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Editorial

John Bolt

This is a unique issue of the *Bavinck Review* with a single item as its content: an English translation of Herman Bavinck's *Foundations of Psychology* (*Beginselen der Psychologie*). Details about the two Dutch editions as well as the English translation are provided in the Editor's Preface and will not be repeated here. Rather, I want to comment on the importance of this work in the larger corpus of Bavinck's thought.

The fact that Bavinck published *Beginselen der Psychologie* in 1897 helps correct an old and significant misperception about Bavinck's career. Bavinck's first biographer, Valentijn Hepp, is the primary source for this misperception. Hepp says that after completing the revision of his *Reformed Dogmatics* (final volume published in 1911), Bavinck had plenty of material for his dogmatics lectures at the *Vrije Universiteit* and these would therefore not require any "new effort" (*nieuwe inspanning*).[1] Immediately after this comment, Hepp highlights the fact that several years before his death, Bavinck divested himself of "the most significant theology books, among them especially older works of Reformed theology, because, he said, 'after all, I am not going to do anything with it anymore.'"[2] Instead, according to Hepp, "he tirelessly devoted himself to psychology, and even more to pedagogy."[3]

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[1] Valentijn Hepp, *Dr. Herman Bavinck* (Amsterdam: W. Ten Have, 1921), 317.

[2] Hepp, *Dr. Herman Bavinck*, 317–18 ("want," zei hij, "ik doe daaraan toch niet meer").

[3] Hepp, *Dr. Herman Bavinck*, 318.

This deliberate contrast between an earlier theological focus and a later emphasis on psychology and pedagogy (Hepp says "daartegenover," i.e. "opposite that") leaves an impression that is corrected by noting that Bavinck published this work in psychology four years before the fourth and final volume of his *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* in 1901. When one considers the level of detail in Bavinck's scholarly treatment of the young discipline of psychology and how he was abreast of the latest work in the field, it is clear that Bavinck had been working on the material in *Beginselen der Psychologie* for a decade or so before he left Kampen for the *Vrije Universiteit* in Amsterdam, in 1902. Bavinck considered this new field of psychology as crucial for the work of a theologian.

After working on *Foundations of Psychology* for more than a year, I judge that it is not only one of Bavinck's most important books, next to the *Reformed Dogmatics* and his Stone Lectures, *The Philosophy of Revelation*, but also underappreciated and underexamined by the resurgent Bavinck scholarship of the past fifty years.[4] We present this translation confident that this situation will now change. *Foundations of Psychology* provides current and future Bavinck scholars with a rich treasure of material for their pleasure, stimulation, and theological growth.

[4] This in contrast to the first generation after Bavinck's death when five studies of Bavinck's pedagogy were published, each of them including at least some discussion of his psychology: Fr. S. Rombouts, *Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck, Gids Bij de Studie van Zijn Paedagogische Werken* ('s-Hertogenbosch-Antwerpen: Malmberg, 1922); J. Brederveld, *Hoofdlijnen der Paedagogiek van Dr. Herman Bavinck, met Critische Beschouwing* (Amsterdam: De Standaard, 1927); L. van der Zweep, *De Paedagogiek van Bavinck* (Kampen: Kok, 1935); Cornelius Jaarsma, *The Educational Philosophy of Herman Bavinck* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1936); and L. van Klinken, *Bavinck's Paedagogische Beginselen* (Meppel: Boom, 1937). To the best of my knowledge there has so far only been one book-length study of Bavinck's psychology, Anthony A. Hoekema's undefended and unpublished Princeton Th.D. dissertation: "The Centrality of the Heart: A Study in Christian Anthropology, with Special Reference to the Psychology of Herman Bavinck," submitted February 28, 1948.

Foundations of Psychology

Herman Bavinck

Translated by
Jack Vanden Born,
Nelson D. Kloosterman,
and John Bolt

Edited by John Bolt

Author's Preface to the Second Edition[1]

It is now many years since the *Foundations of Psychology* appeared and it is long out of print.[2] I had intended to issue a second, enlarged edition but the pressures of other work prevented it. It would be too bad if this little book disappeared from the psychological literature. The foundations described in the book have had my lifelong acceptance and they remain powerful principles deserving use and expression alongside empirical psychology.

Herman Bavinck, 1921

[1] Ed. note: This text was dictated by Bavinck "on his sickbed" to Valentijn Hepp, and is the opening paragraph of Hepp's own foreword to the second, revised edition of *Beginselen der Psychologie* [*Foundations of Psychology*] (Kampen: Kok, 1923), 5. The first edition contains no preface.

[2] Ed. note: The first edition was published by Kok (Kampen) in 1897.

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Editor's Preface

Herman Bavinck's *Beginselen der Psychologie* was translated and presented in 1981, with introduction and evaluation, as a thesis for the Master of Christian Studies degree at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, by Jack Vanden Born. Dr. Mary Vander Goot, professor of psychology at Calvin College, was the supervisor. Herewith we offer our thanks to Dr. Vanden Born for his permission to use his translation as the basis for our edited and modified translation to be published in the *Bavinck Review*.

In addition to Vanden Born, John Bolt and Nelson Kloosterman are listed as translators because Bolt edited the entire manuscript and translated material that Vanden Born had not included in his translation. Subsequently, Kloosterman carefully went over the work again and made a significant number of changes. The final, published product, therefore, is the work of three hands. Major thanks are also due to Dr. David Sytsma, professor at Tokyo Christian University and a research curator at the Junius Institute for Digital Reformation Research, for carefully reading the manuscript and making a number of corrections to translations of Latin phrases.

Let me highlight some of the key changes made to the original translation in the editorial process. Vanden Born worked from the second, revised edition of 1923 that was prepared for publication by Bavinck's successor at the *Vrije Universiteit* in Amsterdam, Dr. Valentijn Hepp. While we must be cautious about inferring too much from this, it is noteworthy that Hepp was not as sympathetic to Bavinck's book as he was to Bavinck's theology more generally. He judged it to be "the least successful of all his works."[1] In particular, Hepp found the "scholastic" faculty psychology inadequate

[1] Dutch original (DO): *het minst gelukkige*; literally "least lucky or happy"; "Foreword" to Herman Bavinck, *Beginselen der Psychologie*, 2nd ed., ed. Valentine Hepp (Kampen: Kok, 1923), 5. This edition is hereafter cited as *Beginselen der Psychologie*[2].

for dealing with "the psychological facts and insights of recent years."[2] In his work on the second edition, Hepp had access to "large envelopes" of Bavinck's notes that likely were preparatory to a revision and noticed that some had been reworked a second and even a third time.[3] Hepp made judicious use of this material in the second edition and we are in his debt for this enrichment. But he also decided to delete Bavinck's original reference notes because he judged them to be, for all intents and purposes, "dated."[4]

Restoring these notes was one of the more labor-intensive dimensions of the editorial work, but the restoration was necessary because, in addition to their intrinsic value to the subject, the notes are important to Bavinck scholarship.[5] To provide only one example, we note that an important reference to William James' discussion of the "methods and snares of psychology" in his *Principles of Psychology* was dropped by Hepp in his revision of the chapter on the method of psychology (§ 2). While we are indebted to Hepp for the significant expansion of this chapter from four pages to eleven, dropping the James reference is obviously a loss that can hardly be justified on the basis that Bavinck's scholarship is dated.

The only way one could determine whether Hepp's judgment that Bavinck's "scholastic" faculty psychology is inadequate for dealing with "the psychological facts and insights of recent years,"[6] is to examine carefully Bavinck's own sources. When this is done, I remain convinced that it is Hepp's dismissal of Bavinck's faculty psychology that is inadequate to refute the case Bavinck makes for it.

In the edited and translated text below, notes that are unmarked are Bavinck's original notes; those marked "Hepp note" are taken from the

[2] "Foreword" to *Beginselen der Psychologie*[2], 6.

[3] Hepp alludes to these at key points such as at the beginning of chapter 3; see note 1 there.

[4] Dutch Original (DO): *verouderd*; "Foreword" to *Beginselen der Psychologie*[2], 7.

[5] The reference to the location of the note in the first edition will be given in square brackets after the full bibliographic information; e.g. [*BdP*[1], 6, n. 3].

[6] "Foreword" to *Beginselen der Psychologie*[2], 6.

1923 edition; "Ed. note" indicates those provided by John Bolt; "Trans. note" indicates those of Dr. Vanden Born. We have also restored the Scripture references[7] and foreign language terms that Hepp removed. Passages that Vanden Born intentionally omitted in his translation (all provided in his chapter endnotes) have also been restored, in some cases using Vanden Born's translation as a base.

A translator of this work faces a number of challenging decisions about key words and expressions in this text. Many words that are popularly used as synonyms often acquire very specialized meanings in psychology. Here are some of our key choices: Vanden Born usually translated *geest* as "psyche" and *geestelijke* as "psychical" rather than "spiritual." We have usually, in keeping with current English usage, used "psychic" rather than "psychical." We have also reintroduced "spirit" and "spiritual" on occasion, in part because it is important to keep Bavinck's use of *ziel* and *geest* distinct, even though he sometimes uses the terms promiscuously as equivalents. Vanden Born translated *ziel* as "psyche." We have retained that translation in many instances, especially to distinguish it from *geest*, but in some instances we used the more conventional "soul"; nonetheless, for the most part, Bavinck's *zieleleven* is translated as "psychic life" (and occasionally with the longer "life of the soul"). We have followed Vanden Born's lead in translating the word *vermogen* most often as "faculty" but also on occasion as "capacity" or "ability." Bavinck's term *verschijnselen* is usually translated as "phenomena" but occasionally as "events," which was Vanden Born's preference. The terms *gewaarworden/gewaarwording* and *waarnemen/waarneming* present special challenges when dealing with Dutch writing about psychology. Following Bavinck's outline in § 7, B and C, we usually translate *gewaarwording* as "sensation" or "observation" and *waarneming* as "perception." But, there are occasions when it seemed appropriate to translate *gewaarwording* as "perception." This of course

[7] The English Standard Version (ESV) is the default Bible translation used in this text. Other translations will be indicated when used.

involves a fallible judgment and therefore, to help the reader, especially Bavinck scholars, we regularly provide footnote references with the original Dutch, marked as DO, for Dutch original. Similarly, we translate all Latin passages in the manuscript but supply in footnotes the Latin original as LO, German original as GerO, and French original as FrO.

It is also important to be aware that Bavinck distinguishes two faculties of the soul: *kenvermogen* and *begeervermogen*. Translating the former is straightforward: "faculty of knowing"; the second and companion faculty is usually understood to be the will. But, properly speaking, *begeren* means "to desire" rather than "to will." We note that the will takes up only two of Bavinck's seven sections under *begeervermogen*. Furthermore, the will is one of the "higher" capacities of the desiring faculty; there are also "lower" capacities, including the emotions and passions (see § 8, A–E). To complicate matters even more, Bavinck also uses "*begeerte*" [desire], as one of the (lower) capacities (see § 8, D) of the desiring faculty. We have therefore used "Faculty of Desiring" as the comprehensive category, that is, as the heading of § 8, *Begeervermogen*.

To assist the reader, a number of minor changes have been made. For ease of scholarly cross-reference, we have provided page number markers to the 1923 Dutch edition, in square brackets [ ]. We have also replaced Vanden Born's rearranged five main sections and restored Bavinck's original eight main section numbers (§) in their order. These main sections have in this translation been called "chapters" rather than "sections," in keeping with modern usage. The use of the symbol § has been retained to refer to each of the eight chapters.

Bavinck refers to many different thinkers, some of whom might not be so familiar to twenty-first-century readers. Vanden Born supplied dates in parentheses for many thinkers; we have retained these and added some of our own. Bavinck also often simply used surnames (e.g., Virchow) and to help the reader identify the person referred to, we have supplied first names along with dates (thus, Rudolf Virchow [1821–1902]). The reader should know that many of these amplifications of names and dates are not

from Bavinck but were added by the translator and editor. The subheadings in all but the final two chapters are also additions to aid the reader in keeping Bavinck's complex argument straight; most are original from the translator although a few have been altered or added by the editor.[8]

As editor, I have made significant changes in Vanden Born's translated manuscript, particularly to provide some clarity and consistency in the psychological terminology. My choices for technical terms are not always the same as the translator; truth be told, some passages challenged me beyond my comfort level of certainty. That is why I include a number of editor's notes highlighting my choices and inviting thoughtful readers to reflect further and suggest improvements where needed. My two goals were fidelity to Bavinck and clarity, and I have tried not to sacrifice the one for the other.

I need to add at this point that my changes to Vanden Born's translation do not reflect any disrespect for the translator. On the contrary! Translating Bavinck's writings on psychology into English is a difficult task, and time and again I was struck by how well Vanden Born *understood* Bavinck,[9] despite the paucity of Bavinck scholarship available to him in the late 1970s. He had to do it virtually on his own, and his work as a pioneering effort, was courageous and deserves both our admiration and our gratitude.

As is appropriate to a master's thesis, Vanden Born's work was more than a translation; it included evaluation and it was his intention and hope that his work would serve in a constructive way, especially for Christian educators. In his words: "It seems to me Bavinck's book can help us get our bearings a little straighter." While we applaud this constructive purpose, our interest is essentially historical and textual—namely, to provide

[8] All the main (chapter) headings are Bavinck's, as are the centered subheadings A–J in chapter seven and A–G in chapter eight. However, the subheadings in chapters one to six and the flush left subheadings in chapters seven and eight have been added by the original translator or the editor.

[9] See, for example, my comment in chapter 6, note 66.

a translation of Bavinck's text that is as accurate as possible in terms of the context of his era. To that end, we are including only the part of Vanden Born's introduction that provides helpful historical context and possible reasons for Bavinck writing and publishing his *Beginselen der Psychologie* in the first place.

Translator's Introduction: Bavinck's Motives

Bavinck published his small book *Foundations of Psychology* (*Beginselen der Psychologie*) in 1897, while he was in the midst of preparing the first edition of his *Reformed Dogmatics* (*Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*).[1] It seems at least three motives prompted its production.

First, Bavinck had long maintained a close relationship with the "schools with the Bible," the Christian schools that had grown up with the Calvinist revival of the previous decades. Education and school teachers are, of course, very dependent on psychology in their instruction and management of classrooms. As Bavinck frequently addressed their meetings and often wrote articles related to their concerns, he could easily sense the need for a psychology that fit Christian education.

A second motive is connected to the psychologism then current in European thought. Bavinck also believed that human existence passed through a psychological mold. Psychology has great significance for all the sciences, he said. The German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey saw things the same way. In his 1894 work, *Ideas Concerning a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology*, [2] Dilthey thought to undergird all the human sciences with psychology. Psychology was the foundational science. Psychologism was in the air and Bavinck sensed the wind currents carefully. But his citations in the first edition (dropped in the second) reach across written

[1] Ed. note: Volume 1 was published in 1895; volumes 2, 3, and 4 followed in 1897, 1898, and 1901, respectively.

[2] Wilhelm Dilthey, *Ideen über eine beschreibende und zergeliedernde Psychologie* (Berlin: Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1894). Ed. note: ET *Descriptive Psychology and Historical Understanding*, trans. Richard M. Zaner and Kenneth L. Heiges (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977); this volume includes the translation of another Dilthey essay, *Das Verstehen anderer Personen und ihrer Lebensäusserungen* [The understanding of other persons and their expressions of life].

history. Bavinck used mostly German sources, but he also cited a number of French and English writings, including those of the American William James.

Correspondence with Abraham Kuyper suggests a third motive for Bavinck's writing about psychology. In 1897, Bavinck's *Dogmatics* had come to a place where the treatment of human nature would properly follow. Correspondence with Kuyper suggests that Bavinck preferred to have that discussion in a separate book more easily available to potential readers rather than within the four volumes on dogmatics. At any rate, writing to Kuyper on September 20, 1897, about his *Dogmatics,* Bavinck said, "I think that I shall put together two more volumes. And then I still need to limit things at every turn. The doctrine of man is incomplete. Therefore, in a couple of months I shall publish a small, separate work: *Beginselen der Psychologie*. The copy is ready and the first proofs have been set."[3]

The small book, only 191 pages, was published shortly thereafter and the December 5, 1897, edition of Kuyper's weekly magazine, *De Heraut*, contained the following review by Kuyper:

> Amsterdam, December 3, 1897[4]
>
> Professor Bavinck has happily been able to find time to set out the first installment of what with further studies can become a Reformed psychology.
>
> The title of this small octavo-format book is *Beginselen der Psychologie*. It was published by J. H. Bos in Kampen. The low price puts it within everyone's reach and we sincerely hope it will have a fixed place in many locations, also with ministers of the Word and teachers in schools with the Bible.
>
> There has gradually come to be among us a Babylonian confusion about psychology. *De Heraut* has complained

[3] Cited by R. H. Bremmer, *Herman Bavinck als Dogmaticus* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1961), 28.

[4] Ed. note: Kuyper's review is dated December 3, 1897; it was published on December 5, 1897. Kuyper became the chief editor of *De Heraut* (The Herald) at its relaunch in 1877.

about this repeatedly and the confusion is of greater concern than most either understand or concede.

School teachers are especially in danger of stumbling over this terrain. Through their educational preparations, they automatically come into contact with psychology. Pedagogy is unthinkable without psychological foundations. In the instruction teachers give and in the literature that is produced about instruction, all sorts of choices have to be made in answering the psychological questions that are confronted because there has not been a psychology available from our circles. This resulted in psychological ideas being borrowed from earlier centuries, thereby missing the connection to present times, or, more likely, their borrowing from psychologies outside of the Reformed circle, these being based on unwelcome philosophical roots or the so-called "mediating theology."[5]

Our solid faith-instincts kept the best thinkers on the right road but the more visionary saw danger ahead and repeatedly called for psychological studies from our own circle.

Rather than burden his discussion of anthropology in his *[Reformed] Dogmatics* with an elaborated psychology, Professor Bavinck had the fortunate insight to present his observations on psychology separately and thus make them more widely accessible. Even if he has given only a foundation and even if he has drawn more lines than he could properly develop and substantiate, nonetheless, our Reformed public will still be profoundly grateful to him for this trailblazing work.

The main problems that are considered here are set forth briefly, pithily, and lucidly. We do have to place an asterisk here and there where a certain redirection or reworking would not be superfluous, but in the main it can be said that this guide leads us safely and is on the right track on nearly all main points.

And this last point is the most important.

Just to give one example, we must question whether [human] psychic life has been delimited sharply enough from

[5] Trans. note: *Vermittlungstheologie* (mediating theology) was a German theological movement that attempted to connect Schleiermacher's subjectivism with modern science, especially the philosophical basis of that science as it had been developed out of Hegelianism.

animal life. Furthermore, is it tenable to include the formative power in a seed of grain under the rubric of "soul"?

We can raise questions about this. Notwithstanding such questions that deserve more careful and deeper examination, none of this influences Prof. Bavinck's conception of the human soul. And it is, after all, the human soul that he has in view. With respect to this soul, his conclusions concur with the principles of our confessions. He maintains these vigorously over against the errors of our age and, at nearly every point, he brings them into rapport with our more developed modern consciousness, achieving an unforced resolution of the current problems in psychology.

There is also a question to be raised about conscience which appears, perhaps only momentarily, to have become an ethical sensor. But insofar as this is the case, it concerns only the narrower or broader conception that the word "conscience" can express. In the end, Professor Bavinck concludes that the deed, the act of conscience, is expressed only in the rupture of moral self-consciousness—that is, in sin.

The expression "moral life," present here and there, apparently points out that human psychic life, among other things, reacts in the opposition of good and evil and that in order to do this, psychic life must have a capacity for ethical sensitivity. Conceived of in this way, the idea is indisputable.

Similarly, there are other things that could be improved by changes in expression or in balanced presentation. But this is connected to the character of the book. It provides us only with the basics and not the fully developed foundations and carefully explained details.

Therefore, we are deeply grateful that on this terrain, so full of stumbling blocks, Professor Bavinck has come to a conception and a set of conclusions that speak to us so broadly and can lead us forward.

With this volume Professor Bavinck arrests the dominance of all manner of false ideas and concepts that had penetrated our circle. His study connects to the teachings of our father's and he pulls those thoughts into our modern consciousness.

Most important is the section on the doctrine of faculties—it is worth gold. He not only maintains the faculties, but that there are two of them, which makes his

> psychology solid. We will set aside the question whether it is wise to change terms from "faculty of will" to "faculty of desire."[6]

On completion of his *Reformed Dogmatics* and its revised second edition, Bavinck turned to write on other subjects. He sought to cast the light of the Bible on topics in culture, science, and life. But in the decade of the 1910s his interest returned to education and psychology. He gave an address in 1915 on the unconscious and published it that same year.[7] According to Cornelius Jaarsma, a past professor of education at Calvin College, Bavinck refuted his earlier faculty psychology in another address in 1916, "Triumph of the Soul" (*De Overwinning der Ziel*).[8] With his thought undergoing development, Bavinck also contemplated and began a revision of his 1897 *Beginselen der Psychologie*, but his premature death prevented the completion of the task.

[6] Ed. note: Kuyper's review is available online at https://www.digibron.nl/search/detail/012eb449ffe53fe2cae50a60/zielkunde/5.

[7] Herman Bavinck, *Over het Onbewuste* (Amsterdam: W. Kirchener, 1915). Ed. note: The lecture was given at an "academic conference" (*wetenschappelijke samenkomst*) at the *Vrije Universiteit* in July 1915. ET: "The Unconscious," in *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society,* ed. John Bolt, trans. Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 175–97.

[8] Cornelius Jaarsma, *The Educational Philosophy of Herman Bavinck: A Textbook in Education* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1935), 78.

§ 1. The Definition of Psychology[1]

[9] The phenomena[2] of the world perceived by the human spirit are divided in our consciousness into an external and internal world. We first acquire knowledge from the external world because all knowledge begins with sense perception.[3] And then, later on, we give names to spiritual realities and phenomena that arise from an original sensory significance. The human eye is initially directed outward and we perceive what is presented to our senses. Then slowly our consciousness is awakened and learns to distinguish perceived events from perception itself, the object that causes pain from the pain itself, the thing that is desired from the desire itself—that is, object from subject, matter from spirit, the non-self from the self.

Even though this distinction is known to everyone, nonetheless the borderline between internal and external life is not clear. Because psychology is the science concerned with the internal psychic life[4] of human beings, it can accordingly be conceived in either a narrower or a broader sense. If we hold to a strong separation of subject and object, then the only thing belonging to the interior being of the person is the concealed self,[5] which finds shelter behind all psychic circumstances and activities. Sensations, impressions, or desires enter into me only by the activity of the outside world and, although they are *in* me and *attached* to me, they are not me myself, not my essence.[6] The science that is occupied with the origin and

[1] Dutch title: "Begrip der Psychologie" (Idea of Psychology).

[2] DO: *verschijnselen.*

[3] DO: *waarneming.*

[4] DO: *zieleleven.*

[5] DO: *verborgen ik.*

[6] Cf. Frederik van Eeden, "Over Hallucinaties," *Tweemaandelijks Tijdschrift* 3, no. 5 (May 1897): 235f [*BdP*[1], 2, n. 1].

essence of the soul is also called "psychology," [10] *metaphysical* psychology, in contrast with other branches of psychology.

Nevertheless, this soul, which lies hidden behind all psychic states, possesses various powers and carries out a variety of activities: it perceives, thinks, feels, desires, wills, etc. Each of these activities has its own distinct psychic nature and is distinguishable from phenomena perceived by our five bodily senses. The science that investigates these psychic circumstances and activities is known as *psychological dynamilogy*,[7] the study of the soul's capacities[8] and activities.

We soon discover, however, that these capacities of the soul are activated only by the influence of the external world. Sensation, perception, thinking, desiring, willing,[9] etc., are all tied to the working of the body, and through it to the whole physical world. Notwithstanding the variety of differences between a person's internal and external life, there is a close relationship between them. Nothing happens in the soul in which the body does not participate, and vice versa. The science that searches out the relationships between the working of the body and the psychic life of a human being is called *physiological* psychology.

Finally, there is a most definite unity in the psychic life[10] of all people and thus there is one unified science of psychology. But this unity does not mean that the psychic conditions and activities of various persons in different times, places, and circumstances may not vary in important respects. Consequently, special study can be devoted to the psychic life of certain persons or groups of persons—of children, geniuses, psychiatric patients, hypnotized persons, races, nations, etc., even of animals.[11] Furthermore, the

[7] DO: *psychologische dynamilogie.*

[8] DO: *krachten.*

[9] DO: *gewaarworden, waarnemen, denken, begeeren, willen.*

[10] DO: *zieleven.*

[11] Thus, we get child psychology, psychology of a people or nation, psychopathology, animal psychology, etc.

poetic portrait of characters in dramas and novels is far different from the scientific analysis of psychic life in psychology. There is a vast difference between a mother's knowledge of her child's soul and that of a psychology professor. [11] Ordinary knowledge of people[12] and the ability to judge character is something completely different from scientific knowledge of the soul and its activities. Shakespeare and Kant are not to be mentioned in the same sentence.[13]

The discipline[14] of psychology is an amazingly rich territory. *Ordinarily, however, it is understood in the second sense described above as the science of the powers and activities of the human soul.*[15] As such, it is the task of psychology to accurately arrange the events of psychic life,[16] to reduce them to the simplest data, and to systematically summarize and describe them.[17]

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[12] DO: *mensenkennis.*

[13] DO: *in een adem te noemen.*

[14] DO: *gebied.*

[15] DO: *de wetenschap van de krachten en werkzaamheden der menschelijke ziel.*

[16] DO: *zieleleven.*

[17] Hepp note: In the revision this chapter would have been nearly twice the size. It is apparent from a few annotations that especially the last part that deals with differentiation within psychology needed further elaboration. With respect to the *differentiation* within psychology, see further: Herman Bavinck, *Paedagogische Beginselen*, 2nd ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1917), 63; idem., *De Nieuwe Opvoeding* (Kampen: Kok, 1917), 40; idem., *De Overwinning der Ziel* (Kampen: Kok, 1916), 17–21. With respect to the psychology of *children*: *Paedagogische Beginselen*[2], 63, 75–78; *De Nieuwe Opvoeding*, 40–44; *De Opvoeding der Rijpere Jeugd* (Kampen: Kok, 1916), 139–40. With respect to the psychology of *adolescents* [*rijpere jeugd*]: *De Opvoeding der Rijpere Jeugd*, 134–45. With respect to the psychology of *adults* [*volwassenen*]: *Paedagogische Beginselen*[2], 78; *De Opvoeding der Rijpere Jeugd*, 140; *Verzamelde Opstellen* (Kampen: Kok, 1921), 185. With respect to the psychology of *women*: *De Nieuwe Opvoeding*, 51. With respect to *pathological* psychology: *Paedagogische Beginselen*[2], 64; *Verzamelde Opstellen*, 200 [ET: "The Unconscious" in *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*]. With respect to the psychology of *animals*: *Paedagogische Beginselen*[2], 78; *De Overwinning der Ziel*, 15; *Verzamelde Opstellen*, 185 [ET: "The Unconscious," 176–77]. With respect to the *soul of plants*: *De Overwinning der Ziel*, 13.

§ 2. The Method of Psychology

The method of psychology requires deliberate discussion because it has to contend with altogether unique difficulties. After all, psychic phenomena[1] display a special character. They are spiritual and cannot be perceived with any of our five senses. They occupy no space and have no dimensions of length, width, or height; although bound to time, they have no duration, but within each person they are subject to continuous change. The question arises automatically: By what means do we [12] access these psychic phenomena and acquire trustworthy knowledge about them?

In the first place, the so-called *introspective* method has been recommended and is always considered to be the main source [of this knowledge] and has achieved honor especially since the days of John Locke (1632–1704). This English philosopher distinguished two sources of knowledge: *sensation* and *reflection*. The first provides knowledge of external objects; the second is the observation of the activities and conditions of our spirit within us. The former requires the five external senses, the latter comes through the organ of an interior sense. But serious objections have arisen to the existence of such an interior sense apart from and alongside the five external senses. And in any case, it does not work to refer to it with the term *reflection*.

Following Aristotle, the scholastics spoke more appropriately of a *common sensibility*.[2] A perception of, say, a man, a house, or a tree, is composed

[1] DO: *verschijnselen.*

[2] DO: *gemeenschappelijken zin*; LO: *sensus communis*. Ed note: We have chosen "common sensibility" as the translation of *sensus communis* thanks to a suggestion from my colleague Richard Muller who called my attention to John D. Schaeffer, "Commonplaces: Sensus Communis," in Walter Jost and Wendy Olmstead, eds., *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 278–93. Schaeffer points to three possible meanings for *sensus communis*: (1) As "communis opinio, the whole set of unstated assumptions, prejudices, and values that an orator can take for granted when

from many distinct sensations obtained by the different senses. Each sense contributes a unique sensation: hearing supplies the sensation of sounds, sight supplies the colors, and so on. Thus those different sensations come into our psyche via different paths. But there, very remarkably, no matter how different in origin or character, they are united into a single image—for example, of a man, a house, or a tree. So behind our various sensations in our spirit, there must be a capacity, an ability, an organ—for now, it does not matter what we wish to call it—that captures, distinguishes, and binds together the sensations of those five senses. But in order to be able to do that, the common sensibility within us must have knowledge of all those sensations; it must, as it were, be present in all those sensations and must sense itself. It must perceive that it is perceiving. It must have an awareness of everything that we sense through the five senses. The common sensibility is that activity of our soul whereby, as it is combined with all the differing sensations introduced through the five senses, it possesses awareness of all these, [13] and therefore also distinguishes them from one another and can bind them together into a single image.

Materially, there can be no objection to this. The common sensibility is *no separate*, isolated sixth sense by which we perceive especially the interior conditions and activities of our psyche.[3] Even less does its activity consist in reflection, that is, in intentional rumination about the phenomena that have occurred within us. But it is conscious awareness,[4] which to some degree accompanies all our sensing, and thereby equips us to distinguish and unify all those different sensations. We are

addressing an audience." (2) Philosophically, as "a faculty of the mind or imagination. In this meaning, the mind instinctively separates and retains sense impressions before any reflection can occur." (3) "In a composite of these two meanings, sensus communis can mean the faculty that perceives, before reflection, relations or connections between objects and sense perceptions or between individual cases or events. In this composite sense, sensus communis is the basis of practical judgment (*phronēsis*)" (p. 278).

[3] DO: *geest.*

[4] DO: *bewustheid.*

conscious of ourselves. All knowing in the broadest sense, every activity of our capacity to know—all sensing, perceiving, recalling, imagining, and thinking—is accompanied by some awareness. While sensing, we are conscious that we sense. Knowing, we know that we know. Neither our eye nor our ear actually perceives, but it is our soul (the common sensibility)[5] that perceives through the eye or the ear. And that same shared sense is what is aware of this perceiving and therefore comprises a single entity out of the differing elements being perceived.

This self-consciousness of oneself is immediate, direct, automatic—the foundation of all psychic knowing. In its psychic activities it should be called self-perception merely figuratively, for it is an involuntary and unintentional consciousness and absolutely not infallible. But fortunately, we possess memory, which preserves what was perceived earlier. Because we are rational beings who by means of remembering are able subsequently[6] to make all our psychic activities that accompany awareness itself with all its content into an object of our thinking, we can thus scrutinize ourselves. We can then look not only outwardly but also inwardly and can contemplate ourselves. This is the *introspective* method and, at the same time, the *retrospective* method, whereby we can become acquainted with our own psychic life. It is the fundamental method of all psychology.[7]

It is absolutely not true that all our knowledge derives from sensory perception. If that were so, we could not know anything of the existence and [14] characteristics of psychic reality. Thus the source of knowledge for psychology is, in the first place, the psychic life that we observe in ourselves. But that psychic life, although it is self-aware in a general sense,

[5] DO: *ziel* (*gemeenschappelijke zin*).

[6] "Subsequently," that is, after the experiences have passed, for this does not occur simultaneously with our perceiving. Ed. note: In Bavinck's original this parenthetical clause was part of a long and exceedingly complex sentence.

[7] On introspection see further: Bavinck, *Paedagogische Beginselen*[2], 55, 57; *De Nieuwe Opvoeding*, 39; *Overwinning der Ziel*, 7, 23; *Verzamelde Opstellen*, 176 [ET: *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*, 168–69].

is really never a direct and immediate object of our investigation. To begin with, all self-perception presumes a certain distinction between subject and object that can occur only in a rather highly developed psychic life. A child and an ordinary person do not make themselves subjects of their own investigation. This requires an intentional and, in a certain sense, artificial activity, a certain reflection, that is not spontaneously present in every human life, but can originate only after life has been lived.

In addition, psychic conditions and activities are not permanent. They originate in time, they are subject to time, and they pass away with time. As living realities, they are in constant motion. At the very moment we find ourselves in such psychic circumstances, we usually cannot perceive these at all or at least not clearly enough. If we are experiencing pain or are reflecting about some matter, we are usually so entirely consumed by these that we cannot perceive and investigate that pain and that thinking at that particular moment. Therefore, memory enters between those circumstances and our perception of them. But along with this the danger is also present that the image of them that survives in our consciousness is confused and falsified, and thereby becomes an unreliable object for our investigation.

Finally, each person is a self-interested party in their own self-perception. Consciously or unconsciously, involuntarily or intentionally, both the self (object) that we perceive and the perceiving self (subject) are influenced by selfishness.[8] We flatter ourselves, imagine ourselves to be better than we are, overemphasize our virtues and hide our shortcomings. Autobiographies, diaries, or journals, for example, almost never escape this danger. The previous century provided an extraordinarily large number of examples and proofs of this, and the *Confessions* of Rousseau, especially in contrast with the *Confessions* of [15] Augustine, are very revealing in

[8] DO: *zelfzucht*.

this respect.[9] Self-reflection, both somatic and psychic, so easily leads to sentimentality or hypochondria. Therefore, introspection requires the greatest possible caution, honesty, and truthfulness.[10] This is not possible without self-knowledge. And genuine, authentic self-knowledge does not exist apart from the Christian faith. Only Scripture, the Word of God, tells us who and what God is, but also who and what we ourselves are. Psychology is related so very closely to ethics.

Because so many serious objections were raised against introspection, many people definitively rejected it as a source of knowledge for psychology. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) pointed out that the very purpose of self-examination had the effect of inadvertently subjecting the phenomena to be observed to alteration. Auguste Comte (1798–1857) argued that it was impossible to split oneself into a perceiving subject and a perceived object. And Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) claimed that psychology can never be a pure science of observation, because its content consisted of changing circumstances and not permanent objects

But these objections are too extreme. All of us are aware of our inner conditions and activities—of hunger, thirst, pain, sensations, emotions, perceptions, thoughts, and so on. And what we are aware of we can also investigate and get to know by means of thinking. If introspection were impossible, the entire discipline of psychology would cease to exist, for we can perceive and understand the psychic phenomena present in others only because we have first encountered them as present in ourselves. Even the experimental method is constructed on the possibility of introspection because the interpretation of the phenomena observed by that method presupposes knowledge of ourselves.

The objections we have mentioned do place on us, however, the obligation, in connection with the perception of ourselves, to guard against

[9] C. Herntrich, *Augustin und Rousseau nach ihren 'Bekenntnissen' beurteilt* (Schleswig: J. Bergas, 1896) [*BdP*[1], 5, n. 2].

[10] DO: *waarheidsliefde.*

prejudice and self-deception, and in this way to work as impartially and accurately as possible. For that reason, we may also be grateful that there are still other sources for psychology besides the psychic life that we observe in ourselves. For this is certain: [16] those who observe only themselves and neglect the study of other people easily run the risk of evaluating others according to themselves, and of forming for themselves an entirely mistaken picture of the psychic life.

But in addition to the observation of self there is the observation of the psychic life of others. *Subjective* psychology is supplemented with *objective* psychology (though this is objective in a certain sense because actually it is also the subjective psychology of and relating to others). The *introspective* method is strengthened and regulated by the *historical* method.

The historical method can be of two kinds. We can perceive others to the degree that they reveal themselves in their countenance, gestures, carriage, speech, deeds, diaries, and so on. Or we can use the observations and investigations that are performed with respect to others by third parties and are communicated verbally or in writing. The history of human beings themselves, whether of individuals or a group of people, as they unveil themselves in language, religion, morality, science, art, etc., along with the manifold descriptions of that history in biographies, character studies, and all kinds of histories—above all not forgetting Holy Scripture—are all important aids[11] for the study of psychology. This investigation of the psychic life of children, the mentally ill, criminals, primitive people,[12] etc., along with those in a sleeping, dreaming, or hypnotic state, is also susceptible to prejudice, with the proviso that one never lose from view the principle that the healthy life must not be explicated from the

[11] DO: *hulpmiddelen.*

[12] DO: *natuur volken.* Ed. note: We have used the term "primitive people" here because it accurately reflects the usage of Bavinck's time; current physical anthropological use prefers the expression "indigenous people."

perspective of the diseased life, but the diseased life from the perspective of the healthy.

Naturally the dangers of error and mistakes are excluded no less from this objective psychology than from subjective psychology. The real question is whether the objects of investigation have understood themselves or others correctly. After all, we understand others only by analogy to ourselves. "If you want to understand others, look into your own heart" (Schiller).[13] We perceive external revelation, but the inner being remains hidden to us. We see actions but we guess their motives. We hear words but can only conjecture as to what thoughts accompany them. Our judgment is therefore always either too generous or too harsh. A spacious field is created here for preference or prejudice,[14] for deception of others or of ourselves, for intentional or [17] unintentional falsehood.[15] But all this does not obviate the claim that *individual* psychology possesses a rich supplement and an excellent corrective in *collective* psychology.

In addition to these subjective and objective methods, we have, thirdly, the *experimental* (physiological, biological) method.[16] To the degree that in the previous century, psychology was viewed as a natural science, its practice had to employ the related scientific method of experimentation. The researcher in the natural sciences, who employs this method, does not limit experiments to the pure observation of the phenomena, but also intervenes independently in the process of those natural phenomena, making

[13] GerO: *Willst du die Andern verstehn, blick in dein eigenes Herz.* Ed. note: Bavinck supplies no reference for this quote. It is the second line from Schiller's poem "Der Schlüssel." Bavinck omits the first line of the couplet: "If you want to know yourself, then see how others suffer" [*Willst du dich selber erkennen, so sieh, wie die andern es treiben*]. See Friedrich Schiller, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart and Tübingen: J. G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1822), 227.

[14] DO: *voorliefde, vooroordeel.*

[15] Cf. Friedrich Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie* (Stuttgart: J. G. Gotta, 1896), 9–11; William James, *Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. (New York: Henry Holt, 1890), 1:183–98 [*BdP*[1], 6, n. 3].

[16] Hepp note: For more on empirical psychology, see: *De Nieuwe Opvoeding*, 36–52.

natural forces operate in a specific manner, and in this way compels them, so to speak, to disclose their secrets to the researcher. In an experiment the researcher addresses a specific question to the natural phenomenon and waits for its answer. In the same way, in the arena of psychology, an experiment supplies an opportunity, with respect to a specific condition of consciousness that was present earlier under specific circumstances, to arrange the circumstances to occur in the same constellation of factors, thereby to observe them more sharply than before and to investigate them. There is no doubt that this method can and may be applied in the psychic realm to a certain extent. An intimate relationship exists between body and soul. Psychic perception, for example, is apparently dependent on the strength of external, sensory nerve stimulation.[17] By altering external conditions, in specific ways one can affect the psychic phenomena transformatively and come to understand them in their interdependence.

In this way, following Alfred Binet (1857–1911), to mention yet another example, one can also set up an investigation of the influence on children that proceeds from formulating questions and from the form in which these are framed to the depiction of an event or the retelling of a story.

The experimental method, therefore, has a right to exist, and has already yielded outstanding results. Physiological investigations in general have made valuable contributions to our knowledge [18] of the phenomena of consciousness[18] and will undoubtedly continue to advance in the future. These investigations have provided much greater clarity on the following: the intimate relationship between soul and body, the conditions under which perceptions originate, the duration of elementary psychic phenomena, the limitations of consciousness, the strength or weakness of attention, and the reproduction and association of ideas. Therefore, as we shall see later, although the application of the experimental method in

[17] DO: *zenuwprikkeling.*

[18] DO: *bewustzijnverschijnselen.*

the discipline of psychology is circumscribed within narrow limits, it may nonetheless not be ignored in silence as one of the pathways by which we come to knowledge of psychic phenomena.[19]

When we attempt as accurately as possible to assemble through observation all the psychic phenomena along these three pathways [the introspective, historical, and experimental methods], the question arises as to how we will acquire an overview of that abundant material and process it.

Until the second half of the nineteenth century, psychology depended on metaphysics and sought to be a deductive, constructive science possessing apodictic certainty. G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) attempted to explain the development of the conscious spirit[20] from the Absolute Idea that lies embedded in nature and ascends gradually from nature. Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841) opposed this idealism, but nonetheless placed a different metaphysical foundation under psychology when he sought to derive psychic laws, with mathematical help, from the disruption and self-preservation of the simple *Reals*.[21] Moreover, both Hegel and Herbart shared an intellectualism in which they conceive of representation[22] as the original phenomenon of the soul, and consider feeling, striving, desiring, and willing as expressions[23] of it. In this respect, after the progress of Friedrich Schelling (1775–1854), Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860)

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[19] Hepp note: Experimental psychology is discussed in greater detail in *De Nieuwe Opvoeding*, 37–39; *Paedagogische Beginselen*[2], 69–78; *Verzamelde Opstellen*, 174 [ET: *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*, 169–76].

[20] DO: *bewusten geest.*

[21] DO: *realen.* Ed. note: In direct opposition to Kant, Herbart believed that "the world is a world of things-in-themselves [and] the things-in-themselves are perceivable" (cited by B. B. Wolman, "The Historical Role of Johann Friedrich Herbart," in *Historical Roots of Contemporary Psychology* [New York: Harper & Row, 1968], 33). "Everything's appearance indicates that it exists. He considered all external objects existing in the world as *reals*, which can be compared to Leibniz's concept of monads." (Source: *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Johann Friedrich Herbart"; the *Wikipedia* article on Herbart provides a helpful overview of Herbart's philosophy and psychology, including his conception of the *Real*).

[22] DO: *voorstelling*.

[23] DO: *wijzingen.*

introduced modifications. He began with the will and viewed the capacity for knowledge as its product. But with his work as well, psychology continued to be dominated by metaphysics.

Around the middle of the nineteenth century an increasingly strong reaction to this view developed. Influenced by the rapidly developing natural sciences that were obtaining such glittering [19] results through the inductive method, and supported by the philosophies of Kant and Comte, people attempted to liberate psychology from metaphysics altogether and to establish it as pure science of experience. The essence of the soul is unknown to us. We must restrict ourselves to observing psychic phenomena as accurately as possible, to compiling them as completely as possible, and then to describing them in their legitimate order and mutual relationship. Despairing of attaining knowledge of the essence of things, contemporary psychology seeks to limit itself to a description of psychic phenomena.[24]

Both now and in the past, there has never been doubt that observation is the source of knowledge for psychology, just as it is for every science, and that this observation can never be too careful or thorough.[25] The deductive method of Plato, Spinoza, Schelling, Hegel, Herbart, and Schopenhauer, which constructs psychology from metaphysical propositions, rightly finds no proponents any longer. But the empirical, inductive method of the present time is also not free of one-sidedness; it all too readily forgets that perception and thought are in fact correlative from the outset and ought to belong together.

First, never, and especially not in psychology, does any observation occur without being accompanied a priori by, and proceeding immediately from, various metaphysical concepts, such as: thing, essence, attribute, being, becoming, change, origin, power, and so on. Without these it is impossible to speak about scientific observation.

[24] DO: *zielkundige verschijnselen.*

[25] DO: *nauwkeurig*; *volledig.*

Second, it is a mistaken notion to think that observing and establishing the phenomena of consciousness can occur with pure objectivity and perfect exactness. For each person sees the phenomena[26] with their own eyes and from their own perspective. Each brings their own nature, character, and conviction to their observation and is influenced by these. No one is able to discard *oneself* in connection with scientific research. This explains why the uncertainties in psychology do not begin first with posing hypotheses or with attempts to provide a causal explanation of phenomena, but they are already present immediately when preparing and establishing the phenomena.

Third, the application of the empirical method has therefore yielded anything but unity and agreement. Undoubtedly, many intended by this method both to restrain speculation by strict adherence to the facts and to establish a firm foundation for the scientific edifice. But this goal has certainly not been achieved. Instead of unity and agreement, which did exist in earlier days when the leading positions were formulated, there are now division and uncertainty, even between the advocates of this very empirical method and the disciples of this same school. One need only mention the names of Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801–1887) and Adolf Elsas (1855–1933), Wilhelm Wundt and Hugo Münsterberg (1863–1916), Theodor Ziehen (1862–1950) and Georg Elias Müller (1850–1934), to get a clear picture of the disagreement that currently exists about what one could call the simplest phenomena of psychic life.[27]

Fourth, this should not surprise us because ascertaining the phenomena, especially in the psychic domain, is just not as simple as it might seem to many. The psychic life is so incomprehensibly rich and the various conditions in it are so complicated and interwoven that scientific investigation can never make them its object as such. Such investigation must therefore restrict itself by isolating one phenomenon from its manifold connection

[26] DO: *verschijnselen*.

[27] Cf. *Paedagogische Beginselen*[2], 57; *De Nieuwe Opvoeding*, 36–52.

in which it occurs in reality and setting it apart; in other words, it must begin with abstracting the phenomenon. This abstraction is an activity of thinking, which therefore has previously been placing observation[28] in its service.

Fifth, psychic life is so rich and so deep that there would be no end to observation if thinking about that multitude of phenomena did not shine its light, did not bring order out of chaos, and did not clear a path through the maze. Recording phenomena is not enough; ordering and classifying must follow. And this is not possible without governing perspectives that alone make thinking happen. People make choices regarding, and distinguish between, what is more important and less important, and they value and assess and use, even though this may be involuntary, [21] according to a standard derived not empirically, but from their own insight.

Sixth, finally, science is explanation. If psychology wishes to be a science, it cannot suffice with only a description of the phenomena, but must strive to track down the causes of the phenomena.[29] This requires it to work to discover the connection of the phenomena, investigating their causes and effects, their means and purposes, attempting to find the laws that govern the phenomena, posing hypotheses, attempting to penetrate behind the phenomena to their basis and their essence. All this, the proper high calling of science, is not itself science, but the task of thinking.

From all this it follows that a purely descriptive psychology—that is, a psychology of consciousness, which suffices with the phenomena of consciousness and refuses to penetrate behind consciousness—has no right to be called a science in the strictest sense of that term. A description and recording of phenomena does not deserve to be called science. For this provides only small fragments of the psychic life, accidentally melded together, without order or unity or system, and does not yield knowledge of the life of the soul itself in its origin and essence. Therefore,

[28] DO: *waarneming.*

[29] DO: *oorzaken der verschijnseln op te sporen.*

observation is necessary and good as a first step, because no building can be erected without a foundation. We human beings do not know things a priori, immediately, through intuition. We are tied to their phenomena and activities and must observe them in the most accurate and conscientious manner possible, but from that we can by means of thinking arrive at their origin and essence, at their laws and purposes. It is therefore thinking that supplies psychology, as with every other science, its proper scientific character. Thinking discloses the logical, the idea, and the law in the phenomena, and that is what science is all about.

The inductive method cannot do without the deductive, nor can the latter do without the former. The essence of things comes to be known from the phenomena and knowledge of that essence in turn assists in the knowledge of the phenomena. Therefore these methods do not follow each other in temporal sequence, although at a given moment one or the other may be in the foreground. [22] But from the outset they go together and accompany each other until the end. "Perception without thought is blind, thought without perception is empty" (Kant).[30] "Thought apart from experience and experience without thought are both equally impotent" (Wundt).[31]

For that reason, Christian Wolff (1679–1754), with his division of psychology into the rational and empirical, rightly saw that thinking and observation were both necessary for psychology. But he incorrectly separated what should only have been distinguished, for rational psychology cannot do without observation of the psychic phenomena. And the so-called empirical psychology cannot do without the activity of thinking. Kant drew this separation more strongly, on the one hand, by limiting empirical psychology to the knowledge of phenomena and, on the other

[30] GerO: *Anschauungen ohne Gedanken sind blind, Gedanken ohne Anschauungen sind leer.*

[31] GerO: *Das erfahrungslose Denken and die gendankelose Erfahrung sind gleich ohmnachtig.*

hand, by retaining for rational psychology nothing more than an unknown and unknowable self (a noumenon). However, whether metaphysical and dynamilogical psychology are considered together or separately, in both, observation and thinking, inductive and deductive methods, analysis and synthesis, go hand in hand from beginning to end.[32]

[32] Wilhelm Fridolin Volkmar, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie vom Standpunkte des Realismus und nach genetischer Methode,* ed. Carl Sebastian Cornelius, 4th ed., 2 vols. (Cöthen: Schulze, 1894) 1:3–5; Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*, 4e Aufl. (Iserlohn: J. Baedeker, 1882), 685–92 [*BdP*[1], 8, n. 4].

§ 3. The History of Psychology[1]

Greek Psychology

Ordinary, daily experience teaches us all that objects[2] outside us become part of our knowledge only by way of mediation through particular bodily senses. Therefore the earliest Greek thinkers focused their investigation on the [23] connection between that external world with its perception through our spirit.[3]

In general, people initially followed the route of explaining that connection[4] as arising through a physical action of the objects on our senses and through them on our spirit. Psychology was still a subdiscipline of physics. The distinction between spirit and matter was not yet clear to them. Human beings were explained from the world, spirit was explained

[1] Hepp note: In the first edition, § 3 had the title, "The Psychology of Holy Scripture." This chapter remained in the first revision, but the author subsequently scrapped and added this note: "see elsewhere." In fact, he published this revision as the first half of his *Bijbelsche en Religieuze Psychologie* (Kampen: Kok, 1920). Ed. note: For reference purposes, we include Bavinck's note about the literature on biblical psychology: "a list of literature about biblical psychology—Zeller, Delitzsch, Göschel, Beck, Cremer, and many more—can be found in Th. Simon, *Die Psychologie des Apostles Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1897), 112–15; cf. also my *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (1897), 2:536f." [*BdP*[1], 15, n. 5]. In the second and subsequent editions, from which the English translation was made, Bavinck added this note: "In the interests of space, for further discussion on human psychology, the reader is referred to my *Beginselen der Psychologie* and the literature cited there. See also W. Geesink, *Van 's Heeren Ordinantiën*, 1:310ff. The inclusive pages for the two references are: *GD* 1, 2:536–45 [ET: *RD*, 2:554–62]; Wilhelm Geesink, *Van 's Heeren Ordinantiën*, 4 vols. in 2 (Amsterdam: W. Kirchener, 1907–1908), 1/2:310–31."

[2] DO: *voorwerpen.*

[3] DO: *geest.*

[4] DO: *verband.*

from matter, the subject from the object. In perception[5] the object made the subject to be like itself. After all, like could only be known by like.

To the same degree, however, that people reflected on this connection, the spirit came to be aware of itself. It learned to sense that the spirit itself thinks and acts. In connection with perception and knowing things, the spirit appears to be more active than initially thought. Perception, which first seemed to be such a reliable and solitary source of knowledge, on closer inspection turned out to provide no knowledge or certainty at all. It was thinking that came to be identified as the source of all genuine science. Thus the core of the matter was shifted more and more from the object to the subject, from sense perception to thinking, and from matter to spirit. People formerly believed that like could only be known by like. Now people claimed the opposite: only what is unlike and contrary—that is, the sensory world—can be known by the human spirit. This reversal began with Anaxagoras and was completed in the Sophists, who were drunk with subjectivism, and attempted with a frolicking recklessness to explain everything as deriving from the subject. The subject was not a product of the world, but the reverse was true: the human person was the measure of all things, and the object was fully and completely dependent on the subject.

The subsequent philosophies of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were thereby charged with the task of restoring the proper relation, the balance between object and subject, and of avoiding the one-sidedness of both empiricism and rationalism alike. They did this by distinguishing between a lower and a higher part of the soul. In itself the soul is rational, free, autonomous, spiritual, immortal. But here on earth it is bound to a body and thereby also the foundation[6] of a lower, sensory life. The soul [24] resides not only in the head, but also in the chest and belly. It is the subject and foundation not only of the intellectual and rational life, but also of the

[5] DO: *waarneming.*

[6] DO: *principe.*

vegetative and sensitive[7] life. Because of that, the soul can remain suspended in the sensory world, and allow itself to be led by sense perceptions and sensual desires—δόξα, ἐπιθυμία, ἡδονή[8]—by temper, pleasure, passions, etc. The wise person rises above such impulses, allowing reason to rule and pursuing genuine knowledge, genuine science, which consists in concepts and not in sensual objects, but has ideas as its object. In addition to that reason (λόγος), a person also has a will, not ἐπιθυμία but βουλήσις, that presupposes knowledge and deliberation. Those who know the good, love it and do it. Knowledge is virtue. Philosophy is religion. In both of these, in knowing and doing good, the soul attains its purpose; rising above the sensual and earthly, it is conformed to God.

In this philosophical view, the soul was independent, i.e., it had its own nature and purpose. Psychology thus became a proper science. However, this psychology had many defects, including Plato's notion that the soul preexisted and consists of three parts (trichotomy), but especially the ethical dualism of body and soul and the intellectualism associated with this. These defects became apparent in subsequent philosophy. The Stoics pushed intellectualism so far that emotions had to be not simply controlled but also eliminated. In opposition, Epicurus went to the other extreme and sought the only good in desire. The harmony of psychic life,[9] of head and heart, soul and body, object and subject, perception and thinking, reason and sensation, higher and lower self, was not found in Greek psychology.[10]

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[7] DO: *sensitieve.* Ed. note: Bavinck's use of *sensitieve* here is worth noting since his ordinary choice for "sensory" is *zinlijk* or *zinnelijke.* Nothing should be inferred from this; since he returned to both *zinlijk* and *zinnelijke* in the next sentence, it is safe to conclude that the change was for reasons of style only.

[8] Ed. note: These three Greek words—respectively, meaning: glory/fame/renown, desire/longing, pleasure—were not included in the second edition but are added here. Similarly for the other Greek terms in this paragraph.

[9] DO: *zieleleven.*

[10] Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung. Erster Theil. Allgemeine Einleitung. Vorsokratische Philosophie* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag [R. Reisland], 1876); Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen*

Historic Christian Psychology

Christianity brought about a great change. Persons and personhood[11] were given their proper status and worth. The whole world does not measure up to the value of a single human soul. The prime concern was no longer knowledge of the world but salvation of the soul. The physical opposition between spirit and matter was displaced by the ethical opposition between good and evil. Scripture introduced altogether different images of the soul and its origin, its propagation, its spiritual nature, its freedom, and its immortality. The entire content, meaning, and [25] character of metaphysical psychology changed. Psychological dynamilogy[12] also underwent a Christian baptism. In conjunction with Greek philosophy, Augustine sketched the main lines of this Christian psychology,[13] scholasticism developed them further, and they were adopted by Roman Catholic and Protestant theology.

Entwicklung. Zweiter Theil, erste Abtheilung. Sokrates und die Sokratiker. Plato und die Alte Akademie (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag [R. Reisland], 1889); Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung. Zweiter Theil, zweite Abtheilung. Aristoteles und die alten Peripatekiker* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag [R. Reisland], 1879); Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung. Dritter Teil, erste Abteilung: Die nacharistotelische Philosophie, erste Hälfte* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag [R. Reisland], 1880); Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung. Dritter Theil, zweite Abtheilung: Die nacharistotelische Philosophie, zweite Hälfte* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag [R. Reisland], 1881), passim. Hermann Siebeck, *Geschichte der Psychologie,* I/1, *Die Psychologie vor Aristoteles* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1880); Hermann Siebeck, *Geschichte der Psychologie*, I/2 *Die Psychologie von Aristoteles bis zu Thomas von Aquino* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1884) [*BdP*[1], 18, n. 6].

[11] DO: *persoonlijkheid.*

[12] Ed. note: In § 1, Bavinck defined "psychological dynamilogy" as the "study of the soul's capacities (*krachten*) and activities, based on investigations of the circumstances and content of psychic phenomena."

[13] Theodor Gangauf, *Metaphysische Psychologie des heiligen Augustinus*, 2 vols. (Augsburg: Karl Kollmann, 1852); Heinrich Ritter, *Geschichte der christlichen Philosophie*, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Friedrich Perthes, 1841), 337–443; Albert Stöckl, *Geschichte der Christlichen Philosophie zur Zeit der Kirchenväter* (Mainz: Franz Kirchheim, 1891), 327–41 [*BdP*[1], 18, n. 7].

Psychology normally had this form. In contrast with Plato, one and the same soul was considered to be the principle of all life in a person. There were not three parts or substances in this soul, seated in the head, chest, and belly. But the life, of which the soul is the basis,[14] is distinct. The human soul is built on a body and is designed for this. The body is not the soul's prison but its natural organ. Life varies, depending on the organs of the body, in which the soul is active.

As Aristotle had already observed, three particular activities of the soul were to be distinguished. In the organs for eating, digesting, and propagating, the soul is active as *vegetative soul*[15] and descends, as it were, to the life of plants. Through the senses of touch, smell, taste, hearing, and sight, the soul performs a higher activity as *sensitive soul*.[16] As such, the human soul, just like the soul of animals, has the capacity[17] for receiving sensations[18] and forming impressions,[19] for storing them and, in a certain measure, treasuring and valuing them. Then in addition, connected with this, the soul also possesses the capacity, to the degree that something is recognized as a good or as an evil, to pursue or to escape it in varying degrees of affection or aversion,[20] and to move and direct the body's muscles and nerves accordingly.

The activity of the soul attains its highest level as the *intellectual or rational soul*.[21] In this way the soul far surpasses plants and animals. The soul performs this higher activity chiefly with the brain in one's head. As such, the soul has two faculties: understanding and will.[22]

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[14] DO: *principe.*

[15] LO: *anima vegetiva.*

[16] LO: *anima sensitiva.*

[17] DO: *vermogen.*

[18] DO: *gewaarwordingen.*

[19] DO: *voorstellingen.*

[20] DO: *lust en onlust.*

[21] LO: *anima intellectiva, rationalis.*

[22] DO: *verstand en wil.*

By way of understanding humans are able to penetrate the phenomena[23] to the essence, the idea, the logos of things, and thus form not only depictions but concepts.[24] The soul can think through these concepts further with the help of reason and, as though ascending a ladder of syllogisms, it can climb to the highest ideas. In that way, through their understanding [26] and reason, human beings come to know truth in distinction from what is false, erroneous, or mendacious. But through that same faculty of understanding, people judge things not only according to the standard of truth or falsity but also according to the standard of good and evil. The standard of truth and falsity is the logical law that is created in our understanding as a potentiality; the standard for good and evil is the ethical law, which also is innate[25] as a constitutional characteristic of being human.[26] In the same way that the understanding tests things by the laws of logic, that same understanding also pronounces an accusation or an acquittal when testing our own or someone else's action by the ethical law. This rendering of a verdict about good or evil is called conscience.

The second faculty of the rational soul is the *will*, which differs from *desire*[27] in that it rests on rational consideration and can be directed toward ideal goods. Thus it presupposes the understanding and produces actions that occur immediately with the willing itself or are performed by the body on the command of the will.[28]

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[23] DO: *verschijnselen.*

[24] DO: *voorstellingen, begrippen.*

[25] DO: *aangeboren.*

[26] DO: *hebbelijkheid.* Ed. note: The second half of Bavinck's sentence reads: "*de maatstaf voor goed en kwaad is de ethische wet, welke eveneens als hebbelijkheid is aangeboren.*"

[27] DO: *begeerte.*

[28] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I[a] qq. 75–90; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, chapters 56–81; Vincenz Knauer, *Grundlinien zur aristotelisch-thomistischen Psychologie* (Vienna: Konegen, 1885); Gaetano Sanseverino and Nunzio Signoriello, *Philosophia Christiana cum Antiqua et Nova Comparata*, vol. 5–6 (Naples: Officina Bibliothecae Catholicae Scriptorum, 1878); Albert Stöckl, *Lehrbuch der Philosophie,* 2 vols., 6th ed. (Mainz: F. Kirchheim, 1887), 1:18–21; Constantin Gutberlet, *Die Psychologie*

There are a number of comments to be made about this psychology. In connection with the division of the soul into the vegetative soul (*anima vegetativa*), the sensitive soul (*anima sensitiva*), and the thinking soul (*anima intellectiva*), the unity of psychic life and the mutual relationship of these three psychic activities are not adequately emphasized.[29] In spite

(Münster: Theissing, 1890); Auguste Castelein, *Psychologie: La science de l'âme dans ses rapports avec l'anatomie, la physiologie et l'hypnotisme* (Namur: Imprimerie Douxfils, 1890); Désiré J. Mercier, *La Psychologie* (Louvain: Uystpruyst-Dieudonné, 1895); Mathias Schneid, *Psychologie im Geiste des heiligen Thomas von Aquin,* vol. 1, *Leben der Seele* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1892); Tilmann Pesch, *Institutiones psychologicae secundum principia S. Thomae Aquinatis ad usum scholasticum,* vol. 1 (Freiburg: Herder, 1896).

For psychology among Reformed and Lutherans one can consult Calvin *Institutes*, I.xv.6f., II.ii.2, II.xiii; Zacharias Ursinus, *Volumen tractationum theologicarum,* vol. 1 (Neustadii Palatinorum: Mathes Harnisch, 1584), 146–7; Amandus Polanus von Polansdorf, *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae* (Hanau: Johann Aubrius, 1615), 310–17 (V, xxx); Jerome Zanchi, *Omnium Operum Theologicorum,* 8 vols. (Geneva: Samuel Crispinus, 1619), 3:573–98; William Perkins, *Alle de Werken van Mr. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam: Johannes van Zomeren, 1659–63), 3:69 [Ed. note: This reference is the first page of the Dutch translation of Perkins's "A Discourse of Conscience," not to be confused with his "The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience"]; P. van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia,* I.iii.9 §§ 6, 15, 16 [Ed. note: This annotation form refers to part (I, II, III), book (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.), chapter (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.), and paragraph numbers (§) of the *Theoretico-Practica Theologia.* The three parts of the work are: Theology (I); The Idea of Moral Theology (II); Ascetic Theology; The Exercise of Piety (III). The third book of part I covers the "Works of God" and chapter 9 is "Concerning Man and the Image of God." § 6 deals with the creation of the soul; § 15 with the union of body and soul; § 16 whether each person has only one soul]; B. de Moor, *Commentarius Perpetuus in Johannis Marckii Compendium Theologiae Christianae Didactico-Elencticum*, 7 vols. (Leiden: J. Hasebroek, 1761–71), 2:1042ff. [Ed. note: Future references to this work will be cited as B. deMoor, *Commentarius Perpetuus*]; Bartholomaeus Keckermann, *Disputationes Philosophicae* (Hanau: Guilielmus Antonius, 1606), 521–60 (Disputation XIX); Philip Melanchthon, "Liber de anima," in *Corpus Reformatorum,* vol. 13, ed. Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider (Halle: Schwetschke, 1846), 5–178; Johann Franciscus Buddeus, *Elementa Philosophiae Instrumentalis, Tomus Secundus* (Halle: Orphanotrophium Glaucha-Halensis, 1715), 327–38; Johann Franciscus Buddeus, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis* (Leipzig: Thomas Fritsch, 1715), 43f. [*BdP*[1], 20, n. 8].

[29] Ed. note: It needs to be noted here that this sentence was unchanged from the first edition. This is telling because it shows that Bavinck's reservations about the tripartite soul date back to his earliest work..

of the clear insight that a human person is a rational soul,[30] the connection of soul and body and the bond between physiology and psychology are frequently absent. The notions of a vegetative soul and a sensitive soul definitely take the body into account. But with the rational soul the body completely fades into the background.[31] The subdivisions of vegetative soul and sensitive soul lack sufficient insight into the physiological significance of various organs and their functions, such as circulation of the blood, respiration, digestion, the heart, the lungs, etc. In connection with these, the different conditions and activities of the soul are not sufficiently appreciated, especially the unconscious, imagination, and emotions. The ancient Greek antithesis between sensuality and reason still seems to be operative here. [27] In general, all manner of distinctions, analyses, and divisions occupy the place of explanation. The most difficult problems are occasionally solved with words and concepts. None of this takes away from the fact that this psychology supplies a much deeper and subtler insight into the nature of psychic life and the mutual connection of its activities than does the psychology that has arisen in more recent times.

Enlightenment Psychology

The more recent psychology is a fruit of the philosophy that had its inception with René Descartes (1596–1650) and Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and which, in principle, was a reaction against Aristotelian scholasticism.[32] It wanted to discard the entire intellectual heritage and rebuild philosophy from the bottom up on firm foundations. Methodologically, this meant

[30] LO: *anima rationalis.*

[31] DO: *komt geheel in de schaduw te staan.*

[32] This corrects Hepp's revision and restores what Bavinck said in his first edition. Hepp turned Bavinck's original "de philosophie, welke met Cartesius en Bacon een aanvang nam" [*BdP*[1], 21] into "de philosophie, die met Cartesius en Bacon een einde nam" [*BdP*[2], 27].

people had to begin from a position of doubt and then see for oneself, think for oneself, and accept nothing uncertain or unproven.

Bacon found such a firm starting point in perception and experience, and when he applied this principle in psychology, he concluded that the soul (i.e., the psychic life[33] at the lower level) belonged to the body, was seated in the brain, and was material, although invisible because of the fineness of the material. This soul was the object of science. Alongside it, Bacon placed a higher soul, a spirit of divine origin, but people in philosophy could acquire no knowledge of this spirit and had to turn to theology for this. Bacon made this separation largely because of his fear of conflict with the church and theology.

But this position could not stand; Bacon's dualism was unsustainable. If empirical perception was the only source of knowledge, then that had to be applied consistently. Thus John Locke stated that since knowledge derives from perception there can be no innate ideas. All knowledge, whether received *externally* by senses or *internally* from the psychic coupling of impressions[34] (i.e., through reflection), can be traced to perception. Locke therefore applied empirical perception also to psychology and thus became the father of empirical psychology.

David Hume (1711–1776) went further and claimed that because empirical perception is the only source of knowledge, it was impossible to know anything [28] about the essence of the soul. The object available to psychology is only the phenomena of the soul.[35] And the things of which we are conscious exist merely as a series of impressions that follow one another and are bound by certain relationships. In this way Hume arrived at what is called *association psychology*—that is, the view that impressions

[33] DO: *zieleleven.*

[34] DO: *voorstellingen.*

[35] DO: *zielsverschijnselen.*

of the soul are, as it were, related societally, legitimately, according to the laws of similarity, contiguity, and causality.[36]

Nineteenth-Century Psychology

This association psychology continued to be dominant in England until well into the nineteenth century through thinkers such as James Mill (1773–1836), John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), Alexander Bain (1818–1903), and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903). But it came increasingly under the influence of Darwin's evolutionary theory as well as the explanation of psychic phenomena provided by ethics, religion, logic, etc. (for everything becomes psychology). This psychology studied psychic phenomena especially along the route of evolution and of the struggle for life, whereby these phenomena came to be seen as a fruit of gradual development, and thereby psychology devoted special attention to humanity.

The resulting sensualism, however, frequently led to materialism. Psychological phenomena[37] were conceived as products of metabolic changes[38] in the brain. This was the view held by, among others, Pancratius Wolff, Julien Offray de La Mettrie (1709–1751), Denis Diderot (1713–1784), Pierre Jean Georges Cabanis (1757–1808), François Joseph Victor Broussais (1772–1838), Franz Joseph Gall (1758–1828), Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872), Oskar Vogt (1870–1959),[39] Edward Franklin Büchner (1868–1929), Jacob Moleschott (1822–1893), and Ernst Heinrich Philipp

[36] Ed. note: Hepp omitted the following sentence from the 1904 edition about association psychology: "The Scottish school of [Thomas] Reid (1710–1796) and the French school of [Pierre Paul] Royer-Collard (1763–1845) and [Victor] Cousin (1792–1867) labored further in this direction" [*BdP*[1], 21].

[37] DO: *zielkundinge verschijnselen.*

[38] DO: *stofwisseling.*

[39] Ed. note: Bavinck simply lists "Vogt"; it is likely he had in mind, first of all, the German physician and neurologist Oskar Vogt, known for his extensive studies on the brain. It is not possible to ascertain whether Bavinck knew that Oskar's wife, Cécile Vogt-Mugnier (1875–1962) was her husband's collaborator in brain research.

August Haeckel (1834–1919). This materialism became increasingly untenable and was discarded. Nonetheless, it gave rise to a movement that preferred to explain psychic phenomena in physiological terms, thus advancing *physiological psychology,* or rather, to use Hartmann's term, *psychological physiology*.[40]

Physiological psychology came into existence slowly. Herbart still built psychology on metaphysics. He regarded the soul as the bearer of psychic phenomena and saw *Reals* in the representations.[41] All psychic phenomena were brought forth by the disturbance and self-preservation of these *Reals*. But Herbart nonetheless prepared the way for physiological psychology by applying the method of natural science as he began to speak of the statics and mechanics of the spirit.[42]

After Herbart, researchers increasingly recognized the physiological dependence of psychic phenomena. Ernst Heinrich Weber (1795–1878) was the first to seek a legitimate relation [29] between stimulus and sensation in the formulation known as Weber's Law.[43] Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817–1881) attempted to shed light on the relation between spiritual and bodily life and to explain the physiological mechanism of psychic life[44] in its healthy and diseased condition.

The actual founder of psychophysics, however, was G. Th. Fechner. Already in his 1851 work *Zend-Avesta,*[45] Fechner claimed that unconscious

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[40] Hepp note: See Bavinck *Paedagogische Beginselen*[2], 57; *Verzamelde Opstellen*, 173 [ET: *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*, 167].

[41] LO: *Realia*; DO: *voorstellingen.* Ed. note: On Herbart's notion of "Reals," see § 2, n. 21.

[42] GerO: *Statik, Mechanik.*

[43] GerO: *Reiz, Empfindung*; Hepp note: According to *Paedagogische Beginselen*[2], 55. Ed. note: Weber's Law, so labelled by Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801–1887), "established that sensory events can be related mathematically to measurable relative changes in physical stimulus values" (Source: *Wikipedia,* s.v. "Ernst Heinrich Weber").

[44] DO: *zieleleven.*

[45] Ed. note: Gustav Theodor Fechner, *Zend-Avesta oder über die Dinge des Himmels und des Jenseit*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Leopold Voss, 1851).

conditions following conscious phenomena[46] were not unconscious spiritual conditions[47] but material alterations in the organism. In 1860 he published *Elements of Psychophysics*, setting forth the results of his investigation into the relation between psychic and physical phenomena, particularly those of stimulus strength and sensation intensity.[48] Using Weber's Law, which he esteemed very highly and whereby he saw a bridge built between the psychic and the physical, he developed the so-called "psychophysical formula." It stated that whenever sensation intensity increased in *arithmetic* progression, stimulus strength had to increase in *geometric* progression.[49]

Wundt published his *Principles of Physiological Psychology* in 1874,[50] in which he gathered together all the investigations of this movement, but he gave Weber's Law a quite different meaning than Fechner. Wundt saw in that concept not a solution for the relation between sensation and the central stimulus process in the brain (Fechner's psychophysical explanation), nor for the relation between external stimulus and the central stimulus process[51] in the brain (physiological explanation of G. E. Müller), but rather an explanation of the way we form ideas[52] about the intensity of our sensations.[53] From this we can learn that in our consciousness we have no absolute but only a relative standard for the intensity of psychic phenomena (psychological explanation).

According to Wundt, we have a special faculty, *apperception*, by which we measure every circumstance in terms of another and make a specific

[46] DO: *bewuste verschijnselen.*

[47] DO: *onbewuste geestestoestanden.*

[48] GerO: *Reizstärke, Empfindungsintensität.*

[49] GerO: *Empfindungsintensitäten*, *Reizstärken.* Ed. note: This is now known as the Weber-Fechner law.

[50] Ed. note: ET: Wilhelm Max Wundt, *Principles of physiological psychology* (London: S. Sonnenschein, New York: Macmillan, 1904).

[51] GerO: *Erregungsvorgang.*

[52] DO: *opvattingswijze.*

[53] GerO: *Empfindungsstärke.*

distinction when [30] the intensity of a sensation reaches a certain level of a previous or simultaneous sensation. Wundt's physiological psychology made use, therefore, of the mathematical, experimental method and had the purpose of investigating the forms and laws according to which bodily and psychic phenomena cohere.[54] This application of the mathematical and experimental method constituted the study of natural sciences, mathematics, anatomy, chemistry, mechanics, physics, and physiology as an indispensable requirement for the modern psychologist. Just like the natural scientist, the psychologist works in laboratories and uses all sorts of instruments and devices. And because there is no end to the number of psychic phenomena, psychologists had to expand their investigations as widely as possible; animals and abnormal persons had to be included within the circle of their study. In this way the new psychology hoped to penetrate more deeply than previously to the essence of psychic phenomena.

Nevertheless, it was increasingly perceived and acknowledged that physical and psychic phenomena, no matter how unified, are still distinct. This led to the rise of *psychophysical parallelism*. The path for this had been prepared by nominalism and occasionalism that deduced from the heterogeneity of matter and spirit, soul and body, the impossibility of these influencing each other. Descartes placed soul and body dualistically alongside and over against each other. Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) regarded them as two sides of the same coin, as attributes of a single divine substance, which for our abstracting mind are two parallel phenomena but in the concrete[55] they are one. The soul is the idea of the body, and the body is the reality of the soul. It is true that Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) softened this antithesis and replaced the heterogeneous substances of soul and body with homogenous, gradually differentiating monads, but he too left both to move alongside each other, because he refused to allow any

[54] DO: *lichaamelijke en geestelijke verschijnselen.*

[55] LO: *in concreto.*

dynamic influence from the soul to disturb the law-ordered mechanism of bodily life. Leibniz is the father of contemporary parallelism, because this proceeds especially from the notion of constant persistence of power. In fact, this idea about the energy of power is employed in such a way that any movement in the atoms of the brain always necessarily [31] proceeds forth mechanically and is never lost. Some of those movements may be coupled with consciousness (many others are not), but this has no influence on that movement of the brain's atoms. Sometimes consciousness runs parallel to the movement of the atoms. Sensation (consciousness)[56] is therefore not redirected movement [of atoms] and movement [of atoms] is not redirected perception; perception and consciousness occur alongside each other.

This parallelism became all the more welcome because of the agnostic movement of the day (Kant, Comte, Spencer). People consider an explanation of the connection between the psychic and physical to be impossible and allow both to stand alongside each other, avoiding the danger of colliding with the view of nature, allowing it to have full play in the physical but reserving space for the psychic, for faith, for the ideal, escaping the charge of materialism.

To be sure, the nature of these psychic phenomena is still greatly disputed. Materialism holds that they are nothing but the products of metabolism. Physiological psychology judges that the psychic can be neither consequence nor cause of the physical and considers psychic phenomena to be concomitants[57] of physiological changes (psychophysical parallelism). Association psychology holds that psychic phenomena are something unique but attempts to explain them according to laws of natural science.

[56] DO: *gewaarwording, bewustzijn.*

[57] GerO: *Begleiterscheinungen.*

Nonetheless, in all their forms these new psychologies harbor passivism. The soul, the self, is denied as an active, creative force. Psychic phenomena constitute a world in which the same laws govern as in material nature.[58]

[58] The most important works of this newer psychology are: Wilhelm Max Wundt, *Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie,* 2 vols. (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1893) [ET (volume 1 only): *Principles of physiological psychology* (London: S. Sonnenschein, New York: Macmillan, 1904)]; Theodor Ziehen, *Leitfaden der physiol. Psychologie in 15 Vorlesungen*, (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1896); Wilhelm Max Wundt, *Grundriss der Psychologie* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1896); Harald Höffding, *Psychologie in Umrissen auf Grundlage der Erfahrung*, trans. F. Bendixen (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1893); Volkmar, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*; Oswald Kuelpe, *Grundriss der Psychologie auf experimenteller Grundlage dargestelt* (Berlin: Friedländer, 1893); Johannes Rehmke, *Lehrbuch der algemeinen Psychologie* (Hamburg: Leopold Voss 1894); Gustav Adolph Lindner, *Lehrbuch der empirischen Psychologie als inductiver Wissenschaft* (Vienna: Gerold, 1883); Friedrich Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1896); Alexander Bain, *The Senses and the Intellect,* 4th ed. (London: Longmans, Green, 1894); Alexander Bain, *Mind and Body, The Theories of Their Relation* (London: Henry S. King, 1873); Alexander Bain, *The Emotions and the Will* (London: Longmans, Green, 1880); Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Psychology* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855); William James, *Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. (London Macmillan 1890); George Trumbull Ladd, *Psychology, Descriptive and Explanatory. A Treatise on the Phenomena, Laws and Development of Human Mental Life* (London Longmans 1894); George Frederick Stout, *Analytic Psychology,* 2 vols. (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1896); Alfred Binet, *Introduction à la psychologie experimentale* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1894); Charles Richet, *Essai de psychologie générale* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1887); Jules Jean van Biervliet, *Elements de psychologie humaine* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1895); Pierre Janet, *L'automatisme psychologique* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1894); G. Heymans, "Een laboratorium voor experimenteele psychologie," *De Gids* 60, no. 2 (April 1896): 73–100; G. Heymans, "Ontwikkeling der proefondervindelijke zielkunde," *Wetenschappelijke Bladen* (1896): 1:225–34 [Ed. note: It has proved impossible to verify this reference].Cf. also Théodule Armand Ribot, *La psychologie allemande contemporaine* (Paris: Alcan, 1885); Jules Jean van Biervliet, *La nouvelle psychologie* (Ghent: Siffer 1894); Max Dessoir, *Geschichte der neueren deutschen Psychologie,* vol. 1 (Berlin: Carl Duncker, 1897); and the list of works in Volkmar, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie,* 2:535–61 and Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie,* 739–67 [*BdP*[1], 24, n. 9].

Hepp note: The remainder of this chapter is missing from the manuscript. However, the envelope in which the author had gathered together everything pertinent to this topic did include two copies of "Trends in Psychology," subsequently published in *Verzamelde Opstellen,* 172–82 [ET: *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*, 165–73]. It is not impossible that he exercised restraint in order to rework it in that essay. At any rate, this last chapter calls for further work.

§ 4. The Essence of the Soul[1]

All the terms commonly used for *soul* originally had a sensual meaning. The Hebrew, Greek, and Latin terms *ruach*, *nephesh*, *pneuma*, *psyche*, *spiritus*, and *anima*[2] all point back, according to their derivation, to "wind," "air," or "breath." The Dutch word *geest* and the German *Geist* seem to be related to the old Nordic verb *geisa*, which means "become rapidly moving" and originally meant "that which rapidly bestirs." The Dutch word *ziel* (Old Dutch: *siola* or *seola*; English: *soul*; Germanic: *saiwlo*; Gothic: *saivala*) is of uncertain derivation. Some derive it from *saivan* (to see), others from *sahl* (strong movement), and still others from *sa* (dwelling). Jacob Grimm (1785–1863) linked "soul" to *saiva* (sea) and gave it the meaning "what is animated, brought into motion."[3]

In any case, the soul was named according to the activities of the soul that people observe. But no matter what it is called, the soul's existence, independence, and immortality are affirmed by many different people in vastly different cultures. Even the so-called nature people generally believe that a person is immortal by nature, and what must be proven and explained is not immortality but death. Their uninhibited, ordinary understanding sees nothing as natural and self-evident as the phenomenon of life. What arouses surprise and requires explanation is the fact that life undergoes death.

The nature people understand the soul's essence as akin to air and wind, manifesting itself in one's breath, which leaves a person at death, being exhaled through a person's mouth, leaving behind a tired, bleak shadow that is an insipid likeness of what the person was in their earthly life. For that reason it has the outline and figure of the living person and

[1] Hepp note: In the first edition, this chapter was headed "The Nature of the Soul."

[2] Ed. note: Hebrew: רוּחַ, נֶפֶשׁ; Greek: πνεῦμα, ψυχή.

[3] Hepp note: Bavinck, *De Overwinning der Ziel,* 35, n. 13.

resembles the living person in stature, size, weight, countenance, hearing, and even in clothing but displays all that in a more weary and vapid, bodyless, hazy, and shadowy manner, [33] something like how we sometimes see ourselves in a dream or a form of ecstasy. When the body lies inactive in a faint or while asleep, the invisible soul watches and works in diminished strength, but is not destroyed in its life or existence. The soul is the other self, a double, which is an enfeebled, powerless, diminished substrate of the person. Such a conception does yet entail a sharp antithesis between spirit and matter; after death, soul and body also remain connected, albeit in a different way. The soul does not die nor does the body, but the person dies and remains a ghost and shadow of their former manner of existence.

Religion and philosophy gradually modified this conception. They ensured that the distinction between matter and spirit was placed in the light with increasing sharpness, that soul and body are viewed as two parts that together comprise the essence of a person, and they positioned the immortality of the soul over against the mortality of the body. People attempted then to reconcile the dualism that originated from this view in such a way that explained spirit from matter or matter from spirit, or in such a way that the distinction between both was preserved from opposition through a higher unity.

Therefore, there are three chief conceptions of the soul's essence: *materialism*, *pantheism*, and *theism*.

Materialism

Materialism regards the soul as either a material substance of air, fire, or ether atoms (Anaximander, Heraclitus, Democritus, Epicurus), or an effluent[4] and product of metabolism in the brain, something like gall excreted

[4] DO: *uitvloeisel.*

from the liver or, perhaps, urine from the kidneys (Büchner, Moleschott, Vogt).

But this view of the soul is untenable:

1. Materialism conflicts with the indisputable testimony of our consciousness. All of us are plainly conscious of two distinct sorts of phenomena—spiritual and material. A tremor in the nerves is something completely different from a sensation;[5] blood rushing to our face is different from a feeling of shame. Gall can leave the liver because it is material, but consciousness is qualitatively different and cannot be explained as a secretion of the brain; it is different in kind. [34]
2. Up to the present day, materialism has been completely incapable of deriving psychic phenomena[6] from physical causes. All attempts directed to that end have proved unfruitful. Just like life itself, along with the origin and purpose of things, so too consciousness, sensation,[7] and freedom of the will are an unsolved riddle. Natural science has contributed so little to solve the riddles of life and the world, so that precisely through its glittering results it has made those riddles even more amazing and more complex.[8]
3. People have always known that the soul in all its activities is dependent on the body, and in this century its multifaceted character has been brought into the light. But this has not helped the explanation of psychic phenomena[9] at all. Dependence is not identity,

[5] DO: *gewaarwording*.

[6] DO: *verschijnselen*.

[7] DO: *gewaarwording*.

[8] DO: *wonderlijker en ingewikkelder*; the published text has *wondelijker*, clearly a typographical error.

[9] DO: *verschijnselen*.

and an organ is not a source. Just as the foot is not the subject and the source of mobility, so the brain is not the subject and source of thinking. In both instances the subject and source are the hidden essence of a person—the spirit, the self.[10] It is the inner, invisible person, who thinks with the brain, strolls with the feet, sees with the eyes, and hears with the ears.

4. If materialism states that the brain is the source of thinking, it is able to arrive at that idea only through a thinking activity of the same soul whose existence it denies, for it could never have arrived at the idea by the purely empirical research of natural science. None of the senses can observe that brains think. The minutest microscopic research never observes thought in the brain or the affections of love or hate in the human heart.

   For someone to be able to say that the brain is the cause of thinking requires thinking and philosophizing. This is one proposition that does not spring forth from sense perception[11] but from thinking; it does not spring forth from empirical natural science but from philosophy; it is not a fact but an opinion, and therefore provides evidence for the uniqueness of thinking.

5. In this century, just as in previous centuries, after materialism blossomed for a short while, the tide turned back toward the pantheism from which it had come forth. [35] Because life, movement, purpose, consciousness, and freedom, etc., cannot be explained from the motion[12] of purely material atoms, the original and basic elements of things were assigned these properties at

[10] DO: *de geest, het ik.*

[11] DO: *zinnelijk waarneming.*

[12] DO: *wisseling.*

the outset. The atoms become dynamids,[13] bodies change to souls, matter becomes the epiphenomena of spirit, and materialism is once again turned on its head[14] into idealism.[15]

Pantheism

But this second, *pantheistic* conception is just as untenable.[16] It does posit the relation between soul and body and similarly that between the individual and universal being in different ways and with repeatedly different images. But pantheism, in all its varieties, nevertheless denies the independence of the soul, both with respect to the body and being in general. According to Indian philosophy, nothing actually exists except God, Brahman, the eternal essence of things—pure, unchangeable, absolute being—that can be designated only with the impersonal, neutral, pronoun

[13] DO: *dynamiden*.

[14] GerO: *umgestülpt*.

[15] On materialism, see further my *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:412–15, and the literature cited there [*BdP*[1], 29, n. 11]. Ed. note: The careful reader will have noticed that Bavinck's note 10 is missing; it is found at the conclusion of the previous chapter in the first edition not incorporated into this chapter by Hepp. Bavinck had made the point that while our inner psychic states often get reflected in our physical bodily movements (e.g., in one's face), "the essence of a psychic personality are not disclosed by experimental and mathematical establishment of the strength of a person's nerves and muscles." He then adds: "The anthropometry of Bertillon cannot capture the simple observation and description of a person's face." Then also this: "The parliamentary portraits of Netscher fail to do justice to the humanity in the person." His reference is: Carl Güttler, *Psychologie und Philosophie: Ein Wort zur Verständigung* (München: Piloty & Loehle, 1896). For the opposing view: Felix Krueger, *Ist Psychologie ohne Philosophie möglich*? (München: Theodor Ackermann, 1896). Cf., also Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, 26f.; Theodor Elsenhans, *Selbstbeobachtung und Experiment in der Psychologie. Ihre Tragweite und ihre Grenzen* (Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr 1897) [*BdP*[1], 26–27, n. 10].

[16] On pantheism, see further my *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:409–11, and the literature cited there [*BdP*[1], 29, n. 12].

"the."[17] The world, the multiplicity of things, is only appearance,[18] exists only in our consciousness,[19] and ceases to exist with it. The world is nothing more than my representation.[20]

In keeping with this, individual souls are only fleeting phenomena, waves in the ocean of being, at their deepest level identical with Brahman, the world-soul, and distinguished only within and for the sake of human consciousness. All wisdom is summarized in the Sanskrit phrase "Tat tvam asi," (you are that), which is to say, "You yourself are what is outside of you."[21] In its essence, the soul does not perceive, know, or will.[22] Personality, individuality, consciousness, and activity are nothing more than appearance,[23] the result of ignorance. True immortality consists in acknowledging the unity of Brahman. And even though Western philosophy did not always state the illusory existence of the world in such crass terms, it remains true that within Western philosophy there are also those who regard individual life as a mere wave in the ocean of being. Thus, thought and extension, soul and body, spirit and matter are two sides of the same coin, two phenomena of one essence (Eleatics [Parmenides], Stoicism, Plotinus, Spinoza, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel).

Pantheism is refuted by the following considerations:[24]

1. It is impossible to form any concept of the absolute, the basic idea and foundation [36] of all identity philosophy. It would not be matter and it would not be spirit, but the unity of both, so that

[17] DO: *"Het."*

[18] DO: *schijn.*

[19] DO: *bewustzijn.*

[20] DO: *voorstelling.*

[21] Ed. note: See further, *Wikipedia*, s.v., "Tat Tvam Asi."

[22] DO: *geen gewaarwording, kennis, of wil.*

[23] DO: *schijn.*

[24] Ed. note: For another angle on Bavinck's philosophical objections to pantheistic monism, see his *Wijsbegeerte der openbaring* (Kampen: Kok, 1908), repr. *Philosophy of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), chapters 1 and 2.

it is neither one nor the other and yet still brings forth both of them. Now, it is possible to say all this, but with these words that are spoken there must have been the possibility of thinking about something, and that is simply not the case here.[25] This explains why identity philosophy swings back and forth and conceives the absolute now as matter and then as spirit. It tilts toward either acosmism [denial of the cosmos] or atheism [denial of God].

2. The being of God and the being of the world are essentially distinct for our consciousness, just as are the infinite and finite, the eternal and temporal, the unchangeable and changeable, being and becoming. As sure and definite as we are conscious of the two types of phenomena—the spiritual and material—so sure and definite is our knowledge of this double series of categories and of the distinction of God's being from the world's being. The being of God and the being of the world are so different that it is impossible pantheistically to derive the latter from the former. A generally familiar objection against pantheism is that it is incapable of explaining the many from the one, time from eternity, becoming from being, or the world from God. This is because both are distinct in kind and because there is no gradual transition between both of them. Pantheism always helps itself at this point with metaphors but explains nothing.[26]

[25] Ed. note: In his *Philosophy of Revelation* (p. 42), Bavinck has this to say about the philosophic value of pantheistic monism: ". . . the conception of ultimate being reached by abstraction is a mere product of thought, upon which nothing can be posited in the real world; nothing can come out of it because it is itself nothing. The proof of this lies in the fact that the relation between the absolute and the world is described by pantheism only by the aid of varying images and similes. . . . But it utterly fails to form a distinct idea or clear conceptions of this relation."

[26] Ed. note: See the immediately preceding footnote.

3. Every person is conscious of being a unique self who is distinct from other selves. "Mine" and "thine" have always and everywhere been strongly distinguished. The thoughts I think, the emotions I feel, the decisions I make, are mine and not those of others. Sin, virtue, responsibility, blame, sorrow, repentance, pain, reward, punishment, etc., are all built upon the differentiation and independence of the individual person, and in pantheism they are simply annihilated rather than explained.
4. In addition, the mutual relations of people presuppose personal independence. It is generally agreed that people are closely related, that they are linked to each other in all sorts of bonds, and that they have deep reciprocal influences on each other. We humans are amiable social [37] creatures.[27] But in that society a person is more than a number or an exemplar of their type. In our personal relations with other people, we can influence and respond, we can hate and love, attract and repel, kill and preserve life. Determined by others, we also determine ourselves. Every personality is formed under influences of a varied nature, but each person also has their own being, character, individuality. Every person, even with all the power of heredity, is still something original, a mysterious, hidden, inexplicable being.[28]
5. This is confirmed by the whole of nature. Pantheism is refuted by the diversity[29] of creatures. There is unity and relation among all things. The world is a cosmos. But in that great totality there is no lack of variety. Heaven and earth, inorganic and organic beings, plants and animals, humans and angels—all are distinct kinds.

[27] DO: *gezellig wezen.* Ed. note: "Amiable social" is an attempt to catch the subtleties of the Dutch word "gezellig," which is almost impossible to capture adequately in translation.

[28] DO: *een geheimzinnig, verborgen, onverklaarbaar wezen.*

[29] DO: *verscheidenheid.*

> And no one has succeeded in erasing the borders between all those kinds[30] or in pointing out the gradual transitions among them. There is variation of being, of living, of knowing, of willing. And for that reason alone the world can be a unity, an organism, a cosmos because the variation is maintained in every way, so that the fusion, the mingling, and the chaotic and uniform whirling together of different kinds is everywhere prevented.

Theism

Acknowledging this diversity in unity, theism therefore considers the soul to have its own spiritual independence along with its own origin, essence, and duration. It is true that we do not have any direct and immediate knowledge of the soul. We do not perceive it directly but recognize it only by its activities. Therefore, metaphysics does not conflict with empirical data but is built on its foundation. We can never know that of which we have not the slightest perception. But the perception of phenomena[31] leads us to the knowledge of the essence of things. In fact, this also holds true to the same extent for the world of visible objects. Materialists assume that atoms are the final division of things. But they have never observed atoms and cannot observe[32] them. Atoms are the object of [38] metaphysics, not of empirical investigation.[33] At the same time, the materialist view suffers from an unbearable antinomy: although atoms are matter, they are nonetheless indivisible. In spite of this, all practicing natural scientists believe that they are required to hold that atoms are the carriers of

[30] DO: *soorten.*

[31] DO: *waarneming der verschijselen.*

[32] DO: *waarnemen.*

[33] Ed. note: Here it needs to be remembered that Bavinck wrote this before the twentieth-century research into atomic and subatomic particles yielded the vast and remarkable knowledge of which we today are the privileged recipients.

physical phenomena. Why then should psychologists not be permitted what is granted to physicists without hesitation? The idea of an atom is not any clearer or more acceptable than that of a soul. We know about matter even less than what we know about the soul. If natural science is permitted to adopt the notion of atoms, psychology's formal right to recognize a spiritual substance cannot be challenged.

Of course, psychology then must operate exactly like the natural sciences—that is, it cannot explain psychic phenomena in any different way. And that is indeed the case. Natural sciences resort to atoms in order to explain physical phenomena, and psychology can explain psychic phenomena by no other means than to posit a spiritual substance as their cause. We saw above that neither materialism nor pantheism is prepared to provide even a slightly acceptable explanation of psychic phenomena. Therefore, both positions warrant the theistic standpoint, which regards the soul as a distinct immaterial substance. Indeed, all psychic phenomena are of such a distinct kind that they require the existence of a spiritual soul as their carrier. Perception, consciousness, thinking, self-consciousness, willing, personal identity[34] in all the changes of the material body by language, religion, morality, art, science, and history refer back to the human soul as a spiritual principle.

There are especially two considerations that argue for the spiritual nature and independence of the soul. Let us keep in mind here that the soul is always something spiritual, also in animals. One could speak of the soul of animals[35] as something bodily and material because they live and work only in matter and cannot exist in themselves. But by no means does this imply that animals themselves exist simply from matter and form strictly material bodies. After all, such a view is impossible to accept. The life that we observe in animals and even in plants is either explained in a

[34] DO: *gewaarwording, bewustzijn, denken, zelfbewustizijn, willen, persoonlijke identiteit onder alle wisselingen van het stoffelijk lichaam door.*

[35] DO: *dierenziel.*

mechanical way on the basis of metabolism, or we are forced to take refuge in a unique principle that governs all matter.[36] The former explanation was attempted by materialists but, up to the present day, in vain. Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902) has already admitted this, and many younger scientists such as Eduard von Rindfleisch (1836–1908), Johannes Ranke (1836–1916), Ferdinand Julius Cohn (1828–1898), Gustav von Bunge (1844–1920), and others, therefore, adopt the idea of a special life-force.[37] In general, therefore, the soul is neither matter nor a material body but a principle, a power, by which matter that is capable of life but does not live by itself, becomes a living organism.[38] While we have no reason to conclude the reality of an independent soul from the phenomena of life[39] in plants and animals, the opposite is the case with human beings. We observe among human beings in their higher capacities of knowing and desiring[40] an activity that extends beyond the body, that bears a spiritual nature, and therefore points back to a spiritual substance. After all, if the human soul can perform an activity that is completely spiritual, then it must be a participatory entity[41] that does not depend on its union with the body.

In the first place, we consider the activity of the higher human capacity for knowing.[42] With their senses people regularly observe a specific phenomenon or object.[43] But they do not stay there. With their higher knowing capacity, they are able, from different observed phenomena and capacities, to let go of the particular while connecting to the universal,

[36] DO: *een eigen de stof beheerschend principe.*

[37] DO: *bizondere levenskracht.*

[38] DO: *levend lichaam.*

[39] DO: *levensverschijnselen.*

[40] DO: *hoogere ken- en begeervermogen.*

[41] DO: *deelachtig wezen.*

[42] DO: *werkzaamheid van het hooger kenvermogen.*

[43] DO: *bepaald verschijnsel of voorwerp.*

thus climbing from impressions to concepts.[44] People think, therefore, in universal concepts and thereby penetrate through the phenomenon to the essence of things. They move up to science, get acquainted with the universal, the idea, the logical in the world, thereby demonstrating their own logos-capacity.[45]

To know the logical in things, people must rise above the individual and the particular to become independent of physical phenomena and thus be an autonomous spirit. For precisely this is what the activity of thinking involves: it liberates sense perceptions from the material, and in order to be able to do this, it must be free from the material in its existence and activity.

Furthermore, this appears also from the fact that such thinking activity of people can be directed not only to the universal in [40] things, but also to themselves and to what is purely spiritual. Whenever people think about themselves, self-consciousness arises. And this self-consciousness very clearly demonstrates the spiritual independence of the human soul. In self-consciousness individuals make themselves, their own essence, the object of their thought. Persons then know themselves as unified,[46] know that in all the changes they experience they are identical with themselves and distinguish themselves from everything around them and with them. Persons who say "I think" distinguish themselves from their thinking and establish themselves as the subject[47] of their thinking. Such a self is the bearer and manager of his or her representations, thoughts, and desires.[48] It

[44] DO: *van voorstellingen to begrippen.*

[45] Ed. note: The neologism "logos-capacity" is our attempt to translate Bavinck's challenging clause: "*en bewijst daardoor zelf logos te zijn.*" The meaning given to the clause is in keeping with Bavinck's other statements about the *Logos* by whom the world was created and the corresponding human *logos* that has the capacity to recognize the cosmic order imparted by the *Logos*; see, e.g., *The Philosophy of Revelation*, 26–29.

[46] DO: één.

[47] DO: *principe.*

[48] DO: *voorstellingen, gedachten, begeerten.*

forms the bond, the unity, and the starting point of all a person's activities. These would not and could not exist if they were not held together by the self.

Representations, thoughts, desires, language, science, and art could not exist if the human spirit did not exist above them, did not possess them as its own, and did not form a spiritual, immanent principle from them. This is also how the human spirit can raise itself out of all the earthly and visible things to the eternal and invisible things, to the highest ideas, to God, the origin and end of all that is. To know God, who is pure spirit, we ourselves must be spirit.

Second, the higher capacity of desiring[49] is also a basis for affirming the spiritual independence of the human soul. The person has not only a lower faculty of desire[50] whereby one reaches for sensual, material things like food and drink, but also a higher faculty of desire by which one can make the invisible, spiritual things the object of one's striving. Understanding and wisdom, righteousness and holiness, the true, the good, and the beautiful in general, even God—the highest good—can be the content of human desire. But this demonstrates that in our higher capacity of desiring we rise above the visible world; that particular, temporal things are insufficient for us; that we need spiritual, invisible, eternal goods for our fulfillment; that God has laid eternity in the human heart; and that we, having been created for God, cannot rest until we have found rest in God.

Our human will, [41] which is capable of desiring all this, cannot be something bodily because then our will would reach only for what is bodily. The will must be of a spiritual nature, and it must have its origin in a spiritual soul. The fact that persons can govern themselves through their will also supports this view. An animal lacks a will and is driven by the desires of its nature. But human beings possess a power in themselves through which they can either will or not will that which they know,

[49] DO: *hooger begeervermogen.*

[50] DO: *lager begeervermogen.*

through which they can act or let themselves be determined, through which they can even restrain or suppress their desires and passions.

This human soul must be thought of now essentially as soul.[51] We take "soul" to mean the inner life-principle of an organic being, the basis of its existence[52] and its movement. Angels are spirits (Heb. 1:14). God is also a spirit (John 4:24). But people are souls. In them the spirit is organized as a soul—that is, the life-principle of a material organism. When the Scriptures tell us that "the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature," [Gen. 2:7][53] they cut off every Platonic or Cartesian dualism. The person as soul cannot be outside of the body. This applies to his essence as well and, thus, to the image of God. Spiritualism and asceticism must be rejected no less than materialism. The two substances, body and soul, do not exist isolated alongside each other; neither are they enemies of each other. From the very beginning they never had conflicting interests that, according to Rome, could be brought into harmony only by the bridle of supernatural grace. No, they are most closely related, most intimately connected, by nature and from the very first moment intended for each other and uniquely designed for each other. In a certain sense, they have flowed together to constitute a third nature, which we call human nature. Notwithstanding the two substances comprising it, in the consciousness, in the self, this human nature constitutes an unseparated, undivided, unmixed, unchanged unity.

The nature of the relationship of body and soul and of their reciprocal actions on each other is in fact completely unknown. We know nothing about it. According to Plato, the relationship of soul and body was akin to that of a captain and his ship. [42]. Aristotle conceived of it in terms

[51] Ed. note: Though this sounds like a tautology, it is exactly what Bavinck says: *Deze ziel des menschen is nu wezenlijk als ziel te denken*.

[52] DO: *verschijning*.

[53] Ed. note: The full Scripture text was included by the editor.

of form and matter; Arnold Geulincx (1624–1669) defended occasionalism;[54] Leibniz posited "preestablished harmony";[55] and Leonard Euler (1707–1783) the "system of physical influence."[56] But all these theories failed to explain the relationship, which is a fact and requires the most profound thinking possible. The soul is the form, the moving power, the foundation of the body; and the body is the matter, the material, and the possibility of soul.[57] They are as intimately united as the wax and its printed image, as the statue's marble and its figure. But for the rest, we know nothing about it. Along with everybody else, we stand here before a mystery. That and how spirit and matter can act on each other is unknown to us. The manner, said Augustine, in which the spirit clings to a body and becomes a sensual essence is wondrous and incomprehensible.

In that humans are souls, they are naturally related to plants and animals. Human beings are animals, sensual animallike beings. This was generally known long before Darwin. If human persons can be said to be like animals, it is also possible to ascribe a soul to animals and plants. Taken together, plants, animals, and humans are psychic beings, animalia. But there is distinction, of course: the soul in all three is not on the same level. The soul in a plant has only an organizational and formational power; it shapes and sustains the plant, but it has neither consciousness nor desire. In animals the soul is not only organizational but also sensitive: it perceives, has consciousness, memory, judgment, understanding to a certain

[54] Ed. note: Occasionalism is the philosophical theory that all events are directly caused by God.

[55] LO: *harmonia preastabilita.* Ed. note: Preestablished harmony can be defined thus: "[T]he appropriate nature of each substance brings it about that what happens to one corresponds to what happens to all the others, without, however, their acting upon one another directly." (*Discourse on Metaphysics*, XIV) A dropped glass shatters because it "knows" it has hit the ground, and not because the impact with the ground "compels" the glass to split" (Source: *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz").

[56] LO: *systema influxus.*

[57] DO: *het lichaam is de stof, de materie, de mogelijkheid der ziel.*

degree, urges, instinct, desire. But in humans the soul is a still higher level and ascends to reason and will. Human beings are rational animals.

The human soul is able to rise above an animal soul because it is spirit. Its origin is higher; it has a higher nature and a higher destiny. Now it is true that we know little about animals; they are walking riddles, and we cannot see them from the inside. What we know about them depends on analogy with ourselves. But we may say that the soul of animals has not developed into its own, independent being. The animal soul is something other than the material organism, for it transcends, shapes, and governs it. But the animal soul is still so bound to the material organism that it cannot [43] exist independent of the material organism.

Human beings, however, receive their spirit from God, and each person has his or her own spirit. And although the soul is inextricably oriented to the body, nevertheless, precisely because it is spirit, the human spirit can, if need be, exist without the body. The human soul does not perish at death like the soul of an animal does. The separation of soul and body is indeed unnatural and violent. For that reason, this temporary rupture must be restored in the resurrection. Nonetheless, the human soul is a unique substance, connected with but not absorbed by the body. As souls akin to animals and as spirits akin to the angels, we humans are a miniature world, and precisely as such, we are the image of God and lord of the earth.[58]

[58] Cf. Johann Heinrich Witte, *Das Wesen der Seele und die Natur der geistigen Vorgänge im Lichte der Philosophi seit Kant* (Halle and Saale: C. E. M. Pfeffer, 1888); Otto Flügel, *Die Seelenfrage mit Rücksicht auf die neueren Wandlungen gewisser naturwissenschaftlicher Begriffe*, 2nd ed. (Cöthen: Otto Schulze, 1890 [*BdP*[1], 35, n. 13]. Ed note: Hepp omitted Bavinck's Latin formulation of his point in this sentence: *compendium naturae, vinculum omnium creaturarum* ("an abbreviation of nature, the link between all creatures").

§ 5. The Faculties of the Soul[1]

The doctrine of the faculties of the soul, which first appeared in Plato and Aristotle, has met repeatedly with fierce opposition from various quarters. Nominalism believed that the faculties were merely names under which various activities of the soul were summarized but without any basis in reality. Because he posited the essence of the soul in thinking, Descartes was unable to distinguish either the faculties of the soul or its activities from the soul itself. Thanks to his pantheistic perspective, Spinoza was even less capable of accepting an essential distinction between body and soul, between the soul and its faculties, and between these faculties themselves. He concluded that understanding and willing were one and the same.[2]

Neither is there any place for a doctrine of faculties in sensualism or materialism. [44] In his *Traité des Sensations* (1754), Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1714–1780) tried to derive the whole life of the soul from sense perception.[3] Although originally a follower of Locke, he gradually came to completely deny internal perception as a second, independent source of representations and to view all psychic phenomena as transformed sensations.[4] To shed light on this, he imagines that a marble statue acquires

[1] Hepp note: It is apparent from a note here, that the author intended to add a chapter on "Soul and Body" at this point in the manuscript. However, I did not find these pages among his papers and such a chapter is absent in the first edition. In this missing chapter it appears that he would have especially dealt with psycho-physical paralleism. Because he discusses this here and there in this work, as well as in *Paedagogische Beginselen*[2], 58, and *Verzamelde Opstellen,* 180 [ET: *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society,* 171–73], his views on the subject can be known to some extent.

[2] Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics*, part 2, propositions 48 and 49 [ET: Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. George Santayana (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1941), 74–81; Edwin M. Curley, ed. and trans., *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 146–52] [*BdP*[1], 36, n. 14].

[3] DO: *heel het zieleleven uit de zinlijke waarneming af te leiden.*

[4] FrO: *sensations transformées.*

the different senses successively, beginning with smell. He then tries to demonstrate that such a statue in this way becomes a being with consciousness, perception, attention, imagination, memory, decision, desire, etc.[5] Condillac was not a materialist, since he considered it impossible for matter to think and, therefore, accepted an immaterial soul. But he asserted, nonetheless, that all the activities of the soul can be derived from one datum, i.e., sense perception.[6]

[5] Ed. note: The following summary of Condillac's use of the marble statue helps clarify Bavinck's succinct summary: "The author imagines a statue organized inwardly like a man, animated by a soul which has never received an idea, into which no sense-impression has ever penetrated. He unlocks its senses one by one, beginning with smell, as the sense that contributes least to human knowledge. At its first experience of smell, the consciousness of the statue is entirely occupied by it; and this occupancy of consciousness is attention. The statue's smell-experience will produce pleasure or pain; and pleasure and pain will thenceforward be the master-principle which, determining all the operations of its mind, will raise it by degrees to all the knowledge of which it is capable. The next stage is memory, which is the lingering impression of the smell experience upon the attention: 'memory is nothing more than a mode of feeling.' From memory springs comparison: the statue experiences the smell, say, of a rose, while remembering that of a carnation; and 'comparison is nothing more than giving one's attention to two things simultaneously.' And 'as soon as the statue has comparison it has judgment.' Comparisons and judgments become habitual, are stored in the mind and formed into series, and thus arises the powerful principle of the association of ideas. From comparison of past and present experiences in respect of their pleasure-giving quality arises desire; it is desire that determines the operation of our faculties, stimulates the memory and imagination, and gives rise to the passions. The passions, also, are nothing but sensation transformed" (Source: *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Étienne Bonnot de Condillac").

[6] Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck added the names of Heletius, De la Mettrie, and Holbach as men who expanded Condillac's sensualism into materialism, a materialism that was accepted by the new psychology. He provides as reference: Ludwig Büchner, *Kraft und Stoff*, 16e Auflage (Leipzig: T. Thomas, 1888), 300f.; ET: *Force and Matter: or, Principles of the Natural Order of the Universe. With a System of Morality Based Thereon,* transl. from 15th ed. by J. Frederick Collingwood (London: Asher, 1884), 303–10 [*BdP*[1], 36, n. 15]. However, Büchner does not mention Heletius and uses Holbach and De la Mettrie as a choice for two choice quotations: "Since man, a material being, actually thinks, matter also enjoys the power of thinking" (Holbach); "When people ask whether matter can think, it is as though they asked whether matter can strike the hours!" (De la Mettrie).

Herbart's Metaphysical Psychology

Johann Friedrich Herbart later adopted Condillac's fundamental idea in reaction to the idealism of Kant and Fichte. According to idealism, the self[7] was the only reality and everything else was to be considered as its representation.[8] Therefore idealism did not investigate things themselves or their properties,[9] but only sought to know the laws by which we become aware of objects outside us and perceive the underlying relationship between them. Herbart believed, however, that the self could not support such an edifice. After all, the idealist view of the self suffers from an inner contradiction; it cannot exist before thinking takes place. The self would be subject and object at the same time. The self would be a completely unified entity[10] and still be the source of all our representations. The self posits itself as pure self-consciousness, but this self, as pure self-consciousness, becomes conscious of its self-consciousness, and proceeds this way in an infinite regress. For all these reasons, the self cannot be the source and seat of our representations. Rather, it is the product of the internal connections[11] between these representations. The self as subject is entirely different from the self as object; it is the intersection[12] of representations and continually changes its place. For Herbart, then, representations are prior to the self and this is to be taken as the foundational idea[13] of psychology.

[7] DO: *ik.* Ed. note: In the paragraphs that follow, *ik* (I) is translated as "self."

[8] DO: *voorstelling.*

[9] DO: *eigenschappen.*

[10] DO: *eene volkomen eenheid.*

[11] DO: *onderlinge verbindingen dier voorstellingen.*

[12] DO: *kruispunt.*

[13] DO: *grondbegrip.*

[45] According to Herbart, representations are the only thing the soul produces. The soul does that because it wants to maintain its existence.[14] Herbart believed that behind and underlying the world of events and phenomena there is a plurality of real things in themselves (*Reals*) that are independent of the operations of the soul upon them. The soul is one of these many *Reals*.[15] As a unique substance, as a *Real*, the soul comes into collision with other substances, or *Reals*, and, as in the movement of atoms and molecules, they collide with one another and are disturbed by one another. These disruptions or collisions generate inner conditions within the *Reals* that have the consequence of self-preservation.[16] Representations are the soul's condition of self-preservation. Thus, representations are not images or the workings of things outside of us, but they are products of the soul's interaction with other *Reals*. The soul actively produces these representations. As soon as representations come to exist, however, the soul is nothing more than their carrier, an indifferent soil for their existence.

All other psychic phenomena, apart from representations, such as feeling, desire, will, etc., flow forth automatically from the law-ordered interaction of primitive representations.[17] In their turn, the representations in the soul themselves became *Reals* for Herbart. They collide with one another, move towards all sorts of connections, elevate or suppress each other, etc. The entire life of the soul is to be explained in terms of the reciprocal tension of the representations.[18] Thanks to this tension, the representations lose their intensity, and the soul's consciousness depends on the degree of intensity. As the representations become weaker the soul becomes less conscious. The lowest level of consciousness is the "threshold

[14] Ed. note: The remainder of this paragraph and the next include significant amplification by the translator, which we have retained for the sake of clarity; the editor has also rearranged some of Bavinck's sentences.

[15] Ed. note. For more on Herbart's notion of "Reals" see § 2, n. 21.

[16] GerO: *Selbsterhaltung.*

[17] DO: *geheel wetmatige wisselwerking der primitive voorstellingen.*

[18] DO: *wederkeerige spanning der voorstellingen.*

of consciousness."[19] When certain representations are pressed down below this threshold by others, they become obscure, unconscious representations—that is, feelings.[20]

But these representations nevertheless retain the inclination[21] to return to the consciousness and in that way turn into urges and desires, and when these are connected with the hope of again becoming a dominant representation, they transition into will. Feeling and will are thus modifications of representations, coming into being from their mutual relationships. All these relationships occur according to fixed laws and must thus be developed as "statics and mechanics of representations."[22] Psychology becomes a mathematical theory of "representation mechanics."[23] Naturally, there is no room here for the doctrine of the faculties. They are nothing but classification concepts without content.[24]

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[19] GerO: *Bewustseinsschwelle.*

[20] GerO: *Gefühle.*

[21] DO: *neiging.*

[22] GerO: *Statik und Mechanik der Vorstellungen.*

[23] DO: *voorstellings-mechanisme.*

[24] Johann Friedrich Herbart, *Lehrbuch zur Psychologie*, 3rd ed., Gustav Hartenstein, ed. (Leipzig: Leopold Vos, 1850), passim, esp. 8f., 15f., 38f.; Johann Friedrich Herbart, "Psychologie als Wissenschaft," in *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 5, ed. Karl Kehrbach (Lagensalza: Hermann Beyer, 1890), 237f. and *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 6, ed. Karl Kehrbach (Lagensalza: Hermann Beyer, 1892), 53f.; Johann Friedrich Herbart, *Lehrbuch zur Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 5th ed. Gustav Hartenstein, ed. (Hamburg and Leipzig: Leopold Voss, 1883), § 124 ("Idealismus"), §§ 156–64 ("Encyklopädische Uebersicht der Psychologie und Naturphilosophie"). Herbart built his pedagogy on the mechanical necessity of the way we form representations in which the activities of the will proceed automatically from the will itself. It stands or falls, therefore, with his psychology [*BdP*[1], 38, n. 16]. Ed. note: We have preserved Bavinck's original footnotes above to indicate the edition he was using, including the indefinite pagination. However, for his reference to Herbart's *Sämmtliche Werke*, we would point out that a new section, "Psychology as Science, Newly Grounded in Experience, Metaphysics and Mathematics: First, Synthetic Part" [*Psychologie als Wissenschaft, neu gegründet auf Erfahrungm Metaphysik und Mathematik: Erster, synthetischer Theil*], begins on p. 191 of the first edition, ed. Gustav Hartenstein (1886), and continues to the end of the volume (p. 514). The entire sixth volume (1888) continues this section in its "Second Analytical Part" (*Zweiter, analytischer Theil*].

In many respects Herbart was entirely correct in his opposition to the idealism of his day. It is absolutely true that the self, self-consciousness, historically and temporally is not original in the soul but develops slowly and is definitely an [46] activity of the understanding. There is a great deal in the soul that precedes self-consciousness, and so the self cannot be the source and seat of all psychic phenomena, much less of the non-self. Furthermore, in his critique of the soul's faculties, Herbart was also correct in his objection to the unnecessary multiplication of capabilities[25] and the belief that the notion of faculty explained everything. It is true that the notion of faculty explains nothing as long as the laws according to which it functions are still unknown. A faculty merely indicates in the first place that we are unable to reduce one group of psychic phenomena to another one.

Although some of Herbart's criticisms are useful, his psychology is unsatisfactory for several reasons.

1. He himself does not escape the idealism he is attacking. The Eleatic unchangeability of the Reals, taught by Herbart, in no way explains how they can exist objectively and really within relationships.[26] Space, time, and categories are products of a representation mechanism and thus merely apparent.[27] The mutual relations of the Reals are not essentially unique, and appear to exist only in the consciousness.
2. Herbart seeks to explain representations from the coexistence of the Reals, from reaction to disturbances. But this is very strange. Surely the objects outside of us have an impact on the soul through the senses and awaken the soul. Yet, the soul is not purely passive in connection with this. From its side as well, the soul contributes to that impact. And the soul produces those representations not

[25] DO: *noodeloze vermeerdering der vermogens.*

[26] DO: *werkelijk.*

[27] DO: *phaenoumenal.*

in reaction to disturbances, in order to remain in existence, but it enriches itself with them and through them knows the external world. Representations are indeed not arbitrary products of the soul but correspond to a reality. Herbart's choice of the word "representation"[28] was a poor one. Representations are hardly the first thing, or the one and only thing, in the conscious life of the soul. There are also perceptions, impressions, realizations, intuitions, instincts, etc.[29] A representation is actually only the name for the product of a perception or a recollection and cannot include all the activities of consciousness.

3. Herbart has the entire life of the soul emerging from the mechanism of those representations. But what, then, are these representations? [47] Herbart introduces them as powers that as a matter of course enter into all kinds of relationships with each other. However, this is a very mythological way of speaking and, when it is actually explained, it makes no sense. For, according to Herbart himself, the representations are products of the soul. The soul produces them through its own activity, even though the soul is awakened by the impact of external objects. Would the soul then lose all power over a representation as soon as it has been produced? Do representations suddenly become substances equipped with powers of attraction and repulsion? Already in itself, this is absurd.[30]

   But there is more. We can neither know nor be conscious of such a conflict between representations, one waged on behalf of the soul's consciousness. What wages conflict within us are inclinations, desires, urges, etc., and these are not fighting on behalf of the soul's consciousness but fighting against each other for dominance.

[28] DO: *voorstelling.*

[29] DO: *gewaarwordingen, indrukken, besseffen, intuïties, instincten.*

[30] DO: *Reeds op zichzelve is dit ongerijmd.*

It is true, of course, that the representations arise in us frequently, become connected with each other, recur in our consciousness, etc., without our knowing or willing. But that does not in the least demonstrate that the soul is not the subject of these representations, their connections and separations. The representations are definitely not always dependent on willing and thinking. No one is arguing that they are. Thinking and willing are but moments in the conscious life of the soul. But representations still depend on the soul, on various other movements, activities, concerns, and needs of the soul. It is the soul that, consciously or unconsciously, with or without its will, produces and reproduces, connects or separates the representations. An act or activity of the soul always lies at the foundation. And with this psychic mechanism, the calculations and mathematics Herbart applies to psychic life also fall by the wayside. The use of mathematics in psychology runs aground on the impossibility of measuring exactly one representation by another. In general we are able to say that one representation is stronger or weaker than another, but the difference cannot be calculated and expressed numerically.

4. Finally, Herbart was unable to derive feeling, desire, and will from representations. In a certain sense, one can agree with Kant, Comte, and Herbart that all activities of the soul are phenomena of consciousness.[31] For [48] nothing of the soul can be known except insofar as it has become conscious to us; what is completely unconscious cannot be known. Put this way, however, this proposition is true. However, Herbart intended it in quite a different sense. He meant to say that feelings, desires, and will are essentially identical with the phenomena of consciousness, that is to say, representations. Feeling, desire, and will are, therefore, only modifications of the phenomena of consciousness. And in this

[31] DO: *bewustzijnverschijnselen.*

> sense, the proposition is very definitely incorrect. It is true that while feelings, desires, and will do not exist without some weak consciousness and are always connected to representations, they themselves are not representations. They possess an independent power and ability that accompany the representations and cannot be explained by them. Feeling is an affect of liking and disliking;[32] desire and will[33] involve striving for an intended good. Just as in representations an imaginative power of the soul is manifested,[34] so another new power of the soul appears to us in feeling, desire, and will, which makes us know the soul from yet another angle and demonstrates that behind the appearance a being is hidden.[35]

Herbart's psychology makes it clear that we cannot dispense with the notion of the faculties of the soul.[36] And yet currently that notion has generally acquired a bad smell. People spot a splash of metaphysics in this notion, which must be exterminated as quickly and completely as possible, because the only genuine, scientific psychology is empirical psychology, the kind that must restrict itself to the description of phenomena.

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[32] DO: *lust of onlust.*

[33] DO: *begeerte en wil.*

[34] DO: *voorstellende kracht der ziel.*

[35] DO: *er achter de verschijning een wezen verborgen is.* Hermann Ulrici, *Gott und der Mensch, 1: Leib und Seele: Grundzüge einer Psychologie des Menschen,* vol. 2, *Zweiter, Psychologischer Theil* (Leipzig: Weigel, 1874), 206–69; Friedrich Albert Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*, ed. Hermann Cohen (Iserlohn: J. Baedeker, 1882), 681–85; Wilhelm Ostermann, *Die hauptsächlichsten Irrtümer der Herbartschen Psychologie und ihre pädagogischen Konsequenzen: eine kritische Untersuchung* (Oldenburg: Schulz, 1887); Hermann Günther, *Betrachtungen über die ersten Sätze der herbartschen Psychologie* (Leipzig: Grieben, 1889); Ernst Hartenstein, *Zur Kritik der psychologischen Grundbegriffe Herbarts* (Rostock: C. Boldt, 1892) [*BdP*[1], 41, n. 17].

[36] Christoph von Sigwart, *Logik,* vol. 2, *Die Methodenlehre* (Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1893), 206; Hermann Lotze, *Mikrokosmus*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Hierzel, 1884), 198f. ET: Hermann Lotze, *Microcosmus: An Essay Concerning Man and His Relation to the World*, trans. Elizabeth Hamilton and E. E. Constance Jones, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885), 177–81; Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, 128–39 [*BdP*[1], 41, n. 18].

Associationist Psychology

We have already discussed and evaluated this school of psychology,[37] and at that time it was shown that a purely descriptive psychology is impossible. Even if it were possible—which it is not—science is never a matter of merely observing phenomena but always also one of explaining them. In spite of itself, descriptive psychology must thus take refuge in hypotheses about the essence of psychic phenomena. If it refuses to acknowledge a substantial soul,[38] it must explain the phenomena of consciousness either materialistically or pantheistically. In the former, psychic phenomena are seen as the product of metabolism; in the latter as the phenomenal form of a substance that lies behind physical and psychic phenomena, elevated above matter and spirit and uniting both within itself.

Nevertheless, [49] empirical, descriptive psychology believes for the moment that it can escape these consequences and can fulfill its scientific task by means of what is called *associational psychology.* If the psychic phenomena have their cause neither in any psychic substance nor in physical movement, then there is nothing left but the notion that together psychic phenomena form an unbroken series in which the foregoing automatically and mechanically brings along what follows.

Although this associationist psychology is currently being celebrated by many psychologists, such as John Stuart Mill, Alexander Bain, Herbert Spencer, Johann Friedrich Herbart, Theodor Ziehen, and Hugo Münsterberg, it is nevertheless nothing more than a temporary stopgap measure.[39] Consider the following:

1. Associationist psychology is always a consciousness-psychology that identifies the soul with consciousness and wants to limit itself to ascertaining and describing the conditions of consciousness.

[37] DO: *richting.* Ed. note: See § 2.

[38] DO: *zielssubstantie.*

[39] DO: *tijdelijke noodsprong.*

But then all the weighty objections that were previously brought against consciousness-psychology return against associationist psychology. A pure psychology of consciousness[40] is impossible because perception already involves all manner of metaphysical ideas and presuppositions. Nor can science, by its very nature, ever be satisfied with a description of events. It must always search for an explanation because the relationship, the connection, the law that governs events can never be empirically perceived. It can only be found by thinking.

2. Associationist psychology, therefore, cannot restrict itself to ascertaining and describing phenomena. However, when it goes further, it immediately denies its own starting point[41] because physical events are numerous and never stop changing. Answer has to be provided for the question to what we must attribute this process of continuous change and how these psychic phenomena are related to each other. If the answer of associationist psychology points to motion in the brain, it retreats into the very materialism it wants to avoid. If it points to the unconscious, it ends up in pantheism and betrays its own foundation in which the soul coincides with consciousness.[42] And if it accepts the idea of a psychic substance, it accepts with flying colors the same metaphysics it had jettisoned earlier. [50]
3. Ordinarily, associationist psychology states that the changes and successions of representations can be explained from the training pathways and communication channels gradually formed by the physical movements of brain cells. Through frequent repetition the movement of one series of cells gradually becomes constantly followed by the movement of another series. Thus it happens that

[40] DO: *bewustzijnpsychologie.*

[41] DO: *uitgangspunt.*

[42] DO: *dat de ziel met het bewustzin samenvalt.*

specific representations gradually connect with continually different ones. The one representation then drags the other along with it because the movement of the brain cells with which they are paired has already been formed, perhaps for years or, in humanity, for centuries, so as to travel along a specific path.

But there are a number of reasons why this depiction does not deserve the designation of an explanation. First, it follows from this that, according to associationist psychology, psychic phenomena are *not* mutually related but merely exist independently next to each other in a completely contingent manner. Their cause and mutual relation are purely materialistic, found simply in the physical motion of brain cells that form their basis.

Second, at most such a theory would count as an explanation for sensual representations that originate only under specific physical conditions. But we also have purely spiritual representations for which such nerve pathways are completely undemonstrable, that follow one another entirely arbitrarily, and whose unique nature and connection prompted Professor Wundt to posit the hypothesis of an extraordinary power, which he called apperception.

In addition, the succession of psychic phenomena is governed by laws completely different from those that govern physiological processes. The same representation, then, could produce an opposite result in different persons or in one person at different times.

4. Associationist psychology, therefore, frequently provides yet another explanation for the connection of psychic phenomena: the laws of association. Now in general, it is true that among similar, opposite, simultaneous, and successive representations, the one often accompanies the other.

However, the first comment is that, while such laws describe the manner by which one representation elicits another, [51] they indicate nothing whatsoever about their causes.

Second, these laws are unsuitable for explanation precisely from the standpoint of associationist psychology. For the representations are not substances, not unchangeable objects that, like atoms or bodies, attract or repel each other, but they are representations, activities, and events that presuppose a subject (i.e., an individual). When, according to the argument of this associationist psychology, such a subject is lacking, there is no causal connection whatsoever between the representations, activities, and events of this subject and those of another, even though they look the same or earlier frequently appeared simultaneously.

Finally, everyone immediately recognizes that the laws of association apply at most to some but definitely not to all our representations. From two valid premises a certain conclusion follows with logical necessity. Suppose that an individual person or even all humanity over time formed such a syllogism, that this syllogism became a custom, and that inherited association of three judgments always remained coincidental and could have been different under different circumstances; then there is no explanation for the necessary, logical connection that exists between the premises and the conclusion.

5. Finally, it is a valid objection against associationist psychology that it turns conscious life into a great illusion. There is no subject that carries the representations and connects the contents of consciousness. The unity of our consciousness, of our personality, of our selfhood is a dream. The human person is completely passive. Consciousness is nothing more than a stage on which representations connect with one another or separate from one another. Those representations arise within a person and one comes after the other without the person being able to do anything about it. Those representations are the one and only thing in the consciousness. Feeling, desire, and will are nothing more than alterations of them. The will is not a special psychological phenomenon, but a complex

> of representations, and therefore once again an idea without reality. Behind the entirety of consciousness lies nothing—no essence, no substance, no power. A human being is physically and psychically a robot, a mechanism without freedom or responsibility.

It is easy to understand that with this standpoint there is no place [52] for any notion of faculties. However, it also shows clearly that the conflict about the soul's faculties is not trivial but is connected to deeper foundations.[43] In the end, it is related to the pantheistic or materialistic philosophy, which erases the kinds [classes], and in so doing directly opposes theism. They therefore not only deny the distinction between the faculties of knowing and willing, but also between the soul and its faculties, between soul and body, and between spirit and matter. The soul is completely absorbed within its own phenomena. Behind these phenomena there is no substance that bears them and produces them. Should such a simple substance be adopted as carrier, as with Herbart, then it is still completely unknown to us. We know nothing about it, and it is not manifested to us in the representations. Once given the simple representations, they produce these psychic activities with such necessity that there is no longer any need for the notion of a soul to explain them. Of course this raises the question whether we can dispense with the notion of the soul altogether, whether the carrier of psychic phenomena is something different from the material substratum of the brain. But even if that question remains, then for us the soul is in fact nothing more and nothing other than a complex of consciousness-phenomena.[44] That is what it amounts to. It is, as Descartes already said, pure thinking.[45]

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[43] DO/LO: *dieper liggende principia.*

[44] DO: *complex van bewustzijnsverschijnselen.*

[45] René Descartes, *Principia Philosophiae* (Amsterdam: Lodewijk Elzevier, 1664), I § 53 (p. 20); ET: René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, trans. Valentine Miller (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1982), 23–24 [*BdP*[1], 43, n. 20]. Ed. note: Hepp reordered the material in this section of the chapter; thus the material originally referenced by note 19 in *Beginselen der Psychologie*[1] follows, in the reordered *Beginselen der Psychologie*[2], the

By contrast, whoever, on the basis of the uniqueness of psychic phenomena accepts a soul as substance not only can have no objection to the notion of the soul's faculties but must make room for them in their psychology in some form or other, even if they eschew the word. For then the claim cannot be contradicted, and experience supports the claim that the soul is not absorbed within the psychic phenomena, nor does it coincide with them.

Thinking and willing are characteristics and activities of the soul, but they themselves are not the soul. In God there are no faculties; all his attributes are his essence. There is in him no distinction between potentiality and actualization.[46] He neither slumbers nor sleeps; he never grows tired or weary. He is pure being without becoming: "I am who I am" (Exod. 3:14). But when it comes to creatures, all that is different. They *become* rather than simply *are*; they continually change and [53] are subject to space and time. Therefore, with creatures there is a transition from rest to activity, from aptitude to development, from ability to deed.[47] If the soul were essentially thinking, then it would have to be thinking all the time, and the alternation from unconscious to conscious life would remain unexplained. The idea of the faculties puts us in a position to explain in a satisfactory way this rich and manifold alternation in the life of the soul. And because every psychology must finally account for these changes, it is possible to challenge the notion of the faculties, but people reintroduce them later in one form or another, overtly or covertly.

The crucial thing is to state clearly what is to be understood by a faculty of the soul. Undoubtedly, the idea assumes that the soul is a unique substance, an active power, but beyond that it is not a metaphysical oddity.

material originally referenced by notes 20 and 21. Accordingly, the reference [*BdP*[1], 42, n. 19] in the present translation follows after [*BdP*[1], 43, n. 20] and [*BdP*[1], 44, n. 21], as seen in note 52 below.

[46] LO: *potentia*, *actus*. See my *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:118–31 [*BdP*[1], 44, n. 21].

[47] DO: *van aanleg tot onwikkeling, van vermogen tot daad.*

Rather, it is a faculty, a potency, a virtue,[48] to whose acceptance the accurate investigation of psychic phenomena compels us. For by this notion we need understand nothing other than the soul's naturally bestowed characteristic aptitude[49] for psychic activity. It is always the same soul that functions in the various activities more or less consciously and actively; the soul is always the foundation from which these activities proceed.[50] But the soul exercises those various activities by means of various powers. This is evident from the fact that, and must for that reason be accepted, psychic activities fall into various groups or kinds, of which the one cannot be reduced to the other.

In principle, the notion of faculties is universally accepted. Even when one believes that feeling, desire, and will are merely modifications of representations, a faculty of representation[51] still comes to be attributed to the soul at its origin. One could even say that, by viewing representations as powers, Herbart, in fact, changed them into faculties. The fundamental difference, then, involves not so much the nature of the faculties but their number. And at this point, Herbart's criticism is completely correct when he says that the faculties may not be multiplied needlessly. There are only so many faculties to be accepted, just as there are different kinds of psychic activities that cannot be reduced to each other and therefore assume a unique power of the soul. Faculties of the soul, whether two [54] or three or more, indicate that the soul performs different *kinds* of activities and thus possesses distinct powers.[52]

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[48] LO: *facultas, potentia, virtus.*

[49] DO: *niets anders te verstaan dan eene der ziel van nature eigen geschiktheid to eene psychische werkzaamheid.*

[50] LO: *principium a quo.*

[51] DO: *een voorstellend vermogen.*

[52] Thomas Aquinas described faculties as "the proximate principle of the soul's operation" (*proximum principium operationis animae*); Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I[a] q. 78 a. 4 co.; Caietanus Sanseverino, *Philosophia Christiana cum Antiqua et Nova Comparata*, vol. 5 (Naples: Officiina Bibliothecae Catholicae Scriptorum, 1878), 31f. [*BdP*[1], 42, n.

In this manner the soul actualizes what is present in the soul as a seed. This notion of the soul's faculties is of greatest significance for nurture. Precisely because the soul comes equipped with various faculties, it can be nurtured and guided. Through nurture, enduring habits (skills, aptitudes, inclinations, habits)[53] that lead to specific actions are imprinted on the faculties (potencies[54]). It is precisely these capacities that, corrupted by sin, are renewed in regeneration and to which Christian nurture connects.

19]. Ed. note: As mentioned in note 45 above, in Hepp's rearrangement of Bavinck's material, notes 20 and 21 precede note 19 in the text.

[53] DO/LO: *duurzame hebbelijkheden (vaardigheden, geschiktheden, geneigdheden, habitus.*

[54] LO: *potentiae.*

§ 6. The Organization of the Faculties[1]

Historical Review

There have always been significant differences regarding the organization of the soul's faculties, even among those who agree about their actuality, nature and number.

Greek psychology was essentially intellectualistic. Because it did not clearly recognize the distinction between the natural law and the moral law, between what "must" be and what "ought" to be, Greek psychology left the will in the background and regarded reason as the essence of the soul. The will receded behind knowing and necessarily followed the understanding within which it is absorbed. Knowledge is virtue; no one is voluntarily evil. Even though Plato and Aristotle undertook a deeper investigation into the essence of the will and the character of its freedom, Greek philosophy did not escape the intellectualism that was original to it. Even with Aristotle, freedom was more a characteristic of the understanding than of the will. The will was not given its own independent value. Dianoetic virtues[2] are elevated far above ethical virtues. [55] In God there is only pure thinking, without desire or will.

Under the influence of Christianity, a change in this view had to occur. In the first place, Scripture taught that God had a will whereby he created

[1] Hepp note: This chapter replaces two chapters in the first edition: "The doctrine/idea of the faculty of feeling" (*De leer van het gevoelvermogen*) and "Criticism of this doctrine/idea" (*Kritiek dezer leer*). In his first revision, Bavinck gave this chapter (§) the title: "The number of faculties and the primary faculty" (*Het aantaal vermogens en primaat der vermogens*). Ed. note: We have chosen to translate *orde* in the title of this chapter as "organization" to capture the sense of hierarchical priority that was intended by Bavinck. We will be using "organization" and "order" as synonyms in the text of this chapter.

[2] Ed. note: "Dianoetic" is derived from two Greek words, *dia* + *noein* (= "to think through) and refers to discursive thinking (via argument) rather than by intuition.

all things, upheld them, and governed them. And, second, the origin of sin was found in the will of human beings, which therefore had to be free. Nonetheless, the human will also required grace in order to be liberated from the service of sin. Hence, the freedom of the will and its relation to grace became one of the most important problems in Christian theology. Psychology, however, was relatively uninfluenced by this discussion. Practically, there naturally was no difference in the appreciation of the faculties of the soul. Just as elsewhere among other people, so too among Christians, there were always various rationalist, mystical, and moralistic tendencies with their gradations.

Especially through and after Augustine (354–430), an important psychological difference arose about the superiority of the understanding or the will. Some, such as Thomas Aquinas (1224/25–1274), accorded the highest place to understanding and let the will be determined by it. Others, by contrast, like John Duns Scotus (1266–1308), emphasized that the will also exercised many kinds of influences on the understanding and that he himself, even though he was illumined by the understanding, was nonetheless not directed by the motives of the understanding but, finally, entirely from and through himself.[3] But, no matter how important this difference, it had no significance for the organization of the faculties. For both sides recognized understanding and will as distinct faculties; the understanding could not be explained on the basis of the will, nor the will on the basis of the understanding. It is therefore incorrect to present Augustine, Duns Scotus, and others, as proponents of the primacy of the will. Duns Scotus wholeheartedly[4] acknowledged that the understanding preceded the will, that apart from the understanding the will is impossible, and that the will receives the objects of its choosing from the understanding. For that reason, notwithstanding these differences, psychology continued to maintain the form described above until the newer philosophy modfied it.

[3] DO*: geheel en al uit en door zichzelf bepaald werd.*

[4] DO: *volmondig.*

Like Plato, Descartes sought the essence of the soul [56] in thinking and located thinking in the human head. The soul, residing in the breast and belly, was completely separated from this essence and was the foundation[5] of vegetative and sensitive life. Descartes explained this animal life in mechanical and involuntary terms. The English and French psychology of the eighteenth century sought to derive the full life of the soul from sensory perceptions.[6] Rationalism passed beyond Leibniz and Christian Wolff to the German Enlightenment. According to Immanuel Kant, the Enlightenment was the "emergence of humanity from its self-inflicted immaturity."[7] Up to that point, human beings had been immature; theyhad always been led by others and never had the courage to look with their own eyes. But this was different in the eighteenth century. Even though we don't yet live in an enlightened age, said Kant, we still live in an age of the Enlightenment.[8] The eyes are opening.[9] People are beginning to make judgments for themselves and use their own healthy understanding. According to the Enlightenment, the understanding was thus the essence of humanity, and its inner striving was nothing other than bringing to mastery over all things the person as an individual and rational being. The Enlightenment placed the person in the foreground. The person must

[5] DO: *beginsel.*

[6] DO: *zinlijke gewaarwording.*

[7] GerO: *Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündgkeit.* Ed. note: This is the opening line in Kant's essay, "What Is Enlightenment?" The full opening paragraph reads: "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the inability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance. *Dare to know!* (*Sapere aude*!) 'Have the courage to use your own understanding,' is therefore the motto of the Enlightenment." The translation by Mary C. Smith is available online at http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html

[8] GerO: [not yet in] *einem aufgeklärten Zeitalter* . . . [but in a] *Zeitalter der Aufklärung.*

[9] Ed. note: The 1923 edition has a typographical error. The Dutch sentence reads: "De oogen gaan oogen" (literally, "the eyes are going to eye"). The first edition has: "De oogen gaan open" [*BdP*[2], 56; *BdP*[1], 48].

be lord of all things because persons know things theoretically and employ them practically for their own benefit. Prior to the Enlightenment human beings had been formed into Christians, but the time had come for making Christians once again into men. Humanness and cultural development[10] became the slogans. These persons were thought of as individuals, each loosely standing on their own, completely independent of others; they themselves perceiving and judging all things; setting aside all so-called prejudices; free from meaning, spirit, and thought; by nature good and corrupted only by the environment. Human connection with others arises not from organic relations but through voluntary contracts, through artificial and self-made bonds. Thus, friendship ranked far higher than marriage.

Furthermore, the Enlightenment regarded human beings essentially as *understanding* beings. The whole vegetative and sensitive life did not belong to the soul, to the human essence, but was of a lower order. Everything that arose from this order was distrusted. Feeling, concepts, intuition, imagination, heart, emotion, and passion were all suppressed and, if possible, banned. They were all unworthy of human persons [57] and beneath their dignity. The spontaneous and immediate, the original and the creative, the mystical and the contemplative were instinctively hated by the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment did harm to the reasonable and healthy understanding and clouded it. Clarity, soberness, and general comprehensibility were the measures of truth. And everything was to be judged by this measuring rod. Human beings as individual, rational beings had to gain mastery over all things in the church, the state, society, family, art, and science. The same standard was applied everywhere. Everything had to be constructed and mechanically put together. There was a fixed model for everything. Life was wedged into forms, repressing and deadening it. It was a time of conventions and mannerliness, of artificial and

[10] GerO: *Humaniteit, Bildung.*

arbitrary taste, of rationalism and moralism, of art without nature, of form without content, of learning without life.[11]

Naturally a reaction was bound to come, and it began with Jean- Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778). When the Académie de Dijon in 1750 sponsored an essay competition on the question "whether the reestablishment of the sciences and the arts contributed to purifying morals,"[12] Rousseau wrote his *Discours sur les arts et les sciences*, which was completely contrary to the spirit of the age. He argued that while the arts and sciences did develop human beings intellectually, they did not improve them morally. Civilization teaches no virtue; it teaches everyone only to disguise sin in exquisite forms. Everywhere—in Egypt, Greece, Rome—culture has undermined morality. According to Rousseau, true virtue is found only with uncivilized nature people.[13] And therefore, improvement of morals requires a return to nature. "Let us return to nature!"[14] The conventionality[15] of life was emptied of all content and turned into fanaticism with the natural. "Sensitive man" took center stage,[16] and sentimentality reigned. People idolized natural life and believed in providence and immortality. Fashionable men dressed à la Benjamin Franklin in crude costumes and walked on thick soles aided by knotted walking canes. Women dressed à la Jean-Jacques Rousseau with sentimental bonnets, and, in order to have whiter complexions, they drank buttermilk and had themselves bled. There was no end to tears and embraces;[17] [58] every incident was profoundly

[11] Johann Eduard Erdmann, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie,* 3rd ed., vol. 2 (Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1878), 237–60; Richard Falckenberg, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (Leipzig: Veit, 1886), 182–98, 225–38 [*BdP*[1], 49, n. 26].

[12] FrO: *si le rétablissement des sciences et des arts a contribué à* épurer *les moeurs.*

[13] DO: *onbeschaafde natuurvolken.*

[14] FrO: *Retournons à la nature!*

[15] DO: *vormelijkheid.*

[16] FrO: *l'homme sensible.*

[17] DO: *tranen en omhelzingen.*

moving and people wept with soft tenderness.[18] Rousseau's "Profession of faith of the Savoyard Vicar" proclaimed this gospel of feeling.[19] Rousseau's final argument for God, virtue, and immortality was his feeling. I feel that God exists; I feel that there is good and evil; I feel that my soul is immortal. What is of nature is good. Society, social life, civilization are the sources of all evil. Feeling precedes everything.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, this philosophy of feeling spread from France across all Europe and came to dominate every terrain; the entire second half of the eighteenth century lay at Rousseau's feet. He was its hero, its ideal, and its spiritual father. This philosphy of feeling helped Immanuel Kant overturn rationalism in his *Critique of Pure Reason* and return to practical reason. Jacobi sought to be a pagan in his understanding and a Christian in his heart.[20] Others—Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788), Claudius,[21] and Lavater[22]—sought in the original and immediate life a point of contact with Christianity. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) made feelings the touchstone of religion. Romanticism broke with the rules of classicism and sought to generate art out of innate genius. Deism turned into pantheism, and the eighteenth century moved into the nineteenth.[23]

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[18] DO: *weeke gevoeligheid*.

[19] Ed. note: "The Profession of the Faith of the Savoyard Vicar" is a section in book IV of Rousseau's Émile, *or On Education,* published in 1762.

[20] Ed. note: Bavinck provides no identification here beyond the surname. The most likely candidate is Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819), a German philosopher who was critical of Enlightement thought, particularly the emphasis on speculative reason in the thought of Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, and Schelling.

[21] Ed. note: Bavinck provides no identification here beyond the name Claudius. The most likely condidate is the German poet and journalist Matthias Claudius (1740–1815).

[22] Ed. note: Bavinck provides no identification here beyond the surname. The most likely candidate is Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741–1801), a Swiss poet, writer, philosopher, physiognomist, and theologian.

[23] D. P. D. Fabius, *De Fransche revolutie* (Amsterdam: J. H. Kruyt, 1881), 59–61 [*BdP*[1], 51, n. 27].

A Third Faculty?

The notion of the faculty of feeling[24] arose first during this period of sentimentality. After others had begun to place more emphasis on feeling, especially in regard to religion, morality, and art, Johannes Nikolaus Tetens (1736–1807) was the first to coordinate feelings with understanding and will, whereby he became the father of the trichotomous view of the faculties of the soul.[25] However, it is unlikely that this portrait would have had a following if Kant had not adopted this division in his *Critique of Judgment* (1790) and in the first part of his *Anthropology from a Practical Point of View* (1798).[26] Since that time, although challenged by Wilhelm Traugott Krug (1770–1842)[27] and others, the three faculties have become established dogma in psychology. Even those who reject the idea of faculties usually discuss the conditions of consciousness in the three groupings of understanding, feeling, [59] and will. But there was a wide diversity of opinion concering the essence of this feeling.[28] The nature and content of feeling, its place, its connection to the faculties of knowing and willing were all construed in very different ways. The concept of feeling is one of the most difficult problems in psychology.[29]

When Hegel rejected this notion of feeling and restored thinking as the origin and essence of all being, he was followed by Schelling (1775– 1854),

[24] DO: *gevoelvermogen.*

[25] In his major work, *Philosophische Versuche über die menschliche Natur und ihre Entwickelung* (1777) [*Philosophical Investigations concerning Human Nature and Its Development*].

[26] Ed. note: ET: Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).

[27] Ed. note: Bavinck does not identify a specific work but does provide the date 1823; he undoubtedly had in mind Krug's *Grundlage zu einer neuen Theorie der Gefühle und des sogenannten Gefühlesvermogens: ein anthropologischer Versuch* (Königsberg: Unzer, 1823).

[28] DO: *het wezen van dit gevoel.*

[29] Volkmar, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie,* vol. 2, 304f [*BdP*[1], 51, n. 28].

who initiated yet a third philosophical movement[30] that posited the will as the core and force[31] of all things. According to Schelling, being cannot be explained by thought because thinking comes after being; it is not a power that produces, but a light that shines on what already exists. That is why, in the final analysis, there is no substance other than willing. It is out of that willing, as an original and eternal power, that both the personhood of God as well as the existence of all things come forth. Willing, rather than thinking or feeling, is the basic force[32] of all that is created.

Thus, in the first half of the nineteenth century, three philosophical tendencies or directions[33] existed next to each other. In turn, they considered the origin and essence of things to be found, respectively, first in understanding, then in feeling, and finally in will. Psychologies that arose later in the nineteenth century and sought scientific explanations of psychic phenomena, either consciously or unconsciously, attached themselves to one of these three directions. Whether or not a psychology retains or rejects the doctrine of faculties and then does not categorically reject metaphysics, it can never set aside the task of investigating the connection between psychic phenomena and tracing them back to their basic components. In this way a psychology must always face the question from where a psychic process originates, from which of the soul's components it proceeds, and how the other phenomena arise from it. This is especially true for the new psychology because it rejects the substantiality of the soul and the notion of faculties. In that case, the newer psychology is unable to derive psychic phenomena from either the essence of the soul or the several powers of the soul. But psychology must view and conceive psychic phenomena as modifications of one original component. To achieve this,

[30] DO: *richting*.

[31] DO: *force*.

[32] DO: *grondkracht*.

[33] DO: *richtingen*.

psychologists can consider only ideas, feelings, or the will. On this point psychologies [60] always have an intellectualist, a mystical, or a voluntarist character.

A. Intellectualist Psychology[34]

The *intellectualist* approach,[35] taken by Herbart, explains all psychic activities[36] in terms of the representations.[37] Following Herbart, the entire so-called *consciousness-psychology* identified the soul with the phenomena of consciousness.[38] There was, therefore, no room for any powers other than representations. Our previous discussion and critique of Herbart is adequate for now, but it may be added here that even if perception or representations were the original psychic elements, their origin would still need to be explained. It was for this purpose that Herbart retained a notion of a soul, but consciousness-psychology wanted nothing to do with a soul. From its perspective, therefore, it is completely impossible to explain how a representation arises, to what it owes its origin, how it comes into existence. After all, a representation cannot float in the air and hover without any connection to anything above the level of consciousness. A representation is inherent rather than subsistent, and it presupposes a subject who possesses it. If consciousness-psychology rejects this, it can do nothing except declare that the representation is a positive given and either despair of finding an explanation or materialistically derive psychic phenomena

[34] Ed. note: This subhead is not original to Bavinck but was added by the translator to assist the reader in sorting out the main lines of Bavinck's argument. Setting it apart from the other subheads by giving it a letter and setting it flush left it is the work of the editor. There are so many "first, second, third, etc." lists in this chapter that it is important to keep the main divisions before us. The two additional main divisions that follow are: "B. Psychology of Feeling" and "C. Voluntarist Psychology." The addition of headings and subheads to aid the reader is explained in the editor's preface, n. 8 on p. xii above.

[35] DO: *richting.*

[36] DO: *werkzaamheden.*

[37] DO: *voorstelling.*

[38] DO: *bewustzijnverschijnselen.*

from physical ones. In that case it would be unfaithful to its own basic principle. Then, just as the origin of representations is unexplained, the origin of other psychic elements, such as feeling and desire, also remains unexplained, because if they are only modifications or relations of representations, they take on the actual character of the representation. In this case, reality dissolves into fantasy.[39] The testimony of our consciousness assures us that feeling, desire, and will are no less real than representations.

B. Psychology of Feeling

Others seek the origin of psychic life in feeling and regard this as the first and original component[40] of the soul. However, the number of psychologists who adopt this view is not large; a far greater number consider feeling as something independent alongside representations and desires and, therefore, accept a particular faculty for it. But feeling qualifies for neither of these two approaches. Feeling is the origin neither of a part of psychic phenomena nor of the whole. [61] A significant formal objection is that feeling itself bears a vague, unspecific character, which suggests that it needs clarification itself rather than being in position to serve as an explanation for other psychic phenomena. The conceptions that are brought forth from feeling are quite varied and wander all over the place.[41]

Kant and his school placed feeling in close relation to the lower faculties of knowing and desiring but assigned them an independent status as the feeling of pleasure and the feeling of displeasure.[42] According to

[39] DO: *en lost de werkelijkheid in phantasieën op.*

[40] DO: *element.*

[41] August Friedrich Christian Vilmar, *Geschichte der Deutschen National-Literatur* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1881), 401 [*BdP*[1], 53, n. 29]. Ed. note: Hepp recast Bavinck's treatment of nineteenth-century romanticism, which Bavinck called "a period of sentimentality." Hepp also omitted Bavinck's description of the practical outworking of this emphasis on feeling: "it expresses itself in tears, homesickness [*heimwee*] for death, despair about life . . . Nonetheless, it worked its way into many areas of life, especially in art and religion. Current theology has not yet been set free from this domination of feeling."

[42] DO: *gevoel van lust en onlust.*

Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, feeling was the organ for the super-sensual, just as perception was for the visible world, ensuring humans about the existence of God, virtue, immortality, and the true, the good, and the beautiful. Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1768–1814) presented an alternative and well-circulated view that posited feeling as the unifying point of being and consciousness, of the objective and the subjective, thus making feeling the root and identity of knowing and desiring, consciousness and will. Schleiermacher agreed with this position and described feeling as immediate self-consciousness, by which people become, prior to all thinking and willing, conscious of their own being and in so doing become aware at the same time of their absolute dependence on God. Hegel, however, placed feeling more alongside the faculty of knowing and considered it to be the lowest developmental stage of consciousness. Feeling is "intelligence at the stage of its immediacy," as the spirit becomes self-conscious but does not yet distinguish itself from itself.[43] Schopenhauer made feeling the term for every modification of consciousness, which is not an abstract concept. From this notion Karl Robert Eduard von Hartmann (1842–1906) was led to develop his ideas about the unconscious.[44] Feeling is the root and the unity of will and representation. According to Herbart, feelings,[45] just like desires, are not alongside and outside of the representations, but are merely the changing conditions of those representations in which feelings

[43] GerO: *die Intelligenz auf der Stufe ihrer Unmittelbarkeit.* Ed. note: As someone who is constitutionaly incapable of "grasping" idealism of any sort, much less the Hegelian variety, I found helpful the article by Timo Airaksinen, "Problems in Hegel's Dialectic of Feeling," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 41, No. 1 and 2 (Sept.–Dec., 1980): 1–25.

[44] DO: *onbewuste.* Ed. note: Hartmann's magnum opus is *Philosophy of the Unconscious: Speculative Results According to the Induction Method of the Physical Sciences*, trans. William C. Coupland, 3 vols. (Edinburgh and London: Ballantyne, Hanson & Co., 1884). The original German edition was published in 1869.

[45] GerO: *Gefühle.* Ed note: Up to this point in this chapter, Bavinck had consistently used the Dutch singular *gevoel*; here, as he shifts to the plural, he starts using the German *Gefühle.*

are seated.[46] Even though Herbart's school rejected the notion of faculties, it nonetheless held that feelings are psychic activities distinguishable in essence from desires and strivings.[47] For example, according to Moritz Wilhelm Drobisch (1802–1896), we are conscious of three types of activities: something happens *in* us, and this is ideation (i.e., representing); something happens *with* us, and that [62] is feeling; and something else happens *from* us, and that is desiring. The uniqueness of feelings is found in their being conditions in which the soul is wholly passive and undergoes something.[48]

Most recent psychologies conceive of feeling in yet another way—not as an objective, passive condition of the soul, but as the subjective, active, immediate perception of our inner condition, whether pleasant or unplesant. In this sense Gustav Adolf Lindner (1828–1887) describes feeling

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[46] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, *2e Aufl.* Edited by J. H. von Kirchmann (Berlin: L. Heimann, 1872), 1–5 [ET: *Kant's Kritik of Judgment*, translated by J. H. Bernard (London and New York: MacMillan and Co., 1892, 1–5 (Preface)]; F. H. Jacobi, *Werke* (Leipzig: G. Fleischer, 1812–25), 59f.; J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Ethics as Based on the Science of Knowledge* [*Das System der Sittenlehre nach den Principien der Wissenschaftslehre*], ed. W. T. Harris, trans. A. E. Kroeger (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1897), 48–49; Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Dialektik*, ed. Ludwig Jonas (Berlin: Reimer, 1839), 151f.; Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), § 3; G. W. F. Hegel, *Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (Heidelberg: A. Oswald, 1817), 260–65 (§§ 402–15); Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea* [*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*], trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp, 3rd ed., 3 vols. (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1888), 1:66–68 [Ed. note: A new and improved translation is: *Will and Representation*. trans. and ed. Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, and Christopher Janaway, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), but we use the Haldane and Kemp translation for our references because it is readily available online]; Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, 1:3–4; Herbart, *Lehrbuch zur einleitung in die philosophie,* 301; idem., "Psychologie als Wissenschaft," *Sämmtliche Werke,* 6:56–62 [Ed. note: See §5, n. 24 above for further information on Herbart's, *Lehrbuch* [*BdP*[1], 54, n. 30].

[47] DO: *begeerten en strevingen.*

[48] Moritz Drobisch, *Empirische Psychologie nach naturwissenschaftlicher Methode* (Leipzig: Leopold Voss, 1842), 36. Similarly, Zimmermanu, Esser, Ohler, Hagemann et al. in Joseph Jungmann, *Das Gemüth, und das Gefühlsvermögen der neueren Psychologie*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1885), 181–95 [*BdP*[1], 54, n. 31].

as "the consciousness of the rising or sinking of the real life-activity of the soul."[49] Frequently these two views of feeling—that is, as the objective, passive condition of the soul, and as the subjective, immediate perception of the soul—are jumbled together, and writers about psychology repeatedly shift from the one to the other.[50]

This brief summation indicates that theories about the faculty of feeling are very wide-ranging. Nonetheless, they are eventually reduced to two main ones. First are those who describe feeling as immediate, as prior to all reflection, perception, or consciousness, especially the perception of internal, pleasant or unpleasant conditions. In the second place, others consider feeling as those objective conditions themselves in which the soul functions and in which it is completely passive. Our reflections now follow.

1. It is immediately clear that taken in the first subjective sense, described as the immediate perception or consciousness of pleasant or unpleasant conditions, feeling cannot be a distinct faculty.

[49] GerO: *Bewustsein der Hebung oder Senkung der eigenen Lebenshätigkeit der Seele.* Gustav Adolf Lindner, *Manual of Empirical Psychology as an Inductive Science* [*Lehrbuch der empirischen Psychologie nach genetischer Methode*], trans. Chas. DeGarmo (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1890), 170; Joseph Wilhelm Nahlowsky, *Das Gefühlsleben*, (Leipzig: Pernitzsch, 1862), 48; Jos. Beck, *Grondtrekken der empirische Psychologie en Logika*, ed. J. Vriend (Kampen: van Hulst, 1856), § 70. Friedrich Dittes-Wendel, *Zielkunde en Redeneerkunde*, 2nd ed. (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1884), 96 [*BdP*[1], 54, n. 32].

[50] R. R. Rijkens describes the desiring faculty as the property of the soul by which it can change itself in its conditions, but then immediately adds that feeling is the consciousness of that change; see his *Beknopte Opvoedkunde*, 8th ed. (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1896), 46. R. Husen speaks of the desiring faculty as the faculty of the soul by which it is conscious of what is pleasant (*aangename*) and unpleasant (*onaangename*), but then goes on to say that it is not the sensation (*gewaarwording*) itself that is called "feeling" but the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the sensation; see his *Opvoed- en Onderwijskunde* (Gorinchem: Noorduyn en Zoon, 1890), 29. H. J. Emous and P. J. Kloppers, in their *Beknopte Pedagogiek* (Amsterdam: Höveker, 1889), 14–17, also consider the desiring faculty as the capacity for becoming aware of pleasant or unpleasant circumstances, and describe religious and moral feeling as consciousness but the sense for the true, the good, and the beautiful as elevated by feeling [*BdP*[1], 55, n. 33].

As perception or consciousness, feeling belongs, together with all awareness, impressions, perceptions, ideas, etc.,[51] to the faculty of knowing. Those who describe feeling as perception or consciousness cannot maintain it as a distinct faculty between knowing and desiring. Their mistake, as we shall see, lurks behind an improper restriction of the faculty of knowing and in turning the perception of specific phenomena, notably the internal conditions of pleasure or displeasure, into a distinct faculty. This cannot be accepted.

By using their faculty of knowing, people become knowledgeable about many things [63] that are in themselves materially, objectively, and essentially different: oneself, the world, plants, animals, people, God, etc. But it is always the same faculty by which we learn to know all those objects. That persons perceive specific phenomena in their feelings, such as their own interior condition of pleasure or displeasure, can never turn that into a particular faculty. In fact, the distinction between the faculties of knowing and desiring is in no way constituted by different kinds of objects because knowing and desiring often have exactly the same objects. But knowing and desiring see their object from different angles and from different perspectives.

It is not the material difference in the object but only the formal difference, the perspective with which it is viewed, that makes it legitimate to speak of a different capacity. Conversely, black and white, for example, are objectively entirely different, but they are considered from the same perspective—namely, as colors—and yet they are perceived by the same sense. The fact that we become aware of a specific group of phenomena through the faculty of

[51] DO: *beseffen, indrukken, waarnemingen, begrippen.*

feeling does not, in itself, provide sufficient reason for elevating it to the status of a particular faculty.[52]

2. It is incorrect to restrict feeling to the perception of inner conditions of pleasure and displeasure. The word "feeling" has a much broader meaning in both daily speech and science. For we speak not only about the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, but also of a feeling for the true, the beautiful, and the good; a feeling for honor and virtue; for justice and duty; for religion and morality, etc. It is precisely for this reason that Jacobi could describe feeling as the organ for the suprasensual.

   The distinctive character of feeling does not lie in its function of perceiving a particular set of phenomena. Rather, it consists in this: we acquire consciousness and obtain knowledge about all sorts of events in ourselves and outside of ourselves in a particular manner.[53] As Schopenhauer rightly said, by the term "feeling" we are referring to all that immediate and direct knowledge that precedes thinking and reflection, which stands in contrast to the knowledge consisting in abstract ideas and argumentation. For example, as soon as someone tells us something, we can feel instinctively whether it is true or false. But that also determines that feeling in [64] this sense is not a particular faculty but a particular activity of the faculty of knowing.
3. This explains very easily why the word "feeling" could be used in this sense of immediate perception. All our knowledge begins with the sensual, and from there we ascend to the realm of the invisible and supra-sensory.[54] That is why we designate invisible, spiritual realities with words that originally had a material meaning. We

[52] G. Sanseverino, *Philosophia Christiana*, 5:38f.; Stöckl, *Lehrbuch der Philosophie,* 1:34 [*BdP*[1], 55, n. 34].

[53] DO: *op eene bizondere wijze.*

[54] DO: *het onzienlijke en bovenzinnelijke.*

always speak even of God and of divine things with images. In doing so, Scripture itself leads the way. Our entire way of thinking is materially oriented because we are sensory creatures. In the same way, feeling is as original as touching, and feeling used to refer also to the sense of touch.[55] But feeling was transferred from there to the immediate cognizance[56] of inner conditions (I feel that I am hungry, thirsty, sad, etc.) or of invisible things outside of us (I feel that something is true, beautiful, good, etc.). In such instances we say that we feel something when we discern and understand directly and immediately, without argumentation or discussion. The matter is then so certain for me, as though I am tasting and feeling something with my hands.[57]

This manner of cognizance is highly important. It is distinguished from and precedes cognizance by means of argumentation

[55] DO: *en gevoel duide vroeger dan ook den tastzin aan.*

[56] DO: *kennisneming.*

[57] Thomas already said the same: "The operations of the sense part are more familiar to us than the operations of the intellectual part, because our acquisition of knowledge begins with sense and concludes with the intellect. And because from the familiar the lesser known things are learned, names are also assigned to things for the sake of understanding, so that names of the operations of the sense part are transferred to the operations of the intellectual part, and, moreover, from human things to divine things. And this is apparent from the apprehensive operations, because that which we with certainty possess in our intellect, almost as something immediately present, we are said to *feel* or *see*. And we are said to imagine, when we grasp the essence [quiddity] of a thing in the intellect, and do so by way of other things." ("*Operationes sensitivae sunt nobis magis notae, quam operationes partis intellectivae, quia cognitio nostra incipit a sensu et terminatur ad intellectum. Et quia ex notioribus minus nota cognoscuntur, nomina autem ad innotescendum rebus imponuntur, ideo nomina operationum sensitivae partis transferuntur ad operationes intellectivae partis, et ulterius ex humanis in divina. Et hoc patet in apprehensivis operationibus, quia illud quod certitudinaliter quasi praesens tenemus per intellectum, dicimur sentire vel videre. Et imaginari dicimur, quum quidditatem rei intellectu concipimus, et sic de aliis.*") Aquinas, *Scripta super libros Sententiarum* (*Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*), book 3, distinction 26, question 1, article 5, response. Ed. note: This commentary by Thomas Aquinas on Peter Lombard can be found in various editions, such as Aquinas, *Scriptum Super Sententiis Magistri Petri Lombardi*, *Tomus 3*, ed. R. P. Maria Fabianus Moos (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1933), 828–29. Cf. J. Jungmann, *Das Gemüth*, 106 [*BdP*[1], 57, n. 35].

and thinking. Intuitive knowledge is no less certain than this manner of knowing, but it far surpasses it. But it is indeed less clear and less conscious, precisely because it is not conceptual and because it is not a fruit of intentional reflection and argumentation.

4. Finally, from all this everyone can see that those who reject the faculty of feeling do not thereby object to the use of the word "feeling" in psychology or to the reality to which it refers. The word is a good one and the reality itself is of the greatest importance. The entire difference involves only the question whether feeling as immediate perception is to be taken as a separate faculty. On the grounds advanced above, this is now scientifically untenable. Feeling, as immediate perception, by the nature of the case belongs to the faculty of knowing and is but one of its particular activities.

With this in mind—namely, that feeling as immediate perception [65] cannot be a particular faculty—others have stated that feeling must be taken in an objective sense and that it designates the passive conditions themselves of the soul—that is, those of pleasure and displeasure.[58] We continue with some further observations:

1. It deserves mention that the word "feeling" in this sense is indeed customary. Just as the words "sight," "sound," "smell," and "taste" can have an active or passive significance,[59] in the same way they can refer to the faculties of seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting, and to the object of these perceptions. It is the same with the word "feeling." It can denote the faculty[60] by which we perceive something immediately. But it can also be used for the condition of the soul of pleasure or displeasure themselves. Thus we speak not only of a feeling for truth, for justice, for the good, and for the beautiful, but also about a feeling of sympathy, sorrow, joy, etc., with which

[58] DO: *passieve zielstoestanden van lust en onlust.*

[59] Ed. note: I.e., as a verb or as a noun.

[60] DO: *vermogen.*

we refer to the objective condition of sympathy itself, the feeling that exists when sympathizing. The reason why the word "feeling" can have this double meaning is obvious precisely because we are immediately aware in our feeling, taken in its subjective sense, of the objective conditions of warmth, cold, hunger, thirst, sorrow, and joy, and without this awareness these would not exist for us; therefore the one fuses with the other, and the same word can be used for both.

But even though there is a close relationship between the objective and subjective dimension of feeling, the two meanings are not the same. The perception of pain is something other than the feeling of pain itself, just as my awareness that I desire or will something is distinct from that desiring or willing itself. In feeling as an objective condition, a power of the soul appears that cannot be explained simply from consciousness itself. It has even been determined that pain caused by a blow or a punch requires a longer time to emerge than the actual perception and that in some instances the perception can be present without being followed by a feeling of pain.[61]

2. Even if it is fully recognized that feeling in this objective sense is something different from perception or consciousness, it still does not follow at all that this feeling is a third faculty between knowing and desiring. Rather, this is contradicted already by the [66] word itself. After all, the word "feeling" as an objective condition of the soul has no plural in the Dutch language, but it has one in the

[61] Ulrici, *Leib und Seele*, 2:164–206; Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophy of the Unconscious,* 1:243–60; Georg Hagemann, *Psychologie* (Münster: Adolf Russell, 1868), 151; Constantin Gutberlet, *Die Psychologie*, 2nd ed. (Münster: Theissing, 1890), 210; Höffding, *Psychologie in Umrissen auf Grundlage der Erfahrung*, 306, 326; Théodule Ribot, *La psychologie des sentiments* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1896), 35 [*BdP*[1], 59, n. 36].

German language (*Gefühle*).[62] In an earlier time, these conditions of the soul with its emotions were classified under the terms "passions," "affections," and "emotions."[63] By the nature of the case, the word "feeling" in this sense cannot designate a particular faculty because then there would be as many faculties of feeling as there are feelings.[64] So there is no one who makes this claim. But in order to rescue the notion of a faculty of feeling nevertheless,[65] the word is at once taken in a different sense. "Feelings," which first referred to objective conditions themselves, suddenly comes to be employed as "feeling," a word for the ability to have these conditions.[66] The passive meaning is abruptly changed to an active one. But in itself this is already logically unwarranted.[67] One does not just take a word, and then without further explanation, use it in two completely different senses, first to refer to a condition, a way of being, a transitive mode[68]; and thereafter to a faculty, a power, or disposition.[69] The impropriety of this move is also apparent in ordinary use of language. While we speak very correctly about a faculty of knowing and a faculty of desiring—that is, the capacity

[62] Ed. note: This is also true for the English distinction between "feeling" (a faculty of the soul) and "feelings" (the objective condition of the soul).

[63] Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck mixes Dutch terms with Greek and Latin ones. In order, they are: *hartstochten* [passions], παθη, *passiones, affectus, aandoeningen* [emotions].

[64] GerO: *Gefühle.*

[65] DO: *gevoelvermogen te redden.*

[66] Ed. note: Vanden Born's translation of this sense demonstrates how well he understood the structure and argument of Bavinck's thought. Bavinck uses the singular (*gevoel*) as the subject of the sentence, but as he had indicated earlier in this paragraph, the Dutch language uses the singular to describe the objective conditions of the soul. Therefore, even though the singular word is the subject, it is properly translated as "feelings."

[67] DO: *logisch ongeoorloofd.*

[68] LO: *modus transiens.*

[69] LO: *potentia*, *habitus*.

for knowing and desiring—we do not, as is proper, speak of a faculty of touching, but a faculty of feeling, the capacity of feeling, the capacity to have feelings.[70] In other words, we are not in a position in the Dutch language to provide a positive description of the character and nature of this so-called faculty. One can only say that it is a capacity to have something or to undergo something.[71]

3. There is more we need to add. Those who take "feeling" in the objective sense, conceive the soul's conditions in such a manner that render the soul completely passive. According to Drobisch, representation happens in us, feeling happens with us, and desiring happens through us.[72] Let us grant this for the moment. Then the faculty of feeling becomes a capacity for having conditions—that is, a capacity or power for being passive.[73] This is very strange. In the same manner one might speak of the capacity or power of, say marble, to become a statue. In metaphorical use, such speech may be permissible, as Aristotle spoke of a "capacity for suffering" [δυναμις του παθειν] or the scholastics of a "capacity for obedience" [potentia obedientialis].[74] But here, in psychology, when the faculties of the soul are being discussed and people seek to attribute to the capacity for feeling an honorary place [67] alongside

[70] Ed. note: For several reasons, this is a very complicated sentence in Dutch. First, the distinction between "touching" and "feeling" is a word play on "*voelvermogen*" and "ge*voelvermogen.*" He then concludes the already lengthy sentences with three genitive phrases that are identical in meaning. Finally, the last prepositional phrase uses "*gevoel*" in the singular but, as noted earlier, requires translation as a plural. Here is the complete sentence in the first edition: "*Terwijl men zeer juist van ken- en begeervermogen spreekt, het vermogen om to kennen en begeeren, spreekt men niet, gelijk het behoorde, van voel-, maar van gevoelvermogen, het vermogen des gevoels, het vermogen om gevoel te hebben.*"

[71] DO: *een vermogen is om iets te hebben of te ondergaan.*

[72] DO: *voorstellen geschiedt* in *ons, het gevoelen* met *ons, het begeeren* door *ons.*

[73] Ed. note: Bavinck mixes two Latin terms with one Dutch one: *potentia, virtus, kracht.*

[74] Ed. note: This last clause with the reference to Aristotle and the scholastics was not included in the Hepp revision.

the faculties of knowing and desiring, such metaphorical speech is not warranted.

The notion of a faculty has a specific meaning in psychology and we should stick with it. If feeling is to be considered a distinct faculty, then it will have to meet the same requirements demanded of the faculties of knowing and desiring. If it does not do this, then it has no right to be called a distinct faculty. If it fails to do so, then it has no right to be called a particular faculty. If the conditions of feeling are such that they do not come forth from the soul but occur to and with the soul, that feeling is completely passive, powerless, and without will over against the soul, then the faculty of feeling is not a faculty or power alongside or between the faculties of knowing and desiring. It is merely a general attribute of the soul, just like the ability to die or to be renewed, changed, or regenerated by God. But surely no one would place such "capacities"[75] between the faculties of knowing and willing and put them on a single line.

4. It is of course true that the human soul can be completely passive. It is that way, for example, at the moment of its creation and at its regeneration. In addition, all creatures, as creatures, even at their highest level of energy and in their most forceful activity, are at the same time passive, receptive, and deeply dependent. In this sense humans are still passive in their knowing and their activity. And with the various activities people perform, the measure of their activeness varies considerably. A person is more passive when sensing than when perceiving.[76] A person functions more forcefully when willing than when desiring. It is absolutely true that in feelings, affections, and emotions,[77] we are for the most part passive. They

[75] DO: *vermogens*; Bavinck himself places the term between quote marks.

[76] DO: *In de gewaarwording is hij meer passief dan in de waarneming.*

[77] GerO/DO: *Gefühle, affecten, aandoeningen.*

are emotions.[78] We are "done to" by them.[79] Pleasure and displeasure, hunger and thirst, joy and sorrow, hope and fear are moods, conditions, dispositions[80] into which the soul is brought by all sorts of circumstances. Taking note of this some scholastics even distinguished between operations and passions in the desiring faculty.[81]

But this passive quality does not take away from the fact that these feelings or affections, as will become clearer later, are from another point of view genuine expressions and activities of the soul. Even if it is necessary to have steel in order to elicit a spark from stone, the spark still comes from the stone. Circumstances may well be the occasion for, the formal cause of, all emotions, like joy, sorrow, hope, fear, and anxiety [68]. But the efficient cause is and can only be the soul, conscious or unconscious, with or without its will. In the emotions, it is the soul itself that begins, in a different manner, to express itself and to be active.

5. Finally, if feelings[82] are to be seen as manifestations and activities of the soul, they must be derived from a foundation, a power, or a faculty.[83] The faculty of knowing does not qualify for this. Perception and emotion[84] are essentially different. Knowing by itself does not elicit a feeling of pleasure or displeasure. To derive conditions of feeling[85] from a so-called faculty of feeling—that is to say, from a

[78] DO: *Het zijn aandoeningen.* Ed. note: This sentence and the next involve wordplays on the Dutch word for "emotion," *aandoening,* which literally means "that which is done to us."

[79] DO: *Wij worden er door aangedaan.*

[80] DO: *stemmingen, toestanden, disposities.*

[81] Jungmann, *Das Gemüth,* 184; cf. Sanseverino, *Philosophia christiana,* 5:44 [*BdP*[1], 62, n. 37]. Ed. note: This sentence is missing in the 1923 Hepp edition.

[82] GerO: *Gefühle.*

[83] DO: *uit een principe, een kracht, een vermogen.*

[84] DO: *gewaarwording en aandoening.*

[85] DO: *gevoelstoestanden.*

capacity to have such conditions—says nothing, explains nothing, and is merely a tautology. These conditions, then, can be explained only when they are derived from the faculty of desiring and obtain a place there.

That this does not occur in recent psychology can be explained by the improper pruning and restricting of the desiring faculty—similar to what it did with the faculty of knowing—by having it be absorbed into the will or into desiring narrowly conceived. Conversely, the opposition is not against the conditions of feeling themselves. Feelings, affections, and emotions are of greatest value. The difference concerns only the place they are given in the life of the soul. That they properly belong in the desiring faculty will be made clear later.[86]

Why Disagreements about the Faculty of Feeling Are Significant

Finally, perhaps someone may therefore observe that the difference is then of no significance, and that it is entirely immaterial whether we speak of two or of three faculties of the soul.[87] But that is by no means the case. Here are four reasons why.

1. It is clear that making the faculty of feeling independent forces the faculties of knowing and desiring to surrender a large part of their domain, particularly because no psychologist has been able thus far to identify a clear distinction between feelings, affections and passions.[88] The faculties of knowing and desiring then run the risk of being restricted to their higher capacities—namely, understanding and willing. Such a restriction opens the door to rationalism and Pelagianism (moralism), respectively. The essence [69] of what it is to be human is no longer found in soul but in

[86] Ed. note: See § 8 E, below.

[87] Gutberlet, *Die Psychologie*, 208 [*BdP*[1], 63, n. 38].

[88] GerO/DO: *Gefühle*, *affecten, passies.*

spirit.[89] The higher life of humans is separated and severed from its foundation and root, which lie in lower sensory life. Understanding and will become autonomous; the ethical is ripped from its connections to the physical, the soul from the body, the kingdom of God from the world, grace from nature. The resurrection makes way for immortality; a human being is as spirit, an angel, and as body, an animal, and thus humans lose their own distinguished place in creation as human.

2. When feeling is positioned alongside and coordinated with understanding and will, it must assert its rights over against that understanding and its will and strongly compete with both. The harmony of psychic life is gone and is replaced with a struggle for mastery. After rationalism and Pelagianism have dominated for a period, mysticism takes its turn. Released from the discipline of the faculties of knowing and desiring, feeling becomes an independent source of knowledge. Balance is broken in the life both of individuals and of nations.
3. In the new psychologies, feeling is often something that is entirely passive.[90] People are purely passive[91]—they can do nothing about their emotions;[92] they are powerless before them, held by and led by them. Naturally, feelings[93] then fall outside the control of human understanding and will and, consequently, outside human responsibility and guilt. And then, in the name of original,

[89] Ed. note: Bavinck's point is challenging from a biblical, anthropological perspective where "soul" (*psychē*) and "spirit" (*pneuma*) are practically synonyms. In this context, "spirit" refers to the so-called "higher" functions of the soul such as understanding, willing, and loving, while the more "bodily" (or even "fleshly") functions of the soul such as hunger, thirst, etc., are the soul's "lower" functions. Bavinck's point here is to oppose the separation of the spiritual and bodily activities of the soul.

[90] DO: *passiefs.*

[91] DO: *louter lijdelijk.*

[92] DO: *aandoeningen.*

[93] GerO: *Gefühle.*

immediate feeling,[94] even the most frightful errors[95] can be presented as truth and the crudest misdeeds praised as heroic deeds.[96] Genius is no longer bound by rule or law. Goethe's Werther and Schlegel's Lucinde are portrayed as exemplars of virtue.[97] Feeling is not bound by logic or ethics and obliterates all the boundaries between truth and untruth, good and evil, beautiful and ugly.

4. Psychology is of the greatest significance for all the other sciences especially for philosophy and theology. Ethics, aesthetics, pedagogy, homiletics, catechetics, and all the different topics of dogmatics: the doctrines of God, the Trinity, humanity, sin and grace, all presuppose [70] psychology and cannot be formulated without psychology. Therefore every error in psychology comes home to roost in the other sciences. It would not be difficult, given adequate space, to demonstrate this broadly. It is sufficient to recall the damage done to theology up to the present day by Schleiermacher's teaching on feeling. The dualism of theology and science, of faith and history, of the ethical and the physical, of grace and nature, of religion and politics, of God's kingdom and the world can be blamed in part on the fact that within psychology feeling was elevated to an independent source and received its own domain between the faculties of knowing and desiring.[98]

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[94] DO: *oorspronkelijk, onmiddelijk, gevoel.*

[95] DO: *schrikkelijkste dwalingen.*

[96] DO: *grofste misdrijven als helsdaden.*

[97] Ed. note: Bavinck is referring to Goethe's autobiographical novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* [*Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*], published in 1774, and Karl Wilhelm Friedrich von Schlegel's *Lucinde*, published in 1799. Both novels celebrated individual autonomy, particularly in sexual matters. Schlegel's *Lucinde* was generally regarded as an account of his affair with Dorothea Veit (daughter of Moses Mendelssohn).

[98] The independence of the desiring faculty is disputed by Wilhelm Traugott Krug, *Grundlage zu einer neuen Theorie der Gefühle* (Königsberg: Unser, 1823); Wilhelm Braubach, *Psychologie des Gefühls* (Wetzlar: G. Rathgeber, 1847); Imannuel Hermann Fichte, *Psychologie,* 2 vols. in 1 (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1864–73); Stöckl, *Lehrbuch*

C. Voluntaristic Psychology

There are also those who grant primacy to the *will* and attempt to explain psychic life on the basis of the will. Wilhelm Wundt is an influencial psychologist within this group whose theory deserves more thorough discussion. Wundt is an advocate of psycho-physical parallelism and therefore regards physical and psychic phenomena as two series, independent from each other and occurring alongside each other in parallel fashion. Nonetheless, Wundt accepted this parallelism, not as a scientific presupposition but as an empirical phenomenon. When Spinoza believes that every physical event corresponds to a psychic phenomenon, he is going far beyond ordinary experience. And when he thinks that the psychic exists only in representations that accompany and mirror the physical, he is guilty of intellectual imbalance and misunderstands the other elements that possess just as much reality in the psychic life as the representations.

Therefore, according to Wundt, the parallelism is to be accepted only to the extent that it presents itself empirically. But this is only a very restricted domain. We must allow this domain for the sensory perceptions that, although they do not originate from, are nonetheless always connected with, the stimuli of the sensations and with processes in the brain. And we must allow this domain for the elementary activities of feeling and willing that are continually accompanied by bodily movements—that is to say, for the psychic elements.[99] But this parallelism no longer continues with regard to the forms of connection and relationship that are made

der Philosophie, 1:146–49; Sanseverino, *Philosophia christiana*, 5:41–44. Tilmann Pesch, *Die grossen Welträthsel*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Freiburg im Bresgau: Herder, 1892), 1:731–37; Albert Maria Weiss, *Apologie des Christenthunis,* vol. 1 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1894), 231–57; Mathias Schneid, *Psychologie im geiste des heiligen. Thomas von Aquin.* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1892); Jungmann, *Das Gemüth*; Joseph Pötsch, "Kein besonderes Gefühlsvermögen," in *Paedagogische Vorträge und Abhandlungen* (Kempten: Kösel, 1895); also by William Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, vol. 2 (New York: Scribner, 1888), 123–26 [*BdP*[1], 65, n. 39].

[99] DO: *psychische elementen.*

between the psychic elements and with regard to the ideas of value and purpose, to the formation of which the psychic connections compel us. For in the physiological processes nothing of these psychic phenomena is understood. They can be explained only psychologically and necessarily require an *independent psychic causality*. This psychic causality is always connected to physical causality and never conflicts with it but is nonetheless essentially different from physical causality. An active principle, a creative synthesis, operates with all *compound* psychic phenomena, all apprehension of observations in space and time. This includes the activities of memory and fantasy, producing concepts, thoughts, and arguments, all aesthetic and ethical evaluation. This active principle, one that cannot be reduced to physiology, has an independent character and reworks original psychic realities in all sorts of ways, building a unified world.[100]

According to Wundt, independent psychic causality arises in the life of a soul and begins its activity with *apperception*. This occurs when we bring a psychic content into a clear conception. At any given moment we perceive many different sensations but set before ourselves clearly and definitively only a small portion of them and that is apperception. By means of apperception we focus on a particular point of what is available in our psychic range and direct our attention to it. In apperception we are active, we become acting subjects, we make changes to our psychic content, and we produce a stream of thought that transcends the mechanical association of representations. The power that manifests itself in this independent psychic causality and in apperception is not a psychic substance, not a soul, but will—pure will.

Wundt makes willing the original fact of experience. Consciousness of this willing is no illusion but points back to a reality. Although prepared by feelings,[101] desires, etc. and always tied to sensations,[102] the will is an

[100] GerO/DO: *eene einheitliche wereld.*

[101] GerO: *Gefühle.*

[102] DO: *gewaarwordingen.*

independent power and manifests itself through psychic apperception. Apperception is therefore a form of [72] the will's activity; in fact, even more, it is an essential part of the will's activity. The more we explore the history of our psychic life,[103] the clearer it becomes that apperception and will are identical. A child who proposes an action to itself (apperception—a clear proposal), immediately performs it (will).[104] Furthermore, because there can be no consciousness without apperception, one can say that consciousness is inconceivable without the activity of the will. The will is the proper and only content of self-consciousness. There is nothing that human persons can call their own more than the will, there lies a hidden power that is best designated as will. According to Wundt, behind consciousness and behind psychic-life, the will is the hidden power.

This is the way it is among all people and among all relations among human beings, familes, peoples, races, the whole of humanity. In fact, analogously to individual persons, we may believe that there is a spiritual, psychic power hidden behind the cosmic mechanism of the whole world, a power that governs and perfects everything. The ultimate ground of the world is not being at rest, but a continuous activity, a process that is always moving forward, an eternal becoming, an ever active and acting will. God is the World-will, and the world's development is the unfolding of the divine activity.

However much value we may attach to Wundt's recognition of an independent psychic causality and consequent repudiation of materialism, his proposals still are subject to serious objections.

1. His adoption of an independent psychic causality militates against his parallelism as well as against the mechanical association theory he had adopted earlier. According to association theory, all psychic elements are tied to physiological events. The psychic causality that

[103] Ed. note: This is an editorial construction; Bavinck's original had: "*Hoe meer we in het psychisch leven teruggaan.*"

[104] Ed. note: Parenthetical explanation added by translator.

accompanies physiological events can only influence consciousness when consciousness has an effect on the physiological event. But this means, then, that psychic causality injects itself from above and outside the normal course of physiological events. It interrupts the standing laws of nature in the physiological domain and [73] thus makes a mockery of the parallelistic foundation.

2. The origin of psychic causality has not been at all made clear. There are only two possibilities: either psychic causality suddenly appears out of nothing and pushes itself between the psychic events in an absolutely incomprehensible manner, and is then, in the fullest sense, a miracle; or it is prepared by previous psychic events and has its origin and grounding in them, but does not, in its independence rise above the laws governing psychic-life. Wundt straddles the fence between the two possibilities. He first posits a materialism and, having reached a certain point, permits it to sail on its own while he then flees to spiritualism. He is first an empiricist and then later becomes a philosopher. He begins as a radical but, midway, succumbs to a reactionary posture. And so Wundt satisfies no one and finds critics on every side.
3. It is unacceptable to make psychic causality with the will and then to view the will as the core of human essence and of the essence of all things. For no one would deny that the will influences representations, thoughts, etc., but it absolutely does not follow from this that the will is then the essence of attention, of apperception. On the contrary, sensations, representations, and thoughts have their own course, and often proceed on that course without the will being able to do anything about it. From this it follows as well that consciousness, self-consciousness, and the unity of consciousness are definitely not products of the will, but rather exist prior to and apart from the will.

   It is not in the will but in the *I*, in the subject, that consciousness finds its basis and its unity. Indeed, the will itself would fall

> apart into a series of loose, disconnected willings if it did not have its unity in the *I*. Just like representations, the will is carried by the subject, the *I* itself, and thus always points back to it. Just as we speak of *my* representations, we speak also of *my* will. There is therefore a subject that stands above all representations, all phenomena of feeling and willing,[105] a subject that possesses all f them and that to a certain extent, governs them. Thus Wundt rightly assumed that an independent psychic causality must have an origin, but he erroneously supposed that this should lie in the will. For the will, just like representations, cannot just hang in the sky, but it inheres [74] in a substance, whether this be material or spiritual. Wundt's prejudice against the idea of substance is completely misplaced. For the power that he regards as the core and being of things is either an empty noise or it is grounded in an eternal substance.

The fruitlessness of efforts to derive the totality of psychic life genetically from a single given places in the clearest light that psychology cannot get along without the soul or its faculties for explaining the psychic phenomena. Psychology finds itself in the same situation and therefore conducts itself in the same manner as the natural sciences, which search for the causes of physical phenomena in powers that are tied to matter.

But in that connection, two things must not be forgotten. First, it is incumbent upon psychologists to provide a clear account of what they understand to be an explanation of the psychic phenomena proceeding from the soul and its faculties. When the natural sciences accept the notions of matter and energy to explain physical phenomena, then in so doing they have by no means clarified what matter is, what energy is, and what their relation to the phenomena is. Similarly, nothing in psychology is yet made understandable when the soul and its faculties are made the foundation of psychic phenomena. The doctrine of the soul and its faculties opens

[105] DO: *boven voorstellingen, gevoels- en wilsverschijnselen staat dus een subject.*

up only the possibility for explaining psychic phenomena but does not yet provide the explanations themselves. The doctrine, however, does not cut off in advance, as materialism actually does, the opportunity of maintaining the uniqueness of psychic phenomena and understanding them in that uniqueness. Rather, it keeps the door open for penetrating psychic phenomena to their essence.

For that reason, psychology may not be satisfied with simply classifying psychic phenomena under faculties and restricting itself to their description. Rather, it has the task, regardless of whether it can ever fulfill it with all the means at its disposal with the help of inductive and deductive methods, of tracing back the phenomena of psychic life (especially those of conscious psychic life) and getting to know them in their origin and development. In addition, laws different from [75] those in physical nature govern psychic life, but nonetheless laws to which the phenomena are bound. Just as in the entire world, there is no place for contingency or fate. The relation of the soul and its faculties, the inactivity and the activity of those faculties, the rise and the development of psychological phenomena, their mutual relationship are no more a product of arbitrariness than are the phenomena in nature or history. In a word, there is a system to psychic life and psychology attempts to investigate that and to communicate it.

A second implication flows from this first thought—namely the duty never to forget that those things analyzed, dissected, and described by science are in reality constantly, mutually, and intimately related. In the life of human beings, vegetative life, sensitive life, and intellectual life are clearly distinguishable, but these three have a single soul as their foundation,[106] they always go together, and they continually affect each other.[107] Similarly, there is a distinction between the phenomena we bring to our faculties of

[106] DO: *deze drie hebben* ééne ziel tot principe.

[107] DO: *werken voortdurend op elkander in.*

knowing, desiring, and acting.[108] It is precisely that undeniable difference among the phenomena that forces us to accept these three faculties. But it is always the same subject that is active by means of these three faculties. The faculties are never separated, and their activities always go together.

Thus perception[109] and feeling are most intimately related. Every perception with a certain intensity brings with it an emotional tone[110] by which it arouses attentiveness and makes the perceiving operate more strongly in the consciousness. As soon as we meet a stranger, for example, a feeling of sympathy or antipathy immediately accompanies the perception. Ziegler[111] is completely wrong when he concludes from this that the perception first comes into consciousness by way of the set of feelings,[112] that the perception operates in the consciousness for the first time by means of that emotional tone, that feeling is original and prior. This is because feeling is passive; it resonates only when something sounds wrong and thus presupposes perception. But it is the case that nearly all, if not all, perceptions, representations, etc., arouse a certain feeling of pleasure or displeasure. Conversely, this feeling of pleasure or displeasure and the inclination or disinclination that is born from it has a powerful influence on the perceptions and representations. The heart frequently rules the head. According to the saying of Jesus, misunderstanding[113] also comes forth

[108] Ed. note: Bavinck introduces a new term here, *beweegvermogen* (lit. "faculty of locomotion"), instead of the expected "faculty of willing." The idea is this: The phenomena of our experience are distinguishable according to our threefold capacity to know, to desire and to will. But here Bavinck wants to underscore the point that our willing leads to action (movement). Hence, the new triad of knowing, desiring and acting, with the third term capturing Bavinck's choice of *beweegvermogen*.

[109] DO: *gewaarwording*.

[110] Ed. note: This expression is an attempt to capture the meaning of Bavinck's term "*gevoelstoon*" (lit. "feeling pitch").

[111] Ed. note: We have been unable to identify this reference.

[112] DO: *gevoelstoon*.

[113] DO: *onverstand*. Ed. note: Bavinck is likely referring to Matthew 15:19 and to "evil thoughts" (διαλογισμοὶ πονηροί); he is being exegetically generous in broadly

from the heart. [76] Temperaments, inclinations, and passions influence our judgment. Psychic causality does not begin to function initially in the apperception but is already active in the simplest perception.

Finally, perceptions, representations, memories, emotions, etc. are almost always accompanied by voluntary or involuntary movements.[114] A hot-tempered person automatically clenches their fist. A child involuntarily copies their mother. With people in their natural state,[115] perception is immediately transformed into one or another physical movement.

Therefore, when we correctly distinguish the soul from its faculties, as well as correctly distinguish the three faculties among themselves and correctly understand their differing activities, we never intend to separate them. For such a separation never occurs in reality. It is always the same *subject*, the one undivided person, who by means of body and soul with their various faculties and powers, lives, knows, desires, and acts.[116]

applying the "heart/head" distinction here. His usual practice is to avoid taking biblical language and applying it to technical, anthropology.

[114] DO: *willekeurige of onwillekeurige bewegingen.*

[115] DO: *de natuurmensch.*

[116] Hepp note: On the so-called primacy of the faculties, see Bavinck, *Verzamelde Opstellen*, 208–214 [ET: *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*, 199–204]; on the faculties of the soul, cf. *Paedagogische Beginselen*^{2}, 144, *Overwinning der Ziel*, 22.

§ 7. The Faculty of Knowing

A. Innate Knowledge[1]

Like everything else existing in space and time, human beings are also subject to a law of development. Our bodies grow in size and strength. The lives of our souls mature in knowledge and wisdom. We develop from suckling to child, from child to youth, from youths to adults. Although we can climb to levels of knowledge and light, we do not start out at the top but from the beginning and develop from the weakest foundations. What we later become in reality starts out in seed form and as aptitude. Being, living, and knowing [77] are therefore not unified in a human being. With God they are unified, with whom self-consciousness and being, knowledge and life, are one. With us, however, being is far richer and deeper than self-consciousness; knowledge is indeed the highest, but it is not the first. An entire world lies behind our consciousness in which this is preformed and prepared. Nobody's life is exhausted in their knowing. Thinking is an essential property of the soul but not its essence. Lower capacities for knowing precede higher ones, the unconscious precedes the conscious, living precedes knowing, and the faculty and its capacity precede the deed.[2]

It is important to know accurately what is to be understood by a faculty and its capacity. Of course, from the perspective of those who explain all phenomena by means of metabolic changes,[3] there is no need for either a faculty or capacity. Everything can become everything else if only the

[1] DO: *aangeboren kennis.* Ed. note: The capital letter subheads A–J in this chapter are original.

[2] DO: *Aan het hoogere kenvermogen gaat het lager, aan het bewuste het onbewuste, aan het kennen het leven, aan de daad het vermogen en de aanleg vooraf.* Ed. note: It is worth noting that Bavinck repeatedly uses the word *vermogen* in this sentence and that we have translated it as "capacity." We have also translated *aanleg* as "disposition."

[3] DO: *stofwisseling.*

environment is suitable, and the circumstances are favorable. Nothing is above the circumstances and offers them resistance, but everything is a product of circumstance. This theory, however, conflicts with reality. For example, even though there is no visible difference between a human embryo and an animal embryo, there must still be some cause that results in the former developing into a human and the latter into an animal. What is not present within an embryo cannot come forth from it.

The same is true on the spiritual level.[4] Even though the circumstances are identical, one child learns easily while another has difficulty with the simplest assignment. Wherever there is life we must take into consideration not only the circumstances but, in the first place, the seed, the capacity, the faculty present at birth.[5] Claude Helvetius (1715–1771)[6] may have thought that since all ideas come from the outside and all people have equal capacities for receiving them, every difference among people is acquired, but reality teaches something altogether different. People are not born identical, and people in turn are not identical to the animals. They possess a capacity, a faculty, a nature.

Even when it comes to conscious life, this applies to knowledge, and from antiquity there has been a debate about what knowledge a person possesses at birth, whether and to what extent innate knowledge exists. Empiricists and rationalists, sensualists and intellectualists [78] have always opposed each other on this question. While the former in the previous pairings argued that all human knowledge comes from the outside and has its origin in sensation and perception,[7] the latter argued that all true knowledge, whether the whole or in part, is produced by people from within themselves.

[4] DO: *geestelijk gebied.*

[5] DO: *hebben wij niet alleen met de omstandingheden te rekenen, maar in de eerste plaats met de kiem, den aanleg, het vermogen, die van huis uit meegebracht wordt.*

[6] In his work, *De l'esprit* (1754).

[7] DO: *gewaarwording en waarneming.*

The first group posits the issue this way: originally the soul is nothing but a blank slate[8] on which is written our external and internal experience or only our external experience. The soul brings nothing with it except the capacity to become aware.[9] All other psychic activities, like thinking, remembering, comparing, judging, deciding, etc., arise from that awareness and are acquired later. Frequently perceiving itself is not regarded as original but as a product of metabolic changes.[10]

Rationalists and intellectualists, on the other hand, believe that the soul as spirit is vastly different from the body and from the material world, and therefore it cannot be affected by the material world and can acquire no knowledge from it. At best, the soul can obtain a few changeable opinions about the appearance of things from the material, transitory world. But true, real knowledge—the scientific knowledge about the essence of things, about eternal, immutable ideas—can be drawn only from the spirit itself. The perception of the material world may be the occasion for the spirit producing these ideas out of itself, but in no case is the world a source of knowledge.

Both viewpoints have always been represented in philosophy. Empiricism was held in Greek philosophy by the Ionic philosophers of nature and by the Atomists; in the Middle Ages by Nominalists; and in more recent philosophy by Locke, Hume, Condillac, Helvetius, Comte, Mill, Bain, Sully, and Spencer. Intellectualism found its expositors in Plato; in the excessive Realists;[11] in Descartes, Arnold Geulincx (1624–1669), Nicolas

[8] LO: *tabula rasa.*

[9] DO: *het vermogen om gewaar te worden.*

[10] DO: *stofwisseling.*

[11] Ed. note: Definitions of "excessive realism" are hard to come by; it is not a common term among historians of philosophy. Philip Merland, in his *From Platonism to Neoplatonism* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1953), 4–5 states that "excessive realism is the doctrine assuming that only the 'reasonable' (mind, spirit) is real." "Understanding" is restricted to "what we can put in terms of 'logical' implication and explication." Merland also claims that Nicolai Hartman's term, *Universalienrealismus*, means the same thing

Malebranche (1638–1715), Leibniz, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Vincenzo Gioberti (1801–1852), and Antonio Rosmini (1797–1855).

But there are insurmountable objections to both points of view. Let us consider first the objections against empiricism.

Empiricism

1. There is an element in our knowledge that is not and cannot be explained by Empiricism, and that is the universal, necessary, unchangeable character that some truths [79] bear. For example, all of us are convinced that two times two not only is four but that it must be so, that a straight line is necessarily the shortest distance between two points, that a thing cannot simultaneously be itself and something else, that everything that happens must have a cause, that good is to be praised and evil punished. This necessary character of many such truths is unexplained by empiricism, for observation teaches us to know only factual, real truths, but not eternal, unchangeable, and necessary truths.
2. The attempt to explain this character of some truths as merely custom, whether that of one person or of humanity as a whole, is a fruitless exercise. This is because, in the first place, we distinguish truths known on empirical grounds from truths that are of an unchangeable nature. In addition, if we accept that those so-called eternal truths are merely empirical, we cannot eliminate [from our consciousness][12] the conviction that they have not only always appeared to be true but that always and everywhere they must be true.

as excessive realism. Hartman's overal philosophical standpoint is usually characterized as "critical realism."

[12] Ed. note: The term "consciousness" was added by the editor; the Dutch simply states *wij kunnen . . . de overtuinging niet van ons zetten* (lit., "We cannot . . . set aside from us the conviction.")

3. That empiricism is unable to account for the necessary character of many truths is also manifested in the limitation of the task of science to which it has come in positivism. According to positivistic thinking, science consists only in the knowledge of phenomena in their mutual relationship because the origin, essence, and final purpose of things is completely unknown. We must restrict ourselves to the knowledge of the relative because the absolute does not exist, or if it does, it is an unknown and inaccessible region. For this reason, no theology, no metaphysics, no rational psychology, or normative ethics exists. There are no universal truths. The concrete is true.[13] That two times two equals four may be true for us right now, but it is impossible to prove that the sum is not more or less for other beings under other circumstances. The true, the good, and the beautiful are not eternal ideas but mutable entities. What is good today can be evil tomorrow. Only custom and heredity lead us today to accept the idea that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points.
4. But empiricism cannot suffice with even this. [80] If there is nothing other than empirical, contingent truths, then the distinction between sensory observation and thought, between lower and higher cognitive faculties—in other words, between human beings and animals—is fundamentally lost. Empiricism then attempts to explain thinking in terms of observation. And although Locke accepted an internal perception alongside external sensory observation as a source of knowledge, Condillac cleared away this internal perception and considered all thoughts to be nothing more than transformed sensations.[14] Human understanding and reason do not have the capacity to penetrate to the essence of things and trace their logical content. Human beings can perceive

[13] DO: *Het werkelijke is waar*.

[14] FrO: *sensations transformées*.

only phenomena and classify and categorize them for the sake of convenience. But these classifications have no objective reality; they are present only subjectively in our consciousness. Thus, we humans were not created for eternity but are fundamentally like animals—namely, sensory and temporal beings.

5. The final conclusion of empiricism is then materialism. The whole conscious life of the human soul is explained in terms of sensuality; all that we know has its origin in observation.[15] With Condillac, for example, that observation is viewed provisionally as an original psychic element that assumes a soul. That is the only point where something other and higher than matter is accepted. But if everything can be explained as empirical, sensual, and mechanical anyway, the question automatically arises whether that one psychic element could not also be conceived of in the same manner. If the soul literally owes everything it has, both formally as well as materially, to the senses, it goes without saying that we should suspect that the soul itself is nothing behind its conscious phenomena, that it is completely absorbed by these phenomena, and thus is to be explained entirely in terms of sensuality, which in the final analysis means in terms of metabolism. Historically, empiricism has always led to this.[16]

Rationalism

On the other side, *Rationalism* is beset by objections that are no less serious. [81]

1. There can be no doubt that in order to obtain knowledge we are bound to observation.[17] The use of the senses is the only way by which we can attain knowledge and science. Whatever does not

[15] DO: *gewaarwording.*

[16] Hepp note: For more on empiricism, see *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:219–22; 2:62–69.

[17] DO: *aan de waarneming gebonden zijn.*

in some manner come under our observation also cannot be the object of our knowledge. Science is not innate but has to be performed and acquired. Someone who is missing one or another sense cannot obtain knowledge of those things perceived by that sense. A blind person cannot evaluate colors and a deaf person cannot rate tones.

2. Even more strongly, the highest level of knowledge available to humans always retains a sensory character. Our entire way of thinking is material. Also, when we think and speak about eternal, immutable truths, we employ forms and images that are borrowed from the visible world. We cannot speak about God in any way other than in a human manner. Eternal things cannot be spoken of except with measurements of time. We always conceive of the spiritual using the image of the material. All this would not be explicable if ideas were innate and originated in our spririt apart from the visible world.
3. Rationalism always proceeds, either consciously or unconsciously, from a false dualism. It sets spirit and matter, body and soul sharply over against each other and supposes that neither one can affect the other. Therefore, it denies that the soul receives knowledge from the external world. However, such a dualism directly conflicts with experience. Soul and body are not two independent entities mechanically linked to each other, but together they comprise the one, undivided person. That person is not partly sensual and partly rational but is both together in the unity of personhood. A person's soul does not live outside or next to the body but in the body. A person's body is necessary as the organ for the life of the soul, as well as for consciousness and for knowing.

4. Nor has rationalism been able to explain exactly how ideas become present in the human spirit and just how they are brought to expression from the spirit. Plato thought that prior to its uniting with the body, the soul had existed in heaven, [82] where it had beheld ideas, had taken the knowledge of these ideas along and was able to bring them to expression through memory. Later, the theories of occasionalism (Arnold Geulinex), of beholding ideas in God (Nicolas Malebranche), and of the notion of pre-established harmony[18] (Leibniz) were invented to give some account for the way ideas originate. But all these explanations are equally unsatisfactory and give the impression of desperation and last resort. No one is conscious of always having possessed ideas and of drawing them from within by pure recall. No one, in fact, has ever obtained ideas in this way.
5. Rationalism leads consistently to idealistic, acosmic pantheism. If the soul is mechanically connected to the body, if it produces all its content from itself, if matter and spirit cannot affect each other, then the idea is obvious that the sensory world is mere appearance without objective reality. As spirit, God then cannot affect the world, and therefore both must stand alongside each other in eternal dualism, or the world must be understood as the appearance of God. This is what happens in pantheism. God, the absolute reason, is the single, eternal substance that receives in the world its constantly changing form. The self produces the not-self and later takes it back again into itself. The spirit evaporates into matter, and thereafter returns to itself. Just as empiricism thus ends with the denial of the spirit, rationalism ends with the negation of matter. Neither of these two solves the problem, and instead, the terms constituting the problem are obliterated.[19]

[18] LO: *harmonia praestabilita.*

[19] Hepp note: For more on Rationalism see *RD*, 1:154–55, 214–19, 512–19.

Kant's Attempted Reconciliation

In all times people have resolved to avoid the one error as well as the other, and to do justice to both subject and object, the self and the not-self, spirit and matter, body and soul. In the more recent philosophy it is especially Immanuel Kant who took on the task of such a reconciliation. Animated by the drive to avoid both dogmatism as well as empiricism, in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), Kant made it his goal to investigate which elements of our knowledge [83] stemmed from our own spirit and which elements come to us from our sense perceptions.

Briefly, the result of his investigation came to this: Of the three distinguishable functions in the faculty of knowing, the *sense perception*[20] from the outset bore the forms of space and time; the *understanding*[21] bore the categories of quality, quantity, relations, and modality; and *reason*,[22] as the capacity for principles, bore the idea of the unconditional, i.e., the psychological, cosmological, and theological idea.

With Descartes, Leibniz, and others, Kant was defintely correct in thinking that universal and necessary truths could not possibly arise from sense perception. In connection with this, he was all the more correct, because he regarded the a priori character of these truths in a very healthy sense, thereby avoiding Platonic realism. That is, Kant did not accept that these truths were unquestionably present in the human soul at birth. But by the a priori elements of our knowledge, Kant understands not the kind that are innate in the proper sense and lie ready in our soul at birth, but he understands them in a logical sense and in connection with them, thinks of strictly necessary, universally valid, inherently clear and certain elements of knowledge that unfold in and with experience, but not out of

[20] DO: *zinnelijke aanschouwing.*

[21] DO: *verstand.*

[22] DO: *rede.*

experience, and therefore are independent of experience, being true and certain in themselves.

Although Kant was fully in the right over against empiricism in acknowledging the a priori elements in our knowledge, he nonetheless committed the serious mistake of acribing only a subjective, phenomenal significance to those a priori elements. The various forms, originating in thinking and not in sense perception, are applicable only in the world of experienced phenomena, but not to the things themselves. Whether Kant recognized the reality of things-in-themselves and rejected only their knowability, or whether he saw in them only limiting concepts and pure thought-objects,[23] is a point of serious difference among his interpreters. But in any case, it is certain that Kant did not express himself definitely or unambiguously about the matter. Thus, even though he accepted the reality of the things-in-themselves, he considered them to be only thinkable but not knowable, and he limited the application [84] of the forms of space and time as well as the Categories to the world of phenomena.

Likewise,[24] with respect to the content of psychological, cosmological, and theological ideas, Kant taught that theoretical reason could not prove the existence of any objective reality to which they correspond. Human understanding was restricted to knowledge of the sensual world and could not penetrate to the essence of things or elevate itself to the invisible and eternal. By means of this antithesis that Kant made between subject and object, between the forms of thinking and being, he in fact ended up in empiricism, which restricted knowledge to the objects of sensory observation. But Kant's empiricism was at the same time idealism insofar as the a priori elements of our knowledge were grounded only in the subject, and their correspondence with the forms of being[25] is not susceptible to any proof.

[23] DO: *grensbegrippen en loutere Gedankendinge.*

[24] DO: *evenzoo.*

[25] DO: *zijnsvormen.*

Kant's attempt to reconcile rationalism and empiricism, therefore, went nowhere. In fact, instead of effecting reconciliation, he brought about great confusion.

Another Attempt at Reconciliation

The starting point and guideline of our investigation must be the undeniable fact that our knowledge consists of two sorts of components that are bound together, a priori knowledge and a posteriori knowledge. Some components have their origin in sensory perception and others do not.

In specific instances it may be difficult to identify the boundaries between these two, but that in no way diminishes the certainty that these boundaries exist. There are universal, necessary, and immutable truths that cannot derive their character from the fluctuating world of visible things but stand firm, prior to experience, abide in themselves, and are the indispensible condition[26] for everything that exists. These truths do not include that the world exists, but if the world exists it must be subject to these truths. They contain no material content but have only a formal character. These truths are not the contents of one or another science, but they are the axioms from which every science inevitably arises and must arise. They are the metaphysical presuppositions of thing, substance, quality, cause, truth and falsehood, good and evil—the presuppositions upon which all human knowledge is implicitly built.

This must be maintained against, first of all, all those who want to see [85] the whole world—nature with all its phenomena, history with all its facts—as a system of metaphysical, a priori truths, as a dialectical game of logical ideas that can be constructed apart from observation from thinking alone. All the truths that bear a universal, necessary, a priori character have a formal and ideal nature.

But further, it is highly important to investigate how these universal truths come to be realized by the human spirit. Once again, it is firmly

[26] LO: *conditio sine qua non.*

established that we make no progress when we claim that they are innate. For no one can posit that these truths lie ready-made[27] in human consciousness at birth. After all, a person has to live a long time before becoming conscious of these truths in general and then of specific truths. So the question involves how someone obtains a realization of these truths, along what path one makes them the content of their consciousness. And then, once again, it is indisputable that people form these truths under the influence of their perception[28] of the world within and outside themselves.

We leave aside here the question whether that perception is the source of our becoming conscious of these truths or only the occasion for it. The fact remains that human beings gradually learn these truths in connection with the phenomena[29] that confront them. Truths are not empty forms that are filled in by the external world existing in isolation; they are not thought-forms[30] possessing only subjective necessity and requiring great amazement that the phenomena fit into them precisely this way. But they are simultaneously forms-of-being,[31] whereby the things themselves exist outside of us. Universals are not "after the fact"[32] as empiricism maintains; nor are universals "before the fact"[33] as rationalism dreams. Rather, they are "in the fact,"[34] and then in both the subject and the object. Now that the world itself exists, it exists in those forms that are the indispensable condition[35] of all that exists. And that is the reason the human spirit is capable of deriving them.

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[27] DO: *kant en klaar.*

[28] DO: *waarneming.*

[29] DO: *verschijnselen.*

[30] DO: *denkvormen.*

[31] DO: *zijnsvormen.*

[32] LO: *post rem.*

[33] LO: *ante rem.*

[34] LO: *in re.*

[35] LO: *conditio sine qua non.*

The old proverb is thus completely true: "All intellectual knowledge begins with sensory perception."[36] Human beings are sensory beings. Human nature necessarily includes a body, and through our bodies we are tied to our entire sensory nature and are dependent on it. Therefore, just as we must take food [86] from outside ourselves in order to eat, just as we have to open our eyes in order to see, so we must observe as accurately and soberly as possible to obtain knowledge in any area of science.[37] Whoever misunderstands or denies this lapses into rationalism or mysticism, severs humans from God's revelation in nature and Scripture, and makes humans intellectually and ethically autonomous. And such we are not. As creatures we are dependent, and as earthly we are from the earth, and we are tied to the earth. We must live by that which is given; in order to have, we must first receive.

However, even though we must fundamentally repudiate the notion of innate knowledge in this sense, human beings do contribute something of themselves at birth. We cannot see before we open our eyes, but we are born with the capacity[38] for seeing. We are incapable of knowledge before we observe and perceive, but we are born with the capacity for knowing. The proverb ,"There is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses,"[39] must not be misrepresented in an empiricist spirit, but must be qualified, as Leibniz did, with the words "except the intellect itself."[40] The faculty of knowing itself is an original and innate gift, not only the lower but also the higher, to which understanding and reason belong. It is through this higher capacity that human beings are built to discover eternal, unchangeable truths in visible things, truths that are the foundation

[36] LO: *omnis cognitio intellectualis incipit a sensu.* Ed. note: This is one of the rare places in Bavinck's writing where he (or Hepp?) provides a full Dutch translation of the Latin proverb: *alle kennis des verstands begint met de zinnelijke waarneming.*

[37] DO: *wetenschap.*

[38] DO: *vermogen.*

[39] LO: *nihil est in intellectu, quod non prius fuerit in sensu.*

[40] LO: *nisi ipse intellectus.*

for all visible things. We do not derive these truths from ourselves apart from all observation; nor is sense perception merely an occasion when or a cause by which we produce them from our own spirit. For these truths are not thought-forms[41] with only subjective necessity but they are also forms of being,[42] the forms in which all things exist.

On the other hand, sense perception is not the cause or source of a priori truths, for the human spirit does not passively receive truths like the retina receives the image of some physical object. The human spirit is active in the discovery of these truths. We ourselves derive those universal truths from particular events. We discover the invisible in the visible, the eternal in the temporal, the logical in the factual. It is not necessary to experience countless phenomena to form these truths. They do not need to be [87] confirmed innumerable times by experience in order to be convinced of their universal, necessary validity. Sometimes a single perception is sufficient for someone to have those truths brought to their consciousness. We do not know the multiplication tables at birth; we must learn them. But as soon as we learn that two times two is four, we are convinced of the truth and necessity of that truth.

So perception[43] always comes first, but with that perception comes the intuition that discovers the law, the idea, or the logical in the perceived phenomenon, and in this way leads an individual to progress from lower to higher levels of knowledge. When therefore we see the necessity of truths, this happens not only because we are subjectively required to do so by our unique psychic makeup but also because we are, at the same time, compelled to do so by the objective necessity that confronts us from reality.

That this occurs in this way, that subject and object encounter each other in that way and correlate with each other, has its ultimate basis in the fact that both have their origin in the same God who created the reality

[41] DO: *denkvormen.*

[42] DO: *zijnsvormen.*

[43] DO: *waarneming.*

outside of us and the laws of thought within us, and who placed both of them in organic connection with each other so that they correlate with each other. As the compendium of nature, the human person is oriented and related to the entire world. For us humans, all creation is our family, and we ourselves are God's progeny. Just as there is no tiny piece of matter in the human body that does not appear elsewhere in creation, so too there is nothing in the soul that is not related to the world beyond it. There is one Logos who created both humanity and the world in relation to each other and for each other. It is in that same Logos that all things have their existence and all things rest. This susceptibility, this aptitude for understanding the world, is innate.[44]

From this it follows that although we come into the world naked, nevertheless from the beginning we carry within us various capacities, aptitudes, and habits, and we are arranged wondrously richly. Just as later in connection with the faculty of desiring, all striving, desires, etc. can be traced back to an original *drive*,[45] so too here, all the activities of the faculty of knowing—sensing, perceiving, recalling, thinking, etc.—[88] point back to original capacities.[46]

To speak of innate ideas[47] is thus in part far too broad because actual ideas are not innnate, and in part far too narrow because there is much more that is innate in us than the capacity to form ideas. From the beginning of time, human beings have been equipped with those capacities that later stood them in good stead for incorporating into their consciousness the objective world in all its diverse forms of existence. We are oriented in such a way that we can perceive the sensory world, investigate its phenomena in their multifaceted relations, and discover the logical order in things,

[44] DO: *aangeboren.*

[45] GerO: *Trieb.*

[46] DO: *oorspronkelijke hebbelijkheden.*

[47] DO: *aangeboren begrippen.*

elevate ourselves to the ideas of the true, the good, and the beautiful, and even ascend to God.

> Were not the eye so like the sun,
> How could it then endure the light?
> If God's own powers were not in us,
> How could we feel divine delight?[48]

"In your light do we see light" (Ps. 36:9). Thus there is some validity for speaking of such innate human capacities for sensory perception, for understanding, and for reason.

In the past, theorists distinguished especially two kinds of capacities: a logical and an ethical. But in this manner we can also speak of aesthetic, religious, and other capabilities. We humans are so constituted that we can perceive and know all those multiple worlds, and we are thus related to them. There is diversity in the world, and in this way, also in the human person.

This is not to say that every person will sooner or later become aware of this capacity and be able to account for it. That is the case only for a reflective few. But it is to say that when individuals perceive, think, judge, and act, they immediately apply those principles that automatically lie embedded within the innate capacities, and those principles automatically come to light when those capacities are exercised. Untutored people also apply the laws of logic in their reasoning even though they have never heard of logic. And pagans "by nature do what the law requires" (Rom. 2:14).

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[48] GerO: *Wär nicht das Auge sonnenhaft,*
Die Somme könnt' es nie erblicken;
Läg nicht in uns des Gottes eigne Kraft,
Wie könnt uns Göttliches entzücken?

Ed. note: Neither Bavinck nor Hepp provided a source for this, but it is from Goethe. Both the corrected German original and translation are taken from *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: Proverbs*, ed. and trans. Robert B. Sowby, 2nd ed. (Morrisville, NC: Lulu Press, 2014), 189.

B. Sensation[49]

All these natural capacities do not reach development, they do not transition into actions, and they receive no content except through the influence of the world within us or outside of us. [89] The life of knowing begins with sensation.[50] These sensations originate in the soul when some stimulus affects the nerves in our senses and the resulting nerve vibrations are transferred to the brain (external or sensory sensations),[51] or when an internal physical or psychic condition of weariness, pain, hunger, thirst, or desire is brought to our knowledge in the same way via the sensory nerves (internal sensations, which include the desire for life and muscle sensations,[52] etc.).

The physiological conditions for the origins of the sensations in the soul have been researched very carefully in recent years. Nowadays people know the boundaries within which alone a sensation can arise in our soul. A certain number of vibrations must occur within seconds if we are to receive through our eye or ear the sensations of light or sound. The lowest limit of the number of vibrations with which that sensation can begin is called, according to Gustav Fechner, *Reizschwelle* (stimulation threshold), and the upper limit of vibrations, when sensations cease, is called *Reizhöhe* (stimulation height). We are limited beings; both the very small and the very large escape our observation. Furthermore, it is also known in what manner and to what extent a stimulation between these two limits should be strengthened in order to be noticed by us. Just as a weight I hold in my hand must be increased by a certain weight if the increase is to be noticed by me, so too a stimulation must receive a particular increase if a sensation

[49] DO: *Gewaarwording*.

[50] Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck adds a parenthesis with four terms (αἰσθησις, *sensus*, *Empfindung*, *sensation*).

[51] GerO: *Aussen-oder Sinnesempfindungen.*

[52] GerO: *Innenemfindungen, Lebensgefühl, Muskelempfindungen.*

is to arise in my soul. We tend to get used to everything and need stronger stimuli to the degree that we become increasingly dulled. According to the Weber-Fechner Law, an *Unterscheidsschwelle* (differentiating threshold) exists between the stimulation threshold and the stimulation height, and this differentiating threshold is proportional to the strength of the stimuli (*Reizstärke*). Finally, the time has also been calculated that elapses between the stimulation of the nerves in the senses and the origin of the sensation in the soul. For this, a minimum amount of time is always necessary, which is called the *Zeitschwelle* (the time threshold). When we eat or drink something, we need to wait for a moment after the food or drink touches our tongue [90] before we sense the taste and can account for it. The faster that impressions follow each other, the longer the time needed for that to happen. The longer they last, the more our sense is dulled. A teacher in school no longer notices the innocent breathing of children. There is also a *Ermüdungschwelle* (weariness threshold), above which the soul no longer becomes aware.

Sensations are thus dependent on all sorts of physiological and physical conditions. The quality of sensations is dependent on the number of vibrations per second; air-vibrations between 16 and 40,000 per second produce sound sensations;[53] ether-vibrations between 450 and 780 billion awaken sensations of light.[54] Similarly, sensations of taste, smell, and touch are each determined by a specific number of vibrations. In the same way the strength or intensity of sensations depends directly on the magnitude[55]

[53] Ed. note: In today's nomenclature, the range of human hearing is usually given as 20Hz to 20kHz (Source: *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Hearing range").

[54] Ed. note: The light that is visible to the human eye, the "visible spectrum," is measured in wavelengths and frequencies. The human eye typically responds to frequencies between 430 and 770 THz (Source: *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Visible spectrum").

[55] DO: *grootte*.

of the vibrations; a sound that has the same pitch may be soft or loud; the difference is in the magnitude of the vibrations.[56]

However important this all may be, the origin and essence of sensation are psychic phenomenon, and as such, it is different in kind from nerve stimulation. The transition from nerve stimulation to sensation is a mystery. We don't know the relation between the two, and we know absolutely nothing about why or in what manner a specific number of vibrations provides us with a sensation of sound or light. Is the sensation a psychic sign, image, or copy of what is occurring in the physical world? Or is it a reaction, a response of the soul to the vibrations in the nerves? Does sensation give objective knowledge of reality, or is it purely subjective? There is no end to the questions, but the answers are beyond our reach.

Even the so-called specific energy of the senses remains entirely unexplained. We know that the sensations provided by means of the five senses are distinguished from each other in kind. Each sense has its own task and leads us to know the world from its unique perspective. With the eye we see a world of light and color; with the ear we hear a world of sounds; and through smell, taste, and touch [91] we relate to things through chemical and mechanical means. The same blow on the body yields pain via the sense of touch, a sensation of light through the eye, and a sensation of noise through the ear. And these various sensations remain connected to their respective sense organs; we do not taste light, smell sound, see flavor, or hear touch.

But why and how each sense has such a particular task is completely unknown to us. We do not know why the eye provides only sensations

[56] Wundt, *Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie,* vol. 1, esp. ch. 8; Volkmar, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, 1:212–333; Harald Höffding, *Psychologie in Umrissen auf Grundlage der Erfahrung*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1893), 132–160; Richard Wahle, *Das Ganze der Philosophie und ihr Ende* (Wien: W. Braumüller, 1894), 65–71, 186–209; Friedrich Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie* (Stuttgart : J. G. Cotta, 1896), 169–209; B. H. C. K. Van der Wijck, *Zielkunde,* vol.1 (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1872), chapter 4, especially pp. 247 ff. [*BdP*[1], 71, n. 40].

connected to light and the ear only sensations of sound. Does the soul interpret various impressions differently as they are transmitted by the different sense organs? But then there has to be a reason why the soul receives one set of nerve vibrations through the eye as a sensation of light and another set through the ear as sound. Many have argued that the vibrations that affect our various senses are qualitatively identical and differ only quantitatively. But the specific energies of the senses can no better be accounted for from the point of view of the subject. The sensation of red is not itself red; it is itself something specifically different from the physical phenomena preceding it.

It seems that all we can say comes down to this: On the one hand, a sensation cannot be a pure product or effect of nerve vibrations in which the soul acts in a completely passive manner because nothing can exist in an effect that is not present in the cause. On the other hand, the soul, although active in forming sensations, does not function arbitrarily and is bound to the objective world—a world knowable by means of the senses.

C. Perception[57]

From the moment of our birth, an unstoppable stream of sensations presses in this manner continuously upon our soul every moment. Most sensations never reach our consciousness and pass by virtually without a trace. But others, for some reason or another, draw our attention. With the awakening of the life of knowing within a human person, the first impact of the object goes forth; [91] something outside of us impinges upon us and provides us with a sensation. Nonetheless, through all those countless sensations that arise within us, the soul is still not overwhelmed; it is awakened by them and elevates itself above them.

[57] DO: *waarneming*.

Some sensations stimulate the soul to attentiveness. Attentiveness is that activity of the soul by which it isolates one sensation (representation, thought) from the others, directing the soul's complete attention to that sensation and making it stand out clearly to the soul's consciousness. Although we humans have an aptitude for such attentiveness, it is nonetheless especially a matter of practice. To call one's spirit back from its absentmindedness, to collect one's thoughts, and to focus them on a single point is an art that must be learned. It is a characteristic of thinking to hold on to a single thought and to follow it to its ultimate conclusion. Although Buffon exaggerates when he says that "genius is a long patience,"[58] there is much truth in what he says. Attentiveness tenses the body's muscles and nerves, sharpens the senses, engages the spirit, and leads people to dedicate themselves with all their power to one or more sensations or representations. A pupil becomes attentive when a teacher tells an anecdote; we all become attentive when we hear our name called, when something is personally important to us, when a sensation fascinates us. In religion, too, "to hearken [is better] than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22 KJV).[59]

Through attentiveness, sensation transitions to perception and perception to apperception. The roaring of the sea that we hear is composed of millions of waterdrops; we have only a perception of the latter and an apperception of the former. There are many sensations and perceptions that never reach the level of our consciousness at all or do so very weakly.

[58] FrO: *le génie est une longue patience*. Ed. note: This is a famous citation from the French naturalist, mathematician, cosmologist, and encyclopædist, Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon (1707–1788). Benjamin Disraeli said it like this: "Patience is a necessary ingredient of genius." Benjamin Disraeli, *Wit and Wisdom of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield* (London: Longmans, Green, 1883), 243.

[59] Théodule Ribot, *Psychologie de l'attention* (Paris: Alcan, 1889); Alfons Pilzecker, *Die Lehre von der sinnlichen Aufmerksamkeit* (München: Straub, 1889); Harry Eugene Kohn, *Zur Theorie der Aufmerksamkeit* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1895); Wladyslaw Heinrich, *Die moderne physiologische Psychologie in Deutschland: Eine historisch-kritische Untersuchung mit besonderer Berüchsichtigung des Problems der Aufmerksamkeit* (Zürich: E. Speidel, 1895); Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, 437–47; 501–13 [*BdP*[1], 74, n. 41].

They bear a subjective character and they are not yet identified as external objects with which we relate. We pay attention to the sensation, noticing at most only the sensation itself and not its causes. But if we do connect a sensation[60] with its cause, then we perceive[61] and we obtain a representation.[62]

There is, therefore, a major distinction between sensing and perceiving. With sensation, our soul is passive and relatively pure; with perception, it functions actively. Sensations form a variegated mass [93] crowding into each other and merging, whereas perception assumes that one or more sensations are isolated from the others and exist by themselves. Sensations have no relation to objects, but perceptions establish a connection between themselves and their causes. Sensations supply impressions, ideas, but perceptions provide representations.[63] Even our language clearly indicates the distinction between sensation and perception: seeing and looking (viewing, noticing), hearing and listening (understanding), tasting and savoring, touching and feeling, sniffing and smelling.[64]

For these reasons it is also true that we orient ourselves by means of perception in the world we inhabit. Perception connects the psychic that is going on within us with its causes in the world inside or outside of us. A newborn child does have sensations but no perceptions. The child receives all kinds of impressions but does not know how or from where these

[60] DO: *gewaarwording.*

[61] DO: *waarnemen.*

[62] DO: *voorstelling.*

[63] DO: *Gewaarwordingen geven indrukken, beseffen, maar waarnemingen verschaffen voorstellingen.* Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck added a parenthesis with the following terms: φαντασια, *phantasma*, *species sensibilis*, *Vorstellung, Anschaung*.

[64] DO: *zien en kijken (schouwen, bemerken), hooren en luisteren (verstaan), smaken en proeven, voelen en tasten, ruiken en snuffelen.* Ed. note: In the last two pairs, the terms were reversed in the translation for the sake of parallelism. Bavinck then repeats the list twice, first in French and then in German (using the Dutch conjunction "en" between the terms): FrO: *voir* en *regarder, entendre* en écouter, *toucher* en *palper*, *sentir* en *flairer*, *goûter* en *déguster*; GerO: *hören* en *horchen*, *sehen* en *schauen*, *riechen* en *spüren*, *schmecken* en *kosten.*

have come. A newborn is not yet at home in the world. But gradually the child awakens, begins to notice and to perceive. The child distinguishes one voice and connects it to his or her mother. The child feels a pain and seeks its cause in a stone or a hammer. That is, the child projects and localizes his or her sensations, connecting them with the outside world and determining the place from which they proceeded. In this context, there is a serious conflict between nativists and empiricists[65] about whether the spatial representation[66] is innate—that is, whether sensations possess local particularity by nature and immediately, or whether they come from the outside or through experience and practice.[67] But this conflict disappears in the view of those who acknowledge that space and time are the necessary categories or forms of existence for all that is created, and that one and same Logos created both subject and object, spirit and matter, the self and the non-self with a view toward and a connection with each other. Subjects themselves, with all their sensations and perceptions, live and move in the categories of space and time, and the same is true for the objects from which the sensations arise. Nonetheless, as with everything, practice is required for this localizing. Our sense of touch plays a signficant role in this. [94] The sensations, which are brought to us by various senses and which differ depending on the place from which they come (local indicators), serve us well. The sense of sight provides strong support. But all this would not give us the representation of space and time unless the subjects themselves with all their sensations existed in these forms.

[65] Ed. note: This debate is more commonly spoken of today as "nature versus nurture," with nativism arguing that humans are born with key innate traits (nature) and empiricists claiming that all our knowledge comes from experience. Bavinck's very complex sentence here was reduced.

[66] DO: *ruimtevoorstelling*.

[67] Julius Baumann, *Die Lehren von Raum: Zeit und Mathematik in der neueren Philosophie nach ihrem Ganzen Einfluss dargestellt und beurtheilt*, 2 vols. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1868–69) [*BdP*[1], 76, n. 42].

All these capacities, impressions, notions, sensations, and representations we have viewed thus far, taken together, comprise the basic capital of our faculty of knowing. They are acquired in the early years. What is learned later is constructed on this foundation. They are freshly introduced into the soul; they lie at the soul's deepest level, remain the longest, and have the most far-reaching effects. Until the end of their lives, people remain under the impressions received in their youth. For that reason, no one undertakes any endeavor while being free of presuppositions, least of all the endeavor of science. To be presuppositionless,[68] one would have to get rid of oneself, since these notions and impressions, sensations, and representations are of all sorts and have connections to everything. They are physical and psychic, religious, ethical and aesthetic. And they precede all conscious life, reflection, and thinking by quite some time. It is indeed an impoverished psychology that limits the faculty of knowing to understanding or to reason. The richest and deepest life, also of the faculty of knowing, lies behind understanding and reason in the human *heart*. This is affirmed by Scripture: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23 KJV). Out of the heart proceed thoughts and deliberations. Folly has its origin in the heart. The philosophy a person has, Fichte rightly said, depends on the kind of person one is. One's philosophy is nothing but the history of one's heart. The tree precedes the fruit, and doing follows being.[69]

D. Unconscious Representations[70]

Leibniz is generally credited for directing attention to unconscious representations and applying [95] the distinction between perception and

[68] GerO: *Vorauszetzunglos.*

[69] LO/DO: *operari sequitur esse*; *het werken volgt op het zijn.*

[70] Hepp note: Cf. "Het Onbewuste" in *Verzamelde Opstellen*, 183–207 ET: "The Unconscious," in *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society,* 175–98.

apperception to them.[71] Eduard von Hartmann acknowledges that he came to the idea of the unconscious through Leibniz and discerned its great significance.[72] Indeed this unconscious activity of the soul in the faculty of knowing was previously almost completely overlooked in psychology. Scholasticism did speak of consciousness in a general sense and also considered the reflection of the knowing subject about itself (self-consciousness). But that there existed activities of the faculty of knowing apart from consciousness was not considered. Nevertheless, it is not correct to say that Leibniz was the one who discovered unconscious representations. Long before Leibniz, Plotinus, among others, very clearly brought these unconscious activites of the soul to light;[73] mysticism has always regarded them as the goal of all the soul's striving.

At any rate, the question of unconscious representations is once again the order of the day, and it is, in fact, a question of the highest interest. To answer it correctly, however, the need is urgent to have a clear notion of what consciousness is, for the entire issue is dominated by that notion.

Sometimes the term *consciousness* is employed with such a broad meaning that it includes, in general, psychic sensation, perception, representation, etc., in distinction from the absolutely unconscious life of a plant. Having representations in itself, apart from anything more, is then called consciousness. At that point, it is clear that there are, or even can be, no unconscious representations. On the other hand, consciousness is sometimes taken so narrowly that it coincides with self-consciousness; in this case, many representations can be labelled as unconscious, whereas they are

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[71] G. W. Leibniz, *Monadologie* (Wien: Braumüller und Seidel, 1847), § 14; idem., *Nouveaux Essais* (Paris: C. Delagrave, 1886), II/1 (§ 10) [ET: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, trans. and ed. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 111–13] [*BdP*[1], 78, n. 43].

[72] Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophy of the Unconscious,* 1:18 [*BdP*[1], 78, n. 44].

[73] Cf. Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, vol. 3, *Die nacharistotelische Philosophie, Zweite Abteilung,* 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Fues, 1881), 584, 597, 614 [*BdP*[1], 78, n. 45].

nevertheless properly associated with some consciousness. Consciousness, however, is clearly distinguished both from having representations only, and from self-consciousness. Consciousness exists not merely in the soul possessing and reworking representations, but it is possessing and reworking representations in such a way that the soul at the same time "knows" itself to be the subject of the possessing and reworking. From the other side consciousness and self-consciousness are distinct from one another in this way: in consciousness subjects relate their sensations[74] to themselves and react to them [96] in such a way that they come to feel as individuals, like unique, distinct beings. However, in this connection subjects do not yet rise, as happens with self-consciousness, to the *I-Awareness*,[75] to the level of considering oneself as both subject and object and identifying as a self.

When these definitions are kept in mind, the question about unconscious representations is not difficult to answer. That the soul performs many of its activities within a person entirely unconsciously is beyond dispute. All our vegetative life provides evidence for this; circulation of the blood, breathing, and digestion have the soul as their foundation and yet occur completely outside of our consciousness.

But a number of facts demonstrate that the soul can have representations in the same way and be active with them without our having any consciousness of the process. Sleeping persons betray through their gestures, movements, laughter, weeping, and cries of fear that they are occupied by very specific and lively representations, and after awaking they nevertheless know nothing about them through their recall. Sleepwalkers have the clearest perceptions and representations, they know the precise path to walk, make dangerous jumps, hold on to objects, wait at the edge of a precipice, and so on, without being aware of any of it at the moment or later. Hypnotized people have representations and act accordingly but they

[74] DO: *gewaarwordingen.*

[75] GerO: *Ich-Erfassung.*

themselves know nothing of it. Intoxicated people try to walk in a straight line, to swerve in order to avoid something, and to stand up, and later haven't the slightest recollection of these actions. Many sick people with high fever become delirious without any consciousness of it. And with mental illness, consciousness sometimes disappears partially or completely.

This unconscious activity of the soul with its representations occurs, however, not only while we are sleeping, hypnotized, intoxicated, or ill; also when we are awake, sober, and healthy, the soul continues this activity. It can happen during a conversation with someone when we are not fully paying attention because our thoughts are directed elsewhere; thus we really do not hear what that person is saying, but we still know later on what we were told. We pass through a street paying no attention at all to the people, houses, names, or advertisements, but later we still recall one or more things we encountered. In writing we unwittingly make an error but nonetheless subsequently [97] know that an error occurred. A soldier may notice nothing of his wound in the heat of the battle. Putting on our clothes, wearing them, sitting on a chair, seeing some object, hearing a certain noise, reading letters are things to which we become so accustomed that we fail to notice them at all, whereas the sensations of them nonetheless penetrate into our soul; as soon as we reflect, we know that. Many psychologists speak about this in terms of double-consciousness,[76] sometimes adding even a third or fourth level of consciousness.[77] But all this activity of the soul is far more subconscious;[78] it precedes consciousness, and it does not penetrate consciousness.

Next, there are also activities of the soul that incorporate consciousness, but not self-consciousness. This is the case with animals. Animals sense and perceive; an animal also senses that it is a distinct being and

[76] GerO; *Doppelbewusstsein, Doppelich.*

[77] Max Dessoir, *Das Doppel-ich*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: E. Günther, 1896), 29–30 [*BdP*[1], 81, n. 46].

[78] GerO: *unterbewusst*.

relates its representations and actions to itself. An animal sees, hears, hungers, thirsts, suffers pain, and feels afflicted by sadness and is seized by it. We see the same with children, who view themselves as private beings and yet speak of themselves in the third person. Similar conditions can occur in sleeping, sleepwalking, or hypnotized individuals, as well as in the ordinary wakeful lives of healthy people. At that point, the subject of these representations and activities is the soul, not as the intellective but as the sensitive soul[79] (the so-called animal soul or sensory soul[80]). With sensations, representations, emotions, etc., we are conscious of ourselves as being sensitive beings. It is a "perception of the sensitive processes in a specific (or individual) gathering together and relating to an actual individual person and thus to one's own individual self."[81] However, these activities do not yet rise to the level of self-consciousness, which will be discussed later.

All these facts and events demonstrate that there is an unexpectedly rich life in the faculty of knowing preceding understanding and reason, preceding even consciousness and self-consciousness. Understanding and reason represent so little of the essence of humanity and so little of the entire contents of the faculty of knowing, that they are but particular activities of that faculty and, as such, begin their work only after the fundamental sensations, perceptions, and representations are laid down broadly and deeply, also into the unconscious. This does not, however, [98] rob

[79] LO: *intellectiva, sensitiva.*

[80] DO: *dierenziel, zinnelijke ziel.*

[81] GerO: *Innewerden der sensitiven Vorgänge in individueller Zusammenfassung und Beziehung auf das eigene Individuum und damit des eigenen Individuums selber.* M. Kohlhofer, "Zur Controverse über bewusste und unbewusste psychische Acte," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 10 (1897): 59. On the unconscious, see further, Adolf von Heydebreck, *Ueber den Begriff der unbewussten Vorstellung* (Halle: Pfeffer, 1884); Volkmar, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, 1:168–77 (§ 25); Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie,* 91–128; Olga Plumacher, *Der Kampf um's Unbewusste,* 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Haacke, 1890); William James, *The Principles of Psychology,* 1:162–76, 199–213; J. P. N. Land, *Inleiding tot de Wijsbegeerte* ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1889), 123–47 [*BdP*[1], 81, n. 47].

intellect and reason of their value. It shall subsequently be shown that it is precisely into this chaos of representations that they have to bring order and rule. But intellect and reason are limited to their own task and must be satisfied with that. Human beings are more than their intellect.

E. Association of Representations

There are so many and various representations that arise within a person that no one can hold them all together simultaneously in one's consciousness. Human consciousness is far too limited and weak to hold the many differing representations at the same time. A single representation—for example, pain—can push all others into the background and absorb the whole of one's consciousness. The more such a representation pushes all others aside, the more that consciousness is concentrated, narrowed, and sharpened. Conversely, the more representations that are present in consciousness simultaneously, the more that consciousness is broadened but also becomes, to that extent, weaker, more vague and scattered.

Even though we can have only a few representations in consciousness at any particular moment, the others that we had earlier do not entirely disappear from our spirit. Memory, recollection, and imagination testify to the contrary. We disagree with Herbart that representations, having once existed, can never disappear but only sink away out of our consciousness and as soon as the disturbance dissipates, automatically rise up again in one's consciousness. For a representation that has disappeared from consciousness is not thereby actually lost. The human spirit is not a container, and a representation is not some material object that is stored in this container without our knowing it. Instead, our spirit has a disposition, or proficiency, for reproducing representations it once had. Just as the pianist's hand obtains proficiency on the keyboard through practice, so too our soul has or obtains the capacity to form anew earlier representations and, as it were, to recall the representation to consciousness. [99]

So-called "association" plays a significant role in this reproduction of representations. At the lowest level of knowledge that we obtain, various sensations, whether they come to us by one or by more of our senses, are combined into one representation, so that we hear one sound, see one table, taste one flavor. An earlier psychology posited the notion of a particular common sensibility[82] in the human spirit that receives the various sensations obtained by the senses, distinguishes them, and joins them together. Furthermore, everyone knows that when we consciously or unconsciously recall or imagine certain representations, they return in a different set of connections than when they first entered our consciousness.

This type of association between representations was always known and Aristotle identified laws governing its occurrence. But modern psychology, especially since David Hume and David Hartley,[83] has considered this association and reproduction of representations more carefully than was done before. The so-called darkening of representations increasingly came into the forefront, and with this as a matter of course, the association and reproduction of representations had to be discussed more broadly. In particular, Johann Herbart directed his attention to this occurrence of representations. One can say that this is the chief content of his psychological system. According to Herbart, the representations that come into existence can never be lost.. They remain in the soul and are hypostasized into powers, powers that join themselves together in all sorts of ways, support or hinder each another, cause each other to sink below consciousness or rise within consciousness, powers that in these ways wage a life-and-death struggle, as it were, with each other.

This notion of the association of representations in Herbart's system, however, encounters numerous objections.

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[82] Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck parenthetically added a Greek and a Latin term: κοινον αἰσθητηριον; *sensus communis*.

[83] Ed. note: David Hartley (1705–1757) was a philosopher who founded the Associationist school of psychology, "the idea that mental processes operate by the association of one mental state with its successor states" (Source: *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Associationism").

1. It conflicts with Herbart's own view about the origin and essence of a representation. For all representations are products of the soul, brought forth by the soul for its own self-preservation.[84] And yet the representations, after first being formed by the soul, suddenly acquire an independence from the soul, living their own life, and establishing mutual connections themselves as hypostasized powers. In the same way that representations do not enter the soul automatically by themselves, [100] so too they cannot associate with one another independently. The soul that brought forth the representations and whose product they are must also continue to maintain power over them. Representations have no existence in themselves but exist only in and through the soul. They are and remain the soul's representations.
2. Herbart's hypothesis lacks any psychological foundation. Consciousness is not a place or a space at the portal of which the representations wrestle each other to get inside. We know nothing of such a conflict. It is altogether different influences, coming from the outside, that determine which representation is present in our consciousness at a given moment. All sorts of interests, desires, inclinations, passions, decisions, etc., exercise influence on them, direct our attention, and cause one or another representation to arise or disappear. Even in those instances when we have been, as it were, surrendered, without will and without power, to the play of representations—as in a dream, for example—even then Herbart's hypothesis does not hold. For then, too, it is still necessary that the soul not be distracted, aroused, and gripped by something else outside of it. It is necessary that the soul be in a certain degree of rest and indifference with respect to the outside world, and direct itself, consciously or unconsciously, to the internal world of representations present within the soul. And then, which representations

[84] GerO: *Selbsterhaltung.*

rise up and occupy the soul depends in turn not on the greater or lesser strength of the representations, but on the entire condition itself in which the soul is living, on its moods and interests, on its desires and inclinations.

3. It is absolutely true that we often exert ourselves in vain either to banish a representation from our consciousness or to summon another back into our consciousness. But then once again, the cause lies not in the strength or weakness of the representation, but in the strength or weakness of our will. Frequently, we are not masters of ourselves. And when representations crowd into our consciousness or disappear from our consciousness, or when they form various mutual connections, then it seems as if those representations themselves are the active powers, but it is actually the soul itself with its unique [101] situation that brings forth these representations. Nonetheless, the soul does this often unconsciously.

   No one is claiming that the conscious will is the cause for the association of representations. The claim is merely that the cause of associations is to be sought not in the representations, but in the soul itself. This is apparent when we note that in many cases, understanding and will can support and guide the association and reproduction of representations. We are able to reflect and to recall and to a great extent have power over our representations. This would be impossible if the soul were completely passive and the representations themselves, by their immanent power alone, pushed their way into consciousness and fought with and advanced each other. Then the inherently stronger representation would rise to the surface, entirely independently of our will.

4. Herbart's hypothesis leaves unexplained the remarkable fact that we not only have forgotten something but that we also know we have forgotten it. This indeed entails, first, that we have received a representation earlier and, second, that we have possessed that

representation as our representation, that we own it as a moment in our soul, and that we defined ourselves in our relationship to that representation. This is, as it were, a second special act of our consciousness. To the degree that this second action accompanies the reception of a representation, to that degree it is later more easily reproduced by us.

Therefore, everything depends not only on providing representations to ourselves and others but also in taking them up in our consciousness and making them part of ourselves. But if it involves representations that are independently active in their association and reproduction, as Herbart claims, then nothing at all is at stake with respect to this conscious act. Representations either are or are not in our consciousness, depending only on their own strength or weakness. If, in fact, they are not in our consciousness, they have sunk away, and we cannot have the thought that we once knew them.

5. It is clear that with Herbart's view, the soul becomes entirely passive and a plaything of representations. What takes place in dreams and, furthermore, in the various abnormal circumstances of hypnosis, fever, stress, etc., is elevated [102] to a rule or law for conscious life. According to Herbart, the connection between representations occurs according to internal laws, according to fixed mechanical relations, and is thus inevitable. Then error and lie lose their sinful character, and human freedom, along with human control over representations and thus also over impulses, desires, and passions, no longer exist. Once the representations exist, the psychic life[85] proceeds mechanistically, like chemical compounds and the splitting of atoms.

It is true that none of the foregoing denies that representations can be mutually alike or different, can have affinity for each other or be in

[85] DO: *zieleleven*.

opposition, and through this provide a powerful support to thinking. But the laws according to which the association and reproduction of representations occur are hardly as certain and simple as is usually suggested. It is even a question whether one has the right to speak here of actual law. In any case, the number of these laws is by no means fixed. Most speak of four, some of three (Hume), others of two (Weber), and still others of one (Malebranche); one person speaks of five (Bartili),[86] whereas Hegel and others reject the idea of laws altogether.[87]

All that can be noted is that sometimes, with respect to representations that are similar or dissimilar, one entails another (a son makes one think of a father; a palace brings to mind a hut) and that simultaneous or successive representations assist each other (a hat generates the thought of the person who wore it; the first line of a poem brings to mind the rest of the poem). However, these so-called "laws" do not continue for long; their operation is repeatedly suspended by all kinds of circumstances; there are no simultaneous representations in an actual, literal sense. Furthermore, those laws do not rest on the representations in themselves, but in the organization of the soul.

This can be illustrated by the following example.[88] If I normally have sugar in my tea, then drinking a cup of tea without sugar immediately makes the representation of sugar arise in me, but not because those representations of tea and sugar are mutually, inherently so closely related, but because I am accustomed to having both sugar and tea together. It is not the representations that repel or attract each other, but it is the soul itself that consciously or unconsciously separates or relates them.

[86] Ed. note: Christoph Gottfried Bartili (1761–1908) was a German philosopher and founder of his own system known as "rational realism." Bartili was a cousin of Friedrich Schelling and a critic of Kantian idealism (Source: *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Christoph Gottfried Bartili").

[87] Volkmar, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, 1:453 [*BdP*[1], 88, n. 48].

[88] Ed. note: This transitional opening sentence of this paragraph was added by the editor.

Comparing, distinguishing, [103] combining, and associating are activities of the soul itself. It performs such activities either consciously or not, either willingly or involuntarily, and undoubtedly also according to laws that are pre-formed in its nature and organization and that are altered by a variety of particular circumstances. For example, if we imagine a body, the thought of development arises immediately for us because it is not the representations but the things themselves that in reality are always paired with each other and our soul is oriented to that reality. If we are unable to think of an object as being simultaneously white and black, then we are prohibited from doing that not by the representations, but by the nature of the things themselves.

The laws of the association of representations do not lie in those representations, but in the nature of subject and object. They are far too rich and individually modified, and they are also far too distinct from the comparatively simple laws of physics than that they should be able to be summarized in a few short formulas.[89]

F. Memory and Imagination[90]

We must also consider memory and imagination from this standpoint and regard them as activities of the soul.

Memory

Memory is an astounding phenomenon. How can representations of the past remain preserved within us? Where are they at that point? In what

[89] On the Association of Representations, see Hermann Ulrici, *Leib und Seele*, 2:232–69; Lotze, *Mikrokosmus,* 1:216f.; Wundt, *Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie,* 2:437–96 (ch. 17: "Verbindungen der Vorstellungen" [association of representations]); Volkmar, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie,* 1:476–501; James, *Principles of Psychology*, 1:550–604 [*BdP*[1], 89, n. 49].

[90] DO: *geheugen en verbeelding.* Ed note: Following this heading "Memory and Imagination," the subsequent headings "Memory" and "Imagination" were added by the editor.

condition do they exist? How do they return to our consciousness? Materialism explains all psychic life in terms of metabolism in the brain, and supposes that representations leave traces behind in the brain, which traces they later, through one or another cause, induce to surface again in the consciousness.

But although memory, like the entire faculty of knowing, is connected to the brain, and even though specific activities of the memory are perhaps dependent on specific parts of the brain (certain sicknesses can cause partial memory loss), nevertheless the relationship between memory and the brain is still far too obscure for people to be able to construct specific theories on the basis of that relationship. Gall's[91] theory that memory is not a single capacity,[92] but the activity of various senses and faculties,[93] is an untenable and unnecessary multiplication of faculties.[94] In each instance, the activity [104] of the memory is psychic in nature and therefore cannot be adequately explained on the basis of physical causes.

Herbart's school, rejecting all faculties, turns especially against memory and attempts to explain it via mechanical-psychic processes. As they see it, every representation has the capacity to reappear in the consciousness when the impediment to its return is removed. Thus there is not one single capacity[95] that saves and reproduces many representations, but rather each representation has an unlimited number of capacities for reproducing it.[96] It is true that memory often has different energies for different sorts of objects. There is a memory for words, numbers, names, places, persons, etc. Within individuals, memory is endlessly diversified. The portrayal of

[91] Ed. note: Franz Joseph Gall (1758–1828) "was a neuroanatomist, physiologist, and pioneer in the study of the localization of mental functions in the brain" (Source: *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Franz Joseph Gall").

[92] DO: *vermogen.*

[93] DO: *zintuigen en faculteiten.*

[94] DO: *vermogens.*

[95] DO: *vermogen.*

[96] Volkmar, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie,* 1:490 [*BdP*[1], 90, n. 50].

memory as a storehouse or treasury of representations is also to be understood in a figurative sense.

Memory, like imagination, understanding, reason, and conscience, is not a faculty in the narrow sense, as this concept was described above and is used for the faculties of knowing and desiring. All these "faculties" of the soul that are indicated by memory, recollection, imagination, and understanding are nothing other than particular activities of one and the same faculty of knowing, activities conducted for the purpose of preserving the representations, forming them anew, reproducing them in changed form, ordering them logically, etc. Memory is not a place or a space in the soul itself or in the brain, where earlier representations are stored. But memory is the soul itself, a soul that is now conscious of having had earlier particular representations and that can form these anew and summon them back into the consciousness once again. But in this way, like the entire association of representations, memory is not an immanent power or attribute of those representations, but an activity of the soul itself. We know nothing about such an inner impulse of the representations. The disruption theory is a mythological hypothesis. If representations actually strived on their own to return to the consciousness, then the strongest one would always have to win. But this is definitely not always the case. Sometimes very weak, insignificant representations suddenly return to our consciousness. And conversely, sometimes in spite of all our effort, we are unable to call to our memory an earlier representation. [105] Rather, the soul itself, being aware of having had one or another representation earlier, is able with more or less difficulty to form it anew and then recognize it as an old, earlier representation. It is true that our memory is developed more or less strongly in one or another direction, and it does vary greatly in different people with respect to all sorts of characteristics. But it has this in common with the entire faculty of knowing and does not affect the unity of this particular activity of the soul.

We can further differentiate between memory and recollection. Memory is an act of the soul through which it is and remains aware of having

had particular representations in the past. The representations themselves do not remain in the soul; they are not stacked up somewhere. But when a person receives a representation, he or she generally knows it as *my* representation and is aware that *I* specifically am having this representation, and to the degree they have and keep this awareness, it is assigned to memory.

In distinction from this, recollection is that activity of the soul by which it reproduces earlier representations without any modification and can recognize these as those earlier representations. Strictly and properly speaking, this recollection is unique to human beings alone. Animals do have representations, and these do return to them from time to time. But the return occurs without the intentional activity of the animal itself. An animal has a memory without the ability of recollection. With people as well, the reproduction of representations often occurs entirely involuntarily. If we are absentminded, muse, or daydream, all kinds of previous representations pass through our consciousness involuntarily and without any consent on our part. But if those representations return and for some reason one's attention is focused on one of them, then one recalls having had the representation at a previous time and then recognizes it as one's own earlier representation. It is in this recall (that is to say, in identifying the present representation with a past representation) that a person expresses a judgment, a judgment that can be made only by the higher faculty of knowing—that is, understanding. From that point forward such a person's recall can be intentional and free. No matter how limited our ability with respect to memory may be, we are able to a certain [106] extent, by means of pondering, reflecting, and meditating,[97] to bring earlier representations to our mind, and thus by means of our will to guide our thoughts; we do so by our will through pondering, reflection, and contemplation. This power of recollection is by the nature of the matter unique to human beings alone.

[97] DO: *bezinnen, nadenken, peinzen.*

The recollection of earlier representations involves especially the fidelity[98] with which they are reproduced. Fidelity is the characteristic quality of memory. Different objections have been raised against this attribute of memory, and with a view toward people's actual situations, the claim is generally correct that even the most faithful memory of a thousand representations reproduces few of them unaltered. Just like the faculty of knowing, memory depends on all manner of psychic and physical influences. To the degree that a brain is more healthy and normal, the attention is greater, the practice more persistent, the representations more related—to that degree memory is more or less faithful, longer lasting or shorter, more extensive or more limited, and the memory reproduces representations with more or less effort. Moral influences also need to be considered. Forgetfulness is often a consequence of ingratitude, inattentiveness, selfishness, etc. At the same time, it is an exaggeration to deny all reliability of memory. At every moment we have in our observation the control in hand for testing the reliability of our memory. If memory could no longer be trusted, then coherent knowledge would be impossible. Memory is, after all, the foundation of our spiritual development, connects the present with the past, and maintains the unity and continuity of our living and thinking.[99]

Memory, like understanding, varies considerably among individuals and in different stages of life. In ordinary conversation people speak about having a memory for words, for facts, for persons, numbers, names, colors, places, etc. Some people, such as Leibniz, for example, remember everything they read. Others forget it all immediately. We note, in particular,

[98] DO: *trouw*.

[99] Hepp note: See Bavinck, *Verzamelde Opstellen*, 198–9 [ET: *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*, 189–90].

the amazing ability for remembering numbers among arithmeticians.[100] Kant distinguished three types of memory:

Mechanical memory remembers words and facts without [107] thinking about them. Such memory often works automatically, and is faithful and long-lasting but not very serviceable.

Discerning memory works with judgments. It is more useful but less faithful.

Ingenious memory, which is paired with reason and remembers those things that have been placed in a reasonable, incidental relation with other things.

But memory also varies among different ages of life. Memory is strongest in childhood but works largely in a mechanical fashion. According to Jean Paul, "A person learns more in the first three years of life than in three academic years."[101] Those things absorbed in childhood come to be related to new images and ideas in adolescent years. In years of maturity little material is added, but now the gathered representations can be freely arranged and processed according to the person's own insights. In old age, memory is subject to swift decline. The oldest, deepest impressions remain, but the new is no longer assimilated and retained.

Education and nurture must, of course, reckon with the path of this development. Memory develops before understanding and judgment and, as such, it must be well exercised in childhood years. That is why a concentric education is of greatest significance; this takes place only with a system of classroom teachers each offering instruction in different subjects but who again and again point out the connections and coherence of the different subjects. This is the way to enhance memory. The ability to remember is

[100] Alfred Binet, *Psychologie des grands calculateurs et joueurs d'échecs* (Paris: Hachette, 1895) [*BdP*[1], 94, n. 51].

[101] GerO: *Der mensch lernt in den drei ersten Lebensjahren mehr als in den drei akademischen.* Ed. note: Jean Paul (Johann Paul Friedrich Richter; 1763–1825) was a German Romantic writer.

used effectively in such an approach.[102] The use of mnemonics, of which Simonides (556–468 BC) is the father, is a useful aid to memory.[103]

Imagination

While memory faithfully gives back *unchanged* representations, imagination is the activity of the soul whereby it reproduces *altered* representations. The characteristic feature of imagination, therefore, lies in the originality, freshness, and newness of its representations. Yet the products of imagination are not new in an absolute sense. They are not actually creations but re-creations and re-formings of representations already present in the soul. No imagination, however strong, can invent a new color, a new sound, a new landscape. Those born blind cannot have a representation of color and the deaf cannot have one of sound. What is new in the creations of fantasy consists [108] of the separation and recombination of previously received representations. Fantasy works by abstracting, defining, and combining. It omits certain elements of earlier representations and forms general outlines from concrete images. It fills in gaps, appends all kinds of things to representations, defines and limits them, outlines the vague and fluctuating, decorates, enlivens, and illustrates representations,

[102] On memory, in addition to the works on psychology, such as especially Ulrici, *Leib und Seele*, 2:207f., cf. also the following monographs: Hermann Ebbinghaus, *Über das Gedächtnis: Untersuchungen zur experimentellen Psychologie* (Leipzig: Verlag Von Duncker & Humbolt, 1885); Goswin Uphues, *Über die Erinnerung, Untersuchungen zur empirischen Psychology* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1889); Adolph Lasson, *Das Gedächtniss*, (Berlin: R. Gaertners, 1894) [Ed. note: Bavinck adds that this was also published in *Philosophische Vorträge* III 2; it has not been possible to verify this reference]; Théodule Ribot, *Les maladies de la mémoire* (Paris: Ancienne Librairie Germer Bailliere, 1881); Paul Sollier, *Les troubles de la mémoire* (Paris: Rueff, 1892); Lucien Arréat, *Mémoire et imagination,* (Paris: Alcan, 1894); Georges Surbled, *La mémoire* (Arras: Sueur-Charruey, 1896) [*BdP*[1], 95, n. 52].

[103] Cf. the article "Mnemonik," in F. A. Brockhaus and Joseph Meyer, eds., *Konversations-Lexikon: Allgemeine deutsche Real-Encyklopädie,* vol. 11 (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1885), 780; Hermann Kothe, *Lehrbuch der Mnemonik oder Gedächtniskunst,* 2nd ed. (Hamburg and Leipzig: Schuberth, 1852); idem., *Katechismus der Gedächtniskunst oder Mnemotechnik,* ed. Ignaz B. Montag, 4th ed. (Leipzig: Weber, 1877) [*BdP*[1], 95, n. 53].

and finally joins together all manner of representations, creating entirely new images that correspond to no reality, and forms ideals that fully correspond with the imagined idea but are not present that way in reality. In this way, fantasy creates the most glorious harmony out of individual sounds; the most beautiful landscapes from individual elements of water, trees, and plants; the most compelling drama from individual characters and situations; the most moving poetry from individual letters and words.

The freedom with which imagination brings these creations into existence is, however, no lawlessness. Unbridled fantasy produces nothing but monstrosities. Just as fantasy is objectively bound to the elements of the visible world, so too must it be subjectively under the control of understanding, and above all be guided by moral ideas. But within these boundaries, fantasy is of the greatest significance. It is, of course, not the bond between body and soul, nor the plastic, body-forming power of the soul, nor the synthesis between the self and non-self, nor the former of the world.[104] Yet its value has often been misjudged in the past and its influence on all human life has frequently been underestimated. During the age of childhood, imagination is a substitute for thinking and serves as a preliminary developmental phase for thinking; education and nurture must take into account, in addition to memory, especially imagination. In later life imagination plays a highly significant role in thinking and action, in science and art, in religion and morality, in health and well-being. It is the mother of art; it plays a role in the greatest discoveries of science; it is the source of legend and saga, of myth and symbol; it awakens feeling and sympathy; and it spurs us to great deeds. Altogether, imagination is proof that human beings possess a higher nature than that of animals and cannot be satisfied with this imperfect world.[105] [109]

[104] DO: *formeerster der wereld.* Fantasy is exaggerated in this way by J. G. Fichte, Schelling, J. H. Fichte, Ulrici, and others, especially by Jakob Frohschammer, *Die Phantasie als Grundprinzip des Weltprozesses* (München: Ackermann, 1877) [*BdP*[1], 96, n. 54].

[105] Hermann Cohen, *Die dichterische Phantasie und der Mechanismus des Bewusstseins* (Berlin: F. Dümmler, 1869); Hermann Siebeck, *Das Wesen der aesthetischen Anschauung*

G. Understanding and Reason[106]

The newer psychology, although not as crass as Condillac's, still generally makes no essential distinction between representation and concept, between observation with the senses and understanding, between perception and thinking. It considers the laws of association and reproduction to be fully adequate for explaining the origin of general representations and conceptualization. A specific faculty for abstracting, as contained in older psychologies, is completely superfluous, according to the new psychology. Instead, they say that an element common to many sensations and representations naturally returns to our consciousness again and again, is increasingly more easily reproduced, gradually isolates itself from other specific elements with which it is connected, and thus becomes a general representation. This general representation can be reproduced with a word, and the word is then the sign and bearer of a concept.[107] The concept is not a product of a special ability of the soul but a postulate of the general representation and a consequence of a word.[108]

However, no more than an animal can of itself become human, can observation elevate itself to understanding or a representation to a conceptualization.[109] It is true that the lower knowing faculty, specifically imagination, is inclined to generalize by abstraction from concretely perceived images. But we must not forget that our higher knowing ability again and again influences and performs actions within our lower knowing

(Berlin: Dümmler, 1875); Gottlieb Leuchtenberger, *Die phantasie ihr wesen ihre wirkungsweise und ihr wert* (Erfurt: Carl Villaret, 1894) [*BdP*[1], 96, n. 55].

[106] DO: *verstand en rede.*

[107] DO: *begrip.*

[108] Cf., e.g., Wundt, *Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie*, 2:305–14; Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, 606–13 [*BdP*[1], 97, n. 56].

[109] DO: *aanschouwing, verstand, voorstelling, begrip.*

ability.[110] Furthermore, we must recognize that general representations are still vastly[111] distinct from concepts. The lower knowing ability, along with association and reproduction, is sufficient for producing general representations. A concept is actually the sum of the characteristic features held in common by many objects. To form a concept, we have to notice those features and the similarity of objects with respect to them. This is possible only through thinking. The activity of the soul that is carried out in associating and reproducing representations is not sufficient for this task. A higher activity is necessary, [110] an activity that turns representations into concepts. This activity is thinking. It is also incorrect to say that words precede concepts and thoughts. The words are, of course, signs for thoughts to those with whom we speak. Words awaken thoughts and, as it were, produce them. But within ourselves concepts and thoughts are prior. Our hearers would not be able to understand our words if the concepts were not present in their souls prior to the hearing. The word is not the father of thought, but thought is the mother of the word.[112]

It is for this reason that earlier psychology rightly distinguished the higher knowing ability from the lower. After all, human beings first have an ability to perceive things outside of themselves and to form representations from them. This is how knowledge begins. We are sensory beings, tied to the body and to the world. But once this tie has been made, it is possible to climb higher. An animal stops with representations, but human beings have higher knowing capacities as well as the lower. It is through these higher abilities that we are capable of tracking down the invisible in the visible, the enduring in the changeable, the general in the particular, the logical in the actual, the idea, the thought, and are able to retain these

[110] Ed. note: Divisions of this chapter (A–F) deal with the "lower" capabilities of the soul's knowing faculty (including perception, representation, and imagination), while the last four (G–J) deal with the "higher" capacities of the soul's knowing faculty (understanding and reason, conscience and the idea of beauty, self-consciousness, and language).

[111] DO: *hemelsbreed.*

[112] Gutberlet, *Die Psychologie*, 124–29 [*BdP*[1], 98, n. 57].

as concepts. There is a great difference between the representation and the conceptualization of, say, a triangle. The representation is only the image of a specific triangle, whereas the concept contains the characteristic features of all triangles. Isaac Newton sees an apple falling, a perception that many people had before him. But as he thought about it he discovered in it a law that governs all phenomena in the physical world.[113]

Higher knowing has long been separated into understanding and reason, but they are one and not two different faculties in human beings. The only difference between reason and understanding is that *reason* designates the lower, discursive thinking while *understanding* refers to the knowledge of truth obtained through the lengthy and difficult process of forming concepts, judgments, and conclusions. God, therefore, does not reason; with him there is only understanding because he knows things not by [111] reasoning, but immediately and all at once, as it were by intuition. Human beings are capable of knowing truth, but only by way of reasoning. They are rational creatures. Thus, reason is to understanding what motion is to rest, what-- obtaining is to possession. Reasoning is the mark of a sensual, earthly, incomplete being; understanding and knowing are the marks of heavenly, complete beings such as the angels.[114] Our usage of language agrees with this. Understanding is insight, knowledge of the essence of things, and therefore differs greatly among God, angels, people, and among people themselves. God knows and understands everything: "With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding" (Job 12:13); "Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure" (Ps. 147:5);

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[113] Hepp note: Cf. my *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:226–33. Ed. note: Interestingly, this is one of the few notes that Hepp carried over from the first edition [*BdP*[1], 99, n. 58].

[114] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* I[a] q. 79 a. 8–13; Polanus, *Syntagma Theologiae*, 32; Zanchi, *Omnium Operum Theologicorum*, 3:573–98; cf., Knauer, *Grundlinien zur aristotelisch-thomistischen Psychologie,* 196–99; Sanseverino, *Philosophia Christiana*, 5:150f.; Joseph Kleutgen, *Philosophie der Vorzeit,* 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Innsbruck: Felician Rauch, 1878), 216–20; 232–36 [*BdP*[1], 99, n. 59].

> I, wisdom dwell with prudence,
> and I find knowledge and discretion . . .
> I have counsel and sound wisdom;
> I have insight; I have strength. (Prov. 8: 12, 14)
>
> And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
> the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
> the Spirit of counsel and might,
> the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. (Isa. 11:2)

To the extent that our understanding comes to the knowledge of truth slowly or more quickly, and to the extent that its insight into the truth is more or less accurate, to that extent we speak of a good understanding or a poor one; a healthy, lucid, deep, clear, quick, sharp, understanding or a slow or dark understanding. Such understanding increases as we grow older. Someone who sees or understands nothing suffers from folly;[115] someone who grasps something incorrectly suffers from misunderstanding.[116] Someone who fails to see things through to their nature, or not very quickly, and acts accordingly is said to be foolish.[117]

Knowledge and insight[118] are achieved by various means. Erudition, book learning, and reasoning[119] are hardly the only ways. A simple farmer often surpasses the most learned professor in healthy understanding and clear insight.[120] Wisdom is something other than learnedness.[121] Knowledge

[115] DO: *onverstand*.

[116] DO: *misverstand*. Ed. note: It is hard to capture Bavinck's wordplay (*onverstand, misverstand*) in English. Here is a possible explanation: Someone who is not the "sharpest knife in the drawer" might misunderstand a particular matter (solving an algebra problem?); folly involves the obtuseness that has a spiritual/moral dimension.

[117] DO: *onverstanding*.

[118] DO: *kennis en inzicht*.

[119] DO: *geleerdheid, boekenkennis, redeneering*.

[120] DO: *gezond verstand*; *heldere inzicht*.

[121] DO: *geleerdheid*.

is not the same as logical reasoning power.[122] In general, there are three roads along which an individual can come to knowledge—that is, to the understanding of things or, simply, to understanding. These are *faith*, *reasoning*, and *observation*.[123] The way of reasoning, judging, and concluding[124] definitely is not the only way to knowledge. Our condition would be miserable if nothing could be certain unless demonstrated by mathematics or logic. By far the greatest part of our knowledge, not only in religion and morality but also in ordinary life, is received by faith and vision[125] and not by reasoning. The way of reasoning is the normal process of acquiring further knowledge in the sciences. [112] We must use this method because we are sensory beings and do not see the invisible things face-to-face. If we are to learn to know the invisible, there is no other way than to move from the familiar to the unfamiliar and to climb from the visible to the invisible. To do that we need a point of origin and a foothold[126] for our reasoning. Given those, we can go from the visible to the invisible, from the temporal to the eternal, or from the world to God.

Reason is, therefore, the characteristic feature of our humanity. God does not reason, nor do his angels who "in heaven . . . always see the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10). And the animals have only a lower knowing ability; they have representations but not understanding or reason. Thus, the essence of human beings is expressed in the phrase

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[122] DO: *logische redeneerkracht.*

[123] DO: *geloof, redeneering, aanschouwing.*

[124] DO: *redeneeren, oordeelen, besluiten.*

[125] DO: *geloof en aanschouwing*. Ed. note: The word "vision" here must not be understood in a literal, physical sense (what we see with our physical eyes), nor as a parallel to "dream" (an internal visionary experience), but in the metaphorical sense indicated by someone saying, "Oh, now I see," i.e., as an insight into a truth. Bavinck is speaking of knowledge that is intuited rather than obtained strictly by sensory observation or discursive reasoning. At the same time, as he will indicate shortly, even this intuitive knowing is mediated.

[126] DO: *uitgangspunt en steunpunt.* Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck parenthetically added: "*recto ratio, habitus principiorum intelligibilium*" [*BdP*[1], 99].

"rational animal." Humans are sensual beings, but they are not without reason[127] and are, therefore, rational beings. That is why they may not act like irrational animals in their speech and conduct. Someone is unreasonable who acts in conflict with the laws that apply to humans, in distinction from animals, in all sorts of arenas. Humans are suited for reason; they must listen to reason and, in this way, come to true, correct knowledge.[128] Therefore understanding is thoroughly personal[129] and varies in measure and strength in each person; reason, however, is impersonal, the same in everyone, and prescribes the same rule and law for everyone. Understanding has a twofold sense and refers either in general to the human capacity to acquire knowledge or to the content of the knowledge itself ("she understands x"). Reason is one of the ways by which humans here on earth acquire knowledge.

Recent psychology has generally swept away the clear distinction between reason and understanding and presented it in a completely different way. Rationalism, initiated by Descartes, used the word *ratio* (reason)[130] to designate all human intellectual activity and placed it initially *outside* and *alongside* revelation and faith, and then over against them. Reason, which previously was a formal ability, soon, with a semblance of law, was given material content. Reason became a possessor of all sorts of innate truths, especially moral and religious truths. [113] Reason was quickly made to do completely without revelation, and it became the organ for truths beyond the senses—that is, for ideas. In this view, reason was the unique characteristic of human beings while understanding became a lower-level, rank-ordering of representations. As such, it was a common property of man and beast. It was against this distinction, introduced by

[127] DO: *redeloos.*

[128] DO: *ware, juiste kennis.*

[129] DO: *door en door persoonlijk.*

[130] Ed. note: Bavinck originally parenthetically added: *raison*, reason, *Vernunft, rede.* [*BdP*[1], 102].

rationalism, that Kant began his philosophical constructions. By means of the categories, he said, understanding places representations under rules and into coherence. But reason climbs up out of the Conditional to the Unconditional;[131] it directs itself to the ideal and absolute, thus forming ideas of the soul, the world, and God. Later philosophers lifted reason even further above understanding, making it the principle of the world.[132]

Now the distinction between reason and understanding recommended by recent psychology is not entirely wrong. Insofar as understanding is taken in a passive sense and designates knowledge or insight into truth, reason, as one of the means or ways to knowledge, definitely precedes understanding. But reason cannot lead to knowledge by means of the process of reasoning unless it, or understanding in an active sense, was not accompanied by principles—principles that are the foundation and point of origin[133] for all reasoning. This foundation and point of origin are not given mediately through reasoning but immediately through insight—that is, by understanding.[134] In this way, starting out from what is known, reason is able to press through to the unknown and, by way of reasoning and making conclusions about the world, climb up even to God. Thus, reason is both lower than understanding and higher than it. It is lower when we consider the means reason must use to arrive at knowledge. Knowledge

[131] GerO: *Bedingte, Unbedingte.*

[132] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 5th ed., ed. Julius Hermann von Kirchmann (Leipzig: Erich Koschny, 1881), 100–42, 294f., 513 [ET: Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)]; cf. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 1, 517–18 [ET: Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation,* vol. 1, 464]; Engelbert Lorenz Fischer, *Die Grundfragen der Erkenntnisstheorie* (Mainz: Franz Kirchheim, 1887), 208–39; Franz Grung, *Das Problem der Gewissheit* (Heidelberg: Georg Weiss, 1886), 101–53 [*BdP*[1], 102, n. 60].

[133] DO: *grondslag en uitgangspunt.*

[134] Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck parenthetically added: *ratio recta, pura; habitus principiorum.*

obtained by vision[135] ranks higher than the knowledge obtained by reasoning. Discursive thinking is a lower form of receiving knowledge than receiving knowledge through intuition, through vision.

Human beings are not like God and also rank below the angels. If we want to learn to know what is invisible and supersensory, then we can obtain this only through reasoning. We do not see and know immediately. But we need to take note of the content and object of our seeing and knowing; our reason then rises above our human understanding. This is because we are sensory beings, and what we learn immediately through our understanding is limited to visible, observable things. But now [114] our reason is precisely distinguishes from animals. And it is through our reason that we are in a position to ascend from the visible to the invisible, from the known to the unknown, even elevating ourselves out of what is created up to God, the eternal origin of all things. While understanding by itself is restricted to the phenomenal world, through reason it is placed in a position to also come around to knowledge of the invisible and eternal. As an active ability, reason stands above understanding—that is, understanding in a passive sense—and provides it again with knowledge, even that of God and spiritual matters.[136]

Because the human spirit is equipped with understanding and reason, it is in a position to think and also to know and to understand.[137] Thinking is the reworking of representations to form concepts, judgments, and conclusions.[138] Thinking is a matter of detecting in the world of phenomena the idea on which representations are based—that is, the laws by which

[135] DO: *aanschouwing*. Ed. note: See note 125 above.

[136] DO: *goddelijke dingen.* See the discussion on Augustine in Sanseverino, *Philosophia Christiana*, 241; cf. my *Reformed Dogmatics,* 1:223–32, and the literature cited there [*BdP*[1], 104, n. 61].

[137] Ed. note: Bavinck uses two Dutch words that both are usually translated "to know": *kennen* and *weten.* The former has the sense of becoming familiar or acquainted with something; the latter is a deeper knowing.

[138] DO: *voorstellingen, begrippen, oordeelen, besluiten.*

they are governed. As the human spirit reworks representations into concepts by means of comparing, separating, and summarizing[139] and then connects these concepts to turn them into judgments, and the judgments, in turn into conclusions, it remarkably does not leave reality behind and begin to fantasize, but truly approaches it more closely and penetrates its nature more deeply. That this happens, in the final analysis, rests on faith in the one Logos who created subject and object alike. Individuals come to knowledge and science through thinking. Understanding is the capacity for knowing; reason is the capacity for comprehending.[140] Understanding knows; reason knows scientifically.[141] They are so unlike each other that Paulsen can say, "The more we comprehend things, to that extent we understand them less."[142] Knowledge is personal; science is impersonal, general, necessary. Science is, in accordance with its idea, the knowledge of phenomena in their cause and basis (ground); in reality it is a search for such knowledge acquired by reasoning and evidence and gathered together in a system.[143]

[139] Ed. note: The first edition includes a parenthesis with the follow terms: *comparatio, abstractio, conceptio* [*BdP*[1], 104].

[140] DO: *Het verstand is het vermogen van te kennen, de rede het vermogen van te begrijpen.*

[141] DO: *Het verstand kent, de rede weet.*

[142] GerO: *je mehr wir die Dinge begreifen, desto weniger verstehen wir sie.* Ed. note: Bavinck is referring to Friedrich Paulsen, *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (Berlin: Herz, 1892); cf. full-length review by Karl Joël, "Fr. Paulsens Einleitung in die Philosophie," *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik,* 109 (1896): 60–83.

[143] Friedrich Paulsen, *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (Berlin: Hertz, 1892), 384; cf. also Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea,* 1:9–16; 2:228–33 [*BdP*[1], 105, n. 62].

H. Conscience and the Idea of Beauty[144]

Conscience

The faculty of knowing is also not exhausted in this knowing and comprehending of the truth.[145] Aristotle long ago distinguished [115] within the higher faculty of knowing between *theoretical* and *practical* reason.[146] The former, he said, is the organ for the knowledge of the truth, and the latter considers that to which it all leads, with which consideration ends and action begins. Practical reason evaluates and supplies the conclusion whether something should or should not be done; it pays attention to action, considers the goal, and decisively influences the faculty of desiring.[147] Christian psychology endorsed this and attached itself to this structure. However, theoretical and practical reason are not two faculties, but two distinct activities of the spirit. The former judges things only from the viewpoint of being true or false, the latter from the viewpoint of being good or evil. The former uses the standard of the laws of logic; the latter uses ethical law. The former confines itself to knowing and comprehending a thing, with the goal of knowing; the latter relates what is known to an action, directing and leading the faculty of desiring.[148]

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[144] DO: *geweten en schoonheidsbesef.*

[145] DO: *dit kennis en weten der waarheid.*

[146] Ed. note: In the first edition Bavinck used the distinction between νους θεωρητικος and νους πρακτικος [*BdP*[1], 105].

[147] Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung. Zweiter Theil, zweite Abtheilung. Aristoteles und die alten Peripatekiker,* 3rd ed. (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1903), 586, 650, note 2 [ET: Eduard Zeller, *Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics: Being a Translation from Zeller's 'Philosophy of the Greeks'*, vol. 2, trans. B. F. C. Costelloe and John H. Muirhead (London, New York: Longmans, Green, 1897), 178–91] [*BdP*[1], 105, n. 63].

[148] DO: *richt en leidt het begweervermogen.* Ed. note: The first edition adds: "and even adds action to apprehension" [*en voegt aan de apprehensio nog de actio toe*] with an endnote reference to Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, I[a] q. 79 a. 11; IIa–IIae q. 83 a. 1; Polanus, *Syntagma Theologiae*, 325. Sansoverino, *Philosophia Christiana*, 7:268f. [*BdP*[1], 105, n. 64].

Thanks to Kant, this distinction acquired a very weighty significance for the newer psychology. Although he nowhere clearly states the distinction between both, nevertheless, his thought undoubtedly was this: the proper character of reason[149] exists in its knowing a priori principles.[150] Theoretical [or pure] reason[151] has such an a priori knowledge in its time and space forms, in the categories and in the idea of the Absolute.[152] But according to Kant, the knowledge of the ethical value of an action is also not of an empirical origin, but it too proceeds from an a priori principle. There exists, therefore, a practical reason as well as a pure reason.[153] This practical reason includes an absolute moral law, in the form of "Thou shalt"—that is, the categorical imperative—and holds it up before the will as a rule.

Now Kant does call practical reason "reason," and thus does not appear to consider it as a particular faculty.[154] But in fact he does distinguish it from theoretical reason in an entirely different way from the earlier psychologists. First, he does not just distinguish the two; he separates them. Previous psychology said that the two types of reason were merely two distinct activites of the one faculty. But Kant disconnects them from each other and digs a chasm between them. With theoretical reason we are still able to arrive at knowledge and science in the phenomenal world, but with practical reason this is completely out of the question. [116] Practical reason brings only the categorical imperative, and if we then make postulates on the basis of practical reason, these are theoretically definitively unprovable, for they are not science but belief. With this, Kant became

[149] DO: *rede*; GerO: *Vernunft.*

[150] LO: *principia apriori.*

[151] DO; *theoretische rede*; GerO: *reine Vernunft.* Ed. note: Cf. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason.*

[152] GerO: *Unbedingte.*

[153] GerO: *practische Vernunft; reine Vernunft.*

[154] DO: *bijzondere vermogen.*

the father of the dualism between knowing and believing, philosophy and theology, science and religion, judgments of being and of value [is and ought],[155] as it comes to the foreground in the neo-Kantianism of Carl Lange (1834–1900), Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889), and others.

Furthermore, with Kant, practical reason includes only a formal principle—namely, "Thou shalt."[156] In the earlier psychology, practical reason, as we shall see, had its own distinctive way of doing things.[157] But with Kant, the moral exists only as a form. It has no unique content, but borrowed that content from theoretical reason and added to it only the obligation of duty ("Thou shalt").[158] Thus, in Kant the ethical and the rational are one; they are distinguished not in content but only in the form of logical distinctions. The only person who acts ethically is one who acts or does not act soley on the basis of the law of duty and not from inclination or love. This is naturally the case, for with Kant, the essence of the ethical consists entirely in that categorical imperative.[159]

Even though Kant developed the difference between theoretical and practical reason erroneously, they are undoubtedly distinct. Therefore, some oppose the distinction without justification.[160] Furthermore, the earlier distinction needs to be supplemented a little more. Aristotle and scholasticism did distinguish between theoretical and practical reason, but considered the former as involving only the knowledge of things from the perspective of being true or false, and the latter as involving only the judgment of things from the perspective of being good or evil. The

[155] GerO: *Seinsurtheile*; *Werthurteile.*

[156] GerO: *du sollst.*

[157] DO: *een eigen, bijzondere hebbelijkheid.*

[158] GerO: *du sollst.*

[159] Compare A. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, 3:338; idem. *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1881), 150 [*BdP*[1], 107, n. 65].

[160] For example, by J. H. von Kirchmann, *Aristoteles' drei Bücher* über *die Seele* (Heidelberg: Weiss, 1882), 196, and by others like Sanseverino, *Philosophia Christiana*, 7:268, 275f. [*BdP*[1], 107, n. 66].

evaluation of phenomena from the perspective of being agreeable or disagreeable, useful or harmful, beautiful or ugly[161] was not mentioned at all. Like unconscious representations and imagination, aesthetic judgment[162] was not given its due in the older psychology.

Thus, the distinction between theoretical and practical reason (or understanding) was entirely correct. The former involves what is true and false, the latter involves what is good and evil. The former involves things that are indeed understood through knowing but not produced in the proper sense; the latter places these things under the perspective of whether through the will they ought to be done [117] or omitted. The goal of theoretical reason is the knowledge of truth, and the essence of knowledge does not include joining together truth with will and action. It is precisely the intention of practical reason, with its evaluation of things from the perspective of good and evil, to hold what is known before the faculty of desiring [163] and do so to stimulate this toward a movement of attraction or repulsion.[164]

It is here that we must also include the evaluation of things according to their beauty or lack of beauty, because this is also a judgment of things that can arouse the desiring faculty to attraction or aversion.[165] Beauty has its own value alongside truth and goodness. In addition to the conscience,

[161] DO: *aangenaam en onaangenaam, nuttig en schadelijk, schoon en onschoon.*

[162] DO: *schoonheidsbesef.*

[163] DO: *begeervermogen.*

[164] DO: *neiging of afkeer.*

[165] Ed. note: This translation is an attempt to capture the aesthetic quality of Bavinck's distinction between *lust* and *onlust*. The common translation of *lust* is "desire," but also, paralleling "lust" in English, as "passion" or "appetite"; more positively, it also has the sense of delight, and joy. When Bavinck pairs *lust* and *onlust,* we have varied our translation: "attraction" and "repulsion/aversion," "liking and disliking," "pleasure and displeasure," and "inclination" and "disinclination."

we must also consider aesthetic judgment[166] as a part of practical reason (or understanding).[167]

Earlier we commented that the notion of a priori knowledge can be discussed in various places in our understanding of the faculty of knowing. Now, all activities of the faculty of knowing can be traced back to principles that lie in the nature of the soul. Observing, perceiving, remembering, imagining, and understanding all point back to a natural capacity and characteristic of the soul.[168] The same is true with respect to reason, and specifically with respect to both theoretical and practical reason. At this point, we must guard against three errors.[169]

First, we must not suppose that the innate capacities[170] of the soul for performing various activities lie isolated and separate alongside each other. The faculty of knowing is a single faculty even though it performs many activities, and these interact continuously and are paired with each other. It is possible for us to distinguish all these capacities and habits of the soul for the purpose of clear exposition, but in truth they are one rich organization of the soul for perceiving things, recalling them, knowing them in their essence and connection, evaluating them, etc. Distinction, then, is never meant to be separation.

Second, we must reject the notion that this a priori knowledge consists of innate ideas. Although we bring ourselves and all the rich [118] organization of our soul to our first perceptions, these innate habits[171] of the soul are not knowledge in the proper sense. People arrive at knowledge

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[166] DO: *schoonheidsbesef.*

[167] Heppe note: Cf. Bavinck, *Overwinning der Ziel*, 23; Bavinck, "Van schoonheid en schoonheidsleer" in *Verzamelde Opstellen*, 262–280 [ET: "Of Beauty and Aesthetics," *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society,* 245–60].

[168] DO: *de gewaarwording, de waarneming, de herinnering*, *de verbeelding*, *het verstand*, *ze wijzen alle op eene natuurlijke geschiktheid en hebbelijkheid der ziel.*

[169] Ed. note: Bavinck says "two" (*twee dwalingen*) but goes on to consider three.

[170] DO: *aangeboren geschiktheden.*

[171] DO: *aangeboren hebbelijkheden.*

only through the influence[172] of the external world. All knowledge begins with sensory perception. Keeping this in mind, we may speak of an innate habit also in connection with practical reason.

Practical reason, we recall, judges all phenomena from the viewpoint of good and evil. To do that requires that it have a standard, and it does not derive this standard from external reality. All attempts to account for the moral law from empirical grounds have failed thus far. We are standing here before an irreducible phenomenon in the life of the soul, one that cannot be traced to anything else.[173] This is not to say, however, that an identical number of exactly the same moral commandemnts has been written in every human soul and included with each person's birth. Reality teaches otherwise. "What holds true on one side of the Pyrenees may be false on the other."[174] Geographical boundaries change the entire moral law. Were this not so, the proclamations from Mount Sinai would have been unnecessary and superfluous. But no matter how the moral law may vary among the nations, one law is possessed by all, by which they distinguish between good and evil. What is deemed good and what is deemed evil may vary considerably, but that there is good and evil and that the good obligates one in an absolute and a priori manner is a universal and ineradicable notion. Even if there were nothing more than this, it would be correct to speak of a human moral disposition.[175]

But in addition, it should not be forgotten that the diverging difference of the nations regarding the content of the moral law has often led people to overlook the correspondence and affinity[176] [between moral

[172] DO: *inwerking.*

[173] Abraham Kuenen, "Ideaalvorming," *Theologisch Tijdschrift* 10 (1876): 316–61. Ed. note: This article is an extended review essay of Allard Pierson, *Eene levensbeschouwing* (Haarlem: Kruseman & Tjeenk Williink, 1875) [*BdP*[1], 109, n. 67].

[174] FrO: *Vérité en deçà des Pyrenées, erreur au delà.* Ed. note: This is from Blaise Pascal, *Pascal's Pensées* (New York: E. P. Hutton, 1958), 84 [*Pensée* 294].

[175] DO: *een zedelijk aanleg.*

[176] DO: *overeenstemming en verwantschap.*

codes]. The profound immorality of many individuals and nations proves nothing contradicting the truth of Paul's statement that the pagans "by nature do what the law requires" (Rom. 2:14). Just as logical laws are not readily present in a human consciousness but are manifested more or less purely in the thinking of every human being, in the same way the moral law is manifested ever more clearly in the moral actions of every person, but especially in the moral striving of beings possessing a high nature.[177] In the Christian moral law, the moral nature of human beings comes properly into its own and responds with its "yes and amen."

And finally, it must be added that the [119] innate moral nature or disposition[178] of the soul was not given to human beings so that they, having separated themselves from society and the world, could determine for themselves from this disposition what is good and evil. It never does happen that way in reality, of course, but neither may it happen that way. As human beings we are born from, into, and for fellowship; at no moment do we stand alone by ourselves, but from our very beginning our entire person comes under all sorts of influences. What is true and false, good and evil, beautiful and ugly are held before us and imprinted on us from our youth. We never encounter a pure, unmixed, natural morality in concrete reality, no more than we find a natural religion or theology in concrete reality. From our beginning, moral disposition is led in a particular direction and bound to a particular, morally applicable content. But such an upbringing assumes, precisely with people, a moral nature, a *synderesis*.[179]

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[177] DO: *het zedelijke streven van hooge naturen.*

[178] DO: *hebbelijkheid.*

[179] The scholastic word "synderesis" comes from a copyists error by Jerome in his commentary on Ezekiel 1:10 where συντηρησις was put in place of συνειδησις; see Friedrich August Nitzsch, "Ueber die Entstehung der scholastischen Lehre von der Synteresis, ein historischer Beitrag zur Lehre vom Gewissen," *Jahrbuch für protestantische Theologie* 5, no. 3 (1879): 492–507; Redaction, "Zur Synteresis-Frage (eine bestätigte Konjektur," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 21 (1896): col. 637 [*BdP*[1], 111, n. 68]. Ed. note: The last reference to the editors of *Theologische Literaturzeitung* refers to a brief news item about Prof. Erich Klostermann from the University of Kiel who had just discovered

This is the moral law by which we automatically and involuntarily judge the actions of our neighbors. But we also apply it to our own deeds and circumstances. We can do nothing else because we stand under the law with our whole person. The law has an unlimited categorical power over us. Whenever we subsume some circumstance or action under the moral law, what is commonly called conscience is awakened. Conscience[180] is not a matter of knowing about ourselves *along with God*, but it is human beings knowing *with themselves* regarding the quality of their doing and being; it is a consciousness of their relationship with the moral law. In the conscience individuals judge themselves, but according to a law that exists under God's sanction, one that for that reason alone is a moral law, one that can obligate absolutely. For that reason, it is a sin to act against conscience, even if the act by itself is not a sin. In the nature of the case, conscience belongs thus to the faculty of knowing and not to the lower level, for animals have no conscience, but to the higher level; not to the theoretical class but to practical understanding, because it evaluates circumstances and actions from the viewpoint of good and evil. Defined still further, in that practical understanding conscience is not a particular capacity nor an innate habit, but an activity or deed whereby we [120] apply our knowledge (of the moral law) in a particular case to our situation or action and evaluate these according to it.[181]

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three codices of Jerome's *Commentary* on Ezekiel that read *syneidesis* (συνειδησις) and not *synteresis* (συντηρησις). For a more expansive discussion of this point see Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, ed. John Bolt (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 1:179. Scholastic theology distinguished *synderesis/synteresis* from *syneidesis*. *Synderesis* or *synteresis* is "the innate habit of the understanding which grasps basic principles of moral law apart from the activity of formal moral training" (Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017], s.v. "Synderesis").

[180] Ed. note: Bavinck adds two words to the Dutch *geweten*, the Greek term συνειδησις and the Latin *conscientia* [*BdP*[1], 111]; Hepp includes them in the second edition as *syneidesis* and *conscientia* [*BdP*[2], 119].

[181] According to Scotus, Bonaventure, Durandus, and others, conscience was a disposition [*habitus*]; Perkins described it as a power [*potentia*]. But Thomas, Mastricht, Ames,

Conscience, as it were, draws a conclusion from two premises: the major premise is taken from the moral law (*synderesis*) and asserts, for example, that a person who steals sins. The minor premise, subsumed under it, is a particular situation or action, such as the assertion, "You have stolen." The conscience then draws the conclusion and pronounces judgment: "Thus you have sinned and are liable to punishment." If there is no guilt, the conscience is silent. Conscience does not function in its true sense in a perfect person.[182] Conscience speaks because in the moral awareness still remaining in us in the situation of sin, our conscience detects a discrepancy[183] between the moral law and our deeds, between what we ought to be and what we are.[184]

Aesthetic Judgment

But people evaluate things also according to the standard of beauty and ugliness. Many think that matters of taste are beyond dispute, that identifying beauty is completely subjective, contingent, and changeable. In

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Witsius, and many others correctly understood it as an activity of the understanding [*verstands*] [*BdP*[1], 112, n. 69].

[182] DO: *volmaakten mensch.*

[183] DO: *wanverhouding.*

[184] The teaching of the conscience in the older psychology is seen in Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* I[a] q. 79 a. 12 and IIa–IIae q. 94; Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xix.15–16; IV.x.1–31; Polanus, *Syntagma Theologiae*, V, chapter 30; Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Loci Communes* (Zurich: Froschouer, 1580), 296; Perkins, *Alle de Werken,* 3:69–110 [Ed. note: This is a reference to Perkins, *A Discourse of Conscience*]; William Ames, *Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof* (Leyden and London: W. Christiaens, E. Griffin, J. Dawson, 1639 [Ed note: Reprint, Amsterdam and Norwood, NJ: Theatrum Orbis Terraum and Walter J. Johnson, 1975), chapters 1–4]; Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, II.i.3 [Ed. note: For an explanation of the annotation form used for Mastricht, see § 3, n. 28]; Herman Witsius, "Exercitatio xviii. De Conscientia" in *Miscellaneorum Sacrorum Libri IV,* vol. 2 (Amsterdam: Franciscus Halma and Guilielmus van de Water, 1700), 598–611; Johanne Hoornbeek, *Theologia Practica*, *Pars Prior,* 2nd ed. (Utrecht: Johannis and Guilielmus van de Water, 1689), 285–304; De Moor, *Comp. Theol.*, 3:245–50; Buddeus, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis,* 76–85. Newer scholarship on the conscience is listed in Luthardt, *Kompendium der Theologischen Ethik* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1896), 93 [*BdP*[1], 112, n. 70].

this view, no objective, general, or fixed rules can be identified for what is beautiful, and hence there is no aesthetics, no theory or science of beauty. But the beautiful is nevertheless essentially distinct from the pleasant.[185] People do not argue about what is pleasant. One person finds this food and that drink enjoyable, but another does not. People are comfortable with this and do not argue about these differences. However, in connection with what is beautiful, people tend not to be satisfied with the notion that something attracts one person but not another; people attempt to account for beauty to themselves and others and attempt, as it were, to demonstrate why something is attractive. People proceed from the notion that what is genuinely beautiful should be attractive to everyone, given sufficient enlightenment and education.

With this, people are presupposing an instinctive liking for beauty, in the same sense that people accept such a liking for the true and the good. But the foundation and essence of beauty are hardly established yet. Logical laws are much clearer than ethical laws, which, in turn, are much clearer than aesthetic laws. But alongside the true and the good, the beautiful also has its objective, universally valid importance.

Truth always exists in agreement, whether between being and appearing,[186] (*veritas metaphysica*: truth or genuineness over against falsehood), or between [121] word and inclination[187] (*veritas ethica:* truth over against the lie), or between thought and reality (*veritas logica*: truth over aginst error). Goodness is the property through which things are worth desiring. Something can be worth desiring because it is useful[188] (*bonum utile*: medicine, e.g., for health) or because it is pleasant (*bonum delectabile*: e.g., a walk, food and drink). But something can also be worth desiring in and for itself, and this is the good in the proper sense (*bonum honestum*). Just

[185] DO: *het aangenaame.*

[186] DO: *van zijn en verschijning.*

[187] DO: *van woord en gezindheid.*

[188] DO: *nuttig.*

as truth exists in the agreement of being and knowing, so the good exists in the agreement of being and desiring (willing).[189]

Lastly, something is beautiful whose appearance or, subjectively, the sight of which is attractive. Beauty always assumes that genuine being lies within the phenomenon, does not hide but is manifested, and then is manifestd in such a way, in such a form, that it attracts the beholder. Beauty is connected with appearance.[190] From this, however, one may not infer that beauty is always of a sensory nature. On the contrary, beauty is a characteristic not only of bodies and of the sensory world but also and even primarily of spiritual things. God is spirit, but nonetheless he is glory itself. Still more, even the beauty of the material world is of a super-sensory[191] nature. We do observe beautiful things through our senses, but the property[192] by which they are beautiful is not perceivable through the senses. Animals have perceptions and representations of beautiful things, but they do not know the beautiful. They know only the useful and the pleasant. For that reason, the perception and recognition of the beautiful, also in sensory things, belongs to the higher faculty of knowing, to reason.

But this higher faculty of knowing, recognizing beauty, brings it, together with the faculty of desiring, into the understanding. That is why knowledge of the beautiful belongs to practical reason. Beauty is something that the beholding of which delights a person. Something is good insofar as it, when it is recognized by us, is desirable to our will. But beauty is what stimulates not our desire in a narrow sense, but our pleasure.[193]

[189] Ed. note: Here Bavinck in the first edition adds: "The good is that which agrees with nature, and therefore desirable in itself; good is what all things desire" [*bonum est quod convenit naturae alicuius ac proinde appetibile est; id quod omnia appetunt*]. The second clause is a direct quote from Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, I^{a} q. 6 a. 1 arg. 2; the language of the first clause, but not the precise quote, finds echoes in I^{a} q. 5. It is possible that Bavinck constructed the phrase on his own from memory [*BdP*^{1}, 113].

[190] DO: *Schoon hangt met schijn samen.*

[191] DO: *bovenzinnelijke.*

[192] DO: *eigenschap.*

[193] DO: *welgevallen.*

What is desired ceases to be beautiful to the extent that it is desired. The starry heaven is unspeakably beautiful, said Schopenhauer, because it is desired by no one. Beauty delights us [122] not because it is profitable to us. Our delight in beauty is entirely disinterested. Beauty awakens the kind of movement within our faculty of desiring that creates enjoyment in pure, disinterested, beholding, whether such beholding is physical or spiritual. Truth satisfies our understanding. The good fulfills our desires and awakens our love. Beauty provides rest and delight. Materially and objectively they are one.

The true, the good, and the beautiful form one unbreakable triad. All that is, in the same measure that it *is*, is also true, good, and beautiful. This unity can disintegrate only temporarily, in this world of disharmonies, so that Christ, the Holy One, "had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him" (Isa. 53:2), and, conversely, so that Satan can appear as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Nonetheless, these three are materially one. After all, also as the Crucified One, Christ is the King of Glory, and one day all harmony will be restored. The true, the good, and the beautiful differ only formally, insofar as the same thing exists in a varied relationship to the rich organization of our spirit. After all, God himself is also the truth, the holy, and the glory. And Christ is prophet, priest, and king; our wisdom, our righteousness, and our salvation.[194]

[194] The idea of the beautiful that has been developed here largely agrees with that of Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1ª q. 5 a. 4; Joseph Jungmann, *Aesthetik*, 2 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1886); Albert Stöckl, *Grundriss der Aesthetik und Rhetorik,* 2nd ed. (Mainz: Franz Kirchheim, 1874); Albert Stöckl, *Lehrbuch der Philosophie,* vol. 1, 6th ed. (Mainz: Franz Kirchheim, 1887) 43f.; Abraham Kuyper, *Het Calvinisme en de Kunst* (Amsterdam: J. A. Wormser, 1888) [*BdP*[1], 115, n. 71].

I. Self-Consciousness[195]

Self-consciousness is the most noteworthy act of the higher faculty of knowing. In self-consciousness the development of psychic life shifts from a republic to a monarchy. Self-consciousness is not a substance and it is not the essence of the soul, for it awakens gradually, and during sleep and in circumstances of illness, insanity, inebriation, etc., it is partially or entirely disabled. It is the result of a long process.[196] First, as we have already seen, there are many representations without consciousness. And then there are yet many representations that are indeed conscious and taken in by subjects themselves without subjects recognizing themselves as selves. Animals remain at this stage. Not only do animals sense objects but they also perceive themselves as the subject [123] of their perceiving and purposeful activities. They feel themselves vexed by hunger, thirst, or pain. But they fail to penetrate with their knowledge through to the subject or source of those activities. They gather together, as it were, all those activities around one subject, but they go no further; they do not make those activities themselves the object of their knowledge and thus are not aware of themselves as foundation[197] of those activities.

Similarly, from birth a child experiences some sensations,[198] both external and internal, like hunger, thirst, or pain. Then there gradually awakens in children a weak concept of the distinction between themselves and the world. Children begin to experience themselves as individual beings, react to sounds they hear or movements they see, and attempt to reach for or push away various objects. And then, after the passing of a considerable period during which a child still speaks of him- or herself in the third

[195] DO: *het zelfbewustzijn.*

[196] Heppe note: See Bavinck, *Verzamelde Opstellen*, 179, 185f. [ET: *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*, 171, 177–79].

[197] DO: *principe.*

[198] DO: *gewaarwording.*

person, self-consciousness awakens. The child has distinguished him- or herself from the world and considers him- or herself in contrast to the not-self.[199]

This self-consciousness, however, always bears an empirical character. It is included in the activities themselves of observing, thinking, desiring, etc. Actually, we become aware first of our circumstances and actions, and in those we become implicitly[200] aware of ourselves. Empirically, self-consciousness in itself is thus never a consciousness of ourselves as such, but always within the circumstance in which we find ourselves or the activities we perform. But through thinking we can abstract this self-consciousness in a narrower sense, as awareness of our self as such, from the circumstances and activities from which empirical reality always appears. This, then, is self-consciousness in the proper sense, considered apart from all its concrete circumstances, having only its own self as object, and bearing its own ineradicable character in the self.

Considered in this restricted sense, self-consciousness is clearly not a substance, it is not the essence of the soul, but it is also not a distinct faculty alongside understanding and reason. But it is an activity of the higher knowing faculty, and, more specifically, an activity of understanding and not of reason. After all, self-consciousness is not the conclusion of a syllogism. Human beings do not acquire self-consciousness by [124] ratiocination, but rather, in self-consciousness they know themselves immediately, as it were by intuition, and that is an attribute of understanding. Therefore, self-consciousness is distinct from *self-knowledge*.[201] Self-knowledge is a fruit of investigation, study, pondering, of lengthy and careful reflection

[199] Jean-Frédéric Bruch, *Theorie des Bewusstseins* (Strassburg: Treuttel und Würtz, 1864); William T. Preyer, *Die Seele des Kindes*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Grieben, 1890). Cf. note 81 above [*BdP*[1], 81, n. 47]. A. S. E. Talma, *De leer van het menschelijk bewustzijn* (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1889), 80f. [*BdP*[1], 116, n. 72].

[200] Ed. note: There is a typo in the second edition which reads *impicite* instead of the *implicite* found in the first edition (p. 116).

[201] DO: *zelfbewustzijn*; *zelfkennis*.

about oneself. Therefore, to speak precisely, we have knowledge of but not consciousness of God, the world, and all things outside of us, even though people often speak of God-consciousness and world-consciousness.[202] For all this knowledge is mediated,[203] obtained through observation and thinking. By contrast, the knowledge of ourselves in self-consciousness is immediate, and therefore it alone is self-consciousness in the proper sense.[204] Here the self identifies itself immediately as subject with itself as object. The self turns back to itself.[205]

But because self-consciousness is not knowledge in the proper sense, for that reason it cannot be said that it includes knowledge of the soul as spiritual substance nor of its characteristics or capacities. Perhaps the former or the latter can through reasoning be deduced from the nature of self-consciousness. But in itself this is not included in it. Self-consciousness, as such, includes only the fact that the self of a person has consciousness of one's own existence, of identity with oneself, and at the same time, consciousness that one is the subject of one's circumstances and actions.

But also in this way the testimony of self-consciousness suffices to refute the newer conceptions of this activity of the soul. Recent psychology does not see within self-consciousness any special action of the soul by which one knows oneself and identifies the self with oneself as subject-object. Rather, it regards self-consciousness as nothing more than a combination of consciousness phenomena, a meeting place of representations, a focal point of the entire psychic life, a phenomenon without reality, a mirror in which psychic life reflects itself.[206] But with all this, the nature of self-consciousness is not being explained in any way whatever.

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[202] GerO: *Gottes- en Weltbewusstsein.*

[203] Ed. note: The second edition mistakenly has *onmiddellijk* instead of the (correct) *middelijk* of the first edition (p. 117).

[204] DO: *in eigenlijke zin.*

[205] DO: *Het [ik] keert in zichzelf terug.*

[206] E.g., Lindner, *Lehrbuch der empirischen Psychologie*, 7th ed., 138–49; Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus,* 674–78 [*BdP*[1], 118, n. 73].

For first, self-consciousness is not an attendant phenomenon of the circumstances and activities of the soul, as if the soul were composed of two parts, the one bearing the circumstances and activities and the other running parallel to it and doing nothing [125] but reflecting those circumstances and activities. Rather, self-consciousness is woven into the circumstances and activities of the soul itself as their subject and bearer. Self-consciousness is not to be isolated and set off by itself.

Second, self-consciousness is surely a phenomenon, an event in the soul[207] or, rather, as we noted above, it is not the essence and substance of the soul but an act. Yet this phenomenon points to a bearer and this act points back to a subject. That which recognizes itself as a self and identifies itself with the self must have its own nature and its own foundation[208] in order to be able to produce such a phenomenon and to be able to perform such an activity.

Finally, self-consciousness is not a consciousness of our circumstances and activities, but in a more narrow sense it is a consciousness of our own self. In self-consciousness, what comes to our awareness are not only our circumstances and activities but especially our self distinct from them. In self-consciousness the soul distinguishes itself from the entire world, from all that is around, with, or in it. In so doing, we are conscious of being a unique being, identical with ourselves, and continuously the same self throughout our entire temporal existence. However, then self-consciousness is not to be understood as an attendant phenomenon of psychic life. At that point, it is not a constant succession of successive overlapping selves.[209] Rather, at that point, it is one single and undivided self. At that point, it is the highest spiritual intellectual activity of the soul, whereby it knows itself and identifies itself with oneself. At that point, the

[207] Ed. note: Bavinck uses both the Latin *phaenomenon* and the Dutch *verschijnsel* here.

[208] DO: *principe.*

[209] GerO: *eine stete Aufeinaderfolge ineinander übergehender Iche.*

soul ascends from unconsciousness through consciousness to this self-consciousness, in order to bring order amid the chaos, to create unity in the diversity, to provide a monarchical arrangement to the entire life of the soul, and to claim everything regally as one's own situation and deed. Self-consciousness is to human beings what the rising sun is to nature.[210]

J. Language

It is the privilege of the conscious life of the spirit that it is accessible only to the subject himself or herself. "For who knows a person's thoughts [126] except the spirit of that person, which is in him?" (1 Cor. 2:11). A person's consciousness is a world closed to others. No one save God alone can penetrate that person's world without or against their will (Ps. 139:2). In order for us to make ourselves known to others and to reveal our internal, hidden life, we therefore need a means.[211] Now the revelation of the inner life of the soul can, of course, occur in various ways and by various signs.[212] In general and in the broadest sense, language is the totality of the signs by which human beings reveal their thoughts. In this sense, therefore, there are as many kinds of language as there are kinds of signs. There is a language of signals communicated by musical instruments, by flags, by lights, or by torches. There is a language of colors and flowers; a language of facial features; a language of gestures; a language of the often involuntary movement of facial muscles, of nerves, and of body parts; language accompanying the disorders and emotions and thus mirroring the inner life of the soul. Finally, there is a language of sounds that are directed to our ears and can be of two kinds: articulated or unarticulated.

[210] Ulrici, *Leib und Seele,* 2:1–87; Sanseverino, *Philosophia Christiana*, vol. 6, 275f.; Kleutgen, *Philosophie der Vorzeit,* 1:167–73; Jungmann, *Das Gemüth*, 33–36 [*BdP*[1], 119, n. 74].

[211] DO: *middel.*

[212] DO: *teekenen.*

Unarticulated sounds—that is, the language of cries and shouts—are characteristic especially of animals. Animals do possess some consciousness, memory, capacity for evaluating, but the impressions they have—all of them concrete—remain unconnected, loose, individual, and unrelated. Nor can animals abstract or form general concepts. Therefore they cannot find signs for these general concepts, and therefore they cannot express this in words or names. Language is the Rubicon between animals and humans.[213]

In a narrower sense, language is the free expression of thought using *articulated* sounds. It assumes the higher faculty of knowing, the rational thinking nature of humans—in fact, all the various activities of the human spirit. It assumes the capacity to receive sensations and impressions and to be affected by them. It assumes memory for preserving representations, imagination for visualizing what is observed in a lively manner, understanding for forming abstract concepts, etc. There is an inner connection between thought (reason) and language. Some people even contend that thinking and speaking are one and the same thing.

So-called traditionalists, such as De Bonald,[214] Lamennais,[215] [127] and Bautain,[216] believe that individual persons cannot discover the higher truths by themselves. These need to be externally communicated to us and done so by the word. We first need to hear the word, and then we get the idea. Just as children know nothing on their own and do not create

[213] Friedrich Max Müller, *Vorlesungen über die Wissenschaft der Sprache*, vol. 1, 3rd ed., ed. Carl Böttger (Leipzig: Julius Klinkhardt, 1875), 16, 416–21 [*BdP*[1], 121, n. 75].

[214] Ed. note: Louis Gabriel Ambroise de Bonald (1754–1840) was a French philosopher, politician, and counter-revolutionary. Bavinck might have had the following quotation from De Bonald in mind: "There was geometry in the world before Newton, and philosophy before Descartes, but before language there was absolutely nothing but bodies and their images, because language is the necessary instrument of every intellectual operation—nay, the means of every moral existence" (Source: *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Louis Gabriel Ambroise de Bonald").

[215] Ed. note: This is likely a reference to Hugues Felicité Robert de Lamennais (1782–1854), a French Roman Catholic priest, philosopher, and political theorist.

[216] Ed. note: This is likely a reference to Louis Eugène Marie Bautain (1796–1867), a French Roman Catholic philosopher and theologian.

their language but learn it from their parents and teachers, and in that language they simultaneously obtain thoughts and truths, so too Adam listened to God, received language from him, and in this language received God's revelation. Language is the bearer of truths, the one great, glorious tradition of humanity.[217]

More recently, the idea that thought and speech are identical has gained entrance among philologists in a different form and on a different basis. Thinking in itself is said to be speaking, and speaking is thinking aloud. Many people speak out loud while thinking.[218] Thinking and speaking, reason and language, are inseparable; they are identical, two sides of the same coin. Just as there is no concept[219] without a word, so too there is no word apart from concept. Thinking without language is impossible. Logically, the word precedes the thought and language precedes thinking; language has been the most important means to form human beings into thinking beings.[220]

However, there are many objections against this identification of thinking and speaking, of reason and language, of concept and word. Undoubtedly there is a close relation between both elements in each pair, but connection is not identity. Deaf persons possess concepts and thoughts without any words. Although they have received those concepts and thoughts from others and although they communicate them through special signs, nonetheless between concepts and words there is not such a connection that the former is inseparable from the latter. If thinking and speaking were indeed identical in such a way that the former could not exist without the latter, then the phenomenon of many languages could not be explained.

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[217] Stöckl, *Lehrbuch der Philosophie,* 6th ed., 406f.; Paul Janet, *Traité élémentaire de philosophie* (Paris: Delagrave, 1881), 231–40 [*BdP*[1], 121, n. 76].

[218] DO: *Vele menschen, denkende, spreken luide.*

[219] DO: *begrip.*

[220] Max Müller, *Das Denken im Lichte der Sprache* (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1888), 70–115 [*BdP*[1], 122, n. 77].

Now the capacity for speech is innate, but language is not. We know things and subsequently we communicate them using different words and languages. The thoughts and concepts are the same, and yet the words are different. In fact, words can be completely forgotten, and yet the thought can be retained and expressed using different signs. One can indicate the number five using five fingers. And we all know from experience that we can have thoughts without words. A sign and the thing it signifies [128] are not one and the same. Often we have a representation, a concept, a thought for which we still search a word. On the other hand, people do say that when we lack a word, then the thought is not obvious and clear to our spirit either. And it is true that words support and clarify thoughts, and that we can express something better to the extent that we know it better. Still, Augustine rightly said that a man cannot speak about what he does not know, but he can know something about which he is unable to speak. Our thinking frequently is not up to the task, and our speaking lags behind our thinking.[221]

Finally, the indication of the natural connection between thinking and speaking is undoubtedly justified against the notion that language is artificially invented and originated through negotiation and contract. Some designations and artistic terms may be explained in this way, just as musical notes, stenographic signs, and sign language for the hearing impaired are established arbitrarily. But language itself is not the product of arbitrariness, of convention or contract. A language invented in this

[221] Theodor Gangauf, *Des Heiligen Augustinus speculative Lehre von Gott dem Dreieinigen*, 2nd ed. (Augsburg: Schmid, 1883), 133–40. On the relation between thinking and speaking, see also Benno Erdmann, "Die psychologische Grundlagen der Beziehung zwischen Sprechen und Denken, I," *Archiv für systematische Philosophie* 2 (1896): 355–448, also published in Paul Natorp, ed., *Neue Folge der Philosophischen Monatshefte,* vol. 2 (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1896), 355–448; Benno Erdmann, "Die psychologische Grundlagen der Beziehung zwischen Sprechen und Denken, II," *Archiv für systematische Philosophie* 3 (1897): 31–48, 150–73, also published in Paul Natorp, ed., *Neue Folge der Philosophischen Monatshefte,* vol. 3 (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1897): 31–48, 150–73; Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, 564–640 [*BdP*[1], 123, n. 78].

manner—such as Volapük, for example[222]—would have no roots in human thinking. It would be devoid of life and poetry and would be moribund. Real, genuine language is not a concoction[223] but the spontaneous, free expression of thoughts. It is humanity's certificate of nobility[224] and the sign and seal of human reason.

But nevertheless, on the other hand, the connection between thought and word is not so close[225] that a specific sound is the physically necessary and only possible expression of a particular thought. Language did not come into being by way of a contract, and it is not the product of human will. Nor is it the product of nature, growing or withering like a plant. It arises from thinking and thus is logical rather than physical in nature. It is not constructed, yet neither has it grown like a tree. It is born, just as a work of art is born in the soul of an artist. Therefore there are all sorts of physiological conditions on which language depends, but language itself is nevertheless subject to laws other than those governing nature. It has its own nature and character.

This special nature of language entails several givens in regard to its origin. The view of John Locke, Adam Smith (1723–1790), and [129] many in the previous century—that language came into being through a pact or treaty—has been for the most part discarded and is no longer being advocated. The onomatopoeic derivation of language, the so-called Bow-wow theory of Herder and Steinthal, bumps up against the objection

[222] Ed. note: "Volapük is a constructed language, created in 1879 and 1880 by Johann Martin Schleyer (1831–1912), a Roman Catholic priest in Baden, Germany. Sheyler felt that God had told him in a dream to create an international language." Though it was popular for a while, with Volapük clubs and conventions, it was rather quickly displaced by Esperanto (from 1889 on). (Source: *Wikipedia,* s.v. "Volapük"; s.v. "Esperanto").

[223] GerO: *Machwerk.*

[224] DO: *adelbrief.*

[225] DO: *innig.*

that onomatopoeic words are few and not very useful.[226] Condillac's interjection theory, the "Pah-pah" theory, is unacceptable for the same reason.[227] Language begins where interjections stop.

Darwinism sees language as arising from primitive yells, and it attempts to explain thinking as a result of language rather than the other way around. Against this position, however, we note that primitive yells are not language and cannot lead to language, and that we are not made human by language but must already be human in order to form language. Moreover, the science of comparative linguistics teaches that the original roots from which languages are derived were not onomatopoeic words, interjections, primitive yells, or concrete names, but abstract things. In other words, general concepts came before things were given concrete names. Naming things according to their nature[228] is the characteristic feature of human beings.[229] Thus people exist before language; thinking (at least in logical order) exists before speaking.[230]

Thus when we investigate the nature of language more deeply, we are directed to an absolute beginning, just as with religion and morality. Human beings are inconceivable without language, and language already

[226] Ed. note: "Bow-wow theories suggest that the first human languages developed as onomatopoeia, imitations of natural sounds. The name 'bow-wow theory' was coined by Max Müller, a philologist who was critical of the notion" (Source: *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Bow-wow theory"). The two named references are to Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and Heymann Steinthal (1823–1899), both of whom did extensive work in philology.

[227] Ed. note: The interjectional theory of Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1714–1780) traced the origins of language back to expressions of the senses; once again it was Max Müller who denigrated this as the "Pooh-pooh" or "Pah-pah" theory. For a slightly different read on this history, see Rudolf Schmid, *The Theories of Darwin and Their Relation to Philosophy, Religion, and Morality*, trans. G. A. Zimmerman (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg, 1883), 96.

[228] DO: *aard.*

[229] Max Müller, *Vorlesungen über die Wissenschaft der Sprache,* 1:425–51 [*BdP*[1], 124, n. 79].

[230] DO: *De mensch gaat dus aan de taal, het denken altans in logische orde aan het spreken vooraf.*

assumes the existence of human beings. The first man could therefore not have come forth from an animal because there would then never have been any first man. Neither can the first man be thought of as a helpless, underage child because then he could not have lived a single day without supernatural help. Therefore, the first man, in agreement with the Scriptures, must have been created as an adult, equipped with knowledge and thinking ability. Language was not imparted externally and artificially to this man by God, as the traditionalists propose. But as God's image bearers, humans possessed all the aptitudes and habits[231] that equipped them for worshiping God, observing his law, knowing things, and thus also for naming them in accord with their nature.

Exactly why [130] a particular concept was conveyed by a particular sound cannot be stated with certainty. Just as each object has its own distinct tone—for example, gold has a different ring from copper—so too human beings, affected and aroused by one or another tone, had to respond and echo them in a unique way (the so-called Ding-dong theory). But surely language did not originate as thoroughly unconsciously and instinctively as that. Language cannot be explained on the basis of purely reflexive actions. The original roots of words are all abstractions and thus point back to thinking, deliberation, and reason.[232] In the final analysis, language rests on the one single Logos who created spirit and matter, soul and body, subject and object, along with creating thought and language, concept and word, in relationship with each other.[233]

[231] DO: *geschiktheden en hebbelijkheden.*

[232] Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck included this sentence: "Language does not have its origin φυσει (in nature) but λογῳ (in reason) [*BdP*[1], 125].

[233] On the origins of language, cf. Max Müller, *Vorlesungen über die Wissenschaft der Sprache*, 1:408–68; Sándor Giesswein, *Die Hauptprobleme der Sprachwissenschaft in ihren Beziehungen zur Theologie, Philosophie und Anthropologie, etc.* [translated from the Hungarian work entitled "As összehasonlító nyelvészet fo problémái"] (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1892), 140–234 [*BdP*[1], 125, n. 80].

§ 8. The Faculty of Desiring[1]

A. Its Distinction from the Faculty of Knowing

After Condillac had already taken the lead and attempted to derive desiring from consciousness,[2] Johann Friedrich Herbart and his school followed and conceived of desire as a pursuit and elevation of a representation above the hindrances and impediments that suppress it beneath consciousness. The object of desiring is not "something,"[3] but a representation,[4] because the soul knows nothing and possesses only representations, and the soul's pursuit, therefore, can be directed at nothing other than representations. A hungry person desires not bread but the sensation or representation[5] of satisfaction through bread. The thirsty person longs not for water but for the representation of thirst being quenched by water. The pious person yearns not for God but for the representation of peace provided by communion with God. Moreover, the representation of what is desired was already present in a person's consciousness before it was desired. Whoever does not know the power of bread for satisfying hunger [131] and cannot imagine the pleasure of satisfying hunger pangs, will also not desire bread. It is simply the case that that representation was merely impeded when it was desired, and once satisfied, it was unimpeded. The pursuing or desiring thus consists essentially in this: that the hindered representation

[1] DO: *Het Begeervermogen.*

[2] FrO: *l'entendement.*

[3] DO: *zaak.*

[4] DO: *voorstelling.*

[5] DO: *gewaarwording of voorstelling.*

seeks to overcome the hindrances and ascend free and unhindered above the threshold of consciousness.[1]

This theory, however, is contradicted in the strongest possible way by our consciousness. Even though hungry persons most certainly wish for a different internal condition—relief from hunger pangs—nevertheless they do long sorely for the thing itself, which is called "bread." The appeal to the fact that the soul knows only representations would, if it were valid, prove too much and therefore prove nothing at all. For from this claim it would follow not only that the actual object of the desire was a representation, an alteration of one's internal condition (satisfying hunger, quenching thirst, etc.), but also that the things themselves that are desired as the means to these ends—bread and water—were also nothing but representations. This is, of course, the teaching of idealism, but it is refuted by a number of considerations.

Idealism's identification of being and consciousness, of the thing itself and our representation of it, is impossible. There is an essential difference between them. The concept of truth as the correspondence of our thoughts with reality is built on the difference, and as such, it is a proof of the distinction. Representations are in our consciousness, but that same consciousness testifies that the things we represent to ourselves are outside

[1] Volkmar, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie,* 2:398; Lindner, *Lehrbuch der empirischen Psychologie*, 190, and elsewhere; Herbart, "Psychologie als Wissenschaft" § 37. 104. 150. *Werke* V 275. VI 56f. 254f. Ed. note: Bavinck's references to Herbart are not entirely clear: § 37 of "Psychologie als Wissenschaft" (*Sämmtliche Werke,* 5:318–20) is the second of five sections (§§ 36–40) dedicated to "Preparation for Mathematical-psychological Investigations" [*Vorbereitung der matechematisch-psychologischen Untersuchungen*]. If "104" and "150" refer to sections in the same work, they are found at *Sämmtliche Werke* 6:73–80, and 6:342–59, respectively. *Sämmtliche Werke,* 5:275, is at the beginning of § 27 and begins a chapter on "Problems involved in the concept of the ego (or self)" [*Darstellung des im Begriff des Ich enthatenen Problems*], a chapter that continues through page 289. *Sämmtliche Werke,* 6:56f. is the beginning of a section "Preliminary Consideration of Reason According to Its Relationships" [*Vorläufige Betrachtung der Vernunft nach ihren Beziehungen*], and 6:254f. comes at the conclusion of a section on "Self-consciousness" [*Vom Selbstbewusstsen*] [*BdP*[1], 126, n. 81].

of us. We make a clear distinction between internal conditions and objects existing outside of us. Idealism cannot explain how our consciousness can make such a distinction or even come to entertain the notion of external objects. The nature and characteristics[2] of representations are different from those of the objects that we perceive. A representation is not warm, hard, black, etc., but the stove I represent to myself is. The perception of external objects and events repeatedly interrupts the stream of my internal representations and consciousness. The representation of, say, a soul that I have at a given moment is not the cause of the representations [132] of, say, a tree which happened to follow in my consciousness. The latter impression is caused by the contingent sensation of an object that we call "tree." The condition for consciousness entirely and only through immanent causality is hereby sufficiently repudiated.[3]

All this teaches clearly that there is a difference between the thing itself in reality and the representation of it in my consciousness. But from this it follows that even though the representation is required beforehand, nevertheless the thing itself can very well be the object of desire. Corresponding with this distinction of representation and thing is that distinction between the faculties of knowing and desiring. With the faculty of knowing, human beings assimilate things in themselves; however, not things themselves according to their substance, but only according to their image, their representation. To a certain extent, in this context a person is both assimilating and receiving. Objects and phenomena press in on an individual from all sides, giving rise within the person to sensations, representations, concepts, etc. In that context, things themselves remain what they are and are unchanged by the human knowledge of them.

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[2] DO: *eigenschappen.*

[3] Eduard von Hartmann, *Kritische Grundlegung des transcendentalen Realismus,* 3rd ed. (Berlin: Duncker, 1885), esp. 67–95; idem., *Das Grundproblem der Erkenntnisstheorie* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Friedrich, 1889?), 40–57; Fischer, *Die Grundfragen der Erkenntnisstheorie*, 49–281; cf. my *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:207–33 [*BdP*[1], 128, n. 82].

But human beings also encounter things from another point of view. Things themselves are something other than their representations in the consciousness. They can be present to an individual not only as things that are observable and knowable but also as they are in themselves desirable and enjoyable. Things can be present to us not only under the perspective of true and false but also under that of good and evil, of beautiful and ugly. It is the same phenomena, circumstances, and objects that encounter us. The true, good, and beautiful are one. But those three differ formally and repeatedly present themselves to us from another side.

Insofar as we recognize things as good and beautiful with our practical understanding, objects awaken in us a power and activity other than that expressed by the faculty of knowing. Of course, it is the same person who knows and who desires, even as it is always the same world that presents itself to him. Distinguishing the true from the good and the faculty of knowing from the faculty of desiring is never the same as separating them. [133]

But a power arises within the faculty of desiring that is formally different from the faculty of knowing. It is a power that grasps things from the viewpoint of good and evil. After all, desiring is not reduced to representations, even as objectively the good is not formally identical with the true. We can say that the true is a good for the faculty of knowing and that understanding by nature pursues that good. But then one is speaking metaphorically[4] though correctly. The faculty of knowing very certainly pursues the true, and that truth is a good, but it pursues that good, not because it is the good but because it is true. The true is and remains the formal object of the faculty of knowing.

Things are somewhat different, however, with the faculty of desiring. The faculty of desiring pursues an object because the object in itself is good or beautiful and because it provides satisfaction and enjoyment to the person who possesses or beholds it. With this activity a person is not

[4] DO: *overdrachtelijk*.

(in a relative sense) passively receptive, but someone who, as it were, goes outside of the self and strains toward the object. The person not only knows the object and has a representation of it but is also affected by the object, whether by being refreshed or repelled. The person is compelled to establish his or her relationship to the object, either to seek it or to flee from it. In the broadest sense, the faculty of desiring is that power of the soul by which it reacts to phenomena and by which it establishes its relationship to them.

In this way, then, the faculty of desiring is closely connected to the faculty of knowing. In the faculty of desiring there is no movement, not even the weakest stirring,[5] unless preceded by a sensation or a representation,[6] no matter how weak it may be. "That which is not known is not desired."[7] Without consciousness, no feeling or desire[8] is conceivable. Conversely, there is probably no perception or representation[9] that does not, in some measure, consciously or unconsciously affect the faculty of desiring, awakening it or repelling it. Basically, human beings are indifferent to nothing because they are related to everything. Nothing leaves them absolutely cold. Neutrality is an absurdity.[10]

But no matter how intimate the connection between the faculties of knowing and desiring, they nevertheless remain formally distinct. The faculty of desiring is a unique power in us. Through knowing [134] we assimilate things ideally within us; through desiring we move toward the things themselves. Knowing works centripetally, desiring centrifugally. The former involves attraction to our soul; the latter involves the expansion of

[5] Ed. note: Bavinck uses both a Dutch term, *beweging*, and a German term, *Regung*.

[6] DO: *gewaarwording of voorstelling*.

[7] LO: *Ignoti nulla cupido*. Ed. note: Bavinck also provides the Dutch proverbial translation: *onbekend maakt onbemind*; *onbemind* indicates being unloved.

[8] DO: *gevoel of begeerte*.

[9] DO: *gewaarwording of voorstelling*.

[10] DO: *onding*.

our soul. The former enriches or impoverishes us intellectually; the latter improves or worsens us ethically.

Therefore, it won't do, as Spinoza claims, to identify affirming with willing. Affirming is a judgment and has to do with truth. Willing has to do with making something come to pass. "There is light" is an affirmation. "Let there be light" is an act of will.

At this point we should mention that the term "faculty of desiring," taken literally, is far too narrow.[11] Just as the faculty of knowing includes far more than actual knowing but includes also sensation, impression, representation, etc., so too the faculty of desiring is far broader than the term suggests. Desire is only one of the activities of the faculty of desiring. This faculty includes every action in which the soul establishes its real relation to things and thus includes not only desire and will but also inclination and temperament, attraction and repulsion, emotion and passion. This faculty is just as rich as the faculty of knowing and testifies once again to the amazing organization of the soul.

B. The Natural Faculty of Desiring[12]

Like the faculty of knowing, the faculty of desiring is divided into lower and higher levels. In human beings it is lifted to its highest level and becomes a rational faculty of desiring that is preceded and led by reason and in this way is a will in its real sense.

But this higher faculty of desiring does not fall suddenly out of the sky; it is prepared both in humans themselves and in those creatures below humans. In a certain sense we can find even among inanimate creatures an analogy of what is a faculty of desiring in animals and humans. There is

[11] Ed. note: Here we need point out that Bavinck uses the term "desire" broadly to cover an entire faculty that includes desire and desiring in a more restrictive sense as a dimension of the whole in sections B and D of this chapter. See note 36 below.

[12] DO: *het begeervermogen.*

a mysterious urge, an unconscious pursuit, in all creatures, even if only to be and to persevere in their existence. Nothing wants to die. Everything fears death. There is an instinct for self-preservation in all that exists. And Spinoza therefore rightly [135] spoke of a pursuit in order to persevere in existence. But it is wrong to identify this urge in every creature as will, as Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Von Hartmann do, since will assumes reason and self-consciousness.

But there is nevertheless such an unconscious urge in all creatures. Because of this urge, everything is in motion, and everything is straining in a particular direction, whether it is seeking for being or also escaping from nothingness. In all creatures there is an attracting and a repelling power, a connecting and a separating power, a power that seeks a midpoint or flees it.[13] Or as Empedocles said, love and hate are the basic forces of all that exists.[14]

Many others have spoken similarly. Plato regarded love[15] as essentially the pursuit from the finite to the infinite. Augustine very fittingly[16] suggested that by its weight a body strives for its place. The weight does not always pull the body downward, but it always drives it toward the place where it belongs. A flame reaches upward; a stone pushes downward. Objects are driven forth by their weight and seek their proper place. If one pours oil into water, it still ends up on the surface of the water; if one pours water on the surface of the oil, the water still sinks beneath the oil. They are driven forward by their weight and seek their proper place. As long as the right order of things is missing for them, they are restless; as soon as they have that order, they rest. My weight is my love. It drives me to where I am driven.

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[13] DO: *Er is eene aantrekkende en eene afstotende, eene verbindende en scheidende, een middel-punt zoekende and middel-punt vliegende kracht in all schepselen.*

[14] Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck included the Greek terms φιλια and νεικος [*BdP*[1], 132].

[15] DO: *liefde.* Ed. note: Bavinck used ἐρως here; a crucial clarification.

[16] DO: *Zeer schoon.*

Poets have therefore sung the praises of love as the principle and the driving force of all that has been created:

> I saw love, as the holiest fire permeating everything,
> Filling the universe with unbelievable blessing,
> That it poured out. (Bilderdijk)[17]

This universal urge,[18] present within inanimate creatures as well, is of course not a faculty of desiring in the proper sense. When the term "natural faculty of desire"[19] was given previously to this urge, it was intended only in a figurative sense. All that is created has an internal striving toward what advances it, toward what it is related to, and it seeks to escape the opposite. But inanimate creatures [136] have no awareness at all of that and thus do not strive even toward what is a good for them. With them, therefore, there is no faculty of desiring, which always assumes some kind of sensation or representation. The goal toward which their pursuit is directed points back not to any consciousness in themselves, but to the knowledge of their Creator. Even when this universal striving takes on some higher form, as in the extraordinarily beautiful crystal formations and still more so in the vegetative life of plants, and the plant that is rooted in the earth assimilates the nutrient juices and captures the pollen

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[17] DO: *k Zag Liefde, als't heiligst vuur door alles uitgebreid,*
't Heelal vervullen met ondenkbre zaligheid,
Die ze uitstort.

Willem Bilderdijk, "Aan Cats," *De Dichtwerken van Bilderdijk,* vol. 12 (Haarlem: A. C. Kruseman, 1858), 68 [*BdP*[1], 133, n. 84]. Ed. note: The complete poem, "Aan Cats," of which these lines are only a fragment, is a tribute to the Dutch poet Jacob Cats (1577–1660), whom Bilderdijk describes in the opening line as "My oldest and best friend." Bavinck cites a longer section of the poem in his book on Bilderdijk, *Bilderdijk als Denker en Dichter* (Kampen: Kok, 1906), 75–76. According to Bavinck, Bilderdijk regarded the universe (*het heelal*) as a living, in-spirited organism that reveals God's attributes. Above all, his heart thirsted for *unity* and he believed he had found it in an all-encompassing *Love* that was divine.

[18] DO: *drang.*

[19] DO: *natuurlijke begeervermogen.*

and turns toward the sunlight, then all this is still not yet the faculty of desiring in the proper sense.

Nonetheless, it is, as it were, a kind of preformation of the faculty of desiring, and as such, it deserves our full attention. After all, human beings, in whom the faculty of desiring rises to its highest level, assimilate and incorporate within themselves all those lower forms. The natural faculty of desiring is present in human beings as well. With them, a rich life of pursuing precedes all consciousness and desiring.

1. First, it deserves notice that the soul in us is the foundation of the vegetative life. Where there is life, there is motion; and where there is motion, there is a moving power.

   No matter how different the expressions of life in humans may be, they all have one principle in the soul. The soul engages in these vegetative activities by means of the sympathetic nervous system, located primarily in the chest and abdominal cavities and also connected to the spinal column and brain through nerve fibers. These various parts nevertheless comprise an enclosed system. The function of this sympathetic nervous system is to channel all movement that proceeds from the soul to the organs involved in vegetative life. The system includes all those nerves that activate the organs of vegetative life that are independent of our will. To this vegetative life belong vascular, respiratory, digestive, and reproductive systems, as well as the secreting of saliva, stomach fluids, gall, perspiration, milk, tears, urine, sperm, and ova.

   All these activities of vegetative organs are relatively independent of the cranial and spinal nerves and function entirely apart from our consciousness and will. We are able subsequently to reflect on them and we may even be able to exert some influence on them—for example, we can momentarily [137] hold our breath—but in the normal course of life all these activities occur without our awareness and without the participation of our will.

While they are all functioning on their own, we continue our usual work and devote ourselves to entirely different things.

2. Attention must also be paid to the reflexes or the so-called reflexive movements, which are sometimes differentiated from automatic movements, both of which are classified as involuntary movements.

   Reflexive movements consist of the stimulation of a sensory nerve[20] (nerves of sensation, nerves of touch)[21] which, automatically and without our will and often also without our knowing, triggers motor nerves, generating muscle movement by means of the central nerves in the spinal cord and brain (the cerebrospinal nervous system), which are therefore called "reflex centers."[22] All these movements rest solely on mechanisms of the nerves and do not involve any psychic elements; they are akin to the movements of a frog jumping or a chicken running after its head is cut off.

   To these movements belong many of the examples that were once advanced as proof of unconscious representations. In addition, we must include here suddenly closing one's eyes in the presence of danger, raising one's arm against attack, struggling for balance when slipping, sneezing when one's nose tickles, coughing after the irritation of phlegm in the throat, blushing from shame, growing pale with fright, laughing in pleasure, wailing in grief, crying out "Oh God, help me" when in need, catching one's breath, one's pulse standing still, and the like.

   On many of these occasions we are conscious of what is happening. We know that we are doing these things even though we did not will them. We experience ourselves blushing, completely against our will. But frequently we know nothing about what is

[20] DO: *gewaarwordingszenuw.*

[21] DO: *sensibele zenuwen; gevoelszenuwen.*

[22] DO: *reflexcentra.*

happening; it happens apart from our consciousness. The pupils of our eyes contract in light and dilate in darkness. Or we may unknowingly play with our finger, a hand, a foot, a leg, a pencil, or our glasses. Similarly, we may have unconscious habits—movements of the head or of other body parts, silly habits, exclamations and interjections in the course of ordinary speech—and these may become so ingrained that they occur without our thinking about them or even knowing about them.

All the motions and activities we must [138] perform while reading, speaking, writing, playing a piano, knitting, sewing, weaving, and perform in connection with numerous occupations and handicrafts, happen completely automatically, involuntarily, and unconsciously. Everything, even the most holy activities, such as prayer, can become such a custom and routine that we do them without noticing what we are doing. We often perform these activities and motions even while our conscious personality is occupied with something completely different. Beneath the conscious, will-directed life, a world of unconscious representations and automatic actions is expanding. And the personality, with its self-consciousness and self-direction, rises on this broad foundation like a pyramid.[23]

3. Finally, we must still take note of the innate drives[24] of human beings. The faculty of desiring, like the faculty of knowing, involves no inherent content. The objects it pursues all lie outside in the surrounding world. Yet that faculty of desiring, on the other hand, is not neutral and indifferent. It involves a particular form, inclination, and direction that are not introduced by our own conscious will, but which are present in that faculty of desiring by nature,

[23] See the literature listed in § 7. D, note 81 [*BdP*[1], 136, n. 85]. Ed. note: Bavinck's original cross-reference was to *BdP*[1], 81, n. 47.

[24] GerO: *Triebe.*

prior to all consciousness and acts of will. That must already be accepted, therefore, because otherwise we cannot understand how the faculty of desiring shifts over to activity. After all, the faculty of desiring is active and pursues long before our consciousness and before our will, and therefore it cannot be activated by either of them. Instead, it is activated by one or another good presented to it and in this way is awakened and spurred to action. The faculty of desiring is like the faculty of knowing as well in that the latter also does not have any innate knowledge but does have all sorts of aptitudes and habits, and thus involves a certain form and then is stimulated by the external world and awakened to sensing, perceiving, and thinking. And even as the activities of the faculty of knowing can be reduced to innate capacities, which, however, all together are but a single habit, in the same way all movements of the faculty of desiring are rooted in such innate inclinations. For that reason, people speak of a multitude of drives: for self-preservation, for sex, for companionship, for happiness, for imitating, for imagining, for knowing, for morality, for beauty, for freedom, for religion, and for many more things.[25]

4. Perhaps all these drives are [139] to be traced back to the drive for self-preservation. Every created thing is implanted with a striving to persevere in its existence. All beings value themselves, seek what is advantageous, avoid what is harmful, and strive for happiness. This self-love is the root from which all activities of the desiring faculty arise. It is the condition without which there could be no drive or desire, longing or act of will, hope or fear, joy or sorrow, love or hate.
5. That is why the faculty of desiring is designed in such a way that by virtue of its nature it can pursue nothing other than the good.

[25] GerO: *Sebsterhaltungs-, Geschlechts-, Gesellschafts-, Glückseligkeits-, Nachahmungs-, Einbildungs-, Wissens-, Sittlichkeits-, Schönheits-, Freiheits-, Religionstriebe.*

> Here the good is to be taken in a subjective sense, referring to what we think corresponds with our nature, suits us, and advances our well-being. The good taken in an objective sense is definitely no longer the object toward which our faculty of desiring is directed. Sin has both darkened our understanding and led our will in a wrong direction. We frequently err and take as being a good what is essentially evil and regarding what is truly good as evil. But the faculty of desiring can nevertheless, according to its nature, strive only for what the understanding holds up as being good. The sinner also chases after sin under the illusion that it is good and despises virtue under the illusion that it is evil. Sinners flee from God because they fear evil from him. To love sin for its own sake, because it is sin, is not human but demonic. In the language of Scripture, all these innate drives together comprise the heart, out of which flow all the issues and views of life (Prov. 4:23).

C. Instinct

So far we have considered only those striving activities of the soul that precede consciousness.[26] These take on higher form in the soul's sensitive life, of which instinct is the foremost manifestation. The vegetative life of plants, even though they seek through an inner urge what suits plants, is not properly called instinct. But instinct occupies a large role in the life of animals. With animals and so too with human beings, we often encounter a purposeful although unconscious connection of sensations [140] or representations with emotions and actions. Instinctive actions have their root and origin in the innate drives[27] of the sensory faculty of desiring, but in connection with their performance they are led by sensory

[26] Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck parenthetically added: *appetitus naturalis* [*BdP*[1], 138].

[27] Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck parenthetically added: *Triebe* [*BdP*[1], 138].

perceptions and representations. In this, the instinctive actions are distinct from the reflexive movements we discussed previously. With this latter there is not yet any psychological element present. These movements depend on mechanisms of the nervous system. Instinctive actions, however, are always preceded by sensory perceptions or representations. Although as movements of animal organs they belong to the discipline of physiology, they are discussed also in psychology because they are preceded by a representation, a need, a drive. Instincts include a psychic element by which they are led.

That psychic element, however, is not understanding and reason, not the higher faculty of knowing that abstracts and forms concepts, but simply the lower faculty of knowing with its perceptions and representations. Instinct is thus not entirely blind and unconscious, as are reflex movements. It does not operate until after a perception has occurred. On the other hand, it is also not rational and therefore also not free. The uniqueness of instinct is that the sensory perception immediately, apart from any deliberation about choosing means having occurred, sets the motor nerves in motion and leads to an action, which though not deliberate, is nonetheless purposeful. The action itself that follows the perception is thus not unconscious, but the relation between the two is unconscious, without thought or deliberation. No prior deliberation occurred about why exactly this specific action had to be performed after that perception. There was no choice made.

The purposefulness of that activity is unconscious. This is how a bird builds its nest, a spider makes its web, a duckling swims, an animal mates with its own kind, an organism seeks its own food. In the same unconscious way, an infant seeks its mother's breast, a feverish person yearns for water, a heartburn sufferer desires antacid, an Eskimo looks for cod-liver oil. Time and again we are led by a wonderful, mysterious instinct in connection with judging a person or an issue, choosing a [141] vocation, deciding what fork of the road to take, and the like. This instinct comes

alongside us to help in our conscious deliberations and actions and helps us succeed where we might otherwise have failed.

For in general, instinct operates more surely and more securely[28] than does conscious understanding and rational deliberation. These latter, after all, include the possibility of doubt, hesitation, choice, mistake, error, faulty insight, incorrect decision, etc. But instinct does not need to learn, to deliberate, and to choose. It acts automatically and spontaneously and makes no mistake. The bird builds its nest in one working session and builds it well. It flies and knows how immediately. But that is also why instinct cannot be trained and perfect itself; it is at its highest development at once and can go no higher. Today bees build their honeycombs in the same way as they did in ancient times. Nor is instinct general in its orientation but particular. A bird does not have an instinct for building *any* nest in general but only for building a particular nest. With all its certainty and perfection,[29] instinct is nevertheless very limited and uniform. The certainty and perfection of instinct is also often exaggerated.

Nevertheless, instinct is of great significance. Equipped with instinct, the sensory faculties of knowing and desiring, which are present in animals and humans alike, have been created and organized in such a way that, without reasoning or deliberation, both nonetheless perform purposeful actions that keep the organism alive. Animals are neither automatic machines, as Descartes thought, nor undeveloped humans, as materialism proposes. It is true that we do not comprehend the inner life of animals. We can only form representations of it by analogy with phenomena we find in ourselves. Nor does the term "instinct" explain anything but merely provides a label for a very mysterious and dark matter. But at this point we may nevertheless conclude that if instinct itself involves no reason or

[28] DO: *zekerder en veiliger.*

[29] DO: *zekerheid en volmaakheid.*

deliberation and still performs purposeful actions, then there must be an objective Logos that organized it this way so that the animallike being could stay alive.[30] [142]

D. Desiring[31]

Although instinctive action plays a large role in human actions, this role differs in many ways from its function in animal life. With animals, the modification in the activities of the instincts occurs within very narrow limits. Notwithstanding the previously mentioned characteristics of certainty, perfection, and security,[32] there is some modification. Birds that resemble each other a great deal do build nests that differ in construction and location. Spiders weave their webs with diverging designs. There needs to be some leeway[33] with regard to place because otherwise the smallest change in circumstances would render instinct inactive, causing the animal to perish. But all these modifications are nevertheless very limited. With human beings, first of all, the number of instincts is fewer. Next, within their own context they function with more restricted importance and necessity. Finally, with people, to the degree that they mature and increase in refinement, their instinctive acting gives way to rational deliberation and

[30] Some of the works that discuss the instinct include Janet, *Traité élémentaire de philosophie,* 33–39; James, *Principles of Psychology,* 2:382–441; Hartmann, *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, 1:68–99 [ET: Hartmann, *Philosophy of the Unconscious,* 1:79–116]; Friedrich Kirchner, *Ueber die Thierseele* (Halle: C. E. M. Pfeffer, 1890). More scholarship is listed by Volkmar, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie,* 2:446–49, and Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, 14. See especially also Erich Wasmann, *Instinct und Intelligenz im Thierreich: Ein Kritischer Beitrag zur modernen Thierpsychologie* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1897) [*BdP*[1], 141, n. 86].

[31] DO: *begeeren.* Ed. note: Bavinck's terminology can get confusing here because he uses *begeeren* in two senses: (1) as a general, comprehensive term to cover an entire faculty that at its lower level begins with drives, instincts, and impulses; or (2) as a distinct level within this faculty where a drive or impulse is directed to a specific object. See note 16 above.

[32] DO: *zekerheid, volkomenheid, veiligheid.*

[33] DO: *speling.*

acting. Instinct occupies a subordinate place in human life and transitions to other higher activities.

With human beings, desiring already goes beyond acting instinctively. Various terms are used to express this desiring; we speak of penchant, custom, wish, longing, impulse, urge, passion, desire, rage, etc.[34] A penchant is a habitual, enduring desire, a disposition to desiring particular goods, and it causes the same desire to return repeatedly. A penchant can be innate or be obtained gradually. The innate penchant[35] is grounded in human nature, is blind and unconscious, and is not yet directed to any particular object. It first becomes desire when it is led in a particular direction by a more or less clear representation. The acquired penchant easily arises in a particular group of representations and is changeable and subject to change. The penchants or inclinations of a lad differ from those of a man and a graybeard. This penchant is closely connected to customs. The inclination often originates from custom. [143] The soul begins to tilt toward what it does repeatedly and to lean toward it. To the extent that a custom corresponds more closely with the natural disposition of a person, the more easily it turns into a penchant and the repeated acquiescence to a desire strengthens the penchant. The inclination toward, for example, play or drink can in this way become a drive, a passion, a craving, a mania[36] (people speak of a craving for sport, drink, or fashion; being jealous, power hungry, ambitious, vengeful, greedy, etc.; or people talk about a craze or

[34] DO: *neiging, gewoonte, wensch, verlangen, drang, drift, hartstocht, zucht, woede.* Ed. note: There is considerable overlap among these terms and, depending on the context, a word may need to be translated in several ways. The word *neiging* is most commonly translated as "inclination," but we have chosen ordinarily to translate it as "drive," particularly because Bavinck frequently associates it with the German *Trieb. Drang* will be translated as "urge," and *drift* as "impulse."

[35] GerO: *Trieb.*

[36] DO: *drang, hartstocht, zucht, woede.*

a mania associated with dancing, sports, even reading).[37] It is from these inclinations, whether innate or acquired, that desires arise.

Desire is distinguished from drive[38] in that a preceding representation directs desire to a particular object; drives are more general. Thus, we have in general a *drive*, coupled with a striving, to alleviate hunger or thirst, but we *desire* bread and water. We have need for love and strive to satisfy it, but we desire the hand and heart of this specific woman. Desiring is always tied to a specific representation. Some knowledge always precedes it. It is this preceding knowledge that is common to wishing and longing[39] as well. But wishing is usually the expression of a longing in the consciousness of uncertainty about whether one will in fact obtain the object of one's longing. It is therefore often a "pious wish,"[40] general, superficial, still proceeding almost completely apart from emotions and will.

Longing and desiring,[41] on the other hand, come from deeper in the soul, are usually paired with strong inclinations and emotions,[42] and are directed to clearly defined objects. Comparing longing and desiring, we note that longing is usually more spiritual and is taken in a good sense; whereas, by contrast, desiring is mostly sensory and is often understood in the bad sense of sensual. In common with instinct, desiring depends on and is directed by representations. Schopenhauer completely reversed this relation and made the will (the faculty of desiring) independent from the intellect. But this is undoubtedly incorrect. The faculty of desiring does precede the faculty of knowing in this sense—that it is a unique power in the soul and is not produced by the faculty of knowing. But the direction

[37] DO: (*speel-, drink-, mode-, ijver-, heersch-, eer-, wraak-, geldzucht, enz.; dans-, speel-, leeswoede enz.*) Ed. note: The preceding two sentences required some reconstruction (including the addition of various verbs) to make grammatical sense in English.

[38] GerO: *Trieb.*

[39] DO: *wenschen en verlangen.*

[40] LO: *pium votum.*

[41] DO: *verlangen en begeeren.*

[42] DO: *genegenheden en affecten.*

in which the faculty of desiring is active [144] is nevertheless specified by the faculty of knowing. What we do not know, that of which we have no representation, we also cannot desire. Along with the change of the complex of representations with which we live comes also the change of our desires. Desires change in the different stages of life and under different circumstances. With human beings, frequently desire is indistinguishable from an instinctive movement. Anyone who is hungry automatically longs for food. The desire arises wholly spontaneously within the person, immediately after the felt need, without any rational deliberation occurring between the need and the desire. While with animals, however, all desires coincide with instinctive movements, this is not the case with human beings. Their desires acquire a different and a higher character because they are rational beings.

A first such difference, surely, is that the human faculty of knowing is not separated into lower and higher parts in such a way that the former would affect only desire and the latter would affect only the will. On the contrary, each of them, the lower and higher faculty of knowing, offer their representations to the entire faculty of desiring, thus also to actual desiring. For that reason, the objects of desire become in human beings far richer and more variegated than happens with animals. An animal has only sensory representations and hence also only sensory desires—for food, drink, sensual appetite, etc.[43] But human beings can in fact desire everything. They are absolutely needy and singly dependent.[44] Their range of needs is wider than that of animals because they are far more dependent. An animal has no need of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful; no need of communion with God; no need of forgiveness of sins because its existence does not depend on all that, and it can be happy[45] without all that. But because humans are related to everything and depend on everything,

[43] DO: *spijs, drank, zinnelijke lust.*

[44] DO: *louter behoefte en enkel afhankelijkheid.*

[45] DO: *gelukkig zijn.*

they also have so many needs and so many desires. They need everything that animals also need for their life. But along with that, they also have other higher spiritual needs. That is why eternal and invisible things as well can become the object of human desiring. The desires of human beings are so many that they cannot be numbered and classified. They increase in number by the day. To the extent that human beings develop, that civilization advances, and that life becomes more complicated, needs and desires [145] increase. With human beings, their desires far exceed those of animals, in terms of both object and scope.[46]

A second difference is that animals are urged on by their desires without any involvement of the will. An animal's soul is merely the blind servant of its body. Its sensory desire is as such completely unfree. The hungry animal automatically longs for food. With human beings, however, the lower faculty of knowing rises to the higher; and similarly, the faculty of desiring rises to the will. And with that higher function, which human beings possess in intellect (reason) and will, they can govern and guide their lower sensory life. We cannot help it that when we are hungry we long for food. That is entirely spontaneous and natural. But with our higher nature, with our understanding and will, we can silence that desire for the sake of higher motives and abstain from satisfying that desire. We can consider that at this moment it would be harmful to us if we ate and therefore we deny ourselves.

Therefore, there is a very significant difference between desiring and willing, just as there is between a sensory representation and its concept. And this distinction may not be ignored. The faculty of desiring includes far more than merely desiring or merely the will. Desiring and willing are two clearly distinguishable activities of one and the same faculty. They differ from each other so much that they can even come to be in opposition to and in conflict with one another. Frequently the will follows desire and

[46] DO: *voorwerp, omvang*. Ed. note: The order of these two terms is reversed in Bavinck's text.

takes it over, as it were, specifically when it has no basis or power to oppose desire. As a rule we eat, drink, and sleep as soon as we feel the need to do so. But sometimes the cravings of, for example, drunkenness, sensual lust, and the like, are so strong that they do not allow reason and will to have a say. But it also happens many times that the higher faculties of knowing and desiring oppose these lower desires, either in weaker or stronger measure. In natural, sinful persons there remains a conflict between sensuality and understanding, appetite and conscience, passion and reason, desire and will—that is, between the lower and higher (better) self. This conflict in natural human beings may not be confused or identified with that between flesh and spirit, between the "old man" and the "new man" [146] spoken of in Scripture (Gal. 5:17). The battle between sensuality and reason (or conscience) is present in all people to a greater or lesser degree. It is not a battle against sin, as such, nor against all sins, but against only some sins. This battle is not waged from the single true foundation of love for God and hatred of sin, but from various other considerations, such as fear of punishment, shame before others, or regard for oneself. It is a battle between two parts of the one person, the higher and the lower parts, and can, albeit with difficulty, be won by reason and will.

The battle between flesh and spirit, however, is acknowledged only by those who are regenerate. This battle is against sin as sin because sin angers God. And it is a battle between the old and the new natures within one person—that is, between that person insofar as they are regenerated and that same person insofar as they still serve sin. Although the battle between sensuality and reason is insufficient, it is nonetheless very important. God preserves in sinners their reason and conscience and will, so that with these tools they would rule their lower, sensual desires and not sink down into bestiality.[47]

[47] Christopher Love, *The Combat between the Flesh and Spirit* (London: D. Maxwell, 1658); Dutch translation: "Strijdt tusschen Vleesch en Geest," in *Theologia Practica, dat is alle de theologische wercken* (Amsterdam: Jan Hendrickszoon Boom, 1669), 40–95;

Sensual desire as such is not sin. Desiring food, drink, etc., follows immediately upon the need for them and in itself entails nothing impermissible. It is necessarily proper to human beings, who are sensual beings, earthly from the earth. It is even written about Christ that he hungered and thirsted. But sin has disordered these sensual desires, especially in three ways. Because of sin we direct our desires to impermissible objects, we desire those objects in terms of a wrong value and with wrong measure, and we strive to satisfy our desires by means other than those intended by God (cf. the Tenth Commandment in the Decalogue and its expositions). These disordered, *sinful* desires are often summarized in Scripture by the term "covetousness" (Rom. 7:7), and as such they are forbidden.[48]

Rome argues that this cupidity in the biblical sense is not sin, that the conflict between flesh and spirit lies embedded in the natures of both, and that this conflict [147] can be curbed only by the supernatural grace of the image of God. But the Reformation took a deeper look into both Scripture and the human heart. And the Reformers taught that although sensual desires in themselves were not sin, and although sensual desires existed in perfect harmony within the entire psychic life both of the first human beings and of Christ, sensual desires had nonetheless become disordered by sin and turned into sinful cupidity, and that therefore there was and could now be conflict between the lower and higher selves of a person.[49]

William Perkins, "*The Combat of the Flesh and Spirit,*" in *The Workes of … William Perkins,* 3 vols. (London: John Legatt, 1626–31), 1:469–74; Dutch translation in *Alle de Werken*, 301–7 [*BdP*[1], 147, n. 87].

[48] Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck parenthetically added: ἐπιθυμια, *concupiscentia* [*BdP*[1], 148].

[49] Campegius Vitringa, *Observationum Sacrarum Libri Sex* (Jena: Bernhard Hartung, 1723), 1:563–643 [*BdP*[1], 148, n. 88].

E. Emotions and Passions[50]

The faculty of desiring can exist in very different relationships toward its objects, and through them it can be stimulated to quite different activities. The faculty of knowing was operating in the same situation. It could sense, perceive, represent, re-create, imagine, and evaluate reality from the viewpoint of true and false, good and evil, beautiful and ugly[51]—and yet these all are activities of one and the same faculty of knowing. In the same way we have already seen that the faculty of desiring includes various activities—drives, instinct, striving, wishing, longing, desiring, willing—which nonetheless are sometimes very different from each other.

But since the rise of the teaching about the faculty of feeling, there are many who judge that at least the feelings[52] and perhaps also the affects cannot be considered to be activities of the faculty of desiring and therefore must be classified separately. The earlier psychology spoke about emotions and passions and made no essential distinction between them but regarded them all as functions of the lower faculty of desiring. The most usual classification divided the desiring (concupiscible) affects from the choleric (irascible) affects. The sensitive soul or the lower faculty of desiring can simply, without further ado,[53] desire a good and shun an evil; or discerning that the attainment of a good or the avoidance of an evil is accompanied by difficulties and obstacles, it can not only long to possess that good or to flee that evil but first, in a furious agitation, it can face those obstacles in order to get rid of them. [148] In the first case, the soul has as its object the good by itself, and then the soul receives the affects

[50] DO: *aandoeningen en hartstochten.*

[51] DO: *Het kon de werkelijkheid gewaarworden, waarnemen, voorstellen, omscheppen, indenken, beoordeelen onder het gezichtspunt van waar en onwaar, goed en kwaad, schoon en onschoon.*

[52] GerO: *Gefühle.*

[53] DO: *eenvouding, zonder meer.*

of joy or sorrow if the good or the evil is present; it receives the affects of longing or aversion if the good or the evil lie in the future; and the soul receives the affects of love or hate if the good or the evil belong to neither the present nor the future. In the second case, the sensitive faculty of desire has a hard time obtaining the good or avoiding the evil as its object, and at that point possesses the affects of hope or despair, depending on whether the good is attainable or unattainable; or of boldness or fear, depending on whether the evil can be averted; or of anger against the perpetrator of the evil if this person is present.[54]

More recent psychology, however, has made a very profound distinction between emotions and passions. Emotions are then explained in terms of a special faculty, either intellectualistically as changes in representations or also as passive conditions of the soul. We have sufficiently refuted these views in chapter 6. Our main task now is to comprehend emotions and passions as activities of the faculty of desiring. This will not be difficult as long as the faculty of desiring, like the faculty of knowing, is understood in a broad sense and we do not restrict it to activities of desiring and willing in the narrow sense.[55]

1. It is essential to distinguish among emotions, passions, moods, and feelings

There definitely[56] is a distinction between *emotions*[57] and *passions*,[58] and then also between these two taken together and *moods* and *feelings* on the

[54] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I[a] q. 81 a. 2. Cf. Knauer, *Grundlinien zur aristotelisch-thomistischen Psychologie*, 201–38; Siebeck, *Geschichte der Psychologie,* I/2:462–72; Stöckl, *Lehrbuch der Philosophie* 4, 1:106, 151–52; Gutberlet, *Die Psychologie*, 219 [*BdP*[1], 149, n. 89].

[55] Ed note: The numbering that follows is original to Bavinck; summary subheadings have been added by the editor to aid the reader.

[56] DO: *zeer zeker.*

[57] DO: *aandoeningen.*

[58] DO: *hartstochten.*

other side. *Moods* are general, vague, unspecified feelings, whose source people do not know precisely and therefore usually cannot explain. They originate not in discrete, concrete representations, but in numerous unspecified sensations, none of which on their own but all of them taken together form an impression of pleasure or displeasure on the soul.[59] To this belongs a certain "feeling of vitality"[60] that results from our entire situation at a particular moment. To this belongs as well all those changing moods that are aroused by the weather, the temperature, by a meal, by colors, sounds, prosperity or adversity in connection with our work, rest, exertion, travel, being bored, gorged, exhausted, and the like—factors that determine our disposition.[61]

In distinction from moods, feelings[62] are conditions of the soul[63] that originate more in particular sensations or [149] representations, whether sensory (feelings of hunger, thirst, cold, warmth[64]) or spiritual (shame, aversion, disgust, gratitude, reverence, respect, fear, love, compassion[65]). Emotions[66] (or affects) are such feelings that intensely shock the soul and are also clearly observable in the body, such as admiration, terror, fear, sorrow, etc.[67] They are acute but pass quickly and become weaker upon recollection. Passions,[68] on the other hand, are strong desires that can master

[59] DO: *lust of onlust.*

[60] DO: *levensgevoel.*

[61] Ed. note: The term "disposition" is our attempt to capture Bavinck's sense in the summary conclusion of his sentence: "*en den aard van ons humeur bepalen.*" The DO of Bavinck's list in this sentence is as follows: *weer, temperatuur, maaltijd, kleuren, klanken, voor- en tegenspoed bij onzen arbeid, rust, inspanning, reizen, verveling, oververzadigdheid, levensmoeheid.*

[62] GerO: *Gefühle.*

[63] DO: *zielstoestanden.*

[64] DO: *gevoel van honger, dorst, koude, warmte.*

[65] DO: *schaamte, afkeer, afschuw, dankbaarheid, eerbied, ontzag, vrees, liefde, medelijden.*

[66] DO: *aandoeningen.*

[67] DO: *bewondering, schrik, angst, smart.*

[68] DO: *hartstochten.*

the whole person, drive persons forth at the cost of their freedom, blinding them against reason and conviction. At the same time, passions sharpen their ability to invent means for satisfying the passion. Passions are not acute, but chronic, insatiable, abiding, and enduring, often increasing and growing in strength over time.

It is possible to agree with this distinction between emotions and feelings without anything being gained for a particular faculty of feeling, for some have exaggerated the distinction. For example, Kant's beautiful explanation is guilty of such exaggeration when he claims: "The more emotion, the less passion."[69]

But no psychologist has yet succeeded in identifying a distinction among these phenomena so comprehensive and essential that these could not be explained as different activities proceeding from a single faculty. All of the psychic activities mentioned above are most closely related, overlapping one another. All of them, if they have any strength at all, also operate visibly upon the body. Moods of cheerfulness or dejection, of a good or bad disposition, can be read on a person's face. The sensory feelings of hunger, thirst, etc., switch to desires. A feeling of hunger and an appetite[70] for food are one and the same. Spiritual feelings of a religious, moral, or aesthetic nature rise immediately and repeatedly to emotions of admiration, enthusiasm, sorrow, guilt, shame, despair, or the like. Every emotion is also a feeling and every feeling can become an emotion. The differences are of degree only.

And it is the same also with emotions and passions. They are both similar in that they are distinguished from the moods and feelings by their vehemence, and they cause their influence on the body to be more clearly obvious. However, in reality [150] they repeatedly appear together and

[69] GerO: *je mehr Affect, desto weniger Leidenschaft*; Immanuel Kant, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, ed. Julius Hermann von Kirchmann (Berlin: L. Heimann, 1869), 164–65 (§ 71) [*BdP*[1], 151, n. 90].

[70] DO: *lust*.

blend into each other. Both are blind to everything outside their sphere. Emotions make the nerves more sensitive to stimuli, and in this way make the soul more susceptible for passions. And passions frequently call up strong emotions in the soul—for example, jealousy, infatuation, anger.

2. Moods, feelings, emotions, and passions are governed by the two mental postures of attraction or repulsion

All these moods, feelings, emotions, and passions, no matter how different, are nevertheless traceable to either pleasure or displeasure.[71] Therefore, there is no disagreement among psychologists about this, even though these two basic states of mind[72] are frequently described with different terms such as enjoyment and sorrow, love and hate, attraction and repulsion, sympathy and antipathy.[73] In addition, this is the case even though some of them occupy a neutral position between both.[74] But inclination and disinclination are deeds or activities performed by the soul through the faculty of desiring. In fact, they can arise in us only when the soul reacts to something placed before it and in a particular proportion. Just as all nature is ruled and maintained by the powers of attraction and repulsion, so too the soul is equipped in the faculty of desiring with the power to seek what is good for it and to flee what is evil for it. It either moves toward something or withdraws from it. Within every created thing, along with its existence is implanted the longing to persevere in its existence, in order thus to join with what furthers its existence and to avoid anything that harms its existence. The human soul was organized in the same way. But because the soul is related to everything and depends on everything, there is nothing about which the soul can be indifferent when it comes to

[71] DO: *lust of onlust.* Ed. note: In what follows, we will vary our translation of this pair.

[72] DO: *grondstemmingen.*

[73] DO: *genoot en smart, liefde en haat, aantrekking of afstooting, sympathie of antipathie.*

[74] There is significant debate about the issue of such neutral conditions; see Ribot, *La psychologie des sentiments* (Paris: Alcan, 1896), 74–80 [*BdP*[1], 152, n. 91].

its life and existence. Everything can potentially enrich or harm the soul and can impact the soul from the vantage point of good or evil. That is why the relations in which the soul presents itself to the objects are infinitely many. They are innumerable and even unable to be divided into classes. People frequently speak of general, sensory, intellectual, religious, moral, social, and aesthetic feelings. But this classification is no better or worse than any other and provides only a limited and defective[75] overview of the rich life of the soul that unfolds here. The relationships in which our soul stands over against everything with which it comes into contact depend on a set of givens that are too many and too varied [151] to permit classification.

These relationships depend on the nature of the subject, but also on the nature of the objects, and of these, whether they are sensory or spiritual; past, present, or future; close or far; persons or entities; abstract or concrete; living or lifeless; etc. Sensations, representations, ideas[76] come to us from all sides and we cannot be neutral to them; we adopt a certain posture toward them. Our unique physical and psychic condition; food and drink; weather and temperature; light and darkness; day and night; colors and sounds; nature and landscape; work and rest; prosperity and adversity; fortune and misfortune; conditions and actions of our family and acquaintances; nations and government; the human world and animal world; the true, good, and beautiful; the earthly and heavenly; temporary and eternal things; all these affect us and compel us to determine our relations with them. And in this way there arise in us all those emotions of cheerfulness and depression, lightheartedness and melancholy, enthusiasm and despondency, joy and sorrow, happiness and sadness, hope and fear, love and hate, compassion and callousness, longing and repugnance, sympathy and antipathy, shame and shamelessness, certainty and doubt, humility and pride, awe and contempt, worship and cursing, and so many

[75] DO: *beperkt en gebrekkig.*

[76] DO: *gewaarwordingen, voorstellingen, ideeën.*

more.[77] Together all these constitute the world of people's attitudes and indicate their attitudes toward the entire creation that surrounds them.

3. The action of the soul is the origin of all emotions; feeling is an activity not a condition

That all these emotions are products of an action of the soul is apparent from yet other considerations. We noticed earlier that one can speak only improperly and figuratively about a faculty being able to receive states or conditions and to be passive. Now to that we also need to add that those states or conditions of the soul must nevertheless have a source. It is a fact that the soul changes in those states. The soul is what earlier was in this or that mood. It goes from the one state into the other.

But how do these states enter the soul, and who fashions[78] them there? What shifts them around? There seem to be only two possibilities: an object does something to the soul, or the subject, the soul itself, is responsible. Only the object can affect me that way, or the subject—that is, the soul itself qualifies for doing this. Now an object can be the immediate cause but never the efficient cause of the emotions of my soul. [152] If an artwork awakens a feeling of beauty in me and makes me feel awe,[79] it is still not the art object itself that actively affects my soul and brings this soul passively into another state. The soul, after all, is not like a piece of wax that is pressed into all sorts of shapes and receives all sorts of impressions. The same art object, the same news, the same sensation at one

[77] DO: *opgeruimdheid en neerslachtigheid, opgewekheid en treurigheid, moed en moedeloosheid, vreugde en smart, vroolijkheid en droefheid, hoop en vress, liefde en haat, medelijden en hardvochtigheid, verlangen en afschuw, sympathie en antipathie, schaamte en schaamteloosheid, zekerheid en twijfel, nederigheid en trots, bewondering en verachting, aanbidding en vervloeking.*

[78] DO: *wie bewerkt ze daar.*

[79] DO: *bewondering.*

time leaves me entirely neutral,[80] but at another time it awakens all sorts of emotions within me.

Moreover, if those emotions were placed upon me in a literal sense, then they would not be my emotions. I could not ascribe them to myself as subject. They would be entirely outside of my responsibility. There could then be no nurture and control of emotions. That conclusion conflicts with reality. For callousness, lovelessness, pride, etc., we reckon ourselves and others as culpable. We attempt in nurturing children to form their hearts in such a way that they are capable of soft, tender, good emotions. Even in the aesthetic domain we are not satisfied when someone declares: "That's just the way I am; there is no judging of taste." Instead, we want to lead that person in such a way that they acknowledge and value what is truly beautiful as beautiful.

Against all this, people argue that feelings are not actions of desiring or willing, that they are not a motion of any kind, but they consist of rest, that they consist of no act but a condition, and people point especially to the aesthetic feeling that is entirely disinterested and free of all desire. These objections, however, derive from misunderstanding and are therefore of little significance. No one claims that feelings and desires are the same. The only claim made is that so-called feelings are an expression of the same faculty that operates in the desiring and the willing. Precisely because the objects that awaken those emotions in us are so infinitely varied, and because the soul is related to everything and is neutral toward nothing, for that reason the soul determines its relation to the objects in the most numerous ways, and is stimulated in accordance with their nature[81] to the most varied activities and expressions. Bread will automatically stimulate a hungry person to desire in the proper sense, but the true, the good, and the beautiful operate on the soul [153] in a completely different manner.

[80] DO: *onverschillig*.

[81] DO: *aard*.

The true becomes an object that the faculty of desiring longs to know;[82] the good becomes something it wants to do;[83] the beautiful something it wishes to enjoy.[84] The beautiful has that nature that its viewing gives delight. As beautiful, it is not an object of our desiring, so that we would want to possess it, but its uniqueness[85] is such that seeing it, observing it, knowing it, delights us, provides us pleasure and enjoyment.[86] And that enjoying of the beautiful, that resting in it and being blissful in its presence, are an expression of that power of the soul that is ordinarily, but in far too narrow a sense, called the faculty of desiring.[87]

But finally, opponents of this view will say that the preceding proves precisely that feelings cannot be attributed to the faculty of desiring. For the object of desire is not immediately present to the soul and desiring ceases as soon as we possess the object. At that point a feeling of pleasure or satisfaction[88] arises, and the satisfaction does not at all belong to the will or the faculty of desiring. It is neither willing nor an act of will, but a feeling that follows the acquisition of the desired object.

It is precisely this understanding, however, that deserves very decisive rebuttal. In the natural order it would be absurd to distinguish and to separate in terms of essence the power with which a magnet holds on to iron from the power with which it attracts iron. But in connection with the human will, that distinction is even far more preposterous. The power with which the soul strives for its good is in the nature of the case the same as the power with which it retains and enjoys the good after having obtained it. If this were not so, it would follow that there could be no thought of

[82] DO: *verlangt te kennen.*

[83] DO: *wenscht te doen.*

[84] DO: *wenscht te genieten.*

[85] DO: *eigenaardige.*

[86] DO: *lust en genot.t*

[87] DO: *begeervermogen*; see, e.g., Ulrici, *Leib und Seele,* 2:166, note [*BdP*[1], 156, n. 93].

[88] DO: *lust en bevrediging.*

a will with God, angels, or souls departed to live with Christ. After all, God is all-sufficient and all-blessed.[89] There can be no need and, hence, no desire in him. Neither do the angels or the blessed in the state of glory any longer have a need to pursue the good. Thus, the state of perfection and glory would be nothing more than a condition of feeling[90] in which there was no place for will or activity. Regarding God, there would be nothing but the pantheistic concept of an eternal, monotonous being, elevated above all action, in the sense of Spinoza's substance.

Naturally [154] such a notion cannot be maintained in the long run. At that point it turns into its opposite.[91] God is not being but becoming, the unholy will, absolute desire, eternal hunger.[92] For creatures the highest condition consists not in obtaining perfection[93] but in an eternal seeking without finding, in a wearisome and never-ending Sisyphus-like labor. Gotthold Lessing (1729–1781) once said that truth belongs only to God and that human beings had enough with seeking the truth—as if God could have the truth but not grant it to the children whom he created and re-created in his own image. But it is a false psychology that separates feeling from the faculty of desiring and satisfaction of the will, and in company with pantheism oscillates back and forth between being and becoming, between quietism and evolution, between resting without working and working without resting.

Christian psychology had a different and much better perspective. It regarded the faculty of desiring to consist not simply in a striving for what

[89] DO: *Algenoegzame en Volzalige.*

[90] DO: *gevoelstoestand.*

[91] Ed. note: In this cryptic sentence, Bavinck is alluding to the dialectical character of nineteenth-century German idealistic thought (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) with such polarities as "Ego and non-Ego" (Fichte), the "Absolute and its potencies" (Schelling), and the unfolding of Reason/Spirit (*Geist*) through the mutual negation of "Being and Non-Being" (Hegel).

[92] DO: *worden, onzalige wil, absolute begeerte, eeuwige honger.*

[93] DO: *verkrijgen der volmaaktheid.*

was lacking, but also in enjoying what was possessed. The will was indeed a will-of-desire, but also a will-of-delighting.[94] This latter was not a lower but, in fact, a much higher level of activity than the will-of-desire. The will-of-desire is temporal and ephemeral, but the will-of-delighting is eternal and lasting,[95] requiring far greater effort of the soul. It is far more difficult for husbands to love the wife of their choice after marriage than before marriage. Many are capable of the love of desire, but most flounder with respect to the love of delight. Goethe once said that nothing was more difficult for an individual to bear than a series of good days. Luxury is indeed difficult to bear.[96] Enjoying requires a power that soon dissipates. Blessedness[97] is not a state of quietistic rest but requires the highest level of activity. That is why Augustine described the highest, true, real love as a powerful, abiding act of will. And, according to this church father, in God as the Absolutely Blessed One, work and rest are one.

4. There is a reciprocal relation between the body and the soul, the physical and the psychic

Finally, the perspective we have just outlined is of benefit to the new explanation that arose some time ago with regard to mood disorders,[98] and first [155] advocated by Carl Lange, professor in Copenhagen, and

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[94] DO: *wil van begeerte; wil van behagen.* Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I[a] q 19 a. 1 ad 2 [*BdP*[1], 158, n. 94]. Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck included the Latin contrast between *voluntas concupiscentiae* and *voluntas complacentiae.* This specific contrast is not found in the Aquinas passage he cites; Thomas speaks of a "will in us that belongs to the appetive part, which, though named from appetite, has not for its only act the seeking what it does not possess; but also the loving and the delighting in what it does possess" [*voluntas in nobis pertinet ad appetitivam partem, quae licet ab appetendo nominetur, non tamen hunc solum habet actum, ut appetat quae non habet; sed etiam ut amet quod habet, et delectetur in illo*].

[95] DO: *tijdelijk, voorbijgaand; eeuwig en blijvend.*

[96] DO: *Weelde is inderdaad moelijk te dragen.*

[97] DO: *zaligheid.*

[98] DO: *gemoedsaandoeningen.*

developed later by others, such as William James and Théodule-Armand Ribot (1839–1916).[99]

According to these people, mood disorders[100] are psychic results of changes in the physical organism. The physical phenomena—namely, those occurring in connection with the affects—are not of minor importance, are not an accidental accompaniment to the psychic affects, and are not of subordinate, secondary significance.[101] But they are the starting point for scientific investigation; the foundation and cause of psychic emotions;[102] not their accidental and involuntary accompaniment, but their real essence and foundational principle.[103] Previously, people taught that first there was one or another sensation (representation, memory, idea); this produced in the soul the emotion of distress, fear, fright, anxiety, rage, etc.,[104] and this psychic emotion then affected the body and brought about all kinds of changes: in breathing, in blood circulation, in the muscles, etc.[105] Nowadays, however, people attempt to explain the affects in such a way that first a sensation occurs; this affects the body, changes the function of the vasomotor system[106] and thereby the function of nerves and muscles; these physical changes are expressed psychically in all sorts of emotions. The relation between emotions and physical changes is completely reversed:

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[99] Ed. note: In the first edition, Bavinck separates James and Ribot with a comma ("James, Ribot") but the Hepp edition drops the comma and gives the mistaken impression that Bavinck is referring to one person, "James Ribot" [*BdP*[1], 158].

[100] DO: *gemoedsaandoeningen.*

[101] DO: *bijzaak; toevallige begeleiding, ondergeschikte secundaire beteeekenis.*

[102] DO: *psychische aandoeningen.*

[103] DO: *uitgangspunt voor het wetenschappelij onderzoek, de grondslag en oorzaak van het psychische aandoeningen, niet de toevallige en onwillekeurige begeleiding maar he eignelijke wezen en beginsel.*

[104] DO: *gewaarwording (voorstelling, herinnering, idee); aandoing van kommer, vrees, schrik, angst, toorn.*

[105] DO: *veranderingen in de ademhaling, den bloedsomloop, de spieren.*

[106] Ed. Note: The vasomotor system is the part of the nervous system that controls the constriction and dilation of the blood vessels.

we weep not because we are sad, but we are sad because we weep (James). The mother who grieves about her deceased child is sad because she feels the exhaustion and limpness of her muscles, the coldness of her bloodless skin, the inability of her brain to engage in clear thinking (Lange). All our joy and sorrow are due to our vasomotor system.[107]

This theory suffers from one-sidedness. As Lange and others acknowledge, all emotions are preceded by a sensation.[108] There is no feeling without consciousness, no matter how weak it may be. The psychic element of the sensation always exists between the stimulation of the nerves in the senses (e.g., in connection with seeing something terrible or hearing bad news) and the change in the vasomotor system. Sensation and emotion (feeling) are distinct, even temporally, as stated above. But neither the stimulation of the senses alone nor [156] the sensation by itself explains the changes that are brought about in the body in connection with an emotion. Otherwise, every stimulation and every sensation would have to result in similar changes. Therefore, the sensation must be accompanied by something that gives rise to those changes. That something is the emotion.[109] Some sensations impinge on the life of our soul so deeply that they bring the soul into turmoil and shock the entire body. Moreover, the theory does apply to emotions that are a result of "internal sensations";[110] for example, wine works directly on the body, thereby providing us a sensation and this makes us cheerful. There is also an action of the body on the soul. But with respect to "external sensations,"[111] the process is mostly reversed. And all the higher emotions are simultaneously psychic and

[107] C. Lange, *Ueber Gemüthsbewegungen*, trans. H. Kurella (Leipzig: Theodor Thomas, 1887); James, *Principles of Psychology*, 2:412–85; Ribot, *La psychologie des sentiments*, 94–113 [*BdP*[1], 159, n. 95].

[108] DO: *aan alle aandoening gaat eene gewarwording vooraf.*

[109] DO: *aandoening*.

[110] GerO: *Innerempfindungen.* Ed. note: Both the first edition and Hepp's edition have *Innenempfindungen.*

[111] GerO: *Aussenempfindungen.*

physical. Ribot cites the music that affects also animals, such as dogs, cats, horses, snakes, etc., as example and evidence that the physical changes precede the emotions. There is nothing strange about this. Music consists of sensory sounds that can provide sensory sensations and emotions. But the actual beauty in music, however, just as with the true and the good, can be apprehended and enjoyed only by the higher faculty of knowing. Lange's theory, in the final analysis, leaves the psychological phenomenon of emotions unexplained. Whether the emotion of joy, sorrow, anxiety, rage, and the like, occur before or after the physical changes is for that explanation a matter of indifference. Either way, the emotion remains a most significant psychic phenomenon. It may well be the case that the physical changes cannot be explained on the basis of psychic emotions, but the converse is equally puzzling. The action of the soul on the body is a mystery; that of the body on the soul no less.

But despite this one-sidedness, in contrast to the spiritualism of people like Kant who considered the affects to be maladies of mood, the physiological explanation is in the right. It is indeed, as Lange says, an impoverished view of human beings that regards their distress and joy, their compassion and anger, their pride and humility, as circumstances alien to a healthy person. Emotions and passions play a far greater role in the lives of individuals and in the history of nations [157] than healthy intellect.[112] They are the weightiest factors and strongest powers that we know in the world of human beings.[113]

But for that reason, it is also incorrect to think of emotions merely as a set of conditions that the soul passively endures. Moods, emotions, feelings, passions, desires, and acts of will[114] are all distinguishable activities of the human soul. In one kind there may be more activity than in

[112] DO: *gezond verstand.*

[113] DO: *gewichtigste factoren en de geweldogste krachten, die wij in de menschenwereld kennen.*

[114] DO/GerO: *stemmingen, aandoeningen, Gefühle, hartstochten, begeerten, wilsuitingen.*

another, just as in the distinguishable activities of the faculty of knowing. But not one of them is to be conceived of as a condition in which the soul is passive, which is brought about in the soul without the soul itself being involved. Both physiologically and psychologically, classifying the affects as active and passive, as sthenic and asthenic,[115] is unjustified. The least of our emotions possess both an active and a passive element. Therefore, they also cannot be modifications of representations, but they arise from being able "to reach out, to long for, and as a result to experience both pleasure and pain."[116] Attraction or repulsion, inclination or aversion, a forward or a backward movement is the foundation for all emotions. These are all emotions that, looked at from another vantage point, are also mood shifts.[117]

In the changes in the body that go hand in hand with the emotions, this becomes clear. Lange's theory is correct in arguing for the noncontingency of the physical events in relation to the emotions; physical changes belong to the essence of emotions. All sorts of well-known facts demonstrate this. Shame causes blushing without any intervening deliberation or decision-making. Similarly, fear produces an ashen face, rage paralyzes, fury makes one's blood boil, malice rots the bones.[118] Conversely, joy seeks expression in laughter and looks for a celebration; sorrow sheds tears, withdraws in loneliness, and clothes itself in mourning attire.[119] The thought

[115] Ed. note: According to Merriam-Webster (online), "sthenic" refers to "notably or excessively vigorous or active"; "asthenic/asthenia" refers to "lack or loss of strength."

[116] FrO: *la faculté de tendrè ou de désirer et par suite d'éprouver du plaisire et de la douler.* Ed. note: This citation is from Théodule Ribot, *La Psychologie des Sentiments* (Paris: Ancienne Librairie Germer Baillière, 1896), 2. My thanks to Karin Maag for her help in perfecting this translation.

[117] DO: *gemoedsaandoeningen; gemoedsbeweginen.* Lange, *Ueber Gemüthsbewegungen*, 40. Ribot, *La Psycholgie des Sentiments*, passim, e.g., 2, 92, 93, 108, 109, 111, 192, 199, 204 [*BdP*[1], 162, n. 96].

[118] DO: *schrik verbleekt, toorn verlamt, woede doet koken, nijd is een verroting der beenderen.* Ed. note: The last item in this list may have echoes of Proverbs 14:30: "A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, / but envy makes the bones rot."

[119] DO: *vreugde zoekt uiting in een lach en doet verlangen naar een feest, droefheid stort tranen, trekt zich in de eenzaamheid terug en hult zich in rouwgewaard.*

of something disgusting makes us vomit; thoughts of fine food make our mouths water. The most obvious changes in our bodies involve blood circulation, breathing, and movements of our muscles. Some affects are so intense that a person's hair can instantly turn gray; or they lose all presence of mind, their heart and pulse stop, and they die as a result. Each emotion acts on the body in its own way. Lange calculated there are 127 possible combinations of physical change,[120] [158] and thus there are just as many somatic forms of affects.

Conversely, bodily movements also affect the soul and bring about all sorts of emotions. Speaking loudly or gesturing forcefully agitates a person, and imitating the gestures of a furious person makes the imitator angry. Kant advised that angry persons can most effectively be calmed by seating them in lounge chairs. An agitated person can regain composure by drinking a glass of water. Wine gladdens the heart of the living.[121] Many illnesses influence a person's mood. In addition, weather, temperature, season of the year, climate, food, age, and sex are of the greatest significance for human emotional life. This mutual relation and activity of soul and body demonstrates that both belong to the essence of the human person. To say that emotions are the cause of physical (bodily) change is just as incorrect as the reverse claim. The body is not a machine, brought into motion by the soul; neither is the soul a reflex, a mirror of the body's movements. But soul and body together make up the essence of a person and have as their subject that unique sensory-spiritual essence we call "a human being."

In principle, we encounter in connection with all human conditions and activities the same thing that we meet here in connection with the emotions. With the sensations, for example, one can neither say nor explain that the stimulations of the nerves of the senses cause psychic

[120] Lange, *Ueber Gemüthsbewegungen,* 39 [*BdP*[1], 163, n. 97].

[121] DO: *wijn verheugt de levenden*. Ed. note: The translation reflects the biblical text of Psalm 104:15.

perceptions, for the soul is the subject of the simplest perception by the senses. The eye does not see—the human self sees by means of the eye. It is always one and the same sensory-spiritual subject who is the cause of all psychic and physical changes. Just as the body belongs to the essence of a person, and the stimulation of the sensory nerves partially constitutes the perception, in the same way and in the same sense, the change in the vasomotor system is an essential component of the emotions.

And just as all feelings and emotions[122] can be reduced into two main groups—that is, those of inclination and disinclination[123]—so too all physical changes, movements, gestures, and gesticulations bring about either the contraction or the dilation of the blood vessels (systolic or diastolic).[124] In connection with sadness, pain, fright, fear, surprise, [159] or anxiety, blood is withdrawn from the parts of the body back to the heart. Fright strikes the heart. It shrinks in pain. The pulse stops. The chest tightens. Breathing is labored. The person freezes. It is winter for the soul. But in connection with happiness, joy, peace, and bliss, one's heart expands and the blood courses freely through the veins. At that point, the cheek blushes, the eye glints, the pulse quickens, the brow unwrinkles, a shine and a glow floods across the face, the visible carriage becomes snappy and lively, and a person feels like bursting out into song and expressions of joy. At that point it is summertime for the soul—light, life, and exuberance. All these rich, manifold movements and changes in the body have their origin in an action of the soul, which action simultaneously and relatedly calls to the surface the psychic emotions from the soul itself.

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[122] GerO/DO: *Gefühle; aandoeningen.*

[123] DO: *lust of unlust.*

[124] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Iª–IIae q. 24 a. 2 ad 2; Wilhelm Max Wundt, "Ueber den Ausdruck der Gemüthsbewegungen," *Deutsche Rundschau* 11 (April 1877): 120–33; Wundt, *Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie,* 2:598–625 [ch. 22: "Ausdrucksbewegungen"]; Charles Darwin, *Het uitdrukken der gemoedsaandoeningen bij den mensch en de dieren*, trans. H. Hartogh Heys van Zouteveen (Den Haag: Ykema, 1873) [ET: Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)]; Jodl, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie,* 691–703 [*BdP*[1], 164, n. 98].

Psychosomatic Unity[125]

The intimate unity of soul and body, and of psychic emotions and physical movement, comes to expression in ordinary language as well. That unity is always present, in connection with sensing, perceiving, thinking, and willing, just as much as in connection with the emotions. But in connection with the latter, the unity is more clearly observable and occurs under

[125] Ed. note: This heading differs from the four previous ones, which were added to separate Bavinck's four points of summation. The content that follows is still part of Bavinck's fourth point; the subheading was added by the editor to aid the reader by indicating the more specific nature of the material that follows. The following table may also help the reader to sort out the many distinctions Bavinck makes in this chapter:

	Moods	Feelings	Emotions	Passions
Influenced by externals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
General, unspecified/ specified conditions of the soul	General, unspecified	Specified		
Acute or chronic or lasting			Acute	Chronic
Affected by the body?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Affect on the body?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Major error # 1	Fails to distinguish from feelings	Fails to distinguish from moods	Fails to distinguish from passions	Fails to distinguish from emotions
Major error # 2	Fails to distinguish moods and feelings from passions and emotions	Fails to distinguish moods and feelings from passions and emotions	Fails to distinguish passions and emotions from moods and feelings	Fails to distinguish passions and emotions from moods and feelings
Major error # 3	Soul is passive	1. Soul is passive 2. Exaggerates difference with emotions 3. Feeling is a condition, not an action	1. Soul is passive 2. Exaggerates difference with feelings 3. Emotions result of bodily changes only	Soul is passive

everyone's notice. Therefore, all nations have spoken of the heart in both a physical and psychic sense. Because the heart is the center of the circulatory system and thus all the emotions resonate physically, people spoke and still speak in daily life of the heart as the seat of the emotions, and people sometimes felt them, especially among Near Eastern people, arising as it were from somewhere still deeper, from the stomach, the intestines, and the kidneys.

Recent physiology has shed clearer light on this. Previously, among the physical organs and functions, people attributed both too large a role to the physical heart and too small a role to the sympathetic nervous system. As psychic, conscious phenomena, emotions are connected to the brain.[126] And yet it can be explained why, in popular speech, the heart is constantly viewed as the seat of the emotions. Out of the heart proceed the gateways of the blood, and emotions are, in the first place, changes in the vasomotor system. For that reason, the heart feels the shock of the affects first throughout the entire sympathetic nervous system, as the heart either retains the blood or releases it, and in this way brings about all the [160] other changes, in breathing, muscle movement, and the like.

Therefore, it is the heart that in a metaphorical sense sings, shouts out and jumps up with joy, or is quiet and subdued, torn up and broken with grief. The Dutch and German languages possess another word for the seat of emotions, namely, the beautiful word *gemoed* or *Gemüt.* No particular faculty is intended with this word; it simply points to the faculty of desiring as the seat of the emotions.[127] While animals have drives and desires,

[126] Ribot, *La psychologie des sentiments*, 114; K. M. L. Keuller, *De mensch, eene psycho-physiologische studie* (Leiden: Van Leeuwen, 1895), 95f.; Jungmann, *Das Gemüth*, 71–76, 139–43 [*BdP*[1], 165, n. 99].

[127] DO: *zetel der aandoeningen;* Ed. note: There appear to be some conceptual unclarities here because only a few sentences later, Bavinck speaks of the *heart* as the "seat" of the emotions and the *gemoed* as the "fountain spring" of the emotions. Because of the challenge involved in translating *gemoed* in this context ("emotional seat"?), we have chosen to leave it in the original Dutch.

they have no emotions,[128] no laughter, and no tears. They have no emotive heart and no countenance.[129] They do have lower sensory emotions such as fright, fear, anxiety, love for young, and the like. But higher emotions like shame, repentance, sorrow, anger, reverence, joy, are not available to animals.

Such emotions, as they are seated in the *gemoed*, can be awakened only by spiritual, ideal goals presented to it by the higher faculty of knowing.[130] *Gemoed* is a synonym for heart but goes deeper. *Gemoed* indicates the fountain spring[131] from which emotions—especially the higher, noble emotions—can arise. The heart is the seat; the *gemoed* is the source[132] of emotions. Therefore we speak about a soft, warm, deep, pious, friendly, or noble[133] *gemoed. Gemoed* confers a quiet, friendly, pleasant, gentle warmth[134] on all impressions and deeds it touches. It is something genuinely human. Animals do not have it. Human beings have both a heart and *gemoed* because they are simultaneously sensory and spiritual beings. It is a working of the ideal in the real, of the spiritual in the material, of the heavenly in the earthly, of the ideas of the true, good, and beautiful in the sensitive life of human beings.[135]

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[128] DO: *aandoeningen.*

[129] DO: *gelaat.* Ed. note: Hepp failed to include two sentences from the first edition here: "Animals lack laughter and tears. Tears are the eternal authentication of humanity" [*Die ewige Begläubigung der Menscheit sind ja Thränen*]. The quote, which Bavinck does not attribute, is from Friedrich Schiller and his dramatic poem, "Don Carlos, Infante of Spain," act 2, Second Appearance.

[130] DO: *hooger kenvermogen.*

[131] DO: *bodem.*

[132] DO: *bron.*

[133] DO: *zacht, warm, diep, vroom, vriendelijk, edel.*

[134] DO: *stille, vriendelijke, gezellige, weldadige warmte.*

[135] Some of the copious scholarship on the affections and passions include: Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*, passim; Siebeck, *Geschichte der Psychologie*, passim; Augustine, *City of God*, IX, 4–7; John of Damascus, *The Orthodox* Faith, II, 22; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I^{a}–IIae qq. 22–25; Franz von Paula Morgott, *Die Theorie der Gefühle im System des heiligen Thomas: ein Programm* (Eichstätt: Karl Brönner, 1864); Polanus,

F. The Will

The highest and most important activity of the faculty of desiring is what it accomplishes in the character of will. Just as the faculty of knowing gradually elevates itself to the activities of understanding and reason, in the same way the faculty of desiring gradually ascends from the lower forms of instinctive movement, wishing, and desiring to the highest act of willing.

The will does not [161] appear in human life suddenly and without preparation, but it is preformed through the forces of movement within inanimate creatures, through the natural drives and instincts in connection with plants and animals, through the lower forms of the faculty of desiring in human beings themselves. The will awakens slowly at first with the

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Syntagma Theologiae, 325; Zanchi, *Omnium Operum Theologicorum*, 3:590f.; Vitringa, *Observationum Sacrarum Libri Sex*, vol. 1, 645–57; B. de Moor, *Comp. theol.* 2:1054f.; Taco Hajo van den Honert, *De waaragtige wegen, die God met den mensch houdt,* 4th ed. (Leiden: by Samuel Luchtmans, 1741), 349–505 [I, 2 c. 8–13]; Johann Franz Buddeus, *Elementa Philosophiae Practicae*, 5th ed. (Halle an der Saale: Frederick Zeitler, 1712), 208–24 [II 2 § 22], and other scholarship listed by Campegius Vitringa, *Doctrina Religionis Christianae,* vol. 6 (Leiden: Johannes le Mair, 1776), § 71 [Ed. note: We are unable to confirm this reference]; René Descartes, *Passiones Animae* (Amsterdam: Johannes Jansson Junior, 1656) [ET: "Passions of the Soul," in René Descartes, *Descartes Philosophical Writings*]; Paul Plessner, *Die Lehre von den Leidenschaften bei Descartes: ein Beitrag zur Beurteilung seiner praktischen Philosophie* (Leipzig: Hesse and Becker, 1888); Spinoza, *Ethics,* parts III and IV [ET: *Ethics,* trans. Santayana, 84–191; part III, "Concerning the Origin and Nature of the Emotions," and IV, "On Human Servitude, or the Strength of the Emotions"]; Joan Menitescu, *Die Affectenlehre Spinoza's* (Leipzig: Carl Fleischer, 1887); Kant, *Anthropologie,* 164–202 (§ 71–86); Herbart, *Lehrbuch zur Psychologie*, 70–78 (§ 95–106); Johann Gebhard Ehrenreich Maass, *Versuch über die Gefühle, besonders über die Affecten* (Halle: Ruffsche Verlagshandlung, 1811); Johann Gebhard Ehrenreich Maass, *Versuch über die Leidenschaften: Theoretisch und praktisch,* 2 vols. (Halle, Leipzig: Ruff, 1805–7); Joseph Wilhelm Nahlowsky, *Das Gefühlsleben in seinen wesentlichen Erscheinungen und Bezügen,* 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Veit, 1884); Nikolaus Bobtschew, *Die Gefühlslehre in ihren hauptsächlichsten Gestaltungen von Kant bis auf unsere Zeit* (Leipzig: Mutze, 1888); Theobald Ziegler, *Das Gefühl, Eine psychologische Untersuchung*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Göschen, 1893); Alfred Lehmann, *Die Hauptgesetze des menschlichen Gefühlslebens* (Leipzig: Reisland, 1892). Cf. also the already-cited works by Lange, James, Ribot, Jungmann, etc. [*BdP*[1], 166, n. 100].

understanding and wriggles free of its swaddling bands.[136] A child begins with unconscious, instinctive strivings and movements. Gradually the child becomes aware that by doing something—for example, stretching out a hand—he or she can obtain or reach an object. And then over time the child places the idea, the goal, at the front and learns to know and use the means for reaching that goal. What was initially an unconscious and unintended result is brought to the fore and is put first and foremost as a goal. This goal becomes the cause of an action. Illuminated by understanding and reason, people make what they strive after the object of their will.

The will, therefore, deserves to be clearly distinguished from the lower activities of the faculty of desiring. Desiring (wishing, longing) and willing are far from the same. All these are activities of the same faculty, but they are nevertheless very different. Aristotle sought the distinction between the two especially in time. Desiring has an eye only on the present while willing has an eye also to the future. However, this is neither a constant nor the most prominent distinction. Rather, this lies in the nature of both willing and desiring. In a real sense, willing is related only to our own actions, to what lies within our own power. But desiring and wishing have no boundaries. I may wish to be free of sorrow, pain, or sickness, but I am unable to make that the object of my will. As mentioned earlier, desiring and willing are sometimes in tension with each other. When I am hungry I involuntarily long for food. But my understanding tells me that it is preferable to fast and my will then suppresses my desire. When desires multiply within us, we become slaves. When the soul elevates itself and increases in power and control, we become free. The domain of the will is the domain of our power and therefore very limited, but for covetousness, the entire world is insufficient. Desiring arises automatically and spontaneously from our inclinations and [162] drives and knows no freedom; a

[136] DO: *Hij ontwaakt zelf eerst langzamerhand met het verstand en wikkelt zich uit zijne windselen los.*

thirsty person longs automatically for water and the miser automatically for money.

The will, however, is a decision, taken after deliberation and therefore guided by reason. In a word, the lower and higher faculty of desiring are a single faculty because they both have as their object what is or seems good for us. Both exist as one direction and movement of the soul toward that goal. But the lower desiring ability as such, as long as it is not directed by the higher faculty of knowing and faculty of desiring, has only the sensory, temporal good as its object, and it is driven toward that object involuntarily. The higher faculty of desiring, however, illuminated by understanding and reason, has also the higher, spiritual, eternal goods as its objects and directs itself freely and royally toward it.[137]

From this, the nature of the will becomes clear. Willing is not an activity that flows forth automatically from desiring; it is not a necessary evolution, but a new action that arises from the faculty of desiring, which appears and can appear only when the higher faculty of knowing with its understanding and reason precede. The will appears for the first time only when the understanding, after deliberation, recognizes something as good. A sensation, a representation, an idea can arise in our understanding and then can immediately disappear. At that point it leaves behind no trace and does not enter into any relationship with our will. But we can also hold on to such a thought, focus our attention on it, consider it, deliberate and evaluate it from the point of view of good and evil. At this point an activity of the will is to be recognized. It is the will that directs our understanding and leads it to attention, deliberation, and judgment.[138]

Now, whenever persons use their understanding to consider a good or an evil presented to them for their deliberation and decision, then in that context they are often under all sorts of influences and cannot quickly

[137] Janet, *Traité élémentaire de philosophie,* 279; Stöckl, *Lehrbuch der Philosophie,* 1:111–15 [*BdP*[1], 168, n. 101].

[138] DO: *opmerkzaamheid, overleg, beoordeeling.*

make a decision. They deliberate but there are voices in favor and voices against, parties on one side and parties on the other, motives and reasons that advise one way and or the other. In this context, not only rational considerations come into play, but the heart also weighs in.[139] Tendencies, appetites, wishes, desires, and passions[140] add their weight to the scale. Often an inner conflict [163] develops between the better insight and the stronger tendency, between head and heart, between reason and appetite.[141] A person who cannot decide is like a novice sailor on the sea,[142] tossed to and fro and often making a desperate decision. But even if one arrives at a decision with less conflict, in a shorter time, perhaps even in an instant, a decision is always the fruit of rational deliberation. The will always presupposes the higher faculty of knowing and exists in a decision that follows the consideration of all kinds of motives. This decision as an act of the will must, therefore, be distinguished from a vague intention, from a good intention, and from a strong desire.[143] Admittedly, the word "will" is used in daily life in a weaker sense, "I am willing to do that"—that is, "I am inclined to do it." But here we are using the word in its narrower and proper sense. In that sense, will is the higher faculty of knowing that chooses the (actual or apparent) good and directs the soul toward it.

The decision is distinguished from its execution. A decision depends on the person and is an act of the person's will, but the execution is determined by all sorts of circumstances independent of the individual. Someone can have willed something very sincerely and be firmly resolved to do it, and nevertheless be prevented from executing it through misfortune, illness, death, or other unforeseen events. Our human fragility becomes apparent in our dependence on all kinds of occurrences that are sometimes

[139] DO: *laat zich gelden.*

[140] DO: *neigingen, lusten, wenschen, begeerten, hartstochten.*

[141] DO: *beter inzicht en sterkere neiging, hoofd en hart, rede en lust.*

[142] DO: *baar der zee.*

[143] DO: *van een vaag voornemen, van eene goede bedoeling, van eene sterke begeerte.*

small and insignificant in themselves. It is possible that, as Lessing in his play *Emilia Galotti* has the painter Conti say, Raphael would have been the greatest artist (i.e., in inclination and ability) even if he were accidentally born without hands.[144] But it is certain that he would not have produced any work of art and humanity would have had little or no awareness of his artistic genius. In his book on rhetoric,[145] Johannes Steenmeijer wrote about this gift of speaking in such a spiritualistic manner that he sought the essence of this gift only in the aptitude of the soul even if it never uttered a single word.

But this is only half the truth. Someone who has no arms cannot be a painter, and whoever lacks the gift of language cannot be an orator. A Raphael without hands is unthinkable. His artistic gift was formed and developed by the expression of his art itself. Still more can be said: the transition from decision to execution is often still a very long and arduous path requiring willpower and even physical power. The greater the difficulties to be overcome in the execution, the more resolution, energy, and perseverance of the will are required. Only with his iron will and wiry tenacity could Demosthenes overcome his speech impediment. Having a gift is not sufficient; it must be accompanied by hard work. The gift of genius does not make study and resolve superfluous.[146] A serious will

[144] Ed. note: *Emia Galotti* is Lessing's play in five acts; an English translation can be found in *The Dramatic Works of G. E. Lessing*, ed. Ernest Bell (London: George Bell and Sons, 1878). The passage that refers to Raphael is in act I, scene 4: Conti: "Yet I am extremely dissatisfied with this portrait, and nevertheless I am satisfied with being dissatisfied with myself. Alas! that we cannot paint directly with our eyes! On the long journey from the eye through the arm to the pencil, how much is lost! But, as I have already said, though I know what is lost, and how and why it is lost, I am as proud and prouder of this loss than of what I have preserved. For by the former I perceive more than by the latter, that I am a good painter, though my hand is not always so. Or do you hold, Prince, that Raffaelle would not have been the greatest of all artists even had he unfortunately been born without hands?"

[145] Johannes Steenmeijer, *Brieven over de Welsprekendheid*, 3rd ed. (Deventer: A. Ter Gunne, 1875), 34–41 [*BdP*[1], 170, n. 102].

[146] DO: *overbodig*.

becomes apparent precisely in its unwillingness to rest before it masters things, whether they be one's own body, the appetites and passions, or something else.

Because there is such a large difference between decision and execution, an earlier psychology spoke sometimes also of a moving or stirring faculty[147] along with the faculties of knowing and desiring. This faculty was understood as the power of the soul to bring into motion the body with its organs, nerves, and muscles, and to use them for one or another activity. The movements of the body and its members, both the involuntary movements and those led by the will, can indeed be ascribed only to the single organic principle of human life—that is, the soul. And this soul performs that movement, not because and only because it knows and desires that movement, but through a unique power granted to the soul to make the entire body to live, to form it, to bear it, to move it, and to stimulate and equip the body for various activities, whether unconsciously and involuntarily or consciously and willingly.[148]

Therefore, the essence of the will lies in *the correspondence of human self-definition to a recognized good.*[149] By means of the will we humans are masters, lords of ourselves. Through the will we have power over our faculty of knowing, over sensations, sensory perception, representations, recollection, imagination, thinking. Through the will we guide all these toward action or toward rest, direct them to a specific object or withdraw them from it, stimulate them to attentiveness or direct their attention away from it. Through the will we have power over our lower, sensory faculty of desiring, and can either accede to our desires and wishes or resist and suppress them. Through the will we have power over our body, over its members and organs, [165] over its nerves and muscles, and set the body

[147] DO: *een bewegend vermogen.* Ed. note: Hepp failed to include Bavinck's parenthetical list of Latin terms: *vis motrix, facultas motiva* [*BdP*[1], 171].

[148] Stöckl, *Lehrbuch der Philosophie,* 1:157–60 [*BdP*[1], 172, n. 103].

[149] DO: *zelfbepaling overeenkomstig een erkend goed.*

in motion or make it return to rest. Through the will we human beings are masters of our personality, kings in our own castle.

Nevertheless, no matter how large this power and mastery may be, it is still limited on all sides and confined within very narrow boundaries. The soul, in other words, creates neither itself nor its own body. It receives both and is thus automatically bound to the powers and laws proper to both by nature. Even though the soul is the life-principle[150] of the body, and from the outset maintains and moves it, the body still has its own laws that obtain for the physical organism, laws that must be honored by the soul. When consciousness and will awaken later, then we can acquaint ourselves with these phenomena and the laws governing the physical organism, and even guide them to an extent, but we cannot change or abolish the laws. Whether we move our bodies with or without consciousness and will, those movements occur in any case according to fixed laws, through nerves and muscles that we with all our strength cannot alter. We can open or close our eyes, but if we want to see, we see in accord with the ordinance that is established for this activity. Furthermore, there is a large domain of the human body over which we have practically nothing to say. The entire vegetative life of the body—blood circulation, breathing, activities of the stomach and intestines, secretions, reflex movements, sickness, decline, old age, death, and the like—exist beneath and beyond our will.

The power of the will is extremely limited not only with respect to the body, but equally so in relation to the soul itself. We are not our own creators. The will has no power over self-consciousness; we become aware of ourselves and we are aware without doing anything about it. Nor does the will have any power over the conscience, which the guilty person would gladly silence and sometimes sear it with a hot iron, but which again rises up and pronounces judgment.[151] The will has no control over the gifts,

[150] DO: *levensbeginsel.*

[151] DO: *de schuldige wel gaarne tot zwijgen zou willen brengen en soms met een brandijzer toeschroeit, maar dat toch zich weer verheft and het vonnis uitspreekt.*

powers, or laws of the faculty of knowing. We can develop what is there, but we cannot create what is not there. We cannot sharpen our perception, deepen our understanding, or increase the justness of our judging beyond what they [166] are by nature. Frequently, the will has no control over the lower faculty of desiring, over sympathy or antipathy, over liking or disliking, over drives or passions, over urges or desires.[152] In the conflict between conscience and appetite,[153] the latter usually triumphs.

Taking everything together, the power of the will is very small and limited.[154] And to the degree that the will has power, it can never exercise that power in a despotic, coercive manner, but only in a political and commanding manner, so that nerves and muscles, perceptions and thoughts, tendencies and desires, finally, when it comes to that exercise, can nevertheless through various circumstances yet be disobedient and refuse to follow the command of the will.

G. Freedom of the Will

Within the drawn boundaries, however, human beings have a power over themselves, a power usually designated as "freedom of the will."[155] In order to understand well its nature and significance, the difficult issue arising here, it is essential to make clear distinctions. This is important with respect to the nature of the freedom of the will as well as with a view to the different areas where the conflict about free will has been waged.

Freedom of the will can be taken in three senses.

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[152] DO: *lagere begeervermogen, over sympathie en antipathie, over lust en onlust, over neigingen en hartstochten, over driften en begeerten.*

[153] DO: *geweten en lust.*

[154] DO: *zeer gering en beperkt.*

[155] LO/DO: *liberum arbtrium; wilsvrijheid, vrije wil, wille-keur.* Ed. note: Hepp included one of the two Latin terms but not the second—*lubentia rationalis*—and none of the three Greek terms: το αὐτεξουσιον, το ἐφ' ἡμιν, ἐλευθερα προαιρεσις. [*BdP*[1], 174].

Freedom of Exercise:[156] This is a choice to *will or do* something or *not to will or do* something (e.g., at a given moment, to eat or not to eat, to sleep or not to sleep).

Freedom of Specification or Discretion:[157] This is a choice between two or more things that differ but nevertheless are all good in themselves (e.g., to choose one or another vocation).

Freedom of Contrariety:[158] Here the choice is between two or more things that are opposed to each other, and then opposed to each other especially in an ethical sense as good and evil (for example, to choose whether to commit a sin or not).[159]

In the different areas of religion, theology, and philosophy, only one specific side of the freedom of the will was repeatedly discussed. In the ecclesiastical and theological controversies between Augustine and Pelagius, the Reformation and Rome, and Gomarus and Arminius, [167] only the last, or third, sense was actually and directly under debate—that is, the ethical freedom of choice. The conflict had a soteriological beginning and was initially concerned only with whether human beings in the state of sin still stood, as it were, between good and evil and could do the one as well as the other. Augustine and his followers denied this and said that the natural person was unable to perform any good and was inclined to all evil. Pelagius and his followers, however, claimed that people could still do the truly good even in the situation of sin.

This difference was, therefore, purely religious and ethical in nature. The question extended only indirectly to the other two kinds of freedom. In fact, many Augustinians even fully affirmed both of these other kinds

[156] LO: *libertas exercitii.*

[157] LO: *libertas specificationis, discretionis.*

[158] LO: *libertas contrarietatis.*

[159] Dionysius Petavius, *Opus de Theologicis Dogmatibus*, *Tomus Primus: In quo de Deo uno, Deique Proprietatibus Agitur* (Venice: Andreas Poletus, 1745), 211–16 (bk. V, ch. 4); Joseph Kleutgen, *Theologie der Vorzeit*, 2nd ed. (Munster: Theissing, 1867), 1:412–25; Stöckl, *Lehrbuch der Philosophie,* 1:119–22 [*BdP*[1], 175, n. 104].

of freedom of the will. After all, as people taught, God is fully free in creation and re-creation.[160] He did not need to create humanity or to save us from sin; this was his free decision and God could have done the opposite. Adam, so it was taught, before the fall could have remained standing if he had willed to do so; in order to explain sin, freedom of the will had to be affirmed. It was also taught that fallen humanity could not do spiritual good, but nevertheless in their natural civic matters they were free and could choose the one or the other; for example, they could choose a life of sin or a life of civic integrity. In all these circumstances all Augustinians taught a freedom that was not only free from coercion but also from necessity.[161]

By contrast, Pelagians conceded in general that ethical freedom of choice could not lapse in God, the angels, and the blessed. They do the good and can do nothing but the good; thus, here freedom excludes

[160] DO: *schepping en herschepping.*

[161] LO: *libertas a coactione* and *a necessitate.* See, for example, Franciscus Junius, "De Libero Arbitrio" in *D. Francisci Junii: opuscula theologica selecta*, ed. Abraham Kuyper (Amsterdam: Muller and Kruyt, 1882), 175, 177 [theses 27 and 43]; Heinrich Alting, *Theologia Elenctica Nova* (Amsterdam: Johannes Jansson, 1654), 356–57; Zacharias Ursinus, *Volumen Tractationum Theologicarum* (Neustadt: Mathes Harnisch, 1584), 234–35; Antonius Walaeus, "Loci Communes" in *Opera omnia,* vol. 1 (Leiden: Franciscus Hackius, 1643), 176; Johann Polyander et al., *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae: Disputationes Quinquaginta Duabus Comprehensa ac Conscripta per Johannem Polyandrum, Andream Rivetum, Antonium Walaeum, Antonium Thysium*, ed. Herman Bavinck (Leiden: Brill, 1881), 148f. (Disputation XVII, "De Libero Arbitrio," thesis 18f.) [ET: *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae / Synopsis of a Purer Theology: Latin Text and English Translation,* 2 vols., ed. Willem J. van Asselt et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014–16)]; Jacobus Trigland, *Kerckelycke Geschiedenissen* (Leiden: Adriaen Wyngaerden, 1650), 17, 18; Francis Turretin, *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae,* vol. 1 (Geneva: Samuel de Tournes, 1688), 626–28, 637–39 [*locus octavus, quaestio* 1, 4], 726–28, 737–52 [*locus decimus, quaestio* 1, 4] [ET: *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 1, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992), 569–71, 578–80, 659–61, 668–83]; Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, I.iv.4 § 30 [Ed. note: For an explanation of the annotion form used for Mastricht, see § 3, note 28. In this reference, part I. *Theologia* consists of eight books; the fourth book has four chapters and the fourth chapter, "The Punishment and State of Sin; about Romans 7:24–25," has forty-three paragraphs; paragraph § 30 deals with the question: "Whether human free will excludes all necessity?"] [*BdP*[1], 176, n. 105].

coercion but not necessity. The only freedom that remains in them is the freedom to choose between two or more good things, and in this respect their actions are not necessary.[162]

In the second place, a theological issue came with the religious-ethical issue. If, according to many theologians of various stripes, human freedom, at least as nonethical freedom of choice[163] was of such a nature that it excluded not only coercion but also necessity, then the theological question had to arise: How was this freedom to be reconciled with God's providence, predestination, and foreknowledge?[164] Some went as far as to [168] even deny divine foreknowledge for the benefit of human freedom. Most were content with divine foreknowledge but failed to think the matter through and simply affirmed that God had foreknowledge of all things but that he definitely did not foreordain them. Reformed theologians affirmed all three, however, proceeding from God as their starting point, and attempted to bring human freedom into agreement with the undoubted, firm foreknowledge, predestination, and providence of God. But from that the conclusion followed as well that human freedom could no longer be understood as a freedom that excluded necessity, but only the kind of freedom that excluded coercion.

That is to say, along with the religious and theological question came finally the philosophical question: What is the true nature of the freedom of the will? Is freedom of the will only a freedom from coercion or is it also a freedom from necessity?[165] Our confessions teach[166] and no one denies that freedom of the will excludes coercion. The only question that remains

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[162] See the literature cited in note 164 above. [*BdP*[1], 176, n. 106].

[163] LO: *libertas exerciti; discretionis.* Ed. note: Hepp did not include Bavinck's original Latin terms in the second edition.

[164] DO: *voorzienigheid, voorbeschikking, voorwetenschap.*

[165] LO: *libertas coactione; libertas a necessitate*. Ed note: In this and the following Latin original phrases we footnote, Hepp did not include Bavinck's original Latin terms in the second edition.

[166] LO: *in confesso.*

is whether freedom of the will can coexist with necessity. Those of a Pelagian bent say no, except with God, the angels, and the ascended saints, insofar as these must perform not this or that specific good but the good in general and cannot sin. However, Augustine and his followers had to gradually arrive at the position, by virtue of their doctrine of sin, and of the omniscience, the predestination, and the providence of God, of describing the freedom of the will in such a way that it excluded only coercion and did not necessity. Viewed from the human side, freedom could still often be understood as freedom of indifference.[167] But from God's side everything was determined, including sin. Every human choice and action was, therefore, from that side certainly not coerced but nonetheless necessary, and the freedom of the will, therefore, could no longer exist in indifference but only in rational deliberation and rational self-determination.[168]

Finally the question became this: Does the essence of the freedom of the will lie in indifference or in rational self-determination? The issue that first arose within the church as a religious and theological issue was thus expanded into a philosophical and psychological issue, in connection with which determinism and indeterminism have constantly stood in opposition to each other.

In order to demonstrate that the choices of human will are always decided in one direction by antecedent motives [169], *determinism* appeals to the nature of the rational will that incorporates a choice based on motives. It also appeals to the law of "grounds" that necessitates finding a cause for any choice or action of the will. And it appeals to the unbreakable connection of causes and effects that science makes known to us in all sorts of ways. Finally, it appeals to the universality of sin, to the continuity of the moral life, to crime statistics, and so on.

By contrast, *indeterminism* teaches that the will finally still remains free after all prior deliberations and notwithstanding all the motives to

[167] LO: *libertas indifferentiae.*

[168] DO: *redelijke overleg en redelijke zelfbepaling*; LO: *lubentia rationalis.*

do or not do something, or to do something this way or another way. Indeterminism advances as its main evidences the nature of the will that includes free choice; human self-consciousness that testifies of such a freedom to every person; the sense of responsibility, guilt feelings, and sorrow, all of which presuppose the possibility of alternative actions; the reality of rights, laws, duty, merit, reward, and punishment, all of which are built on such freedom; the history of the human race, which is neither a mathematical calculation nor a series of syllogisms; the practical reality of life, in which everyone in fact acknowledges freedom of choice and acts accordingly, and so on.

Both positions, therefore, present weighty arguments, and both also defend excellent concerns.[169] These concerns involve, on the one hand, the sovereignty of God, whose counsel is one and holds all things together, and, on the other, the independence of the rational, moral person, as that is established by virtue of self-consciousness, responsibility, guilt, penitence, punishment, etc. Both of these are facts and truths whose connection is not recognized by us, but whose reality neither can nor may be denied. It is better that we conclude by confessing our ignorance than that we seek a solution that destroys the problem. Here are some important considerations:[170]

1. The will is not distinct and separate from the faculty of desiring[171]

Considerable confusion would have been averted if the will had not repeatedly been understood as an entirely new, independent faculty in human beings to which freedom was ascribed. This portrait conflicts with

[169] DO: *Beide brengen dus gewichtige gronden aan, en beide verdedigen ook uitnemende belangen.*

[170] Ed. note: This transitional sentence was added by the editor.

[171] Ed note: Bavinck concludes this chapter (and the book) with five extended points. He fails to indicate the first as "first," beginning his explicit numbering with the second ("ten tweede"). We inserted number 1 at this point for clarity and consistency. The summary headings for each of the numbers were added by the editor.

all good psychology. The will is not a specific faculty; it is nothing other than the faculty of desiring itself in its highest form. Willing is but one special activity of this faculty and thus has its root and foundation[172] in that entire faculty of desiring. [170] This faculty of desiring in general is, as we have seen, not an indifferent power without direction, but from the outset includes all sorts of inclinations that it manifests in instinct and desire, in wish and longing, and in this way also in willing.[173] It is in the final analysis concrete persons themselves who will, and not some abstract, nonexistent being. It is concrete persons, who are this way and not another way, who are born from a specific set of parents, raised in a particular group, and who become what they are under unique circumstances. Pelagianism rests upon an abstract psychology and does not take reality into account.

In fact, for that reason it is also incorrect to ascribe freedom formally to the will. The Latin phrase *liberum arbitrium* attributes freedom more to understanding, for *arbitrium* refers to the judgment and the verdict of an arbitrator[174] and therefore leads us to think more specifically of the understanding. Theologians and philosophers have always differed about whether freedom should formally be ascribed to the understanding or to the will. Nemesius of Emesa (fourth century), Bernard of Chartres (eleventh century), and Peter Abelard (1079–c. 1142), for example, held the first, and Thomas Aquinas, Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), and others taught the second. Still others, such as Peter Lombard (c. 1100–1160), said that freedom belongs radically to the understanding but formally to will.[175]

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[172] DO: *wortel en grondslag.*

[173] DO: *brengt allerlei neigingen mede, die in het instinct en begeerte, in wensch en verlangen, en zoo ook in het willen, openbaart.*

[174] DO: *uitspraak van een scheidsrechter.*

[175] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I[a] q. 83 a. 3; Robert Bellarmine, "De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio," III, ch. 2. in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 4, part 1 (Naples: Joseph Guiliano, 1858), 331; Peter Lombard, *Magistri Sententiarum, Libri IV* (Lyon: Antonius Tardif, 1581), 164*v.*–172*r.* [book II, distinctions 24–25]; Turretin, *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae,* vol. 1, 737–52

Indeed, in connection with freedom both the understanding and the will are eligible, both contribute their qualities, and freedom first comes into existence in and through both. That is to say, individuals with their higher faculties of knowing and desiring raise themselves above the lower, vegetative and sensitive life, take this life to a certain extent into its service, and become lords and masters of their deeds. Human beings can do this because they are no longer spurred on like the irrational animal, but they themselves deliberate and judge, and can govern their actions accordingly. Thus, freedom is a characteristic of human persons who judge with their understanding and who govern with their will. The understanding is the basis and cause of their freedom. They are free because they are understanding and rational beings. By means of the will they demonstrate and exercise freedom, for thereby they rule and govern their deeds. And they themselves are the subject of the freedom.

2. The will is not completely arbitrary, separated from the person and isolated from the context

Indeterminism is usually presented in a form that makes it untenable, not only theologically, religiously, and ethically, [171] but also psychologically. Usually indeterminism presents freedom in such a way that even after the understanding has deliberated everything and pronounced its judgment, the will can still set aside all motives and act as if nothing had happened. It can even choose to go as readily in one direction as in another. In complete arbitrariness, according to its own discretion,[176] and depending on whether it is so pleased to do so or not, it can act in this manner or that. In this

[*locus decimus, quaestio* 1] [ET: *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:659–61]; Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, I.iv.4 §§ 30–35. Ed. note: For an explanation of the annotation form used for Mastricht, see § 3, note 28. In the part of *Theoretico-Practica Theologia* to which Bavinck here refers, I.iv.4. §§ 30–35, Mastricht explores in detail the various questions about free will. See note 166 above in this chapter for further details on the content [*BdP*[1], 180, n. 107].

[176] GerO: *Belieben.*

way the will is completely separated from the person, set by itself, isolated from its context, hypostasized to a fully distinct faculty, and presumed to be able to act without motives, to act according to whim and mood.[177] Such a will cannot be found anywhere. A will that can set aside all preceding motives and can act according to its own pleasure is a pure abstraction, beyond life and reality. In fact, one cannot even imagine such a will. It is without nature, without character, without root and soil; it hangs in the air and is less than a weather vane, which changes but always points in a single direction as determined by the wind. The will of the indeterminist is a hypostasized whim, a personified mood, a blind contingency, an incalculable fate.[178]

Rather, the will, according to its nature, is rational desiring and presupposes understanding and reason. Remove these and there is no will left. A will that is without ground or cause, that is separated from understanding and reason, that is set by itself, is no longer a will, and is in irreconcilable conflict with its true nature. To the question, "Why do you want this?" it can only answer, "Because I want it this way; I happen to like it this way." No one would be satisfied with such an answer because everyone expects rational creatures to act rationally—that is, to give reasons why they acted or failed to act, why they willed to act or willed not to act. Furthermore, this answer would also be repeated endlessly because the question could always be repeated: "But why do you will what you are willing?" And the answer would constantly be: "Just because I want to." The will that acts in this way, without any ground or any cause other than itself, would in a literal and absolute sense become its own cause,[179] creator of itself and of its deeds, and in this way in fact be made equal with God. It is easy to see [172] that such a neutral, indifferent, equilibratory conception of the will turns human life into an aggregate of completely independent,

[177] DO: *inval en luim.*

[178] DO: *gehypostaseerde gril, gepersonifieerde luim, blind toeval, onberekenbaar noodlot.*

[179] LO: *causa sui.*

contingent, incalculable determinations of will that scarcely have any connection with each other. With this, any thought of an organism, of unity and connection, momentum or plan, in the life of an individual or in the history of a people is completely lost. Education, character formation, moral development become completely impossible. Facts and events are connected like loose sand.

In fairness, it must be acknowledged that only a few have dared to posit such an absolute free will. Pure Pelagianism always gives way to one-half, one-fourth, or three-fourths Pelagianism. Most thinkers limit freedom, ascribe a stronger or weaker influence to motives, say that ordinarily the will follows the stronger motive, and grant the will such absolute power of decision only in a few instances that are of greatest seriousness, that are crucial for one's entire life. But when it comes right down to it, at the critical point, the untenable notion of the free will does return.[180]

3. Questions about free will are complex and multilayered

It needs to be noted that opposition to the idea of free will can appear in very different forms. There is a wide theological distinction between the fatalistic determinism of Islam and the confession about predestination in the sense of Augustine or John Calvin. Religiously and ethically the hereditary burden about which recent ethics and criminology makes mention is hugely different from the Christian doctrine of original sin and of human inability. And in the same way, psychologically the opposition to free will on the part of monism in its pantheistic or materialistic form is something completely different than the standpoint of theism. Monism erases the boundaries between God and world, humanity and animal, spirit and matter, soul and body, understanding and will, rational and

[180] E.g., in Sytse Hoekstra, *Vrijheid in verband met zelfbewustheid, zedelijkheid, en zonde; Een psychologish-ethische studie* (Amsterdam: P. N. van Kampen, 1858), 78; cf. J. H. Scholten, *De Vrije Wil; kritisch onderzoek* (Leiden: P. Engels, 1859), 117–34 [*BdP*[1], 182, n. 108].

moral life, etc. Therefore, it leaves no room for the ethical phenomena of responsibility, sin, guilt, repentance, punishment, etc.

With this monism, therefore, determinism always appears as either a *logical* or a *physical* determinism. Nonetheless, in both forms it is refuted by experience. It is simply not true that [173] with the individual or with the human race, the will gradually follows intellectual insight, reason, or the conscience. The will always takes the path of least resistance and follows the power of the strongest attraction. One or another suddenly appearing appetite, desire, inclination, or passion[181] casts aside, sometimes in one moment, all rational deliberations and better insights and drives the will forward in its direction. Sin is not only ignorance. Education and upbringing or nurture are two different things. Development in understanding is not yet moral improvement. In most instances, people sin against their better judgment:[182] "The evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing" (Rom. 7:15).

Physical determinism is similarly refuted by experience. The distinction between psychic and physical phenomena appears gradually to be acknowledged more and more because, no matter how close the relationship may be, body and soul are still two elements. Furthermore, no one has explained the soul as a product of metabolism. Similarly, the distinction between understanding and will, between the rational and the moral life, has not yet been erased. The ethical phenomenon that people call freedom of the will is just as much of a riddle as consciousness is for the mechanistic worldview.[183]

Theism, however, acknowledging the distinction between God and the world and in this way the distinction among created things, does

[181] DO: *lust, begeerte, neiging, hartstocht.*

[182] LO: *video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor* ("I see the better way, I follow the worse").

[183] Emil Du Bois Reymond, *Über die Grenzen des Naturerkennens. Die sieben Welträthsel* (Leipzig: Veit & Comp, 1882), 84–105 [*BdP*[1], 184, n. 109].

not thereby solve the problem of freedom of the will. It does, however, maintain the integrity of the various terms of the problem and identifies the direction in which the solution must be sought. Soul and body, understanding and will, exist in the most intimate relationship, but they are not identical. Therefore, the will has its own nature and identity, functioning according to its own laws that are valid for it as will. We cannot speak about a will that has no cause and no law, one that exists only in whim and caprice. The will, or the human person as one who wills, has its own identity and acts in accordance with its own laws. But that nature and those laws of the willing life of humans are distinct both from those belonging to their intellectual life and from those belonging to their physical life. An act of will is not the conclusion of a syllogism, and even less the product of metabolism in the brain.

The moral life has its own nature and is therefore ruled by its own laws. This means not only that the moral life has its own norms [174] (that is, the moral law, the categorical imperative[184]) in distinction from the laws of logic and the laws of nature. But the moral life itself, in its origin, its history, its degeneration, its flourishing, etc., is governed by its own laws, all of which are in turn modifiable in nations and persons according to particular circumstances. The phenomena of sin, guilt, responsibility, repentance, remorse, merit, and punishment all belong to that moral life with its own nature and laws. All those phenomena are related, they come to expression according to fixed laws, and yet, they are not logical conclusions or physical forces. Freedom belongs within this circle of moral life and its laws. It is immanent in the willing, moral life of human beings themselves. It is an altogether different question whether we explain it and bring it into agreement with other phenomena. But freedom itself, as a fact, certainly exists. A free will in the indeterminist Pelagian sense does not exist, but human beings are definitely free. We have an immediate consciousness of that freedom and our entire moral life is built on

[184] DO: *de zedewet*; GerO: *du sollst*.

that foundation. Whoever would want to destroy this freedom would rob human beings of their moral and rational nature and would make them equal to an animal or to a machine.

4. Human beings are free, acting subjects, shaped by and responsible for their drives, desires, and appetites

This freedom consists neither in incalculable caprice (whim, mood, coincidence) nor in logical or physical coercion, but in *rational self-determination*.[185] Occasionally people have suggested that the essence of freedom lies in the spontaneity of the decisions of the will. But the domain of the spontaneous is far larger than that of the free. Instinctive actions, drives, desires, etc., are also spontaneous. Conversely, it is also incorrect to exclude the spontaneous from the freedom of the will, as Kant does. Something would be moral then only if it excluded that which was done out of inclination and love and included only that which was done from duty, out of respect for the law. Schiller directed his well-known distich against this view, as did Allard Pierson in the journal *De Gids*.[186] In the highest true material freedom, love and will coincide. Love is the most powerful will, its greatest effort and energy. Love is not a sentimental feeling, but it is that serious, deep, and enduring direction of the will and act of the will that wishes

[185] DO: *onberekenbare willekeur* (*gril, luim, toeval*) *noch ook in logischen of physischen dwang, maar in redelijke zelf-bepaling.*

[186] Ed. note: The reference to Schiller is to the following:

> Gladly I serve my friends, but alas I do it with pleasure.
> Hence I am plagued with doubt that I am not a virtuous person.

To this, the answer is given:

> Surely, your only resource is to try to despise them entirely,
> And then with aversion do what your duty enjoins.

Taken from Anne Margaret Baxley, "The Aesthetics of Morality: Schiller's Critique of Kantian Rationalism," *Philosophy Compass* 5, no. 12 (December 2010): 1084–95. The second reference is to Allard Pierson, "Over Ethika," *De Gids* 59, no. 4 (November 1895): 245–63.

and adapts the good on behalf of love's object, if necessary, with complete self-denial. God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.

The nature of freedom, however, is not completely defined by this spontaneity.[187] People who impose silence on their desires [175] and allow themselves to be led by reason, conscience, or duty, are also free. They give evidence of their freedom in this governing of their lower, sensual self. What is free is every decision of the will and act of the will that comes about by means of the higher faculty of knowing. An animal is not free. Freedom awakens and develops in a child along with self-consciousness. The character of an instinctive movement, of a sensory desire (for example, of a hungry person for food), consists in this, that it arises immediately from a need or a drive.[188] But with the decision of the will, all kinds of psychic elements, and particularly various deliberations of the intellect, are inserted. Later those inserted elements can be erased entirely from our memory, so that we can no longer give an account for our deeds, and do not know how we came to do them. These elements can actually also have only slight significance and influence, such as when desire and duty coincide and there is no conflict between them (as with a virtuous person), or when desire or passion have rendered the will completely powerless (as with an alcoholic). But these psychic elements are always present; the will functions and can function only after the activity of the higher faculty of knowing.

Therefore, there can be no doubt about the *primacy of the intellect*.[189] But we must understand this properly. There was a significant difference of opinion in earlier psychology about the question whether the will always followed the final judgment of practical reason.[190] Now, this question is

[187] DO: *Maar in deze spontaneiteit gaat toch de natuur der vrijheid niet op.*

[188] GerO: *Trieb.*

[189] DO: *verstand.*

[190] Ed. note: In the paragraph that follows, we are translating Bavinck's phrase "*de laatste uitspraken van het practische verstand*" as "the final judgment (or verdict) of practical reason."

not identical with the question about the reality of the free will since, for example, Bellarmine, who defended freedom of the will, also answered the question about the will following the last judgment of the practical reason affirmatively.[191] Nor was the primacy of the intellect meant to say, as logical determinism makes it say, that humans do nothing or can do nothing against their better judgment—that is, against the judgment of reason and conscience. Our experience teaches us all too well that the opposite is true. But those who assert that the will always accepts the final verdict of the practical reason thereby also maintain that the will cannot act blindly and must always be led by an expression of the intellect. The final verdict of practical reason was not identical with that provided by reason and conscience, but in fact was built on the foundation of appetites, drives, desires and passions,[192] which finally, as it were, managed to overwhelm the intellect [176] and managed to prevent what was desired as being seen to be good and desirable. Alcoholics know full well that it is better for them not to drink. Their consciences forbid them to drink. A host of intellectual and rational considerations discourage them from drinking.[193] But there is one motive opposing all those others—namely, the overwhelming appetite[194] that so influences their judgment that it makes them, finally, conclude that it is good and desirable, even if it is only one drink. And under the glossy sheen of this desirable thing, the hand reaches for the glass. That was the *final* verdict of their *practical* reason.[195] These

[191] Robert Bellarmine, "De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio," III, 8, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 4, part 1, 338–40 [*BdP*[1], 187, n. 110].

[192] DO: *lusten, neigingen, begeerten, hartstochten.*

[193] DO: *Allerlei verstandelijke en redelijke overleggingen raden het hem af.*

[194] DO: *lust.*

[195] On the question whether the will always follows the reason, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I[a]–IIae q. 9 and 10; Bellarmine, "De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio," III, 8; Kleutgen, *Theologie der Vorzeit*, 1:493; Calvin, *Institutes*, I.xv.7, etc. This question is dealt with particularly after John Cameron (c. 1579–1625), who treated it extensively in his *Amica Collatio* (with Daniel Tilenus) and gave an affirmative answer; see John Cameron, *Amica collatio de gratiae et voluntatis humanae concursu invocatione & quibusdam annexis,*

last movements comprise the final pronouncement of practical reason. And, thus, sin appears to people in their darkened understanding as a desirable good.

Thus, those who advocate the primacy of the intellect in no way fail to recognize that appetites and drives, desires, and passions,[196] generally tip the scales in connection with the decision of the will and that the heart exercises powerful influence on the head. No, the issues of life proceed from the heart, also those of the life of the intellect. But just as consciousness precedes desire across the board, and the unknown must also be unloved, so the understanding logically precedes the will. The will always follows the understanding, and still commits the wrong, because it appears to be good.

The decision of the will itself, therefore, is the result of a whole series of insights, deliberations, arguments, appetites, drives, desires, and passions. Freedom does not consist in this, that after everything that has gone on within the soul, it can still act arbitrarily. Rather, freedom lies in this, that with all those arguments and deliberations that grab a seat in their soul, human beings themselves are the acting subjects. A person is the subject of his or her acts. It is the person who freely and without coercion weighs the pros and cons of an act and finally makes the judgment and renders

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instituta inter cl. V. Danielem Tilenum et Johannem Cameronem (Leiden: Benedict Mignonie, 1622); Johannes Maccovius, *Theologia Polemica* in *Macovius Redivivus* (Franeker: Idzard Albert & Johannes Arcerius, 1647), 61–62 [chapter X, question 2]; Samuel Maresius, *Systema Theologicum*, Aemilius Spinneker (Bibliopola, 1673), 417–23 [Eighth locus "De Foedere Gratiae et Libero Hominis Arbitrio", §§ 43–45]; Turretin, *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae,* 1:730–33 [ET: *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:659–61, 663–65; tenth topic, question 2.7, 2.15, and 2.17]; Gijsbert Voetius, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum,* 4 vols. (Utrecht: Joannes à Waesberge, 1648–1667), 1:835–46, 2:450; all of whom agreed with Cameron. Others who judged differently include: Simon Episcopius, "Examen Sententiae Joannis Cameronis" in *Opera Theologica*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Rotterdam: Leers, 1678), 209–10 [chapters 2–3]; Phillipus van Limborch, *Theologia Christiana,* vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Henricus Wetstenius, 1686), 132–34 [book 2, chapter 23, questions 9–18]; Walaeus, "Loci Communes" in *Opera Omnia,* vol. 1, 431–38; Polyander et al., *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae,* 148 [disputation XVII, "De Libero Arbitrio," thesis 21]; Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, IV.iv.36 and elsewhere [*BdP*[1], 187, n. 111].

[196] DO: *lusten en neigingen, begeerten en hartstochten.*

the verdict. It is the person who freely determines his or her will accordingly. It is the individual who from start to finish is the responsible person. However many false arguments may delude people, in the final analysis they have no one else to blame but themselves, as truly as they alone can be the subject of their deeds, the efficient cause of their actions. Everyone is convinced of this in the depth of their soul. Our self is accused and condemned by our own conscience—that is, by our own self. [177]

5. Freedom is a problem because of sin

Finally, we must not forget that the entire question about the freedom of the will would not have arisen, or at least, would have had far less significance, if there were no sin. Desire and duty[197] fully coincide in perfected persons. The question about the freedom of the will has an ethical origin and presupposes sin.

Sin introduced the opposition between appetite and conscience, between passion and reason. And when individuals lose the battle, they attempt after the fact to justify this by pleading that they could have done nothing else. They resign themselves to their place. What is done is done; there is no turning back.[198] Furthermore, from "Thou shalt" it does not absolutely follow that "Thou art able."[199] But everyone forgets that this "I-am-not-able-to-do-otherwise" has its deepest causes in and factually coincides with "I-do-not-want-to-do-otherwise."[200]

The advocates of so-called logical and physical determinism argue in completely the same way—only with slightly different words[201]—as those who in religious circles hide behind their impotence [for overcoming sin]. Impotence in the ethical domain, just like the phenomena we discussed

[197] DO: *begeerte en plicht.*

[198] DO: *Gedane zaken nemen geen keer.*

[199] GerO: *du sollst; du kannst.*

[200] DO: *niet-anders-kunnen; niet-anders-willen.*

[201] GerO: *nur mit ein Bischen anderen Worten.*

above of freedom, responsibility, blame, etc., is a part of our nature, our ethical nature, and cannot be identified with logical absurdity or physical impossibility. If in the conflict between appetite and conscience we had *willed* something different, we *could* have done something different. That we were not able to will something different is due to ethical rather than physical reasons.

Therefore this moral impotence can never diminish responsibility or blame. Ignorance that is beyond one's own responsibility can diminish responsibility to a degree. Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Conversely, greater insight and stronger conviction can increase guilt: "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin" (John 15:22). But from the will itself, which is the ethical subject of human deeds, a motive for exoneration can never be derived.

The fact that moral life, both in its normal or in its abnormal form, develops itself according to fixed[202] ethical laws does not detract in the least from the nature of the moral life, and thus also from freedom. It is a fixed, moral law that whoever serves sin is a slave to sin, and feelings of guilt follow transgression of the moral commandment. But [178] with this the moral life is maintained precisely in its own free nature. Freedom in this sense, then, is not lost through sin. What is lost is the power—that is, the will—to do the truly good. But what is not lost and is not losable is the freedom that belongs to the essence and nature of the will. Sinners, too, serve sin freely and in accordance with the deepest inclination of their own will. Freedom might, perhaps, work in another direction or in another manner, but freedom itself is the indestructible property of the human person.

Understood in this way, this human freedom is also not in conflict with God's omniscience, predestination, and providence.[203] We do not see

[202] DO: *vaste.*

[203] DO: *alwetenheid, voorbeschikking, voorzienigheid.*

through to the connection of both of these sides, but even less so does the one cancel out the other.[204] On the contrary, just as God's omnipresence does not annihilate space but sustains it, just as God's eternity does not swallow time but sustains it, just as God's omnipotence does not suppress the powers of created things but makes them all function according to their nature, just as God's existence does not make the existence of the creation an apparition but makes it reality—in the same way also the omniscience, predestination, and providence of God are the basis and origin of the freedom of creatures.

In that freedom is mirrored something of God's sovereignty. God knows this freedom in all its paths and ways, in all its laws and ordinances. For God, freedom is not an incalculable and unknowable arbitrariness. Freedom moves within that terrain and within those boundaries and according to that nature and in accordance with those ordinances that he, the Sovereign, has established. But in the same way, then, it also moves as a freedom, created by God and upheld by him, not suppressed but maintained, not annihilated but preserved and upheld in its essence, even in the situation of sin. With that freedom, human beings, even as fallen creatures, are still the image and likeness of God. The freedom with which we serve sin is still a shadow of God's sovereignty.[205]

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[204] DO: *Het verband van beide doorzien wij niet, maar veel minder nog heft de eene de andere op.*

[205] The literature on freedom of the will is far too rich to be covered here. An overview of its history in church and theology is provided by Christoph Enst Luthardt, *Die Lehre vom freien Willen und seinein Verhältniss zur Gnade, in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung dargestelt* (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1863); cf. my *Reformed Dogmatics,* 2:337–405. The philosophic angle on the question, with the most significant views up to the present, is covered by, among others, Constantin Gutberlet, *Die Willensfreiheit und ihre Gegner* (Fulda: Fuldaer Actiendruckerei 1893); Franz J. Mach, *Die Willensfreiheit des Menschen* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1887); George L. Fonsegrive, *Essai sur le libre arbitre, s a théorie et son histoire* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1887); Ernest Naville, *Le libre arbiter* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1890); Clodius Piat, *La liberté*, 2 vols. (Paris: Lethielleux, 1894–1895) [*BdP*[1], 191, n. 112].

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