

**For Still Our Ancient Foe:
Contours of Satan's World**

**by
Abraham Kuyper**

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For Still Our Ancient Foe: Contours of the World of Satan

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The original contains chapters on good angels and on fallen angels. These have been separated into two shorter volumes—one on the good and one on the fallen. This volume is about satan and his cohorts of demons and devils. The title of the companion volume is

From the Realms of Glory: Contours of the Angelic World

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Translator's Chat with Readers

False Creek

I live near False Creek, an indirect extension of the Pacific Ocean jutting in between Vancouver's downtown and the southern part of this beautiful British Columbian city. It is surrounded by beautiful parks, beaches and a lengthy sea wall for walking. The whole scene is one of beauty and serenity with its watery ripples.

But—and this is a big but!—why is this beautiful and serene place called “False?” The main reason is that the original Caucasian explorers expected it to penetrate deep inland and peter out into a creek. That was false. There may have been a creek at the end, but not something navigable. It ended like the end of your big toe, like a stub. It gave a wrong impression; things were not as they seemed.

But with the “coming of civilization” boats took over the place, both large and small. At first they came to service the many industrial places along its shores. When they disappeared and gentrification took place, the large ones were replaced by smaller recreational vessels, quite a number of which housed permanent residents. These residents have been seen by their neighbours on the land dumping their unwanted cargo, including the worst personal kind. As a result the serenity at the top covers a lot of filth floating around, so much so that it is no longer safe for swimming. The entire impression is false. It is indeed a False Creek; it does not deliver on its superficial promise.

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Way back in 1923(!) well-known Reformed publisher “J. H. Kok” in Kampen, the Netherlands, published the second printing of Abraham Kuyper's book *De Engelen Gods*, which translates into *God's Angels*. Like so many of Kuyper's tomes, this one is a compilation of articles he wrote for one of his newspapers.

The book contains chapters / articles on both the faithful angels and the fallen angels. We have decided to publish the translation in two volumes—one about the faithful angels and another shorter one about fallen angels. This shorter one has as title *For Still Our Ancient Foe: The Contours of Satan's World*, while the longer

one goes by *From the Realms of Glory: The Contours of the Angelic World*. You will probably recognize the popular classic hymns from which these titles were derived. The book describes another “false creek.”

My translator’s main introduction to *both* volumes is found only in *From the Realms of Glory*, which is published together with this one on the same website page:

< www.SocialTheology.com/kuyperiana >

If you want to do some reading *about* this book, that’s where you’ll have to go. However, *this* small volume is published first. So, you’ll have to wait some months before that other one becomes available. But even that introduction will be minimal, because most of what I would write has already been written in the introduction of other Kuyper translations of mine, also on the same page: *The Ascent of the Son—The Descent of the Spirit*, a translation of Kuyper’s meditations on Ascension and Pentecost.

One feature you will observe is that I do not capitalize the word “satan,” unless other grammatical issues overrule my resistance to “Satan.” He is not worthy of the honour implicit in capitalization.¹

Together with my administrator and co-editor, my wife Frances A. Boer-Prins, I wish you pleasant reading—in so far as satan, devils and demons can be subjects pleasant to read about. But pleasant or not, as you wade through its pages, you will find unexpected but beautiful tulips and roses—genuine jewels actually-- among the thorns and thistles that populate the field. After you’ve read it, you will probably understand the previous sentence.

May you be blessed and enriched spiritually as you read and ponder satan, his work and power, along with his cohorts, the devils and demons. Being more fully aware of these satanic forces can help you recognize and resist their voices, their urgings and temptations, their immense power and control over our world and our

¹ Throughout this book I do not “upper-case” or capitalize the word “satan,” except where grammatical demands intervene, for he simply does not deserve this honour. All references to God, including Jesus, on the other hand, *are* “upper-cased” or capitalized. I reject the democratization process that has flattened references to the Divine by “lower-casing” them.

lives. Greater understanding of the dynamics they create can also lead to greater Christian wisdom.

On the other hand, ignorance and lack of awareness about satan and his cohorts can lead to disastrous results, a major one being superficiality in our worldview along with the resulting easy prey to their advances. So, yes, familiarity with that world can lead to blessing and spiritual strength. You become equipped to more effectively withstand the most negative and destructive spiritual creature in all of creation, whether on earth or in heaven.² So, dear reader, herewith I invite you to take the plunge into this false creek³ of the filthiest broth and froth ever concocted by any creature, hopefully to emerge a more chastened, wiser and more compassionate servant of the Most High. Amen and amen!

Dr. Jan H. Boer, 2022
Vancouver BC

² Whether heaven and earth are separate geographical *places* or whether they are different *spiritual relational* arrangements, for me the jury is still out. I look forward to their coalescence as in Revelations 21:1-4.

³ I mistakenly keyboarded "false creed," a term that would also be descriptive of the evil discussed in this book.

Chapter 1*

The Fallen Angels

*See, I will send My messenger,
who will prepare the way before Me.
Then suddenly the Lord you are
seeking will come to His temple;
the Messenger of the covenant,
whom you desire, will come,”
says the Lord Almighty.
Malachi 3:1*

The topic of Chapter 25⁴ in the companion volume about the relationship between the angelic world and Christ, brings us automatically to a discussion on fallen angels under their head, satan.⁵ Luther once correctly referred to satan as “the ape of Christ.” He meant to indicate that satan’s wisdom consists merely of imitating the work of Christ. This ape image is justified by the fact that in the end satan will present himself as the antichrist or the contra-christ and then imitate (“ape after”) the miracles of Christ to confirm his own rule. However, we are not yet ready to dig deeply into the antichrist role of satan. To justify the sequence of the discussion, we pointed out in that chapter 25 (see footnote 1) that after the subject of angelic relations with Christ, we now bring the fallen angels under their head, satan, to the foreground.

That the fall of the angels had already taken place when Adam was still in the Garden in his state of righteousness, is clear from the history narrative. As soon as Adam was given the test in the Garden, satan approaches Eve in order to make her and Adam doubt that command. That is how Jesus Himself explained the Garden event in John 8:44. It was satan who spoke to Eve through the serpent. He and only he, said Jesus, was the *murderer from the beginning*, i.e., that unholy person who subjected the entire human race to death. The creation of angels can only have happened *before* the creation in the Garden. It is included in the first words of Scripture that God created heaven and earth. Whether the creation of the world of

⁴ See chapter 25 in the companion book *From the Realms of Glory...* on this same Kuyperiana page.

⁵ I never capitalize “satan” and other names associated with him—or is he “her?” With all the evil he does, he does not deserve a capital. As to the “he-her” issue, would feminists please help me here? With a reason, of course!

angels underwent certain stages...is not revealed to us. We are only told that God created “the heavens and the earth.” Then we are given more details regarding the completion of the creation of the earth, but nothing about developments in heaven. It is only in the book of Job that we read that at the completion of the creation of the world, “*The morning stars⁶ sang together and all the angels shouted for joy*” (Job 39:7). This gives us ground to assert that the creation of the world of spirits was completed before the completion of the earthly creation with the creation of light. As to the “children of God” who sang at the beginning, one can hardly understand them to be anything but the angels of God.

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In this completed angelic world a principal fall from God took place *before* the prohibition test came to Adam. In order to think this through more deeply, we must keep in mind that the angelic world was created very differently from that of humans. When our human race, that in its completion shall comprise a thousand times a thousand million persons, was called into being on earth, our race was still very small. First a man, then a woman; a mere two in all. From these two persons the entire human race was to emerge.

It was very different with the angelic world. There is no birthing or procreation among them. Thus we cannot speak of an angelic race. The one does not give birth to another. There is neither man nor woman among them. This is the reason their number does not increase. It follows from this that the angels were created in their full number at once and that immediately upon their creation the complete angelic host stood before God. What will happen with our human race only at the last judgment, namely that the full number of all human persons will appear before God, with the angels took place immediately at the beginning. All the hosts of angels, without missing a single one, appeared before the Face of God. Their number has never increased nor decreased. Their number is still as it was at their creation and will remain so eternally.

This point must be brought to the foreground with some emphasis, because it explains how much closer the fall of the angels occurred to creation than in the case of humans. At their beginning the human race was so small, so few in

⁶ Instead of “morning stars” Kuyper has “the children of God.”

number, so diminutive . Just two persons on this entire earth; only two in the entire universe! No more than two created human beings over against almighty God. That small number encouraged humility, for even over against the rich animal world and the power of nature, humans experienced a kind of aid dependency that drove them to seek God's *help* rather than *resist* Him. There was a feeling of smallness, of depreciation, that had to work harder because humans are wired for further development and thus were not up to their potential.

Humans were not created in the fullness of their power but at its beginning, bearing within themselves the prophesy of what would one day reach its maturity and fullness from out of that beginning. It was from here that humanity was promised something more in the Covenant of Works, a more powerful and richer existence, provided it would stand in the faith. It follows from that promise that originally mankind was much weaker than his potential and thus stood before God in weakness. Mankind was sanctified, holy, but had not yet reached the level of perseverance of the saints. Yes, sanctified and just, but still capable of falling. It was indeed on the way but only at its beginning; the end of that way was still a far distance.

Now take these two factors, that humanity consisted of only two persons and, secondly, that humanity was still at the beginning of their development, then you can sense that at their creation their entire existence was wired for submission and humility. They were inclined more to seek refuge in God in their helplessness than to imagine themselves resisting God's majesty with their own strength and power. This leads us to serious doubt whether mankind would ever have reached out to the forbidden tree if the tempter had not intervened.

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But, of course, the situation was completely different for the angels. They did not in the least feel themselves lonely and forsaken; they stood before God in their millions upon millions. With their immeasurable multitude, it was unavoidable for them to develop an exaggerated sense of power and significance and thus do away with that sense of helplessness.⁷ Among humans we see frequently that great

⁷ Is Kuyper here applying fallen human categories to the angelic world that he insists is so different from that of humans? It seems there is a hidden contradiction here.

numbers elevate our courage and a sense of power multiplies our strength tenfold. In school, a single boy will dare little, but with the support of the entire class or even the whole school, he is capable of anything. A person holding thoughts about her society alone will feel weak, but when she becomes the mouthpiece of the masses and public opinion supports her, she will speak more boldly and even audaciously. A single dissatisfied person who grumbles will keep it to himself, but when thousands share the same complaint, then a feeling of power develops among the masses that may lead to recklessness and often morphs into revolution. It is because we are wired for community that we feel weak when we are alone and everything within us thirsts for fellowship with others to strengthen our position. Now figure for yourself how an unbridled feeling of power and might had to vibrate among the angels once they were called into being in such an endless legion. No signs of loneliness or of being forsaken. All at once, there they stood in the unbroken and immeasurable fullness of their assigned might.

With us humans we already feel strong when an entire nation as one person defends the honour of the people. Where would it lead to among us when an entire continent or even the whole world with its billions were to be animated by one single ideal and united by a single ardour? But even that would be an insipid copy of the sense of power that must have moved through that angelic host. In their case it was not a matter of a single generation that lived together, but the fullness of *all* angels. And now imagine for yourself that all people that ever lived on earth were still alive, lived and existed at the same time and thus realized their unity as one single generation in their full potential. This may in some sense help you to imagine what this feeling of power must have meant in this newly-created angelic world.

This unbelievable feeling of power was strengthened even more, because, not wired for development, they were all created at once in their full potential. Humans increase in knowledge, in sanctification and in ability, but not so the angels. They would eternally remain as they were created. It is true that the good angels, liable to falling before the Fall, became immune to falling, while the fallen angels changed from good to evil and devilish, but none of this implied development, increase, growth, multiplication, no hierarchical ladder from lower to higher. Satan does not confront God as an apprentice but as a spirit in the fullness of his complete angelic power. He did not become that powerful though his fall.

He was the same powerful angel, the same richly endowed creature, immediately after his creation. Naturally, this sense of power and might had to increase among this immeasurable host of angels in an unbelievable manner. It was not only their inestimable number, but their personal maturity also caused their sense of power to swell so that it was almost beyond surpassing. To be sure, someday the hosts of the elect will surpass the glory of the angels, but this will always be accompanied forever by their awareness of having been lost and then saved, a reality that, in gratitude for their salvation, will suppress all feeling of pride in their own power.

We do not accept the opinion that the fall of the evil angels can be explained from their envy of the human race, no matter with how many smarts this is defended. When Jesus calls satan a murderer from the beginning, this is not an explanation of satan's own fall, but it does explain the *human* Fall. In order to be a murderer, satan must have fallen already. For the explanation of satan's own fall we must place emphasis on Jesus' statement, "*He was...not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his own language, for he is a liar and the father of lies*" (John 8:44).

In the following, the emphasis does not fall on his being a murderer of human beings so much as that it explains that this status derives from the fact that satan is the personification of *The Lie*. His abomination is not his lying. That is merely a consequence. But it is that satan in his own person is himself the absolute liar without truth, the denier and the opposite of the Truth. It will be discussed in the following chapter how this is to be understood. Here we are only explaining that Jesus does not find that main cause of satan's fall in the latter's status as murderer, but in his being the essential liar and not remaining in the truth. The opinion that jealousy of humans brought satan to fall not merely has no support in Jesus' statement but is rather denied by Him.

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This could not be otherwise. Do not forget that satan's fall is *the* event from which all sin, whether human or angelic, has sprung forth. His first sin was *the sin* from which all other sins germinated. As Jesus put it: satan did not only become the lie, but the *father* of all lies. This can also be expressed thus: he became sin itself and the fountain of all sin and its origin. His fall then must be the most principal sin.

In a full and literal sense this was the root sin to which all sin can be traced and from which it all emerges. Jealousy of the human race simply *cannot* such a sin. The existence of humanity was a marginal factor for the angels. The angelic world would continue to exist even if you were to wipe out the human world. Did it not exist in its full glory even before humans came on the scene? There was no root relationship between humans and angels, but merely a peripheral one, even if you keep in mind that angels would be wired to serve mankind.

For example, the horse as a noble animal is called to serve humans and is oriented towards them, but the race of horses in themselves can continue to exist without humans and relates to people only in a marginal way. This also holds in a higher sense for the angels, for which reason the mother of all sin in the angelic world *could not* emerge from her marginal relationship to humanity. Even among humans, the sin of jealousy showed up later. In Genesis 4, Cain is the evil jealous man who takes it out on Abel, but however evil Cain's sin was, it is *not* the mother of all human sin. That sin was not Cain's but Adam's and did not consist of something that affected his relationship with Eve, but, rather, his relationship with God Himself. It was not murder but the violation of the original prohibition test. Thus satan's mother sin cannot be that he, as Cain, committed murder, but only in that *he broke his relationship to God Himself*.

Jude 1: 6 reads that the evil angels sinned in that they “*did not keep their position of authority*⁸ *but abandoned their own home...*,” which has no connection to Eve's temptation and shows not a trace of jealousy of humans. Literally, it does not say their *own* principle but the principle in itself. In other words, they denied their origin, that is, their reason for existence to which they owed their origin. They directly violated the creation ordinance and changed the truth of that ordinance into its opposite, the lie. Thus we must not understand their leaving their home in a geographic or locational sense. “Their own home” refers to their household. They gave up their assigned order. They forsook their assigned angelic household. They were created as *servicing* spirits, but they presented themselves as *reigning* spirits. As long as this remains clearly in the foreground, it can certainly be admitted that the higher position reserved for humans pricked angelic passion, provided that it is and will be seen as principial resistance against God's ordinances about their own

⁸ Kuyper translates “position of authority” as in the NIV as “their own principle.”

angelic world. Their sinful scheme was not directed against mankind but against God. Only the sin that is directly aimed at God is principal sin. You cannot regard the fall of satan as the evil fountain of all sin, unless you consciously understand this as a direct affront to God *as God*. *The struggle was about the sovereignty and majesty of the Lord God, not about something within the creation*. The first sin in the creaturely angelic world was a reaction against all the “omnis” of the living God—omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience and all the rest.

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For good reason we started this chapter with an emphasis on the power and greatness of the angels with which they stood before God immediately upon their creation in their full number and in perfect maturity. Place over against that the small beginning of humanity. Only two persons and they only at the beginning stage of their development. Our human race stood before God in a minimalist diminutive form, while that of the angels seemed gigantic. While our human diminutive form can lead to submissiveness and humility, this gigantic might of the angelic world can lead to the temptation of haughtiness and pride.

More needs to be said about the above. This temptation was more effective for satan personally than for his cohorts. We are not going to make an issue of the name of satan. Of course, satan was no satan prior to his fall. This name of satan, that apparently means “opponent” and “accuser,” is found only in the later books of Scripture. We use this name exclusively to point to his person, while we do not use the name “Lucifer” since that does not occur in Scripture. Perhaps using “Lucifer” is appropriate in poetry but not in Bible study. In any case, *this* angel was the head of their complete host—but not *the* head. He is not Michael, but he *was* a commander or head angel of some standing, an unusually powerful angel, an angelic genius, who was accorded a high place of honour in the angelic world because of his excellence. More than among his angelic troops, his high consciousness of the power of angels must have grown on him very clearly. What other angels experienced only partially, he must have felt in all his depth, right down to the root. This angelic awareness must have risen in him to such a high but still creaturely level, that it threatened the loss of his creaturely character. This consciousness was further strengthened and stimulated by the knowledge that the

entire host of angels drew from his imagination and was thus ready to support him. It was as if their number multiplied his power a thousand times.

Satan, glittering in his excellence and holding such a powerful position, stood before God encircled by the full force of the angelic world. He is now about to perform his first life-affecting deed, namely to overturn his complete dependence on God with which he was created, by an act of his own consciousness and own will into his own willed and conscious independence. Actually, of course, all of creation, whether animal, angel or human being, is dependent on God, but for a rational creature this is not sufficient. The conscious creature does not find rest until he recognizes the situation as rational, meaning that he not only recognizes it but is also content with it. Mankind must also make this transition, the home of faith.

But this must also take place with the angels. It could happen only once, as we shall show in a future chapter, for once that position has been accepted and understood, the angels stood in this new relation and *could not* escape it anymore. However, in that first moment, understanding the situation, it would have been possible for the will to resist and then it would be impossible for all eternity. It was not only satan who was confronted by this choice but all angels—Michael, Gabriel along with satan. In that first act, Michael, Gabriel and all angels who are now holy chose *for God*; they freely, with their own consciousness and will, accepted the position to which God had assigned angels, after which choice they could never fall away. But satan did the opposite. Intoxicated by his own glory and tempted by the power of the angelic world, he thirsted to reject that creaturely position assigned to him. That's why he fell and that for eternity. From now on he would be devil for eternity and could only work in a devilish way.⁹

⁹ As translator, I confess not to understand the reason for claiming that both parties were locked into their self-chosen position, that there is no escape for either. So far, I have not come across Kuyper's defense for this opinion.

Chapter 2*

Satan

*You believe that there is one God.
Good! Even the demons believe that
--and shudder.
James 2:19*

Our right to explain the fall of satan¹⁰ and his cohorts not on basis of their jealousy of humans but, rather, on basis of enmity against God, is confirmed by Jesus' affirmation that "*He¹¹ was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a **liar** and the father of lies* (John 8:44) . It is even possible that the name "satan" originally directly meant "God's opponent," and not "accuser, ambusher of humans." It is not possible to be absolutely certain about this, since we are no longer capable of finding out how this name came into the world. The fact that later on this name was interpreted more as "accuser" or "slanderer" may not lead us to insist that originally it meant predominantly "accuser of the brothers."¹² "Satan" is a derivative of a root word that means "to oppose someone," to restrict someone's movements or to restrict his actions. By itself, there is nothing negative about it. In fact, resisting someone from doing evil is an act of piety that turns the person into an opponent, and thus his satan! Indeed, the first time the word appears in the Bible, it refers not to the devil but to the Angel of the Lord. We read the following in Numbers 22:22, 32—"*But God was very angry when he went, and*

¹⁰ As explained in a previous chapter, I refuse to do satan the honour of capitalizing his name; he does not deserve it. Decapitalization represents in my mind the chaos satan creates wherever he goes. I do capitalize when the word is the first in a sentence.

¹¹ I assume that my sisters will not object to depicting satan as a male with male pronouns. For some odd reason, I have never seen satan referred to as a female! I wonder why.... It does not seem to fit the inclusive language we demand in Bible translations.

¹² It is for this reason that the Greek "*diavol-os*" was translated as "slanderer. The term is the root of the English word "devil."

the angel of the Lord stood in the road to oppose him."¹³ It shows here very clearly that the name "satan" means simply one who opposes.

The princely angel who fell away together with his henchmen could be God's opponent as well as opponent to a human or even to both. The name "satan" fits very well and clearly expresses his essence, even though I assume that at the time of the Fall his sin consisted of opposition to God. As a result, he became the opponent or adversary of God's elect and thus in subsequent history the name was taken to refer to "the accuser of the brothers."

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The fact that in the Old Testament relatively little is said of satan and that not until the New Testament does he appear frequently, should not stop us. True, attempts have been made to conclude from this that the recognition of the existence of a devil with his demonic cohorts was originally foreign to Israel and that they initially became acquainted with the notion of a hostile anti-god during the exile, especially later under Persian influence. Von Darmestetter¹⁴ has effectively waylaid this myth. In the creation story, the serpent appears as a cunning persona, who from elsewhere introduces sin to the human heart and thus to the world as a whole. That serpent can only be understood as satan as in Revelation 20:2—"*that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or satan,*" but also in history itself. No one of sound mind, when reading the history of Genesis 1-3, can even for a moment entertain the delusion that the conversation with the serpent was intended to depict that something original came out of a hissing animal. The issues that were under discussion between Eve and the serpent were not base animalistic in nature, but represented the highest spiritual questions. Even if the question remains undecided whether satan did indeed slink into the serpent so that the latter spoke or even whether "serpent" here is a name for satan himself, it is definitely the case for every objective reader that the first appearance of satan took place in the Garden, something that is abundantly confirmed in the New Testament.

¹³ Kuyper translates the last clause here "*hem tot een satan ofte wederpartijder,*" i.e., "as an opponent or adversary." Translators may not have done us a favour by sidestepping the term "satan" here and making it "angel."

¹⁴ James Darmestetter (1849-1894), son of an Iranian Jewish bookbinder, an amazing scholar with "superb intellect." [DARMESTETER, JAMES – Encyclopaedia Iranica \(iranicaonline.org\)](http://iranicaonline.org)

That satan is hardly mentioned in the Old Testament and is mentioned only in Job, 1 Chronicles 21:1 and Zachariah 3:1 deserves attention and can easily be explained. When two armies approached each other from a long distance, they would attack only later when the time was ripe. It was only a matter of course that you would not see the enemy for weeks on end.

Only within the last one or two days before the battle would begin, the hostile forces would come in view. Similarly, the entire history from the Garden to Golgotha is one long, slow period of preparation for the battle between the spirits that is finally fought and decided by Jesus against satan. So it is a slow centuries-long approaching each other of two powers that will eventually bring them to the battle of life and death. It is not until Golgotha comes in view that the satanic forces come near enough to be seen by every eye. It is totally consistent with this that after the Fall, satan silently slinks away and that you hardly hear anything about his work. When Jesus is on the way, satan's forces do not become visible, till His actual arrival at Golgotha is near. At that point nearly all spiritual borders become unsafe by satan's invasion.

The reverse would have been unnatural. Should you have read much about satan in the Old Testament, that would decrease as you went along and satan would almost totally disappear in the New Testament. You would not find a trace of satan in the words of Jesus and the Apostles. By then the entire story of satan would have appeared a superstition that would gradually fade away and at the end totally disappear in the clearer light of Jesus and His followers. The entire presentation of a spiritual battle between Jesus and satan would collapse. It is then that we would have had to agree with the more "enlightened" (read: liberal, secular) scholars who advised us to ban the entire conception of satan from our thoughts and confession.

But that's not how things stand. It was exactly in the days of yore when superstition had its freest reign, that Scripture is silent about the multifarious work of satan, while you begin to notice satan and his agitation just when the clearer light of the Gospel breaks through. Once the Saviour has appeared, it is then that satan comes out with full force. Then you hear more about satan from Jesus' lips than ever flowed from the pens of Moses or Isaiah. Yes, it is now that for the first time ever a frightening satanic agitation is unveiled clearly and explicitly from

behind the veil of life itself for which the earlier messengers of God had no eye and which reality had not been revealed to them.

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It is exactly the delay of satan's appearance in the Old Covenant and his audacious appearing in Jesus' days that confirms for us our opinion that satan's first, deepest and last battle is not against humans out of jealousy, but against God out of pride. If satan's issues were first and foremost about people, you would have expected multifarious actions from him, especially in the days of Noah, Abraham and Moses. But this was not the case. You see him come into action only against Job, a man who stood in the shadow of the Man of Sorrows, but who did not play a major role in the history of revelation like Noah, Abraham and Moses. We notice Job come and go. He leaves us behind with the echo of his bitter complaints, with the speaking of Jehovah in the thunder-storm, and in the shadow of God's majesty in His creation, but in the course of world history and that of Israel, Job and his children are of no significance. The reason for satan's attack on Job is not as if Job were a person of high historical status, but only because he was a servant of the Most High. It is not so much the human as God Himself who is tested whether He will be able to continue His holy plan against the wiles of the devil. To the contrary, when in the Person of Jesus God Himself appears on earth, satan gets his full chance to attack God Himself in the Person of the Mediator. It is then that you suddenly see the adversary (satan, remember?) of God come forward in his full armour, not to defeat the Son of Man, but the Son of God in Christ. "*If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread*" (Matthew 4:3). Here, too, it is clear that satan is driven in his satanic work not first of all by jealousy of the human but primarily by his opposition to God as God.

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That among the Pagan nations, especially in Asia and Africa, human involvement with a kingdom of evil spirits was much greater and took a much more prominent place than with Israel, is fully consistent with the above and gives us every right to reject characterizing Jesus' statements as after-effects of Pagan superstition. The Scriptural teaching about satan is so far from Asian and African perceptions of evil spirits that seeking the origin of that teaching there betrays a lack of a sharp critical

research spirit. Those advocating such a Pagan origin totally lose sight of the teaching of Scripture about the overwhelming satanic influence under which the Pagan nations lived. When Paul refers to the table of idols as “the table of devils,” he basically says the same as what satan pretended in the desert as if he were capable of offering the kingdoms of this world in all their glory. It was something similar to the time Jesus called him the ruler of the world. At the proselyte baptism that preceded that of John the Baptist, people were fully aware of the satanic tint of Paganism. It was therefore demanded that converts distance themselves from their Pagan parents as well as from their inheritance. All contact with unclean Pagan life had to be broken. It must be admitted that the Christian church greatly exaggerated its practice of exorcism, wherefore our Gereformeerde ancestors abolished the practice at the baptism of covenant children. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that before the coming of Christ, the Pagan world was completely dominated by demonic influences. It needs to be acknowledged that common grace checked the full influence of the satanic principle, but it did not undo it wholly. In the life of Pagan nations the demonic principle would time and again be triumphant and establish controlling influence. This was the case in the social life of these nations, in their thought life, in their political life and not the least in their religious life. All worship of idols is satanic. Even though in Athens the altar to the unknown god as a remnant and after-effect of common grace could inflict damage on satan’s rule, Paul does not hesitate for a moment to dub the worship of Greek gods and goddesses in Corinth “a service of devils” that was the directly adversarial to the service of God Almighty. All idolatry is overturning the first commandment as well as that of the great and high commandment that flows immediately from the being of God, which is therefore sometimes called the only “natural” and “fully necessary” commandment or its *sine qua non*.

It must be recognized that satan had established for himself a kingdom in which he was partially triumphant and that he succeeded to ban the worship of the one true God from his world. Hence, it should not surprise us that it was in that Pagan world that the revelation and confession of the demonic underwent a richer development there than with Israel. Israel, after all, was the only place that satan could not conquer. Here he ran into a wall and could not penetrate triumphantly. And thus it is reasonable that among Israel less was thought and spoken about satan than elsewhere where the development of satanism infiltrated to the

foreground. The coming of Christ forced Israel to prepare itself for the great battle against satan. Thus, we do not in any way deny that belief in satan was dormant for many centuries and only later arose with greater power. But we do continue to insist that it can be readily explained on basis of these facts and others, such as the demonic character of Paganism, Israel's unique position, and the postponement of the main battle till the coming of Christ. But however remarkable this difference in perception between Paganism and Israel may have been, it totally agrees with what we earlier determined about the initial intention of satan. After all, satan celebrated a great triumph in the Pagan world, so that he succeeded to destroy the worship of the one true God and to replace it with the worship of his own creatures. In the case of the Persians, even worship of the evil one. All this confirms our conception that the primary issue in the Fall was not jealousy of humans but pride against God. Satan is first of all *God's* adversary and only then opponent and envier of humans.

After having shone the light on the subject from every angle, we now come back to Jesus's declaration of satan as liar and as the father of all liars. It should be clear to us that this declaration does not allow any other conclusion. To see this clearly, we must first of all ask ourselves how we are to understand the concept of truth in John 8:44. Many think hereby primarily about the lie of the serpent in the Garden. Satan distorted God's words in the Garden by calling them lies and suggested to Eve that God had deceived her. Indeed, God had said "If you eat of this tree, you will surely die" (Genesis 2w:17), but, the serpent said, He knew it would be very different. To the contrary, if they should eat of that tree, they would be promoted to a higher level of bliss and, now being like God, they would know good and evil. God did not want that, for He wanted to keep humans at a lower level. Therefore He had made humans in such a way that death hid in the eating of the fruit. As it is said, a lie lay hid in satan's first appearance. Falsehood was the weapon wherewith he served himself. It is from that background that Christ said, "*He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies*" (John 8:44). From that perspective, there is nothing more here than that satan was the first to lie, that the first lie came from *his* lips. That is the reason he must be called

“the father of lies,” something that we humans learned from him. Jesus’ statement aimed at this lie, saying “yes” when it was “no,” at the lie as the medium of deceit.

When you look at Jesus’ statement more carefully, Jewish reaction to it could hold no water for even a moment. He said to the wayward Jews, “*You are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God*” (John 8:40). All agree that this does not mean that Jesus was not guilty of a lie and that people could depend on His word. When Jesus said, “I tell you the truth that I heard from God,” this can only mean that Jesus, His convictions about the things of heaven and earth being what they were, took a stand over against the convictions of the sinful meandering world. He received this pure, just and true conviction not from humans but from His God. For Him this pure conviction was the truth that stood over against the lie of the world’s perspectives; He had spoken this truth in the midst of the world without embellishment.

The immediately following statement that satan did not stand in the truth can only mean two things. First, satan initially also had correct knowledge about the things of heaven and earth before he fell. Secondly, he did not retain this pure and correct knowledge; he did not remain standing in it, but left it behind and moved over to a false perspective about the things of heaven and earth that stood diametrically over against the truth. When Jesus speaks here of truth, He refers to the true and actual condition of the things in heaven and earth as they originally stood by virtue of divine creation. The truth about things is as they actually are, as they exist. Or to say it more clearly, truth is not the essence of things themselves, but insight in, knowledge of and conviction about the things in heaven and earth as they agree with the actual situation.

Initially, satan stood in that perspective. That is to say, when God created this princely angel, He imprinted this conviction and knowledge of God and all creation in him that conformed totally and purely with reality. Satan saw it all as it really was. Thus he, too, initially stood in the truth.

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But he did not remain standing in this truth. He fell; he opposed it; he withdrew from it. That truth in principle held for satan that he was a creature, in everything dependent, a servant and instrument of God, in everything subject to God and

intended not to live for himself but for the glory of God. It is here that you find the root and origin of all sin. Satan did not want this kind of status. He did not want to exist as a mere rational and moral being and to acquiesce to this appointed status. He had to accept such a dependent status by a deed of personal faith. He was not merely to resign himself and acquiesce but to accept it as his highest level of blessedness. In order to achieve this, it was necessary for the opposite conception to emerge and then to be resolutely rejected by him in full consciousness.

He was not the only one facing this choice; all angels had to face it, even the famous angels Michael and Gabriel. However, the others wanted to make this choice voluntarily, in full consciousness, to accept this God-created status. By this only and eternal choice they transferred to a state of sufficiency by virtue of God's grace in order never to be able to fall again. Sin no longer has a hold on them. They serve God for ever. As to Satan, in this first, only and eternal choice, he chose against God; he did not want such a status of dependence. When the contrary conception passed by his spirit, the pride of his heart and another vision was judged more beautiful and more desirable to him. He rejected the position for which God had created him and chose a status that seemed more attractive to him, not a dependent but an independent position; not under God, but opposed to God.

Did Satan's position change herewith in reality? Did he truly become independent? Of course not. The truth was and stays that Satan also remains a dependent creature subject to God in everything. This was the truth and remained the truth. All of Satan's will and choices could not change anything in this truth and reality. All he could do, if we may so express it, was to dream of a different status for himself, to imagine that things were different, to conceive of an opposing position and thus to allow a false image of himself to emerge. That is why Jesus said that from that moment no truth remained in him; reality no longer existed for him, for he had closed his eyes to it. From now on he lived in an imaginary heaven and an imaginary world that he had fabricated and spun for himself.

This imaginary world was the reverse of everything found in reality. It was all lies, lies that came from nowhere but were spun by Satan himself. That's why Jesus said, "*When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies*" (John 8:44). Thus Truth and Lie came to stand over against each other—the Truth as the mirror in our consciousness of the things in heaven and earth as they

were actually ordered by God; the Lie as the mirror of the imaginary world that exists only in satan's perception. While Jesus again acquainted human children with the truth of all things that He had heard from His Father and thus taught them how things actually are in heaven and on earth, satan continued to deceive us with his imaginary world so that things looked to us not as they are in reality but as he has invented them.

Chapter 3*

The Fall of Satan

*The wealth of the rich is their fortified city;
they imagine it an unscalable wall.
Proverbs 18:11*

The fall of satan is of such prime importance, because the origin of *our* sin lies in *his* unholy choice. Hence, our view of the core of sin is influenced by our conception of the fall of satan. It is for this reason that Jesus' declaration in John 8:44 is worth its gold to us, for when accurately understood, it clearly indicates that sin is a being without substance, a "non-being." It is not and does not represent truth. There is nothing true about it. Its essence is the lie and thus an untruth or falsehood that incorporates lack of substance and reality. All that is or belongs to satan is the lie; all that comes out of him is the lie. The lie not a perception of reality as it is, but of reality as it is not. The content of this lie does not exist in reality but only in the imagination. In contrast, reality exists in the opposite to what the lie represents. Reality and the lie are opposites; the one excludes the other.

Out of the three views about the essence of sin, our Gereformeerde churches have adopted that concept that denies every substance to sin and finds its strength in the opposite, namely a strength that God created good. They insisted on this over against all that Manicheism managed to wriggle into the early Christian community.¹⁵ This religion taught that sin had its own substance, that the power of sin came out of an evil being, and that this evil being was eternal like God, equal to God and opposed to God. The issue here is that they attributed substance to evil and to satan. It could almost be said that they considered sin as something physical against which we could be inoculated. Those who regard Manicheism as half a heresy do not know the human heart, nor its history, nor the power that sin has on the human heart. The Manichean wandering about the doctrine of sin has emerged

¹⁵ Manicheism was one of the major ancient religions of Persian (ancient Iran) origin. The religion was founded in the third century AD by Mani, who reportedly was born in western Persia and lived approximately 210–276 AD. He claimed to be the *Paraclete of the Truth*, as promised in the New Testament: the Last Prophet and Seal of the Prophets that finalized a succession of men guided by God and included figures such as Zoroaster, Hermes, Plato, Buddha, and Jesus. < www.theopedia.com/manicheism >.

from a very natural characteristic of the human heart. Anyone who has experienced special life circumstances, whether in her own life or in life around her, in which they learned the power of sin in all its horror, tends almost automatically to attribute substance to sin. One who reflects and wonders how sin came into the world and realizes that sin cannot possibly have God as its author, easily and almost necessarily falls into the error of searching for the origin of sin in sin itself. That is, to eternally regard sin as God, thereby turning Satan to a god. The Manicheans are by no means the only ones to fall into that error. They did develop this perspective more sharply and exactly, but it constantly and especially runs up against mystics and theosophists with their related systems. Whenever this spiritual orientation has been honoured, you will always see sin portrayed as something real, positive and substantial.

The opposite of Manicheism in this regard is found in the perception of sin as a degree of imperfection, not yet having reached the potential and for which the situation was not yet ready. This is the current reigning perception of nearly all scholars of our time who have rejected Christ. However, one should not consider this a new perspective. Though our modernists plead this perception, it is not their invention; it goes back to their kindred spirits of centuries ago. It is the idea that sin does not exist. We can call it sin, but unjustly so. After all, every child among other things has to begin developing in the moral aspect. It can mature as a moral being only gradually. In order to reach a more advanced level of sanctification, the child must go through all sorts of struggles and temptations. All that has not yet reached its ideal stage is still at a lower level of development and must continue to progress. This all brings us the reproach of not having arrived, a state in which we condemn ourselves and others as sinful.

These two perceptions are the direct opposites to each other. Manicheans consider sin to be its own substance that exists eternally as God. In contrast, in the other school of thought sin not only has no substance of its own, but it exists only in our imagination. What impresses us about sin is, according to them, not sin. It is only its disappointing version that constitutes our own imperfection.

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On basis of Scripture, the Church of Christ has rejected both theories and forsworn them. Especially the Gereformeerde Churches have constantly preoccupied themselves with spreading the correct thought in this respect. Sin, so the Gereformeerde Churches have confessed and preached, is *not* from God. God *cannot* be the author of sin. Sin comes from the creature, from the fallen angel and from the humans who fell after him. However, precisely because sin comes from the creature, as a creature itself, it cannot create anything or give substance to anything. Neither can it elevate anything to a substantial being.

It follows naturally from this that sin, a product of the creature, *cannot* possess its own ingredient or substance. Sin can neither *be* nor *have* truth associated with it. It cannot be anything but lie, a distortion, a deprivation, lacking something, a reversal of what God created good. The warmth that you cherish and find beneficial can be brought closer to you without introducing anything new. Only if a change in relationships enters the equation can it scorch and singe you and thus turn a cherished good into a destructive evil. A light held up at the right level will light up your whole environment in a friendly glow and give clarity to your eyes. But once that same light is brought too close to you or elevated too much, it will blind your eyes, making the glow invisible and colourless for you. What at first helped you see, once positioned wrongly, will eliminate all visibility.

And so it is exactly with the appearance of sin: All powers and entities created good by god and that is beneficial can, by upsetting and reversing, turn a blessing into a curse and good into evil. The power that has such bitter and violent effect is not created by satan but by the good power that God created, that changes sin in its application and use into its opposite, reverses the effects it has, and works against God with a power that God Himself did not confer but protects against from moment to moment.

Even the most horrible sin cannot be performed or perpetrated except with a power with which God Himself empowers the sinner at the moment he enacts it. When Cain killed Abel, it was God who strengthened Cain's muscles and empowered him-- and Abel's blood succumbed.

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If we hold on to this only true principial perspective as we now consider the fall of satan, it follows directly that this princely angel could neither create anything new nor generate anything new from his fall on his own. He was a creature before, during and after his fall. Thus he could not change anything with respect to the essence of thing and he didn't. The essence of things is from God, which is the reason that essence remained exactly as it was. Satan could neither add nor withdraw or subtract anything. This is the reason for our strong emphasis that satan *thought* that he created new circumstances, but he won nothing but an imaginary world that existed only in his own imagination. Thus an unreal world without substance, a world that did not exist and therefore was a lie that stood over against the truth, against the world of existence and substance. What really existed was the Truth. That is why satan went out and that with which he replaced it was nothing! Nothing but an imaginary world, a product of his own phantasy. An unsubstantial and untrue something and therefore a lie.

Scripture says of the rich in Proverbs 18:11, "The wealth of the rich is their fortified city; they imagine it an unscalable wall." Does that mean that his wealth is a fortified wall that covers and protects him? In no way. To assert this is to lie, but for him it *is* so, a fact. He feels safe behind this fortified wall. He believes in its reality. Unfortunately, it is all a product of his imagination.

In Psalm 73:7, Asaph says that the people live not only in a world of their own imagination, but even in the depth of their I, their ego, from where these imaginary things come-- "the evil conceits of their hearts know no limit." And to add this to the picture, already in the days of the Judges it was judgmentally affirmed of the proud and haughty tribe of Reuben that soon had to yield to Judah, that in Reuben's district there was much fancy and self-conceit in their hearts.¹⁶ These heart presumptions are referred to elsewhere in Scripture as the "thoughts of the heart" or "the poetic fiction of the heart." It is out of this figment of imagination, out of this poetic fiction and inclination, out of these thoughts of the heart that all sin must be explained. The watery Flood came because God saw "that every inclination of the thoughts of his (human) heart was only evil all the time"

¹⁶ The NIV puts it "in the district of Reuben there was much searching of the heart," a statement that does not really support Kuyper here (Judges 5:15).

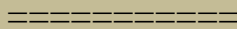
(Genesis 6:5). In Deuteronomy 8:2 the Lord God knows the inclination of the hearts of the children of Israel even before He has brought them into Canaan. King David warned his son Solomon emphatically that he must cling to Jehovah, for He searches all hearts and knows all the inclinations of their thoughts.

For this reason Holy Scripture places two “thoughts of the heart” over against each other. On the one hand, the thoughts of God’s heart; on the other, the thoughts of the heart of a sinner. Those thoughts of God’s heart constitute His plans or purposes as we read in Psalm 33:11—“*But the plans of the Lords stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations.*” Over against that stands His adversary with his deepest unholy all-controlling phantasy that there is no God. Psalm 10:4 says, “*In all his thoughts there is no room for God.*” Of course, God *is* there. Satan can cipher Him out of the picture, but he cannot extinguish Him. Even if he closes his spiritual eye to avoid seeing God, He remains eternally. When the godless thinks that God does not exist, his thought is a lie; the Truth is and remains and all his games are products of the imagination; he cannot injure God.

It is therefore illusive to think that sin exists in the deed, or perhaps even in the word, but definitely not in the thought, for, to the contrary, evil thought is the mother of all sin. That is why Proverbs 24:9 says emphatically, “*The schemes of folly are sin.*” These two worlds of thought stand over against each other as direct opposites. On the one side, there is the thought world of God, that is, His council or purposes that will exist and from Whom reality emerges. On the other, the thought world of the evil one with its illusion is merely a product of his imagination and from whom nothing real emerges forever. God says, “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways*” (Isaiah 55:8) and My Word shall not return empty—*that is real*. That is the reason the decision has to be taken in the world of thought in order to “*demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

All this prompts us, by the fall of satan as well as with the rise of sin in the cosmos, to pay attention now more than ever before to the weighty significance of the peculiar phenomenon in the rational creature that we refer to as the work of his

imagination. In ancient doctrinal writings hardly any attention was paid to imagination. None of these writings, whether about angels or the fall of the human race or the description of the fallen race, make any mention of that imagination. It does not at all follow from this that those writers denied the existence of humans or angels, but only that they did not develop the unique significance of the imagination. Following in the track of the Scholastics, our forefathers simply subsumed the imagination under *reason* and under that concept everything that belongs to the life of our consciousness. That imagination indeed belongs to the life of our consciousness in so far as it belongs to the thought world, is undoubtedly true. As we have already seen, the Scripture frequently interchanges the term “imagination” with that of “the inclination of the thoughts of our hearts.” The metaphors in language and the need to clarify even the most sober and the most unexpected thoughts amount to proof that complete separation between our logic and our poetic imagination is not possible. However, there is no doubt whatsoever that the imagination has its own sphere of activity where it obeys totally different laws of operation from those followed by our rationality via its own logical thought patterns. Scholarship and science are the sphere of our rational thought; art is spun out in our imagination.



Now the glory of imagination is that it empowers humans and angels to do up to a certain level what otherwise is only God’s sphere, namely to create. The common language of science and scholarship does not speak of creation; it only gives results. But the same cannot be said of creation by the arts. Please understand well. Real, true and substantial creation is only God’s, for He is *the* Creator. It is beyond the confines of the creature to create. To create one has to be God. Humans are created after God’s image and thus that unique characteristic of God’s image to create must also be imprinted on humans. Humans must also be able to create, but in a human way. God real, substantial; she unreal, unsubstantial. God in truth; humans in appearance, phantoms. Human creations are thus nothing but pseudo creations. Humans create phantoms, as all of art is nothing but appearance—as if. She as human being attaches her imagination to the word in poetry, to the cloth in painting, to the rock with her chisel, and to the sound of

stringed instrument. These are all products of imagination. In so far as a humans can create, they are never creations of substance, always phantom appearances.

Apparently, this imaging faculty has been embedded in angels as well, in stronger measure even to geniuses among them. Otherwise it would not have been possible for such an imaginary world to emerge and satan would not have been able to position his world of lies over against the true world that exists after God's ordinance. This imagination cannot direct itself only to the world around us, but normally first of all to us, to ourselves in the world, that is, to our own ego. In our self-consciousness we see our own I or ego as in a mirror. That we are charmed with our own ego is not sinful in itself. Our love of self is simply a desire for self-preservation. It is not evil, since God loves Himself and instructs us in the second great commandment that we are to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. Evil emerges first when we love ourselves not as God created us or as He wills, but in some other way. Then we are not at peace with our assigned status. Then we want an I or ego other than the one we actually received. And now, with the help of our imagination we create another I or ego, another form, imagine ourselves differently till we actually believe that our ego is different.

Sometimes you will find this evil in mature form among our insane. An insignificant citizen dreams of himself as king; a clerk dreams she is Napoleon; a poor man dreams himself a billionaire. That is why the sin of pride is always the principal sin, so that David can say, "Deliver me from pride that I may be clean from this great transgression." Satan fell in pride. Proud people are the most difficult to bring to Christ. It is their imagination that casts itself on their own ego. That ego dreams differently, then magically imagines it into reality and transforms that ego into a lie, a phantom. They peer and stare at that phantom image of their own ego for so long till they finally consider it the real thing and totally lose sight of the true thing. At the end of their lives they are dedicated to the phantom that has become their idol for which they build an altar and, along with their priests, friends and maidens, light the incense.

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If you apply all this to satan, then you understand how he, seeing his own ego in his self-consciousness as omnipotent, though simultaneously always dependent,

wanted a different ego that started to imagine himself as an independent ego not subject to God. He turned away from his own reality and in his imagination allowed another ego to emerge, clung to that image and was so powerfully charmed that he finally closed his eyes to his actual being and enjoyed this phantom being with the spiritual eye of his power consciousness. His ego became central in order to apply the same method to both God and the world. It speaks for itself that as soon as satan, in the place of his real ego that was *dependent* on God, had adopted another self-image *free* from God, that in his thought world the Eternal Being could not remain for him what He originally was for him. Initially, that Eternal Being stood high above him, but now he must become His equal and even stand above Him.

We are not claiming that satan ever imagined there was no God. A fallen human could reach that conclusion, but not satan. However, satan did seek to worship himself. His highest joy was for the Mediator to bow His knee before him. The shortsightedness of imagining God out of the picture, to deny His existence, is not found in a fallen angel. “*You believe there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder*” (James 2:19). Thus, that is not the case. But it *is* true that in satan’s thought world there is no place for the real God as He indeed exists. That is the reason he falsifies the image of God in his imagination. He does to God as he has done to himself. Of himself he inserted a false image of his ego in the place of his true ego and, similarly, he inserted a false image of God in the place of the true God. He imagined God as He fit in satan’s own scheme of things. In his thoughts about God, the lie pushed aside the Truth.

And this same imaginary game, in the third place, was also applied to the world. In the thoughts of satan’s heart, the creaturely angel that he was, was replaced by the independent king of kings. That is how it began. Sin came out of his ego, his I. Then in the thoughts of his heart, the knowledge and honour of the living God was replaced by the false image of a god as he imagined Him. Consequently, the true world of things in heaven and on earth also increasingly faded out of his consciousness. They no longer suited his purposes; he could not use them anymore. Now that in his imagination everything between God and him had been turned into their opposite, everything else in heaven and earth had also to be rearranged in his, satan’s, favour to fit his imaginary circumstances. This did not

really happen of course, for God's plans proceeded and stayed as they originally were, no matter how much satan pondered or trumped up, but in his imagination he was free. There he imagined everything differently. So it was that satan moved over from truth to falsehood. He saw nothing else anymore and knew nothing else apart from his own ego, which was merely the image of the lie, of a god that he conjured up falsely for himself and of a world that he saw through the lens of the lie.

Chapter 4*

The Nature of Satan's Fall

*Does the axe raise himself
above him who swings it?
Isaiah 10:15*

We need to pay greater attention to the fall of this regal angel who is called the “evil one,” the “devil,” or “satan,” for it is *here* that sin first made its appearance, and not in the Garden. That being the case, we know with certainty that *physical* or *fleshly* sin emerges from *spiritual* sin, not *vice versa*. If sin had first originated from people and thus not before life in the Garden, then there would be two potential explanations for its origin. It would have emerged either from our spirit or from our physicality, since we are people of soul and body, i.e., spirit and flesh. If these were the only choices, you would probably have concluded that sin had its origin and cause in our flesh. Even with our children we see that sin mostly begins with the flesh. In addition, the abundance in the Garden was overwhelming while no dress protected the eye from sensual temptation. The entire direction among the “children of men” as well as of Christ’s Church, living as they do in a “touch not, taste not” atmosphere, seeks its strength in and lives out of the disposition of monks and nuns. All who seek sin more in the world outside of themselves than in the internal world of their own hearts, and for that reason surround the external world outside of themselves with fences and railings, guide themselves by this perspective. They do not reach beyond Adam when they seek sin’s origin and its first rustling in the magical sounds of a sensuous Garden, where, do not forget, there was the presence of the still unspoiled and pristine beauty with which the woman that God gave Adam glittered. And so everything coheres together. The conclusion we must draw is that sin, sensual in origin, must be sensuous or physical in nature and focus. The most susceptible temptation hides in the flesh and the kernel of sanctification therefore is to mute the flesh.

If you agree with the following with me:

--the above is not possible;

- the sin existed already in the angelic world before it reached the Garden;
- the origin of sin is not to be sought among us but among the angels;
- the angels undoubtedly are neither physical nor can they operate out of the physical;

then it speaks of itself that the entire above perspective is topsy-turfy, upside down. Then it is agreed that the origin of sin lies not in the flesh, but that it must be sought only in the spiritual realm. Spiritual sin does not come from the flesh, but, in the reverse, sins of the flesh come from the spirit. In this connection, a person who controls his flesh but is nevertheless a horrible sinner before God in his spirit, can be a spiritual devil in human form. Not sensuality but pride and haughtiness are the core of all sin. You are to understand the Psalmist's confession and plea, "*Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression*" (Psalm 19:13). He, who fell so terribly deep in the flesh, confessed herewith before God that these atrocities in his life had their deepest root in the pride and haughtiness hidden in his heart.

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So it is confirmed from all angles that the point at which sin broke loose laid in the dependence of the creature on his God and in nothing else. This is even more remarkable because it makes us realize more clearly that we experience the vacant nature of sin and its purely negative existence as a lack, a deprivation, the absence of the true and good. Surely you understand that both angel and human, whatever they may have derived from God, could not derive from Him a consciousness of dependence. All good and perfect gifts descend to us from the Father of Lights. A string of love, holiness, and tenderness in your breast never vibrates except it be from God that this good, this lovely, and all beauty come to you. It is your God who, as the perfect Good, out of the fountain of all good that dwells in Him, hands these good things to you. Thus that good is first of all in God and comes to you from Him as the holy Apostle Paul declares, "*God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us*" (Romans 5:5).

But, and this is the point here, to all of this there was one exception. Our God has never been dependent, is not now and never will be. The perfunctory sense of dependence, subjection and humility has never been associated with God and can thus not be poured from God into the creature. God has created the creature in such a way that it is dependent and thus is not capable of any independent action or of

any action against God. It is thus God Himself who has called this relationship of dependence into being and has embedded it in His creatures. But the feeling, the realization, the consciousness, and voluntary adoption of dependence and the consequent feeling of subjection is not in God and must come from the creature himself. And so this princely angel whom we call “satan” was created a dependent being. That he was completely dependent in everything was the truth and reality. His own obligation was to stand in that truth. It is therefore completely clear that sin *could* originate only at this one point and, in fact, did. To refuse to voluntarily enter into that relationship of absolute dependence in which he stood as creature, was *the* sin and the source of all other sins. A fact that coheres with the above is that salvation, the escape from the power of sin, lies only in faith. For what is faith apart from a willing and conscious return to the position of perfect dependence on God, both in nature and morality, and from now into eternity? All this must suffice without any additional information, even though one familiar with it must foresee where all this will take him. At this time we are only dealing with the fall into sin within the angelic world; anything else is beyond this discussion.

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This is how you must imagine the fall of satan. Among all the creatures he had the most extravagant degree of power. This most endowed creature was nevertheless created as a creature in the full sense of the word. That’s what he is and cannot be anything else. The truth is that which exists in absolute dependence on God. But that is not sufficient; he must also totally absorb this dependence and live out of this relationship in its full sense out of this feeling and deep consciousness. He must stand firmly in it, not, understand well, to suppress the consciousness of this power entrusted to him, but to live simultaneously in full light with this almost immeasurable power. He has to simultaneously develop these two in his consciousness: the full, deep realization of his absolute dependence *and* the full, deep realization of the immense significance of his person. *That* is the conflict.

From that conflict harmony must emerge. It is only out of that high and holy harmony that the universe can be restored. Eventually this occurred through the man Jesus Christ, Who emerged victoriously out of this same conflict, He to whom even greater power was accorded than ever to satan and who nevertheless became

obedient to death, even death on the cross. Satan succumbed in this conflict. When those two, overwhelming power and deep dependence, struggling as they were with each other, glittered before his spirit, he was captivated by his consciousness of power and flung back all sense of dependence. He grabbed the first and banned the second away from himself. A creature with such overwhelming power and that refuses to submit—who else could it be but the living devil?

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One more feature needs to be added to the discussion in order for you to see the somber situation in its full contour. Sin arose in satan the moment his ego let go of that feeling of dependence to be blessed in it, shut his inner being to it, refused to submit and thus refused to accept the truth of dependence. It also appeared to us how just *this* was the point at issue, where sin *had* to break out. Everything can come to the creature from out of the Fountain of all good, i.e. from God, except not the sense of dependence, for that feeling of submission is totally foreign to God and thus cannot come from Him. When it comes to submission and dependence He only subjects the creature to submission, but does not Himself experience what it is to be subjected. He knows all this in His omniscience, but not as a feature of His own Being, not as something that comes to His creature from Him. Once satan fell, he could not remain as simply not wanting to be dependent, but it had to immediately morph into opposition to God, if not actually attempting to subject God to him. What satan sought to obtain from Jesus in the desert, namely that the Son of God would fall on His knees before him, is the deepest desire of his unholy passion. It was a case of satan rejecting submission to God and then leaving Him for what He is. Here neutrality is neither possible nor understandable. He who is not for, is against. Anyone refusing to submit is in a state of rebellion. Out of that rebellion a struggle is born that cannot end until either God subjects satan or satan subjects God, the very thought of which is blasphemous.

Pride is not the same as not wanting to submit; it is simultaneously wanting to rule and be as God. Satan's whispering to Eve in the Garden that she would be like God came out of the intimacy of his unholy self-knowledge. Satan betrayed his own intention in that whisper. Satan dreamt that he truly was like God.

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Having banned the feeling and consciousness of dependence from his spirit and thinking of himself as independent, *did satan actually cease to be dependent?* Did satan escape from God's omnipotence? Did he succeed somewhere outside of God's creation, in the eternal nothingness and emptiness, to find a hiding place from where he would construct his hellish fortress to defend himself against God's power? That is indeed how many imagine it. They imagine that there is an unlimited eternal space over which God had power over only a restricted area of His creation and that there remains an immeasurable, unused and unoccupied space, an endless emptiness in every direction. Satan is then thought to have escaped to this unoccupied space where he fortified himself against God, the place of the portal to hell.

For those who live out of the Scripture, such conceptions are to be rejected outright; God is omnipresent; He is everywhere. Even if there were such a space, God would be there as well; not a creature in this space could escape Him. The Psalmist wrote, "*If I make my bed in the depths¹⁷, you are there*" (Psalm 139:8). Of course, such an eternal empty space is a totally unscriptural and a purely fictional invention of thinkers who do not take God into consideration. No creature exists even for a moment without God carrying him in His Own hands at the same moment. There is no place where a living creature is planted so that God can turn elsewhere, while from here on that creature stands there in his own place. The place where that creature stands along with whatever supports him, is and forever will be God's hand. If God withdraws His hand, the creature will cease to exist; as long as it exists it is always and forever God's hand that carries him. What we may call "space" or "place" is not something independent on its own but originated with its creation; it exists only in so far as God created it and assigned it a place to exist and continue to acknowledge him in that place.

What seems strange to those who are caught in the net of such false conceptions, is for those who think truthfully fully natural. According to the book of Job, satan is said to show up in heaven and appear before God. Even though satan has fancied himself independent from God, in fact there is not a moment in which even the slightest sliver gets removed from his dependence. It is there before and after satan's fall; it has not changed one bit. Satan remains a creature; remains

¹⁷ The NIV has "sheol" here.

completely dependent on God and, like all creatures, is supported by no one but God Himself from moment to moment. Like all creatures, his place is to be carried in God's own hand. It is undoubtedly a horrible thought, but one that fully agrees with Scripture, first of all that God is present in hell and, secondly, that satan appears before God in heaven. You may and cannot consider it in any other way. If satan had considered even for a moment to exist without God holding him in His hand, he would cease to be creature and thus either no longer exist or be like God.

The actual situation is this that satan pictures himself to be independent of God and that he tries to demonstrate his independence from God in all sorts of ways, but that in fact he remains in God's hand like every other creature, so that without God he can neither stir nor move. Our Gereformeerde Churches have accepted this confession in the Heidelberg Catechism; anyone disagreeing with this is not at home with us. One hears the well-known cowardly remark that 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 21:1 contradict each other, because it says in the first place that God stirred up David to take a census, while in the Chronicles passage it was satan who did this. The Gereformeerden never accepted the remark, because they understood that if I hit a dog with a stone, I can say that *I* hit the dog as well as that the *stone* hit the dog. It is the same as how the Lord explained to that king from the east when the latter asked whether the king who was about to humiliate Israel was allowed to boast as if *he himself* had taken his anger out upon Israel. Then God asked, "*Does the axe raise itself above him who swings it, or the saw boast against him who uses it? As if a rod were to wield him who lifts it up, or a club brandish him who is not wood!*" (Isaiah 10:15). That is also how it is with satan. God uses satan for His own holy purposes, just like a shepherd uses a dog to prevent his sheep from straying. *These are examples of the fact that satan does nothing without God doing it through him.*

This dependence is joy, a cord of love for a child of God, but for satan and for every sinner that tie of dependence is as a rope around his neck that ensnares them, a chain that rivets them. That is the reason the mighty among sinners in Psalm 2:3 call out, "*Let us break their chains, they say, 'and throw off their fetters'.*" It is also the reason that the French revolution at its deepest kernel was nothing but an attempt to instill despondency and to tear up the bands of God's holy ordinances. That is also the reason that for satan this band is even more unbearable and which he experiences as an iron chain that confines, oppresses, stifles and torments him.

In Jude 1:6 we read, *“And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these He has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgement on the great Day.”* And in 2 Peter 2:4, *“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgement....”* In these verses we are told that, even after his fall, satan was held by God in the tightest bond of dependence, a bond, while experienced as a blessing of joy by the good angels, became an unbearable burden for satan, crushed with an iron chain. The same relationship of dependence that shone in a happy and friendly light for the children of God, gnashed for satan like a shackle and chain in the deep twilight of darkness. All along the way he was preserved for the day of the great judgment in the chains of darkness. With satan, who has no physical body, we cannot speak of external chains. The chain that binds him is of a spiritual nature and is in fact nothing else than his absolute bond of subjection to the same divine ordinances that he audaciously rejected in foolish arrogance.

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And now a few words about the angels who were dragged along by satan in his fall. We will treat the various work aspects of these demons and devils later. Here we are concerned with the relationship of their fall to that of satan. On the one hand, the Scripture clearly teaches that there is a satan who was the primary figure in the fall and in whom sin had its origin. On the other hand, beside and under satan there is a large cohort of evil spirits that has become as devilish as satan himself but who are not his equals. Our Reformed ancestors somewhat confused the insights in this matter when they rejected all notions of rank among the good angels in order to combat the Catholic sense of angelic hierarchy.

These ancestors were right in so far as they combatted hierarchy of office in the angelic world, that existed only in Rome’s imagination, but they went too far when they closed their eyes to the spiritual hierarchy of more or of less talents, gifts of genius and excellence that exist among angels as much as among humans and thus calls for a certain order or rank. It is, however, singular that the same writers who rejected all rank and order among the good angels, accepted a definite rank order among the fallen angels and insisted on the dependence of demons on satan. In

other words, there was no rank among the good angels, but there was among the fallen.

But this cannot be. Sin creates nothing new. The relationship among fallen angels before the fall still exists after the fall. From the fact that they are agents of satan, it follows that also before the fall they were not satan's equals, but ranked below him, less in power and in no small measure subject to his influence. It is not as if two or three of them here and there fell out of each rank level as if they had already united together around satan and appointed him as their leader. To the contrary, satan fell together with these angels who before the fall already constituted his hosts. In the world of angels there were a definite order, organic relationships and fixed cohesion. Satan did not exist by himself, but in a cohesive relationship to his troops. He would not have fallen if they had stood firm and, vice versa, if satan had remained faithful to God, his hosts would not have resisted God and rebelled.

Thus, you should not imagine these demons as victims of being misled and tempted. That would put them on the same level with Adam and Eve, who were also tempted by satan and brought to fall. As such they would still be salvageable, be saved. No, the fall of satan and his demons was one deed, one sin, one abomination. You *can* say that satan dragged them along in his fall. Pious poets who sang about this immense problem, have always been sensitive to this and intermingled their mutual responsibilities and guilt. It is as in so many families that go astray through the father's misdeed in which he drags his family along in his fall, but also in the reverse, if the father had not fallen, his family and descendants might have resisted evil and remain faithful to God. It was not that satan first fell, while his hosts remained faithful to God and that he coaxed them into mutiny. It all happened simultaneously. Satan fell with his cohorts and they fell and *wanted* to fall.

We have not been told the size of this fallen multitude, but we should not minimize it. We read of a possessed man who was invaded by a legion of devils. Even if we do not take this expression literally, "legion" does point to thousands. If this was the case with one single possessed person, then the suspicion is generated that the number of fallen angels was astronomical. If you read in the Book of Revelation about the war between Michael and his angels against satan and his cohorts, as a dangerous battle that requires every exertion, it would appear that the multitude of

fallen angels, if not half, must have consisted of a very powerful and large part of the angelic community.

Chapter 5*

Anti-Satanism

*He replied, "I saw
satan fall like lightning
from heaven."
Luke 10:18*

The position and power of satan is too weighty for us to understand, because the way a purely spiritual being works is totally unknown to us. Well, we *do* know a bit about how our own soul works. The human soul has a body at its disposal as an instrument. Even the language that we speak has a physical basis in its sound. The effects of hypnotism which is expanding in ever widening circles and appears to be coming more directly, has so far been observed only empirically. Even attempts to explain them have not yet been dared. God's children certainly know something about God's secret communion, but the manner in which this communion between the Holy Spirit and our spirit is established in the depths of our hearts still resists every explanation. From that point of view, it should not surprise us that a certain hovering generality is lost on us and refuses to adopt more solid, tangible form. This being the case, you may feel how it is almost impossible for us to form a clear picture of satan's position.

Generally, ordinary people think of satan as living in the depths, some place far away from God's holy temple. But in the Book of Job we read how satan appears before God in heaven and, upon leaving Him, strolled through the earth. In a moment of deep emotion you hear your Saviour shout, not as you might expect, that satan lies mutilated in the depths, but the opposite, "I saw satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18). The Apostle Paul says, "*Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*" (Ephesians 6:12). Peter and Jude speak of satan being bound in the darkness. In the Revelation of John you see satan ruling the earth and only then is he cast into the lake of fire that is prepared for him and his angels. Already this

short summary makes it crystal clear that none of the above is meant to point to a fixed abode of satan. A fixed abode would have to be in one of these three: in *heaven*, on the *earth* or *under the earth*. Now it is said alternatively that he is in heaven, that he is wandering through the earth, and tied in the darkness, and is cast in the lake of fire on the judgement day. It would seem that these expressions do not refer to physical places but, rather, to a spiritual entity. It is said of satan that he is in heaven to indicate he is God's servant; he is placed on earth when the subject is his influence on humans; he lies bound in darkness when attention is drawn to his devilish nature and lack of power. But it is not till the end where we read that he is cast into the lake of fire in the context of his still having some power to oppose.

It cannot be emphasized enough that one has to let go of all notions of a fortress of hell in which satan protects himself from God. Even as Paul imagines that evil spirits are in the heavens or space, he is only saying that they do not belong to our earthly economy or household but work on our earthly household from the outside. Like all angels, satan is a purely spiritual being without body. Not omnipresent, for he is always in a specific place, but in such a way that both his movements and his effect on other creatures take place in a manner very unlike the way we move about and do our work.

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Though we should not conceal our ignorance with respect to the position and manner of working native to satan, this does not in the least give us the right to consider what satan hints at with respect to his power as if it were not written. And then we must soon draw a definite line between the power of satan *till* Golgotha and his power *after* Golgotha and Jesus' crucifixion. After the fall in the Garden a curse comes to blanket the earth, a bitter fruit of perdition that has entered the human heart. Satan triumphed with that curse. From that hour on, the power of satan has been established over human life. It is only "common grace" that stepped in between both of them to reduce the all-too-strong influence of that power. Since human life developed into an increasingly devilish direction, the Flood comes to restrain further penetration of the destructive yeast. After the Flood, the entire earth with all of its creatures was taken into the general covenant of grace and herewith reined in satan's supremacy. But even then his power penetrates deeper

and deeper into the life of the nations. They lose the blessing of full “common grace” in two phases (Romans 1:24, 26, 28); God partially withdraws the blessing of that grace. By means of this, the supremacy of satan over the human spirit increases. It finally reaches a point where the higher developments in human life are almost exclusively controlled by demonic thought patterns. Thus satan became in fact the ruler of this world. It is thus no empty boast when he said to Jesus, “*I will give you all ...authority and splendour, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to*” (Luke 4:6).

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Of course, this statement, as satan put it above, was not true. In those ancient days, God had not crowned satan with the same degree of power that would be given to Christ once He would be elevated to God’s right hand. Satan makes that pretense, but that’s not how it was. The world did not fall into satan’s hand via a divine decision or ordinance. It was the children of the world who increasingly closed their eyes to the things of God and were attracted more and more by satan’s craftiness and thus, sinning and tempted to sin all the way, worked themselves deeper and deeper under the power of satan.

This started among a few individuals and from there this unholy spirit spread out over families and from there over the generations. In this manner the peoples and nations came increasingly under the power and influence of the spirit of satan. The reigning perspectives, the general convictions and insights, the traditions and customs that were followed—all became totally estranged from the Spirit of God and were increasingly drenched with satan’s evil spirit. This spirit of destruction took hold of peoples and nations ever since idolatry became the norm and took on increasingly unreasonable forms. This idolatry signified nothing less than that the bond with religion and with God, Who was supposed to be the only one with power to break this satanic attraction, was itself desecrated and would from now on be abused to pacify the conscience and to rationalize and justify all sorts of sin and immorality.

Finally there was no evil too heinous, no sin too audacious, no wickedness so impious and reckless that could be thought of, or idolatry that could cover and justify it. What God had cursed now was touted as a sacred obligation. A mother

murdered her own child and pretended thus to be serving the gods. Similarly, a young woman prostituted herself in the temple and sold her purity, also in service to the gods. Though it must be acknowledged that this scandalous situation was not evenly spread among the nations, history tells us how the myths of even the most civilized nations were filled with all sorts of impurities. In their rites they celebrated all kinds of excessive banalities. Even among the highest classes, shameful practices had penetrated public morality which even scandalized the public at large upon merely hearing of it. As Paul wrote, “...*God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts...*” (Romans 1:24) and thus they directly ended up under the power of satan.

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The above should not be understood as if satan exercised only a damaging influence on some hearts. After all, satan still exercises such damaging influence on many persons; all of us are threatened by it. Till the end of days the Church shall pray, “*Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.*” Or, if it signified nothing else, Jesus would never have called satan the ruler of the world nor would He have jubilated and expressed gratitude when He saw satan fall out of heaven like a bolt of lightning. There is something more behind this, something else that is necessary for us to see.

In every society and in every time period certain concepts and convictions play a dominant role. One could call them fashionable convictions or that which is absorbed by every new generation and that decides all public disagreements, to which everyone submits, that the one copies from another, and in this way puts its stamp on a society over an extended time period. This is what is meant by the “spirit of the time,”¹⁸ to be a child of your time, to be fully updated or to speak of the “national spirit” and express certain shared patriotic feelings.¹⁹

But it does not stop with this time spirit or national spirit. Individual peoples and nations are group-governed by even more general concepts and inspiration. The southern European nations—Italy, Spain, Portugal—live differently from those of northern European nations—Denmark, Sweden, Norway. In western Europe

¹⁸ More contemporary terminology might be the “common sense of the time” or the “politically correct.”

¹⁹ Today in 2022, the popular term covering this situation might be “political correctness.”

people again live and think differently and are inspired by very different motifs from those in Russia and Poland. Among Americans a different spirit prevails from that of Europe, while among Africans still another tone reigns that differs from that of China and Japan. These are the more general domineering and cultural motifs to which everyone in a given time period adheres. These dominate not just one single nation but entire races, large groups and nations, even entire continents.

As far as power, extent and effect go, these more general concepts and convictions hover above the spirit of the time and that of the people. But even above those powerful spirits there are still more powerful spirits that rule not just this or that race but almost our entire human race. Is such a national spirit so powerful that there is not one single king powerful enough to conjure up a strong expressive spirit over time for his people? Are the racial spirits, if I may use such a term, already so overwhelmingly powerful that whole nations are blindly driven by them, without a ruler or statesman able to resist them? How overpowering must such a global spirit be that can instill a specific impulse amongst all people and simultaneously inspire a similar tone in their hearts and, almost without exception, push the entire human race into a certain direction?!

The Holy Scripture testifies that this spirit governing the entire world distanced itself increasingly from God not only before the Flood, but also after it, and then drowned in idolatry, after which it was given over to its own evil as punishment. This is how a situation emerged in which the national spirit, the racial spirit and the global spirit became increasingly unholy, more demonic, so that at the end satan could boast that the spirit that controls the entire world, controls them in their morals and traditions, in their politics and religion, in their inclinations and sympathies, is no longer the Spirit of God but his, satan's, spirit. He boasts, "I am the ruler of this world. The world lies at my feet. Even the fate of kingdoms and empires along with their glory all rest in my hand." Of course, it was not as if the providential world order was handed to satan for even a moment. God prevented that; satan could neither stir nor move. However, the spirit that provided the world its dominant tone, along with the history of the nations, their families and individuals, was that of satan.

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The question whether, over against that demonic world spirit and the general principle in which that spirit finds its strength, it would be possible to posit an even mightier spirit with an equally general spirit by which a blow would be dealt to this evil world spirit and another holy world spirit be positioned against that of satan's. Scripture tells us that this stronger Spirit along with His general Spirit *did* appear in Christ, Who not only provided a temporary dominant Spirit nor merely inverted the spirit of His *own* people, but Who embodied an all-encompassing principle in His body. In His appearances He indeed proved to be the Son of Man Who introduced such a new and overpowering principal that a Christian world could emerge over against the Pagan world, not simply to break it, but to conquer and destroy it.²⁰ The moment Jesus sensed that this was the effect of His appearing, He saw the evil power of satan torn apart and collapse before His very eyes and then He called loudly into the ears of his surprised disciples, "*I saw satan fall like lightning from heaven*" (Luke 10:18). Because Peter momentarily fell back from the Spirit of Christ into that of the world, Jesus reprimanded him, "*Satan, get behind Me*" (Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33). When Judas made himself available to destroy the work God was doing in Christ, satan entered him. He was the ruler of the world who appeared to have triumphed over the Son of Man on Golgotha but actually accomplished nothing, since that cross would break satan's power forever. It was with that high emotion that Jesus could testify, "*Fear not; I have overcome the world.*"

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In order to achieve that goal, the Lord uprooted satan's spirit from one place on earth in the days of Abraham. On that place He brought one man through whom all the generations on earth would be blessed. In that place and out of that man a holy people emerged gradually, holy not because it had no sin, but because it did not participate in the spirit of the world and did not allow itself to be ruled by a demonic world spirit. That demonic world spirit did attempt to subject Israel and soon succeeded with the ten tribes, while a sizeable part of Judah also prostituted themselves, but the kernel or remnant of the nation was saved from falling away by the Holy Spirit and stood firm. The demonic world spirit always remained a

²⁰ Though the Christian Church carries out mission to the rest of the world, over against the violent mission practiced by some religions, today no Christian missionary organization aims to destroy anyone or any religion. The Holy Spirit has infused a more tolerant spirit.

foreign spirit in Israel; it never became the spirit of the real Israel. At its healthy core, Israel lived out of a Spirit that principally opposed as much as possible that world spirit and its idolatrous falling away. Even when foreigners ruled Israel, first the nations of the Middle East, then the Greeks and after them the Romans had conquered the entire country, there always remained in that one single place a nation that kept the faith and did not capitulate to the world spirit. So, when Jesus appeared and let His voice be heard, it found immediate echo. Israel's heart awoke. The sheep that belonged to His flock followed Him. Eventually, when on Pentecost the nationalistic and exclusive spirit of Israel was broken, the core of Israel became the centre of all humanity. From here on, a heavenly World Spirit emerged to create a very different human society than had developed under the domination of the demonic world spirit that had so far ruled the roost.

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You need to understand how the Pagan world is in direct contact with satan and that through this the conviction won the field among the Christians that the non-Christian world at its core and its life's urgings were devilish. Already in Leviticus 17:7 it was said to Israel, "*They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols to whom they prostitute themselves.*" It was repeated in Deuteronomy 32:17, "*They sacrificed to demons, which are not God—gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear.*" Of Jeroboam it is said in 2 Chronicles 11:15, "*And he appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat and calf idols he had made.*" After Christ's ascension the holy Apostle repeated that we must recognize devil worship in idolatry, when he called on the Christians who attended their Pagan family members' celebrations in their Pagan temples, "What fellowship is there between the table of Christ--the Lord's Supper-- and the table of the devils?" Or, as it says literally, "*You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too...*" (1 Corinthians 10:21).

The above mirrors the conviction with which the ancient tradition of exorcism struggles. Exorcism means banning the devil. It existed in a convert from Paganism being withheld baptism till after she had sworn off satan worship in a ceremonial rite. The evil spirit had to be banned from the candidate in order for the Holy Spirit to enter her. This had already become a custom with proselyte baptism. The *thebiela*, as proselyte baptism was called, represented a final and

complete break with the Pagan world and the Pagan spirit in order to be transferred to the world of Israel and to live out of the Spirit of Israel from there on. That break was considered in such a radical way that the candidate was even cut off from his Pagan parents and adopt a Jewish couple as baptismal parents.²¹ When the Christian Church entered the picture and took over the role of Israel, the same basic perspective continued to function. A convert to Christ who was to be baptized, had to break radically with the Pagan world and the Pagan world spirit, i.e., satan, and in full consciousness move over to this totally different world that was ruled by Christ. This was accomplished by an exorcism ceremony that originally was totally reasonable and would have been practiced at the baptism of Pagans. A Pagan who was about to join the Christian Church had to first swear off the spirit of devils and only after this be sworn into the Holy Spirit via the sacrament of holy baptism.²²

That exorcism later moved into the wrong direction had a very different cause. When, later, the Church had to do not with converts from Paganism but with candidates born from Christian parents and soon began to baptize them as infants, exorcism should have been discontinued. A child born from Christian parents is not unclean but holy (1 Corinthians 7:14). Such a child had never been under the spiritual world of Paganism and thus could not come out of it either. For such a child to swear off the Pagan world spirit no longer made sense. This first of all, but in addition, a newly born child cannot swear off anything, since it cannot yet speak. When exorcism of infants continued to be practiced, it took a different direction. A priest would blow with his mouth and do a manual ritual to complete the exorcism rite, a practice that in effect turned it into something magical. The Gereformeerde churches therefore soon ceased the practice. The Lutheran church continued it, but it eventually died out there as well.

It is still practiced in the Catholic Church. A priest is dedicated to exorcism. Before baptism, he must blow three times on the child's face and say, "Come out of him, evil spirit, and make room for the Holy Spirit." While making the sign of the cross, he must blow on the child and say, "Receive through this blowing the blessing of God, the Good Spirit." Then give the sign of the **cross** and say, "Peace

²¹ I assume this arrangement lies behind the "godparent" tradition?

²² For a detailed book-length treatment of a specific exorcism, you are referred to Thomas B. Allen, *Possessed: The true story of an exorcism*. New York: Bantam Books, 1994.

be with you.” We Gereformeerden have done away with this practice once and for all, since it goes against 1Corinthians 7:14.

Chapter 6*

The Anti-Christ

*Dear children, this is the last hour;
and as you have heard that this
antichrist is coming, even now
many antichrists have come. This is
how we know it is the last hour.
1 John 2:18*

Even today we would demand from adult Pagans who apply for baptism to renounce satan. This would amount to an exorcism, but not in the manner as it is currently practiced by Catholics²³ but as the early Christian Church did. Just renouncing idol gods in order to confess Christ is not enough. Converts to the Christian religion are taught the Lord's Prayer, which includes "Deliver us from evil." She must be taught the identity of the evil one and only after she has come to recognize that he is God's adversary, it must be made clear to her how idolatry and, in fact, the entire Pagan religion in which she was born and raised is inspired by the spirit of the devil. She must not only reject those idols and become like Jerub-Baal,²⁴ but also acknowledge that she has lived under the devil's influence and thus forswear the spirit that hides behind this idolatry, that is the devil. It has seriously weakened missions that they paid little attention to this important issue.²⁵ They sought to save people for eternity and acted in obedience to Christ. They sought to spread the church far and wide. However the holy zeal to demolish the kingdom of satan was lacking. Because of this, missions bore a superficial character and estranged themselves from the seriousness of the Lord's Prayer as

²³ For a current Catholic view of exorcism, see Catholic Answers Insider Newsletter, *Demons, Deliverance, and Discernment: Separating Facts from Fiction about the Spirit World*. It gives the Catholic answer to: *How do People Become Possessed by Demons?* < insider@catholic.com >.

²⁴ JERUBBAAL. jer-u-ba'-al, je-rub'-a-al (yerubba`al, "let Baal contend"): The name given to Gideon in recognition of his destruction of the altar of Baal at Ophrah (Judges 6:32).

²⁵ By the time I entered Nigeria's missionary setting in the largely Pagan centre of the country during the 1960's, many of the emerging Evangelical denominations had forgotten or, more precisely, had not been taught this part of the baptismal ceremony, including my own. I myself had never been made aware of or familiar with this issue. One family did appoint me as godparent for one of their children, but without asking me. I did not know what it entailed and never took responsibility for this honour, which I now deeply regret.

well as from that deeper understanding of Scripture that always supported Christ against satan.²⁶

There is a second issue here that is no less weighty for the Church of Christ. The observation is often made that we no longer find Paganism only in India or Japan, but that, especially since the second half of the nineteenth century, we find naked Paganism, to put it crudely, at our doorstep, in our cities and towns, in all these families and individuals who have renounced the service of Christ. There is indeed truth in this. Constantly we get the impression that the once-defeated Paganism is reviving and that the great rebellion has already begun (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Unfortunately, missions do not address this feature either. They do conduct evangelism, as it is called, among the backsliders and the ignorant whom they attempt to regain, but there is no mission among the modern Pagans. Missions search for distant Pagans, not those nearby; in Africa and Asia, but not in our own backyard.²⁷

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This remarkable phenomenon has a ready-made cause. Modern Paganism, as we have earlier pointed out, still lacks its Paganfocal point. In more highly developed Pagan countries—it is only to their circumstances that our modern Paganism can be compared—we can distinguish four groups:

1. The group that finds its strength in serving their idol;
2. A much larger group that participates in its rites on basis of tradition;
3. A philosophic-aesthetic group that has distanced itself from idol worship;
4. A group of amoral, prosperous people who find their enjoyment in worldly pleasures.

²⁶ Having served Nigerian churches for 30 years, I am not aware of any mission church practicing exorcism at baptism, except perhaps the Roman Catholic Church. The churches I refer to emerged mostly from Western evangelical missionary organizations. I personally wonder whether new converts in the West should not go through an exorcism, coming as they mostly do from a secular environment that has its own spirit and from an atmosphere of almost total ignorance of the Gospel.

²⁷ This distinction was maintained by my own Christian Reformed Church until around 2015 when the two branches were amalgamated into one single global outreach.

If you now compare that broad class in our midst who have broken their relationship with Christ and with all revealed truth, it is clear that we can readily identify that fourth broad group. It is the members of this large group who call evil “good” and light “darkness;” that mocks and slanders, lives a sensuous life and excels in outrageous opulence. Next but completely isolated from them, there is this very different group we call “Modernists” who, much like many Pagan philosophers, are serious about their convictions and attempt to uphold certain ideals, but whose inspiration is found not in Scripture but in philosophical systems, scholarship or the arts.

That first group that has chosen the real idolatry as the centre of their lives is lacking altogether. Though it is completely true that among us also there are various forms of idolatry, such as the worship of Mammon or money, what is lacking is a rite honouring their idol by name. There is no Baal over against Jehovah. We can discover traces of such rites in the veneration of geniuses who have passed on and for whom we erect statues, whose anniversaries we celebrate. Or they can be living poets whose busts are on display in museums.

Added to this we have Spiritism that organizes certain services for Spiritists. In Paris, positivism has called a sort of liturgy to life, but totally absent is a rite for an idol around which the deniers of Christ unite together. There are Buddhist temples in Paris, London and New York where properly appointed priests carry out offerings, but all this takes place at such a very low scale with so little support that it hardly counts in the larger scheme of things. Taken as a whole, modern Paganism among us lacks a liturgy or rites and is thus deprived of the central focus from which traditional Paganism derived its strength.

A consequence of the lack of this main group is that the second group, namely that of the unthinking masses who follow idolatry out of mere tradition, has not yet emerged in its true form. It is identifiable in a small margin of the population that blindly follows Modernism, but does so almost everywhere in forms borrowed from the Christian Church, often even within the walls of a church, including sermons, catechism, Sunday school, etc.

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One can see from all this that it will not do to place our modern Paganism on one line with the traditional Paganism without further stipulations. The idol is there, but the rite, the liturgy of the idol that is central for all Paganism is missing. Will this change in due time? Can we expect that eventually the rites for the idol will be revived so that the temple of Baal will again rise up against the Church of Christ? It seems to us that the Holy Scripture gives us every reason to doubt such a return of Baal rites, at least in their traditional form. Scripture makes an obvious distinction between the Pagans who have never known Christ and those who, after having “known” Him, have backslidden and ended up denying the one true God. For the latter, in Scripture satan’s most penetrating work does not centre around Baal, not in “ordinary” idols, but in the antichrist.

And with this we arrive automatically back at our main subject, the significance of satan, but now in contrast to the Messiah. What are we to understand by satan, who seeks his strength in idols and associated rites, or, as Paul calls it “the table of devils” (1 Corinthians 10:21), now appearing as antichrist? As is generally realized, the antichrist is to be distinguished from the pseudo-Christ who is referred to in Matthew 24:24 and Mark 13:22. The reason that in the past this distinction was not properly understood was that translators did translate the term “pseudo-Christ,” but not the word “antichrist. They translated “pseudo-Christ” as “false Christ,” but they did not translate “antichrist” into its equivalent that Kuyper calls “*Tegen-Christus*” or “Opposer-Christ.”²⁸ Had they done so, every Bible reader would have noticed the difference. As it is, the terms “antichrist” and “pseudo-Christ” are frequently mixed up with both terms meaning the same.

However, it is clear that both terms do indeed refer to different things. A pseudo-Christ or false Christ is someone who pretends to be the Messiah and claims that Jesus is not the real Messiah and imagines himself the Messiah. According to Johann Albrecht Bengel,²⁹ there have been no less than 64 false christs among the

²⁸ A problem here is that English has only one word for the Dutch two, especially in the creative hands of Kuyper. His Dutch “*Tegen-Christus*” translates the same as “antichrist.” In order to retain the distinction, I translate the term into the rather awkward “Opposer-Christ.”

²⁹ Johann Albrecht Bengel (24 June 1687 – 2 November 1752), also known as Bengelius, was a Lutheran pietist clergyman and Greek-language scholar known for his edition of the Greek New Testament and his commentaries on it.

Jews. Amongst the insane it is not unusual for someone to present himself as the true Messiah. Even among sane people it often happens that someone presents himself as Messiah, as happened recently on the terrain of Gereformeerde missions on the island of Java in Indonesia.

But the antichrist is something totally different. He is the “*Tegen-Christus*,” the “Opposer-Christ,” who denies in principle the need for the world’s salvation; who disputes that a Christ or Messiah must come. His intention is to ban and eradicate the Christ and all that is associated with His Name. He calls upon the world and the human race to turn into a completely opposite direction from the long-trodden road of salvation to which Christ points us and which one must now abhor and curse.

The nature of the antichrist is that he wants to take on the same position as Christ’s, but in a completely opposite way. He dethrones the Christ in order to enthrone himself, but once he is there on the throne, his regiment becomes the very opposite to that of Christ. Luther was right to call satan “an ape of Christ,” since he is envious of Christ’s position and tries to rob Him of His prominent position. Christ received a Name above all names, but satan wants that honour for himself. All knees shall bow before Christ, but satan wants them all to bow before *him*. All tongues will confess the Christ, but satan wants all tongues to confess *him* and proclaim *his* honour. Christ received all power on earth, but satan wants to grab that power for himself. The Spirit of Christ will one day enliven the spirits of regenerated or born-again people, but satan wants that all-controlling animation of the human race to proceed from *him*. One day the regenerated will carry the sign of Christ, but satan wants *his* sign to triumph. One day all those who have not loved Christ will fall into perdition, but satan wants the opposite: all who have followed Jesus are to be banned and annihilated so that the entire world and all its treasures be controlled by *him*. Thus the antichrist borrows his programme from Christ. He also imitates Christ in that he tries to learn how Christ achieved such great power and such far-reaching influence in order for him to achieve similar results through similar means. He even tries to embody himself in our human nature. He also performs signs and wonders. He, too, sends out prophets and witnesses. Similarly, he establishes sacraments and symbols in his own way. He is original in nothing, but is forever imitating.

But here the similarities end. For when it comes to deeds, he is the very opposite to Christ: He does not curse sin but seeks his strength from it. He does all that Christ did but in the opposite way. He mirrors a direct opposite ideal to the nations and promises all that Christ promised, but in the reverse. Thus, here also dependence on Christ, but so that the antichrist merely imitates Christ in order to reach the opposite goal.

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It does not require further indication that this antichrist is no one less than satan. As long as Christ had not yet appeared and the struggle was not against Him but against the God of Israel, satan placed a non-god, an idol in opposition to God. But as soon as Christ appeared and was given all power in heaven and on earth, satan realized that he could no longer hurt the living God until he had overcome Christ. Now he placed himself as the Antichrist over against *the* Christ.

If one were to ask whether, apart from that moment, all of satan's operations were directed at Christ, the answer would be negative. In the Pagan countries of Asia and Africa he is still operative along his ancient ways, and places this non-god over against the living God.³⁰ He continues to play the role of tempter in every human heart, going around like a roaring lion searching for victims to devour. Even among the children of God, besides his anti-Christian activities, he is still continuing his general devilish work as well that turns him into a tempter of our hearts.

However, as antichrist, to the contrary, he acts only when he readies himself to disrupt the Kingdom of Christ, to demolish His Church, to tempt its redeemed to backslide and to banish the Name of Christ. This first of all, but these are only his negative activities against Christ. There is also his positive programme of replacing the Kingdom of Christ with his own. But he can only succeed in this—and that is why he now takes his measures with full force—after this apostasy has spread sufficiently. He continues to reign in the bosom of Pagan nations as the “ruler of this world,” by serving the non-god, that is, “the table of devils.” Over against that,

³⁰ Remember that Kuyper wrote a century ago. If at all, that distinction now holds more in the reverse. He had the correct prophetic insight into Western spirituality that has further developed along the same trajectory, but he might have been utterly amazed at the positive development of the African Church.

as antichrist he can only establish *his* kingdom in the bosom of peoples and nations that at one time or another were baptized and, thanks to Christ's salvation, achieved a higher level of human development but now have come to deny Christ and apostatized, ripe for that much more terrible appearance of iniquity that is possible only at that higher level of development.

This is what the Holy Apostle Paul means in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12:

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness⁴ is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

⁵ Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. ⁷ For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, ¹⁰ and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie ¹² and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

The above is an important apostolic word from which we offhand gather the following data:

1. The great apostasy must precede the appearance and the complete revelation of the antichrist;
2. The antichrist can only work among baptized nations, for a Pagan people cannot backslide; they have nothing from which to backslide.
3. It is his character to serve as adversary, that is, to do the reverse of Christ;

4. He cannot jump into action before the iniquity of the Lie has reached a higher development;
5. The return of the Son of Man will soon follow satan's full appearance.
6. Satan's appearance will be accompanied with signs, wonders and powers.

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The traditional expression “the man of sin” (“the man of lawlessness” as in the above Thessalonians quotation), shows us convincingly that the antichrist will not appear as a spirit, but he will come wrapped in our human nature. We do not know whether satan will attempt to adopt human nature *per se* or whether he will take possession of a human being and reign through her. This has not been revealed to us. However it will be, at the end a human appearance will be seen on earth that embodies iniquity, through whom satan will reveal himself, who will exercise an almost complete influence over the spirits and an almost omnipotent power over the nations and peoples. We also discover that the design of the antichrist will be like Christ is for us in his holy and compassionate manner, but in his own godless and devilish way. Thus the power of this antichrist and that of Christ will stand opposite to each other. Sin and iniquity in their devilish principle will come to full development and principial appearance till it has reached its limits and cannot be more devilish. It is then that the end shall follow with Christ defeating the antichrist. The basic thought here is that Christ will not fully triumph until He has released satan once more but now totally, and offers him the opportunity to completely reveal his devilish nature. Satan must never come to the point where he can say, “If I had been free and able to develop my full power, I would have been victorious.” He will have that opportunity. He *will* be released. He will have the chance to show himself at the *zenith* of his power. It is *then* that God will waste him with His breath.

That the Scriptures speak of a plurality of antichrists does not change the picture. John writes indeed, “*Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour*” (1 John 2:18). Only once, at the end of the age, satan will truly succeed in appearing as *the real* antichrist. But this does not take away that in his hot-headed temper against the Kingdom of Christ he will constantly test whether his time of victory has finally come. To that end he misleads various

persons and powers through the centuries to have them attack the Kingdom of Christ and pit a kingdom with opposite principles against that of Christ. The people drawn into this and who thus play leading roles, bear an antichristian character as a result, but without being the antichrist themselves. This was the meaning during the early Reformation when Rome spoke of the antichrist. When Rome used every trick in the book, thanks to the support of the poor of the world, to resist the revival of the Gospel of free grace by means of prison, torture and scaffold, there was a hidden antichristian tendency even here that in some countries led to the evil goal, though this was blocked in Europe. Since the French Revolution erupted in 1789, this antichristian tendency became even stronger. This, the Lord willing, will be treated in the next chapter.

Chapter 7*

The Tarrying Satanic Revelation

*And the devil, who deceived them,
was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur,
where the beast and false prophet had been thrown.
They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.
Revelation 20:10*

We know most definitely from the Revelation of God's Word, that the most audacious and abominable revelation of satan is still tarrying. The Scripture counters the currently popular opinion, held even in Christian circles, that sooner or later the entire world will be baptized and the entire globe Christianized, after which the completely triumphant Christian religion morphs its way almost unnoticed into the Kingdom of Glory. That is how human "smarts" hold out false hope for us, but the Scripture testifies it won't be so.

To the contrary, the Scripture teaches us that satan's agitation will not only continue throughout the days of the New Covenant, but it will even end in a great falling out by the baptized and at the end of days will once again be released in order to cool his hot anger at all that is holy, bring his deepest satanic thoughts into the open, and only then to be defeated and destroyed. There is a degree of mystery in satan's injustice. The opening up of that mystery is initially resisted, but one day this resisting power will dissipate and that is when a revelation of satanic anger and injustice will be revealed as the world has never experienced before. It will turn with its full power against the Church of God to accord her the honour of the martyr's crown.

The contrast between these two positions leaves nothing to the imagination. As the current crop of Christian philosophers would have it, there will be a gradual and continuous spread of the Christian religion that will automatically lead to a final victory over evil and a complete ban on satan.

Over against that, according to God's Word, after a too rapid flourishing of Christ's Church, a great apostasy will occur to be followed by a renewed release of

satan. The oppression of the church will surpass any persecution and bitterness it has ever experienced. This horrendous suffering will only come to its solution when Christ descends from heaven to help His Church, casts satan into the pool of fire and crowns His saints.

Those who unconditionally adhere to Scripture with us will join us in rejecting the first option and hold on to the second, on basis of which we are convinced that the days of horror and unprecedented abomination are knocking at the door. The course of things as we have observed them in the nineteenth century, totally follows the Scriptures.

We were soon awakened from that sweet dream that would have all nations and peoples gradually Christianized. The Reveil or Revival that began in Switzerland and France in 1814 and worked its way through Western Europe, still tempted us to join the dream, but then philosophical/theological developments and publications began to disturb the minds and hearts of the people. The resurrection of Christ came to be denied; the Scripture was attacked and torn to smithereens. It became a common feature on the pulpit for Christ to be denied and even the afterlife. The great falling away started and grew until it reached appalling measurements. Before long the very different powers of materialism, sensuality and anarchism began to captivate the minds. The Catholic Church participated in this movement and moved her goalposts “forward.” As the small flock of the Lord’s sheep came under increasing pressure, it became clearer by the day that no mission, regardless of its energy, could from afar make up for the losses that the Christian religion in both Europe and North America suffered. It was no longer progressing but regressing.³¹

Related to the above is that in our day all Christian social action that takes those facts into consideration and remains faithful to the Bible, once again moved forward and increased its influence. But there were also those other “Christians” who closed their eyes to these developments and contradicted God’s Word at this point. They were very active in stirring up others, but without retrieving their strength; they often participated in the great retreat from the true faith.

³¹ The last ten sentences here are a translation of one single sentence at the hands of Kuyper!—a wordsmith if ever there was one.

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John saw a vision on Patmos of the horrors of the last revelation of satan, a vision that is recorded for the Church of Christ in the book of Revelation from chapter thirteen on. Satan is called the “dragon” here. Out of the depths, animal-like creatures emerge that are called the first and second beast. There is an image of the first beast and it speaks. The power that comes out of that beast and his image is a God-slandering power. That first beast was given a mouth:

⁵ The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷ It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. ⁸ All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world (Revelation 13:5-8).

Space does not allow us to dig deeper into the meaning of this vision. We must let go of the details and stick to our main line of thought, a thought that fully complies with 2 Thessalonians which tells us that the most fearful and horrible appearance of satanic evil is still awaiting us. These are the days of which Jesus Himself tells us just before His death on Golgotha, that if they were not shortened, even the elect would be led astray by the awful suffering of persecution and the fascinating pull of evil. But where 2 Thessalonians is silent is brought to us in this vision in Revelation, where we are given the broad outline of the figure and form of the last and most horrendous appearance that satan will take on. That representation tells us that satan, appearing as the dragon here, will undertake his last attack, not himself directly but through another creature. This creature, a human being of course, comes to us as a beast in order to display his complete animalization. This person, fully inspired by satan, will exercise a power that encompasses all nations and peoples. Far from neutral with respect to the Christian religion, he will choose God, His Christ and His people as the target for his hate and anger. Over against the Christian religion, he will posit a religion of evil, demanding that satan and his host be worshipped and the people sing along with the mockery with which these evil powers aggravate God and His Christ. All this fanaticism of unbelief, no,

worse, this belief in satan, will strangle the whole of political and social life so that the retail industry and commerce will be banned for those who do not display the sacramental sign of this satanic service. The end of it all will be just plain wholesale murder. The blood of anyone still holding on to Christ shall be poured out in scorn and mockery—until Christ comes. He will grant to these last martyrs a special glory, disarm satan forever just before the new Jerusalem will descend from heaven.

We restrict ourselves to these general characteristics of the time in order to pay special attention to the main line of thought and thus promote clarity. We would rather not deny the question whether the prophecy in this vision may not in some way have been fulfilled already. The marginal notes of some Bible translations refer the vision partially to the tyranny of Roman emperors from the early centuries of our era and partially to the tyranny of the Catholic hierarchy of the sixteenth century that opposed the believers of the Gospel. There is some truth to this explanation. There is nothing strange and, in fact, it would be quite natural that all this should begin to occur first on a small scale, but at the end explode to its full extent. With such an evil character that will end up with horrendous and widespread murder, it was easy to fabricate stories of such a man from his childhood onward.

It was said that as a child he was already very cruel, as a teenage bully he would grab his peers by the neck till they almost suffocated and was long eager to spill human blood. No wonder then that satan, though the full revelation of his evil still tarried, during the intervening ages already displayed his disastrous and vengeful nature and, whenever he had the opportunity, to present a prelude to the awful tragedy that is coming at the end of the age.

Throughout the centuries similar processes have been operative that would over time mature into similar constellations of events and leave us if not with repetitive then with similar occurrences. The names, the powers and the peoples may vary, but the contrast between the kingdoms of Christ and of satan continues. Time and again, it is a combination of barbaric powers who recognize the time ripe to destroy the Church of Christ with fire and sword. That has been attempted by the Roman empire; was undertaken in the East by Islam and, more recently, tried by

the Catholic hierarchy at the expense of the Protestant Church in the sixteenth century. We agree with these marginal notes mentioned earlier that this terrible vision in Revelation already has had repeated provisional fulfillment, small-scale preludes.

We would not even dare to claim that a fourth provisional fulfillment is not on the way. It is not impossible that the various evil powers are once again uniting to violently subdue the Church of Christ, but again without success. The attack is resisted and the normal course of the struggle once again continues. Whatever the future has in store for us, in any case the course of history shows that after we have endured the persecutions by Roman emperors, the rise of the false prophet and the sixteenth-century persecution by the Catholics, that this three-fold series is not the end of it all. The Church of Christ has been rescued every time and revived. So far, the complete, the actual and the decisive fulfillment has not yet come; it is still tarrying. It is there that the Church must fix her eyes, searching for early signs to prepare herself for the most terrible period in her life to erupt at any time.

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It is in connection with the above that we mentioned the French Revolution earlier on. It is not—and this hardly needs saying—that we would defend all the abuses from before 1789 and which were overcome during and after 1789. The Church may *never* gloss over, tolerate or participate in abuse. She recognizes the hand of God even in the most terrifying events and she will thus never hesitate to acknowledge that the Revolution of 1789 constituted a righteous judgement of God for the sin and injustice that at the time marked state and society.

But quite apart from ending abuse and being protected from this just divine judgement over sin and injustice, something totally different also took place. A very different worldview that until now was recommended only in the books of academics, replaced that Christian perspective in real life itself, declared war on it and from there began to demand that all of the life of all nations—domestic, personal, social, political—was not to be re-arranged so that not the Christian spirit but that of the religion of unbelief would dominate our human life in all its appearances, operations and expressions.

Herewith the attack of the French Revolution on the Kingdom of Christ became a much more principal starting point and had a much wider influence than those previous three. The Roman emperors were prepared to tolerate the Christian religion so long as it was content with a place next to or under the empire's state religion. Islam robbed Christ of His crown but did leave Him a place of honour after Muhammad and Abraham. During the sixteenth century, the Catholic hierarchy in its persecution of the Protestant church did indeed attack the pure Gospel, but at least not against every form of veneration of Christ. To the contrary, she persecuted with the sign of the cross in hand; "*In hoc signo vinces*" was her motto.

This was all changed in the French Revolution. The conversion of the conviction, the worldview and the direction of human life on which it all was based touched the very root of our human consciousness. This was not a subsidiary principal but the root principle of human society; not a partial truth but a conversion of the foundation on which all truth rests. It opposed God pertinently as God; replaced the authority that flows only from God in mankind. It rejected the worship of the Lamb of God in favour of the worship of human genius. It loosened all ties and relationships to replace them with totally different ones. It not only changed the façade of the social structures that were erected by eighteen centuries of labour, but demolished the entire building, dug up its foundations and replaced even the dirt on which it was built to prevent all appearances of similarities. In fact, it undertook the gigantic task of constructing totally new foundations on which they set a totally new building that would not resemble the old at all. That this task would take time was obvious. It would be a long and gradual process to have such a totally inverted worldview penetrate the hearts of humanity. From the top of society down, layer by layer, it had to trickle down through all the levels of society. Put differently, it could gradually spread out from the centre to the periphery. The programme of this revolutionary principle was never pursued in a relaxed style. In a jerky way, it trickled down farther and farther, especially through events in the years 1789, 1793, 1830 and in 1848.³² All the powers of state and science increasingly dedicated themselves to spread this new worldview at the

³² I urge readers to check out these years online to get a more detailed picture of this historical process that we now often call "secularization," a process still going on.

heart of the French Revolution in glittering ways and to introduce it in such a tempting and dominating form that it indeed appeared for a moment that the triumph of this principle was irresistible and ensured.

Currently we no longer dare predict this. Resistance has arisen. In many circles the penetration of this evil principle collides with a force never seen before. A certain reaction is observed. However, even if its progress is resisted and partially pushed back, that pushback will only be temporary. But, though it cannot be expressed in statistics, over time this evil programme emerging from the new principle will again make progress. Actually, it is difficult to fathom that this abomination could go any further beyond what it did in the Revolution. This false principle has corroded the deepest roots of our lives. It is a principle with the farthest general spread that wants to govern all of human life: our mental and sensual life, our rational and aesthetic aspects, our domestic life and marriage, and in the rearing of our children along with the social life in our morals, customs and traditions. And then there is our political life that finds expression in our perspective on the state and human rights as well as on the nation and the government. It wants to govern our minds, our common sense, heads and hearts. It desires to reconstruct our history, change our character, move our conscience over and change our ideals. It wants to instill totally different notions about the origin of our human race and about the future that awaits us in the afterlife. It reaches out to heaven to destroy the angelic world, dethrone Christ and declare the death of God Almighty via the mouth of Nietzsche. There is not the least doubt but that the drive behind this topsy-turvy principle is nothing less than the work of satan himself.

It is satan who, though dethroned by the cross of Golgotha as the ruler of the world and sworn off in exorcism by the baptism of Europeans, wants to regain his rule along this radical route and thus appoint himself the real antichrist through the above programme. Wherever Christ has come to save the world, the French Revolution proclaims to you that the Christian religion, far from saving the world, confuses the society wretchedly and turns it into the clergy's booty. Instead, so the claim goes, we are now bringing you the true, the real, via the only gospel of salvation to a utopia that does not exist in some imaginary heaven, but must be striven for on our concrete earth, where our future is insured through the magical mantra of "Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood."

Those among believers in Christ who have not observed this anti-Christian character of the French Revolution but rather seek to profit from it by decorating themselves with feathers torn from their own plumage, are nothing but blind leaders of the blind and will not stand in the judgement. This holds especially for those who saw the truth clearly in the past, but who were tempted by personal ambition and now believe what they rejected previously.³³ It is much more the calling of the followers of Christ who, giving full consideration to the immense power of thought and its consequences that have emerged from the Revolution, to dig equally deeply into the roots of their own worldview and with it counter the motto and worldview of the Revolution antithetically at every point. This is a programme that can be carried out to its full consequences only by Calvinism, because its starting point is the purest and deepest of all and widest in its reach.

If it were asked whether the last consequences of the Revolution that are to precede the appearance of the antichrist have already been experienced, we would have to demur. In the days of the Revolution, religion was only despised and regarded with contempt. The state of the Church at that time had sunk too low to demand respect and reverence, the reason it was ignored. It was not worth persecuting. This then led to moving the spiritual life into the inner chamber, banning it from the public square. It did not occur to anyone in the least to call up a counter religion into life. And yet this is to happen before the end. The evil power of the world released by the French Revolution will finally organize itself into a mighty power under a powerful person. This person will enthrone himself as if he were God and demand that he be worshipped. Then satan will finally appear in his full force, in flesh and blood, rise up against the Church of Christ and only then will streams of blood once more be poured out, but for the last time

This situation can only become reality when the evil world power, awoken by the power of the reviving religion, begins to realize that *a religion can be defeated only by another religion*. For this reason, freeing itself from the contempt in which it held religion, it now establishes its own religion over against that of Christianity. That all these things are presently in the stage of development is clear. The

³³ This seems like a flashback to Kuyper's own conversion experience in the reverse, from modernism to Christianity. He understood the spirit he is describing, for he once was a deep and convinced adherent.

evaluation as to the value of religion is currently (around 1900) very different from that of, say, around 1800. Already the effects of the Revolution are beginning to lose themselves in a deep mystery. It is out of that deep mystery that the antichrist will emerge one day.

Chapter 8*

The Plan(s) of the Fallen Angels

*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers, against the authorities,
against the powers of this dark world and against
the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
Ephesians 6:12*

We affirm that the good angels spend their time praising the God of hosts, fight for Him and serve Him. From this the opposite follows with the fallen angels: They slander God's majesty, fight against Him and try to destroy His works. It all goes according to the principle that has governed all our writing about angels, namely that good and fallen angels are in essence one and the same, that both have equal strength. The difference between them is only that the good angels spend their energy *for* God's glory, while the fallen angels use theirs *against* Him. No matter how deeply nature has been corrupted, as our fathers taught us, satan in essence as a creature of God is good or, as the traditional Latin phrase has it, *quod ad entitatem*. If you mentally place a good angel like Gabriel next to the devil, they will look alike like two drops of water. You would only notice the distinction and contrast in their relationship to the Eternal Being. It makes all the difference whether one is a *friend* of God or an *enemy*.

The above relieves us from the difficulty of placing the three-fold calling of the good angels—praising God, fighting for God and serving God—over against the three-fold programme of the devils—slandering God, fighting against God and destroying His work. We have already spoken about their slandering God in the companion volume about good angels.³⁴ Their fight against God hardly requires detailed information; only a few words will suffice with respect to their destruction of Gods' work.

³⁴ The final format of these companion volumes has not yet been determined. Hence it is hard to be more specific by giving a page number. In the Dutch original it is Chapter 33.

Their fight against the host of good angels must by definition be explained in the same way as the fight waged by the good angels. It is a battle waged by spirit against spirit without the intervention of material or physicality, fought only with spiritual weapons and with only spiritual result.³⁵ It is a restless struggle between the fallen and the faithful angels. It is to decide who is the stronger and then the field must be left to the latter. It is a war satan's cohorts *must continue* since the power and majesty of the Lord of Hosts is a thorn in their flesh. Similarly, it is a war the good angels *cannot discontinue* since the evil reign of fallen angels must not survive comfortably forever. The Truth cannot co-exist comfortably with the Lie, but will combat the latter till it is exterminated and powerlessly collapsed in humiliation. That this battle on the side of satan aims at Christ, His Kingdom and His followers is not because of hate for humans, but exclusively because Christ, His Kingdom and His followers support God's intentions and end up glorifying Him. Satan always aims directly and regularly at God as God and every other struggle is subsidiary to this one single terrible aim, namely the spoiling of God's Name and His glory. That is why much of the battle of the fallen angels aims exclusively at the good angels. They see them as the faithless ones that refused to participate in their fall. Had they only participated, the reign of God would have been lost. Actual evil hides in the good angels, according to satan *cum sui*. That's why their hatred and anger is directed at the good force. Their main aim is not to destroy the human race but to wage war with them about heaven.

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The evil that the devils unleash on earth among the children of men must be seen from another perspective. It is not against the war the good angels wage but against the service they render. Serving is the opposite of ruling; over against serving humbly stands the drive to reign in pride.³⁶ This is what satan and his cohorts on earth are aiming at. His goal is not to wage war against us humans but to win us over for himself in order that he establish his control and rule in our hearts, in our nature and in our human world.

³⁵ *Only* spiritual result? This might be contested. In fact, Kuyper himself contradicts this statement in the following pages.

³⁶ I challenge especially the first clause of this sentence. From the Christian perspective serving is not opposed to ruling but it is the spirit in which ruling is to be conducted.

Satan did not *begin* his war against Christ in His human nature. To the contrary, he approaches Jesus in an amicable way and tries to win Him over. He promises Him, not as a trap but in truth, rule over all the kingdoms of the world, but on one condition, namely, that Christ recognize him as landlord and ultimate ruler of the world. It is from the moment that Satan encounters the unconquerable character of Jesus' soul that he morphs into His enemy and that of His people and Kingdom. All of this is the opposite of the service rendered by the good angels. The good ones are available to serve God and to promote His Kingdom, while the fallen angels are in Satan's service to destroy God's Kingdom and to hand the triumph over to their master, the devil. This constitutes the gradually developing programme of the evil angels. This is what occupies them night and day. It is the chase after this unreachable goal that never gives them rest.

In their programme the evil angels are out to gradually first lay traps for God's elect, to threaten them, blindfold them, and perturb them till it leads to a serious temptation for them. They intensify their effort in proportion to the status and prominence an individual elect has. Like wasps, they prefer the more noble fruit. They do all this in various ways:

1. They spiritually affect their senses, their imagination, their thoughts, their inclinations, their passions, sometimes by prompting unclean thoughts, even in their prayers. Something like one person hypnotizing another, they embrace the spirits of God's elect and the children of God who have forsaken communion with their Saviour and no longer seek the communion of saints—and they fall into that trap all too frequently.
2. They are busily engaged to harden that part of humanity that never chose for Christ to begin with, but always resisted Him in a covenant of fellowship, to harden them in their evil, to frustrate all missionary outreach in the Name of Christ and to so stupefy them in their senses and pride that any potential vision to come to our Mediator is stunned, if not actually just terminated.
3. They not only affect persons but also the organic relationships in which these persons live, such as families, generations, peoples and nations as well as the spirit that inspires and drives them all.

4. They also work on the cultural and social structures such as corporations, traditions, morals and manners that govern the life of the nations.
5. Their attack is directly on the Church of Christ to foster general degeneration, to adulterate, and to corrupt them into a pseudo- or phantom church. In this context, they counter every activity of the Church, whether in mission, education or evangelism, etc.
6. Finally, they direct their operations to those general institutions that have such an immeasurable influence on the development of society, such as public opinion, fashion, the spirit of the time, the dominant worldview and the development of scholarship, science and art.

In short, it can be said that their operations encompass the entire terrain of human society. The devils try to rob God of all of human life and to win this for satan to achieve the dual goals of opposing the Kingdom of God and promoting the kingdom of satan.

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That the evil angels do not restrict their work to the spiritual life of people, but work also on the material and bodily side, can hardly be denied by Scripture believers. The possessed persons in Scripture already point this out. According to clear Scriptural stories, we are faced by people into whom one or more evil angel, called demons, invaded. From out of the innermost being of the possessed they had such overwhelming effect on their bodies that they became deaf and dumb, spoke in devils' jargon or foamed at their mouths in raging madness.

Even as with good angels, we have to distinguish events that take place in extraordinary times when God revealed His salvation to the world, and in the ordinary times wherein we now live with that revelation quietly continuing to penetrate. But we have no good reason to conclude from the fact that the head of the evil angel cohorts appeared to Christ in the wilderness, most likely in human form, that therefore satan also appears in human form today. Satan *cannot* do this unless God grants him a body temporarily. True, the Scripture does tell us that we can expect such a visible appearance of satan in the last days, but it gives no reason to expect that satan can appear like that now in our day. All that has been said

about that, even by Luther, must be regarded as the fruit of imagination. This becomes more clear from the unique forms in which satan is described—with horns, tail and goat feet. This is all fantasy and in disagreement with what the Scriptures have revealed about this dark part of the angelic world.

But from this it does not in the least follow that therefore the evil spirits lack the power to influence physical things. Unless, of course, God wants this, intends it and permits it. As our soul is capable of having a direct effect on physical things, so also the spiritual creatures that we call angels can have a direct effect on material or physical things, something that was demonstrated so clearly with the victims of possession. When you read the Gospels and carefully gather all that is said about the possessed, as long as you are a believer, you will see in the most convincing manner that demons were definitely given the power to affect the body and, thus the material and the organs of their victims.

It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss the state of the possessed further in its full details. This would require a special treatment of the subject. As long as it has been certified that the possibility is guaranteed that a demon can affect the material. This is also abundantly clear from the fact that satan is described as one “*who holds the power of death*” (Hebrews 2:14). After all, death is the breaking of the bond that connects the soul to the body and would thus be unthinkable without being able to affect the body.

Herewith it is in no way claimed that the phenomena that displayed themselves at the time in possessed people appear still regularly today in the same way and measure. As the good angels during the days the Son of God dwelt on earth and often appeared as guards around God’s throne, it is very understandable that satan with extraordinary power and unusual means tried to block the coming of the Mediator. Action provokes reaction, also in similarity of measure and grade. But we protest against those who, with respect to what we are told about victims of possession, explain it away as ordinary insanity or epilepsy. We do not deny that the symptoms of these diseases are similar to those of possession. However, there is this great difference: These demons recognized and confessed Christ when no one else was doing so, while they were exorcised not by entering these unfortunate victims in a mental institution but by fasting and prayer; *Jesus exorcised them by the power of His word*. The symptoms of the two diseases are both similar and

opposite to each other in two ways: First, the possessed showed not only signs of rage and fury, but also indicated knowledge of the Messiah when no one else yet did as in Mark 1:23-24 “*Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are....*” Secondly, the possessed were not treated medically, but were healed through spiritual acts and Jesus gave us a spiritual explanation. The insane did display similar signs of rage and fury but without indicating any new, peculiar or original knowledge, and without getting healed by means of a spiritual word of power or fasting and prayer so that we have medical solutions, but no spiritual explanation for their condition from Jesus. Even though we completely go along with those doctors who point us to our blood, our spiritual life or to our brains as the cause of insanity, nothing has been achieved beyond having followed the physical traces of insanity as far as possible with as goal the intervention in the physical symptoms to bring either improvement or complete healing. But from this it does not at all follow that behind these physical symptoms there lurks no psychiatric suffering or that there cannot be demonic or spiritual powers at work through it all. Neither does it even follow that such a demonic or spiritual being cannot affect the physical symptoms like any other sickness.

We cannot be sure of anything here, for what is not revealed remains hidden in the darkness for us. We are merely protesting every explanation that pretends the physical and its effects are all there is. First of all, our own spiritual life counts along with an explanation of the bodily symptoms. In addition to our own spiritual life, the influence of other spirits on our persons must also be considered. We claim this on basis of what Jesus said about the possessed man as well as the fact that constantly there appear certain other categories of sickness that are, sometimes suddenly, healed by spiritual means without medical intervention. To exaggerate all this as if healing by prayer can or should replace all medical intervention is, of course, unreasonable. But the fact is that behind a sickness there hides more than can be diagnosed by medical means. We may not discount, for example, the care for the insane undertaken in Christian institutions, which undoubtedly includes the calling to do more research in this uncertain terrain and to recognize the operation of powers other than that of which medical science, restricting itself too much to the physical, is capable.

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In this connection we need to say a few words about the processes of so-called sorcery. Currently we notice little of it, but until the second half of the eighteenth century, the battle against sorcery was still a matter of life and death. Shortly before and a century and a half after the Reformation at least a hundred thousand people have been executed for reasons of sorcery.

If you follow the history of that time of Occultism as it is popularly called, you will see that that which today we treat mockingly represented a terrible power over life itself at the time. It was believed that the devil would establish his power over some people, perhaps old women or people handicapped in some way and sometimes even young children. They would surrender themselves to him to serve as his instruments and as such inflict all kinds of spiritual and material injury. This had an after-effect in Northern European Paganism, especially in its Germanic form that had only recently been Christianized. When the Reformation broke out, in these large newly Christianized European regions, this process had sometimes gone so raw and wild that it only succeeded in violently eradicating Pagan rites.

The result was that these ancient Pagan mysteries and sorcery withdrew from public view and then presented themselves as servants of devil and demons over against God and His Christ. Since the Christian church continued to believe that demons actually exist and have their effects and reveal their power through idols and idolatry, the reality of their evil actions was acknowledged on both sides. Both the superstitious masses that were still basically Animistic in their hearts, and the church understood that this evil being had to be overcome.

This led to the pre-Reformation Catholic Church, whose hierarchy was still fully in control, took increasingly radical measures to exorcise this evil. Finally, Pope Innocentius VIII in his Encyclical *Summis Desiderantes* of December 3, 1484, painted the entire battle between this Pagan being and the Christian Church in sharp contrast and installed the inquisition to counter it. Under the influence of the clergy, the Government also gradually began to involve itself. After the Reformation the church handed this entire concern over to the earthly judge. As a result of the Thirty Year War in Germany, a process of brutalization took place that in turn once again powerfully revived the old Paganism along with a potent increase in sorcery that affected the entire population. All ecclesiastical and civil powers girded themselves to defeat this evil being. Our Gereformeerde churches

also acknowledged on basis of God's Word that this kind of sorcery and superstition that distinguished the other nations from Israel, were Pagan in nature and had their origin and strength in the stimulation by demonic powers. Subsequently, all who in any way had a part in this evil being and allowed themselves to be seduced by him, were strictly banned from the Table of the New Covenant according to the Liturgy for Holy Communion.

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That this demonic-Pagan being adopted the form of sorcery had its origin in the superstition of the old Germanic peoples, who had incorporated female priests in their Pagan rites. In connection with these priestesses, various kinds of females appeared who were thought to possess secret powers to either heal or to destroy. These "Walkyren,"³⁷ also called "White Women," and many others, were all revelations of the same phenomenon. These women worked both good and evil by means of secret drinks and foods they concocted, of sorcery mantras of which only they knew the secret and of the distribution of amulets and other paraphernalia. Often they served both as sorcerers and fortune-tellers. They would withdraw into the deep forest where the public would come to look for them, thus exercising a secret and mysterious power over wide segments of the population.

Once the countries where this mysterious spiritual power of these women had been effective, converted to Christ, this feature disappeared from the cities and retreated to rural areas, especially to sylvan and mountainous regions. Gradually, they lost most of their beneficence, healing and blessing functions and finally became an exclusively destructive and evil power that became hostile to the Christian church, led many into all sorts of evil sin and misdeeds and eventually developed not only into an anti-Christian power but also anti-social. If these persons that lent themselves to this atmosphere only had certain distinctive marks, much evil might have been prevented. That was not possible, for these sorcerers hid themselves and carried out their evil plans in secret places. This secrecy created a certain angst among the people. They increasingly gained the impression that there existed an evil, demonic conspiracy against Christianity, so that many accidents and much suffering was attributed to the operation of that evil power. Almost any accident would immediately be blamed on sorcery. And so people began to search just

³⁷ [Valkyrie - Wikipedia](#)

where these sorcerers might be hiding. People would look all around themselves and everyone who acted strangely would soon be suspect. Anyone suspect would be taken into custody, but sometimes just outright be killed at the hands of the public. They would often be tied to the torture rack till they confessed, which all accused ended up doing. They would be sentenced to be burned at the stake on basis of such forced confessions. The water test was also applied; every person who did not sink but floated would be regarded a sorcerer. And then there was the weight test; underweight people ran the risk of being condemned.

It was not till the second half of the eighteenth century that this evil was sworn off and after that as good as eradicated.³⁸ If you were to ask whether all those victims were guilty or not, we would certainly have to confess with sadness and vexation that a sense of justice had been lost and tens of thousands were murdered.

However, it must also be acknowledged that many people in those days still hung on to the old Pagan spirit and, out of hostility to Christ, had given themselves over to the evil spirit of satan, and in that evil condition committed all kinds of atrocities such as lewdness, poisoning, destruction of other people's possessions, etc. It was not a campaign against an imaginary force, but against an actual evil power. The only mistake was that the earthly judge, instead of only punishing these atrocities after delivering proof of guilt, also wanted to punish *spiritual* evil, something beyond her capacity, and tried to extract proof on the rack, which was not permissible. Especially in rural areas serious attempts were made to exterminate all this superstition and sorcery at their roots by spiritual means such as preaching and home visitation. Demonic power is not imaginary but reality. And should this demonic power succeed only minimally to nestle itself again in popular opinion, we run the risk that this evil being will return and once again seduce the people to apostatize from God and sell themselves to the power of satan, even if in a different format.

³⁸ That may have been true for the West, but certainly not for much of the South.

