

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>titel:</i>              | <b>The standpoint of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea with regard to dichotomy</b>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>vertaald door:</i>      | <b>Chris van Haeften</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>bron:</i>               | 22 oktober 2024, 2 p.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>website:</i>            | <a href="https://hermandooyeweerd.nl/vertalingen/#2024I02">https://hermandooyeweerd.nl/vertalingen/#2024I02</a><br><a href="https://hermandooyeweerd.nl/wp-content/uploads/2024I02.pdf">https://hermandooyeweerd.nl/wp-content/uploads/2024I02.pdf</a>                               |
| <i>originele document:</i> | <b>Het standpunt van de wijsbegeerte der wetstidee t.a.v. de zgn. dichotomie</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>auteur:</i>             | <b>Herman Dooyeweerd</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>website:</i>            | <a href="https://hermandooyeweerd.nl/ongepubliceerd1/#1945B02ad1">https://hermandooyeweerd.nl/ongepubliceerd1/#1945B02ad1</a><br><a href="https://hermandooyeweerd.nl/wp-content/uploads/1945B02ad1tekst.pdf">https://hermandooyeweerd.nl/wp-content/uploads/1945B02ad1tekst.pdf</a> |

## The standpoint of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea with regard to dichotomy

The anthropology of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea takes its starting point in the duality of body and soul as do Scripture and confession. It starts from the scriptural belief that the human soul is not subject to *bodily*, i.e. *temporal* death, but outside of Jesus Christ rather to *spiritual* and *eternal* death. So, which is obvious anyway, it accepts the continued existence of the human soul or spirit after physical death.

If by the “immortality” of the soul nothing else is meant than that it is not liable to bodily decomposition, then it is only natural to accept the soul’s immortality in this sense. The objection by some adherents of this philosophy to the *term* “immortality” is only based on scriptural grounds. That which by the fall into sin has become subject to *spiritual death* can *as such* not really be called “immortal”. Within the scriptural frame of thought it is better to speak of immortality only *in Christ Jesus*.

However, the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea rejects dichotomy in the scholastic metaphysical sense. That is to say, it rejects a dichotomy within *temporal* human existence between an abstract “material body” and an equally abstract *anima rationalis*, which is then supposed to be able to exist as a pure “form-substance” apart from the material body. This rejection has a solid ground, since it is clear that this dichotomistic conception originated from the dualistic scheme of form-and-matter in Greek philosophy. In this rejection this philosophy only combats a *philosophical* conception, which originated from a dualistic *pagan religious groundmotive*.

For the same reason it rejects the scholastic philosophical *substance-concept*. In this conception two theoretical abstractions from *temporal* human existence are elevated to independent entities that are supposed to be able to exist in independence from each other. However, *as theoretical abstractions they have no reality*.

But in so far as it is not meant in a philosophical sense, the *word* substance does not meet with any objection. If applied to the soul, the word substance is only meant in the sense that the human soul continues to exist even after the separation from the temporal body the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea as a *philosophy* has no objections. After all, it starts from the belief that the human soul is not subject to *bodily* death, and consequently continues to exist *independently from the body* even after its separation from it.

But in so far as in scholastic vein the attempt is made to connect the term substance with the scholastic-metaphysical conception of body and soul, it raises a *fundamental* and *scriptural* objection. By the human soul or spirit the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea in accordance with the divine Wordrevelation means *the religious root-unity of human existence*, from which all temporal manifestations of life in their variegated diversity *originate*.

For corroboration of the scriptural nature of this confession I do of course not appeal to the words “heart,” “soul,” or “spirit” as they can appear in Scripture in very distinct meanings. I am also eager to admit that I possibly made a mistake in appealing to the text “Eternity has been put into man’s heart.”

The confession of the soul as spiritual or *religious root-unity* of human existence is not based on one or two texts, but on the *religious groundmotive* of scriptural revelation, namely of the creation of man according to God’s image, the *radical* fall into sin, and the *radical* redemption in Christ Jesus. Whoever reads Scripture from this groundmotive and does not scholastically approach it from the synthetic motive of nature and grace (which aims at an impossible *compromise* between the scriptural groundmotive and the dualistic Greek groundmotive of form and matter) should in light of Scripture’s revelation of the basic relation of body and soul necessarily abandon the Greek conception of the “material body” and the “*anima rationalis*”. This Greek conception cannot possibly be combined with the

confession of the radical fall because it has no room for the integral religious *root* of temporal human existence.

This confession denies that we can establish a metaphysical theory about the “soul” in this pregnant Biblical sense, since philosophical science is limited to temporal reality, as was already recognized by Kuyper in his “Encyclopaedia of sacred Theology.” It argues that all knowledge that we acquire of the “soul” or “spirit” of human existence must be derived from Divine Wordrevelation, namely from the revelation about the creation according to God’s image the radical fall into sin in the *spiritual root* of human nature, and the rebirth of the heart in Christ Jesus.

This knowledge, which is only acquired in faith, must determine the starting point and direction of anthropological science if it is truly to be a Christian anthropology. This is to say that it becomes decisive for the conception of the structure of the human body. Accordingly, the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea by human body means the entire *temporal form of existence* of humans, which has its root-unity in the soul. So, it rejects the scholastic conception of the material body as “merely a physical substance.” According to its conception, the body comprises all aspects of temporal reality.

Of course it too holds that the human soul or spirit is not material. But it also holds that the human body is not merely material, that it is not a physically-chemically qualified compositum, but that it also comprises higher structures, including the temporal act-structure, which in the scholastic conception of the *anima rationalis* is only to be ascribed to the “human soul.” For this reason the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea holds that the opposition of matter and spirit is not suitable to characterize the fundamental difference between body and soul.

*Summa summarum.* The Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea accepts the duality of body and soul, and with it the dichotomy in a *deeper sense* than scholasticism does, because it takes it exclusively in the scriptural sense, not in a sense determined by Greek metaphysics. It acknowledges that the terminology of some foreign written confessions betrays the influence of Aristotelian scholasticism, which has also penetrated reformed theory and which has been able to maintain itself in a tough tradition. About this Kuyper, Bavinck, and my colleague Hepp agree.

But it emphatically denies that terms like “*anima rationalis*,” “material and spiritual substance,” in so far as they appear in these confessions should be interpreted in the scholastic-philosophical sense, and that a certain philosophical conception should be introduced into these confessional documents.