

Text 18. Homo Religiosus: Christianity (53 p.)

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1. Introduction

The Holy Trinity,

The Holy Trinity, center of Biblical life, is very close to us in our daily concerns. She is ready - even if we ask for nothing at all - to intervene in solving our problems. This is the conviction inherent in the following pages. In the Bible we find repeatedly the expression, "consulting God." Indeed, life can be defined as a set of problems that require a solution. Yet we lack, sometimes in a striking way, the necessary and sufficient data. God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, however, know them. Thus we are never alone. Even if we were abandoned by everyone, we can contact Him directly. Therein lies the power of prayer.

The Bible.

One can study the Bible from a historical point of view. Modern and postmodern scholarship does it all the time. But one can also delve into it by immersing oneself in it and seeking its bearing ideas. The excerpts that follow here, draw out such basic ideas. One will find, through their reading, that they form a logically coherent whole. Indeed, starting from a limited number of intuitions, such as the couple "flesh/spirit," one better understands many Biblical texts.

An example. The last excerpt cited here will deal with the fine material body. From there it is easier to understand the Church Fathers, who defined its basic concepts in the first centuries of Christianity, when they tried to explain the virginity of Mary as the mother of God.

Virginity.

it means that Mary's womb is solely and exclusively destined to bear the Son. Criticisms concerning virginity are all situated outside the biblical presuppositions. For example, one can reject the existence of a particulate body, and this without sufficient reason, indeed sometimes without even knowing anything about particulate matter. Thus the Son, second person of the Holy Trinity, incarnated in Mary's womb, in the form of a subtle body, a body that is at the base of the biological body. At birth, however, the biological body of Jesus becomes subtle material and passes through the hymen without any problem, and afterwards becomes again a biological, i.e., gross material body. That is also why in the Byzantine liturgy one sings, "As You Jesus, as the risen one, pass through walls, so already as a child You respected Your mother's virginity."

Faith.

Biblical life has as its goal the establishment of a new covenant: uninterrupted and intimate God contact through prayer. Something that is sometimes conspicuously omitted in our day. In *Luke 18: 1vv*, we read how Jesus illustrates to us with a parable the necessity of prayer, indeed persistent prayer: There was in a city a judge who did not know God and did not bother about people. In this city there was also a widow. She sought him and said, Deliver me justice against my adversaries. The judge refused for a long time. Then he said to himself, "Although I do not know God and do not bother my fellow man, yet this widow continues to cause me trouble. I will give her justice so that she no longer bothers me.

Thus speaks the Lord, If even this cynical judge provides justice to the widow, how much more will God provide justice to those who call on Him all day long? I tell you that He will immediately provide justice for them. But will the Son of Man, when He returns, still find faith on earth? Jesus uses a- fortiori reasoning: in order not to be constantly harassed by the widow, the cynical judge grants her justice. How much more, then, will God, out of love for His creatures, provide justice?

It is Jesus' last sentence - will He, the Son of Man, still find faith on earth - that is astonishing: Christ, in accordance with a whole Biblical tradition, foresees a great return. So it is a persistent faith, as with the widow, that is necessary to pray and persevere in prayer. And this every day, but especially toward the end of time.

2. Introduction to Christianity.

Biblical origins.

The bearing ideas of Christianity are of Biblical origin. Well, as early as *Genesis 6:3*, the basic "flesh/spirit" couple dominates in the Bible. In the days of Noë, when God saw that evil was growing in men, (among other things due to the evil influence of the "sons of God" (divine beings) He spoke: "That my spirit may not be endlessly responsible for man, for he is flesh. In other words: I, God, no longer invest my spirit in a mankind for it is only 'flesh'". 'Spirit' here stands for 'divine energy' and 'flesh' means: divine energy at an earlier and therefore less powerful stage. Given man's sinfulness, therefore, 'flesh' here means an inferior and weakened form of energy.

Since the ancient Greeks, "mind" means, "intellectual capabilities," which is only one aspect of "mind" in the Biblical sense.

Meat.

'Flesh' opposed to 'spirit' means first of all a primitive stage of 'spirit', but also 'spirit' in decay, due to immoral behavior (or a combination of both). The sexual element, if concealed, is never far away here.

This stage of divine energy, even though this energy has lost a lot of its power due to an intervention of godly beings, is not nothing. It creates the beyond and is even capable of amazing miracles such as *Exodus 7/8 (Egyptian miracles)*, *Acts of the Apostles 8:9vv. (Simon the magician)* and *2 Thessalonians 2:9 (miracles of the antichrist)* show us.

Weakness.

The more God's spirit is weakened and degraded in us, the more it too is subject to all kinds of misfortunes (diseases, accidents). So too did it happen to Noë's contemporaries, who were merely "flesh" and so could expect all kinds of miscalculations. In their case: a natural catastrophe; a flood. However, Noë and his followers, by their conscientious behavior, escaped it.

Evolution.

Creation as described biblically is essentially and story of the relationship between "flesh" and "spirit," and of a struggle between the two. What is more, creation has an evolution, expressed, among other things, in *Daniel 12:4*: "Evil will increase." Surviving the end of time in a God-honoring manner, then, requires a more powerful Divine energy.

The voice of God.

One day Moses exclaimed: "If only every man could be a prophet, so that they might all share in God's spirit" (*Numbers 11: 29*). Well, peculiar to a prophet is fact that he hears God's voice.

Remark:

The voice of God is first of all what is called "the voice of conscience," it is, according to *Rom 2:14*, proper to all men. However, it can make itself heard as an "inner voice" clearer and clearer than a voice of conscience, but with essentially the same message.

Morality.

The Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, as a popular summary of an ethical code of conduct, is the masterpiece of the entire Bible and is ultimately decisive: an unscrupulous man hears the voice of God but neglects it (*Numbers 14:22*). This lowers him from "spirit" to "flesh" and, weakened as he then is, makes it more difficult to face many of the dangerous temptations of this world.

The Role of Christ.

John says of Christ that he partook of the "flesh" as a lower form of God's "spirit. He bears the weakness of "the flesh.

Easter. Peter (*1 Peter 3:18; 2 Peter 2:4*) summarizes: Jesus was put to death according to the flesh but once He died He was resurrected according to the spirit; after which He brought the glad tidings to the souls and spirits in the underworld who refused to believe.

John (5:25) puts it his way: the "dead" (those who heard the divine voice but neglected it) now hear the voice of Jesus. That explains his descent into hell, where "life" is a kind of dead existence rather than real life. One only fully understands Christ precisely from that opposition of "flesh"/"spirit.

Christ is a prophet.

"I say to the world what I have heard from Him who sent me." (*John 8: 26; 8; 28*). Jesus says of Himself that He is a prophet." The Father gives Him His spirit". He hears and listens to the voice of the Father. "You (the contemporaries who reject Him) have never heard the voice of the my Father. You have never seen His face" (*John 5: 37*). Notice that to "see the face" means to be "intimate with. Throughout the Bible, being intimate with God is precisely what all people are called to. Unlike those who have never heard the voice of the Father, *John 6:45* says "And all will be taught by God. He who hears his voice comes to me". Those who live in God's intimacy also live in the intimacy of Jesus and come to faith. Those who possess God's spirit also notice it in others. Thus one comes to the essence of Christianity

3. The God of the Bible.

The Bible

(*Genesis 1:1*) the Bible is formal: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth," i.e. all ordered reality. Consequence: all that masquerades as "god" or is worshipped as such reveals itself, in comparison to the God of the Bible, as nothing more than yet another creature. The word 'god' (without capital letter) means "gifted with a higher form of energy." The word "lord" means, among other things, "deified man" (*2 Macc. 11:23*). - In *1 Cor. 8:4vv.* we read that an idol is as good as nothing and there is no God apart from the only God. For although there are so called gods in the heavens or on earth - indeed there are a number of gods and a number of lords - for us in all things there is only one God, the Father, from whom all things proceed and to whom we are all destined, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things are and by whom we live. (*cfr. Rom. 3:29*).

1. Paul, in listing the number of higher beings worshipped by the peoples around the Mediterranean, underscores the immeasurable distance between such beings and the God of the Bible.

2. He also emphasizes that Jesus, as the second person of the Holy Trinity, is co-creator along with the Father and the Holy Spirit: one divine nature in three persons.

Deification. -

Already in *Psalms 8:5v*, God says of mortal man, "But behold, thou hast made of it scarcely less than a deity!"

Peter (*2. Pe 1:4*) says that, through the glorified Christ, we were withdrawn from the corruption of the flesh and became partakers of His divine nature.

This deification (transformation from "flesh" to "spirit") is the very essence of Christianity.

Warning. -

Gal. 4:3v. says that the Jews were "subject to the elements of the world" and the Gentiles were "subject to gods" The word "world" means "whole" (neutral), "whole, controlled by God" (meliorative) or "whole, enslaved by evil (pejorative).

The term "element" means, "that which controls" (and thus makes it understandable). The elements of the world govern this world, and if one knows these elements, one also understands the world. The law of Israel is the element par excellence of the Jews: if one knows their law, one also understands their religion. If one puts the gods of Galatians first, one also understands their culture.

Coloss. 1:16 lists the elements of this world: thrones, lords, dominions, powers. The angels, powers and forces Peter speaks of (*1 Pe 3:22*) are elements of the world.

In passing: powers (legal) and forces refer to the executors of civil power.

Coloss. 2:8

Colossians warns against the vain lure of a philosophy "according to a certain human tradition" that relies on the elements of the world, not on Christ. For it grips the thinking of many people.

'Elements of geometry' to the Ancient Greeks meant "That which one must put first in order to understand geometry."

Peter, Paul, John do not hide their rejection of the elements of the world. Satan is "the prince of this world" (*John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11*). Paul calls him "the god of this world who blinds the mind" (*2 Cor. 4:4*). Submission, slavery, is the preeminent sin of the elements of the world.

Consequence:

Jesus Christ disarmed the dominions and powers (*2 Coloss. 2:15*). All of this makes it understandable that *Job 1:6; 2:1* speaks of the divine court council of the sons of God (higher beings, including Satan) who with God rule the world (in their own way, by the way).

The judges.

Psalms 82 (81), Thou, Holy Trinity, standest up in the midst of the divine court council, in the midst of those called as judges, gods: "How long wilt thou execute unjust judgments? Wilt thou kneel before the godless? Yet pass judgment in favor of the powerless and the orphan. (...) Without any sense, without any understanding, ye are lost in darkness. Immediately the whole country falls apart at the seams. We, the Holy Trinity said in the beginning, "Ye are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you." But no, even as men ye shall die. As one man, rulers, ye shall fall".

One thinks of the cynical judge, who would not grant justice to the widow, described in *Luke 18:1*. Such judges are "elements of the world" who - for the time being - belong to the Divine court. They enslave their neighbor instead of being of service to God and to their neighbor. Hence, God judges them: "You will die" - in the Biblical sense, this means: deprived of divine life force so that only the underworld remains for them.

Psalms 56 (57)

Psalms 56 (57) is sharp: "Is it really true, - so say ye, Holy Trinity, to the judges called 'gods' - that ye have acted righteously? (...) The godless are deviants even from their mother's womb. Those who put errors together have already gone astray from during gestation.

Christ, taken up to heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father, having subjected the angels the powers and forces to Himself (*1 Peter 3:22*): He has dealt with and judged the elements of this world.

4. Biblical dynamism

Dynamism -

In the science of religion, "dynamism" means "the proposition that a religion is essentially a matter of energy (vital force). Dunamis (ancient Greek), in Latin "virtus," stands for "energy. *Luke 8:46* speaks of "a power" emanating from Jesus when he healed the woman suffering from hemorrhage. Since *Genesis 6:3*, the Bible prioritizes two levels of energy, and this according to the couple "flesh/spirit. The destiny of man and his biotope depends essentially on this couple, as will be shown further on. Prayer confirms this: in *Mat 26: 40-41*; at Gethsémani, Jesus says to Peter and the apostles, "Can you not then stay awake with me for one hour? Watch and pray so as not to fall into temptation: the spirit is fervent, but the flesh is weak." Strength and prayer go together, just as the very absence of prayer leads to weakness. Through this basic pairing of "flesh/spirit," Jesus clarifies.

Vital power and destiny. Read two Bible texts that demonstrate this connection between "vigor" and the resulting "destiny."

1. In the days of *Noë*. *Gen. 6* describes, "When men, and their daughters, began to become numerous over the face of the earth, the sons of God - members of God's court council; (as *Job 1: 6; 2 :1* calls them) - found that these pleased them. They took them to be wives at will. Yahweh says, "That my spirit be not indefinitely responsible for man since he is 'flesh'."

One sees the triad: angels/ women/ impermissible sexuality. Biblically speaking, the union of these three is "flesh" in the strict sense. The sacred writer notes the cultural role of this triad: "The nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterwards when viz. the sons of God had sexual intercourse with the daughters of men and gave them their children: they are the heroes of old, those infamous men."

Sexual intercourse with such fallen angels results in higher-gifted children who - heroes alike - nevertheless degrade their culture from "spirit" to "flesh" to the extent that Yahweh, precisely because of their fall, withdraws his spirit over them.

The absence of divine energy makes them weak, even to a flood that destroys such people "by chance. 'Coincidence' to the victims. Inevitable, however, for those who understand the deeper role of that energy.

Notice in this context that the Gospel (*Luke 17: 26*) states, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man." It offers little hope for those who live only according to "the flesh.

2. In the days of Lot (*Luke 17: 28*). *Genesis 19* describes. Three "men" who reveal themselves as an apparition of God, along with two of his angels, arrive at Abraham's house.

The two angels depart for Sodoma because "the cry for vengeance against Sodoma and Gomorrah is great," because of their cross-border sinfulness. (*Gen. 18:20*). For Israel, homosexuality - also called sodomy after the city of Sodoma - was a sin "against nature," and deserved the death penalty (*Lev. 18:22*). Note: it is sin that cries out for vengeance and is rectified by God in an accelerated manner: if man is merely "flesh," this leads to loss of energy.

Transgressive homosexuality.

The two angels enjoy Lot's hospitality as was customary in those days but in doing so he is confronted with the public mores of his time in Sodoma: hardly had they gone to bed or their house was besieged by the inhabitants of Sodoma, from young to old. They woke Lot and cried out, "Where are the men who came to see them? "Deliver them to us so that we may abuse them." (*Gen. 19:4*). Lot tried to appease them somewhat: "I still have two virgin girls. Do with them what you will. But leave my guests undisturbed, for they enjoy the hospitality of my house.

Remark:

In that cultural context, the welfare of the people to whom one extended hospitality was sacred, and therefore more important than the sexual integrity of both Lot's daughters. Moreover, the value of the woman was also less than that of the man, as *Gen. 12:10vv* shows.

Angels who exterminate.

The Sodomites, from the smallest to the largest, pushed Lot aside and wanted to use force, but the angels came to Lot's aid and warned him and his people that a natural catastrophe will take place over the city. One sees the hastened judgment of God. Sulfur and fire destroyed Sodoma (and Gomorrah) and the entire plain. Note that "judgment of God" means "intervention of God" (either in a direct way or through a natural event). Here it takes the form of a judgmental shift: the ones, - the inhabitants of Sodoma - are overwhelmed because from their lack of dynamism, of energy, they "being flesh," they denote the event as a coincidence. Lot and his own, however, with an abundance of dynamism, of God's spirit, sense the danger and take flight in time.

Here we also encounter "the flesh" but under the form of Sodomy: and as a triad: angels/men/ illicit sexuality. Finally, we note that the sacred text does not condemn every form of homosexuality as a sin crying out for vengeance, but only the degenerate and brutal form of the Sodomites.

5. The ethics of the Bible.

In his *letter to the Galatians*, 6:8 Paul writes, "He who sows in the flesh will reap corruption; we who sow in the spirit will reap eternal life." In *Marc. 10:17ff*, Jesus meets a rich youth who asks him, "Good master, what must I do to attain eternal life?" Jesus answers him, "Keep the commandments, do not kill anyone, do not commit adultery, do not rob anyone, do not wrong anyone and respect your parents." This response of Christ clearly shows that the ethics of the Old Testament, (*Ex. 20:1vv, 34:10v*), the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments remains the basis for a spiritual life. Keeping these commandments, faith in the one God, Yahweh, supplemented by the counsel given by the gospel, remains the pre-eminent characteristic of Christian dynamism.

The Decalogue.

The first three commandments concern revering the divine, the Holy Trinity, in thought, word and deed as the basis of culture. The fourth commandment articulates the basis of culture: the respect of parents and children for one another. Then follow the commandments that center respect for life in all its varieties (5), sexuality (6, 9), property (7, 10) and truth (8). One might be tempted in our modern and post - modern times to downplay the value of these ten commandments, yet it is good to realize that these values are the basis for a mutual respect between people, even still in our time, which speaks so easily of neighbor with contempt.

The "flesh/spirit" couple.

Clarify: *Gal. 5:19vv* gives us an enumeration.

1. Those who live from the flesh. - idolatry, unchastity, discipline, licentiousness, (black) magic, hatred, discord, jealousy, temper, quarrels, strife, dissension, envy, revels and the like.

2. The fruit of the spirit: chastity, joy, peace, meekness, service, goodness, confidence, gentleness, self-control....

We give this enumeration to clarify that the basic Biblical pairing "flesh/spirit" is supported on a concrete reality, as the following example illustrates.

The meat as the way to the Sheol. -

Numbers 16:30vv gives us an actual example of what the way to the sheol, (underworld, hell) means. - What the sheol can particularly mean is described in *Proverbs 7:1vv*.. Bible specialists name this description with the Greek word "parakuptousa" (the oblique woman). Summarize somewhat.

The stranger with the soft words.

"I saw in the midst of young naive people (...), a lad without insight. He goes down the alley,--near the corner where she is. Turns into the road to her ...house. At dusk, at dusk, in the heart of "night" and "darkness." Look: a woman approaches him, dressed like a prostitute, in

her heart the treachery itself. Enterprising she is and shameless. Her feet do not hold up in her own house. (...). She grasps him, embraces him and shamelessly she says: "My bed I have covered with blankets, with colorful fabrics! With myrrh I have sprinkled my berth, with aloes and cinnamon. Come down! We intoxicate ourselves with love play until morning. By persuasion with power she seduces him. Immediately he follows her. Like an ox to the slaughterhouse. Like a rash to the torture of foot-clutches. (...). Without realizing that his 'life' is at stake."

The ordained writer specifies what he means by "life": "That your heart does not deviate in the direction of her paths! Do not get lost in her paths! For numerous are those whom she mortally afflicts Her dwelling is the way to the sheol, the slope to the portal of the dead."

In *Spr. 23: 27/ 28*, the sacred writer says that a lewd woman is like a deep pit lurking. In other words, whoever engages with a prostitute surrenders to shadows from the underworld. Her dwelling gives out to death. Her dwelling is the sheol itself, materially visible - and tangible on earth.

Remark:

The biblical authors sometimes present it more as if the invisible evil beings are primarily in the earth, but *Ephes. 6:12* e.g. also situates them in the sky or even in the stars.

6. The flesh, Biblically speaking.

To further understand the Biblical term "flesh" as opposed to "spirit," we read *Tobias 3:8...*: Sarra, a young woman, was the object of Asmodeus, "the worst among the demons. She had already been married off seven times yet 'this son of God' had killed her partners, one after another, just before they were to enter into the marriage act, as spouses." As an invisible worshipper, the killing demon harms her nothing. However, as soon as someone wants to approach her with a view to marriage, he kills him (6:15).

An exorcism by the archangel Raphael (12:15) makes things quite difficult for the demon so that it flees (8:3) and thus Sarra is set free. The triad "woman/ demon/ illicit eroticism" shows that this is "the flesh" in its strict sense.

Numbers 25 gives us another example. This time it involves a religion. Israel settled at Shittim. There the people engaged in fornication with Moabite women who invited the people to offer sacrifices to her deities. The term "prostitution" in the Bible means, among other things, "loss of faith.

Baal, the high god (the Lord) formed a pair with the goddess Astarte. The sacred rite took place in a bedroom. By engaging in lovemaking, one invoked the couple Baal/ Astarte who mystically drew into the two lovers in the course of intercourse.

In the Moabites' interpretation, such was not prostitution but religion. The sanctuary of Baal between Israel and Moab (*Numbers 23:28*) was frequented by both peoples. Which encouraged seduction by Moabite women. The triad "men and women/ sons, daughters of the god (Baal/ Astarte/ illicit ethics" shows that said religion is through and through "flesh" is in the rawest sense was. Hence the Biblical term "(sacred) prostitution," i.e. a religious act involving apostasy: one turns away from Yahweh.

The Epistle of Judas. -

Jude describes how God severely judges the flesh.

Jude 6: The angels who had fellowship with the daughters at the time of Noé did not keep their high rank but left their abode: they lowered themselves to demons of the underworld. Their level of "spirit" they lowered to that of "flesh. God also chained them in the depths of the underworld until the return of Christ and the last judgment. Thus, they reside in the subterranean regions because their energy is insufficient to resist those places and their inhabitants. Especially since they have created an immoral culture that makes a natural disaster inevitable: a deluge.

Jude 7. - Sodoma, Gomorrah and their surroundings sinned in similar ways. Saint Jude envisages that sodomy which no longer even respects God's angels and seeks communion with them: "these cities sought a completely different 'flesh,'" viz. not human, that of the two angels

in their earthly appearance. Consequence: their energy no longer protects them from the suffering of eternal fire. Their abode is that of the subterranean regions of demons and of the damned whose energy is eaten away by the fire, viz. by the radical loss of their divine energy.

S. Jude accuses the false doctors (also *2 Peter 1:16, 3:3v.* mentions them) who "drunkenly defile the flesh (note here in the ordinary sense) and do not respect the angels

Which they seek to include in their rites. They bring no regard for the exalted nature of angels and for that which they know by nature (by their behavior) "like reasonless animals." The flesh serves only to lose themselves in it. According to Jude, they are psychic beings, that is, beings without God's essential spirit. Thus, they are not protected from the darkness that attracts them.

As for Peter, for S. Jude, the appearance of such doctors is a sign of the coming end times. (*Jude 18*).

S. Jude asks believers to seek to convince those who are still hesitant . But to shun others, however, "with fear and loathing, for even their garments are stained by sin." (*Jude 23*). As a counterweight, he sees the Holy Trinity: "God (the Father)/ the Lord (the Son)/ Holy Spirit") with prayer "in the Holy Spirit" as the source of life force.

Remark:

Some interpret these texts as if they are merely a "mythical mentality," and the modern mind does not tolerate solid truth as one knows it from a life borne of the Holy Trinity.

7. As it was, ... so shall it be.

Read what Jesus says regarding the moral and religious evolution of man in *Luke 17: 26vv.*. In summary, "Noë/ Lot" and "flesh/ spirit in the form of "sow/ harvest".

1. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man (Jesus): men ate and drank, married and were given a marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark and the flood came which destroyed all."

2. "Or as it was in the days of Lot: people ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and built, but on the day Lot departed from Sodoma, God rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed all. So will it be in the day when the Son of Man appears."

1. *Metonymic language:* -

The Bible, like many religious texts, summarizes: instead of saying, "The deluge or the sulfur and fire, phenomena created by God and instrument of his providence, make all who lack divine energy disappear" (the unabridged version) one says, "God, by the deluge or the rain of sulfur and fire makes disappear..." (the abbreviated version by metonymy)

"*The Son of Man*" 2. -

This term dates from *Daniel 7:13* and means "to be human" (as "son of man" means "divine being"). *Daniel in 7:13* articulates the end of the "animals," the very earthly political-religious earthly system before the time of the Son of Man, and in *7:13* he sees the coming of the Son of Man who is of heavenly origin. Jesus introduces Himself there as Son of divine man. One sees the pair "flesh (animals) / spirit (Jesus)."

3. *The days of the Son of Man*

These materialize in two times: His first coming is a "revelation" in which He shows His power and His teaching, supported by miracles, but He bears witness to His weakness through His death on the cross; His second coming (spoken of in *Luke 17:26v.*) is that same revelation but "in power" t.e. glorified ("glory" is "spirit in its full splendor").

Conclusion: Jesus is under no illusion regarding the cultural evolution of man: in *Luke 18:8* he says, "Will the Son of Man find faith on his return to earth?" See, among other things, *Matthew 24:12.* - In the end, it will always be "the small number" who live up to the new covenant (*Jer. 31:31vv; Heb. 8:13*) and live according to the spirit, while the vast majority live according to the flesh.

The descent "into hell." -

Christ, mindful of the future, is deeply concerned about this situation: died on the cross and filled with the Spirit immediately after His death (*1 Pet. 3:18*), He descends "into hell" (the subterranean realms where "life" knows only darkness and eternal fire) to proclaim the Good

News "to those who at the time of Noah had refused to believe. Add the Sodomites who had likewise refused to believe at that time. They too are told the glad tidings. One of the reasons - besides the concern for the salvation of souls in the underworld - is that people on earth who exhibit similar behavior also come under the influence of the underworld. Not without reason, Jesus speaks of "the gates of hell" in *Matthew 16:18* where he says that these gates (understand: presence and power) of Hades (the Greek term for "hell") will not stand against the church despite their constant threat.

Judgment of God. -

S. *Jude* (6; *deluge*); 7 (*destruction of Sodoma*) and even more clearly Peter (2 *Peter* 2) reiterate what Jesus emphasized: first, the pair "days of Noah/ days of Lot," then judgment as shifting. -

2 *Peter* 2:4vv.. - God notes that the world prior to the Flood was a world of sinners - the level of the flesh - among whom Noë and his own lived - level of the spirit - , did not spare the sinners and kept Noë and his own. One sees the shifting and its energetic basis (flesh / spirit). -

2 *Peter* 2:6vv.. - God sees the Sodomites prey to an aggressive form of sodomy, condemning some to utter destruction (flesh) and saving others (spirit). One sees the shifting and the reason.

This reminds us of *Galatians 6:7v*: "what one sows, one will reap: he who sows in the flesh will reap corruption; he who sows in the spirit will reap the spirit and eternal life."

Life is a process dominated by the type of life force, according to the fundamental law of "sowing/harvesting." "Before man is life and death: according to their good pleasure one or the other is given them" (*Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 15:17*).

8. The new covenant.

All religions have their mediators of the sacred. In the Bible, they are the priests, prophets, wise men (*note*: thinkers) (*Jer. 18:18*) or "prophets, wise men, scribes" (*Matt. 23:34*). These mediators claim to have a knowledge of God and speak "in the name of God" to the people they authoritatively lead. That is the old covenant.

The New Covenant. -

Already Moses exclaimed: "May all Yahweh's people be prophets because He sent His life force down upon them!" (*Numbers 11:29*). But since Jeremiah and especially Ezéchiél, the idea of a new covenant found its way.

Jeremias 31:32vv, says that the old covenant has come to an end because it was based too much on the interdependence of believers. He clarifies, "The fathers have eaten green - unripe - grapes, and the teeth of the children taste bitter."

Ezekiel 18:1 repeats the same thought as characteristic of the old covenant. - Jeremias quotes the voice (*note*: the inspired word) of God: each one will die by his or her own fault: whoever commits faults will himself "grow stout teeth" (suffer the adverse consequences). The uniqueness of the new covenant is expressed by Yahweh as, "I will situate My law (*note*: the way of life I desire) in the depths of their being, and I will write My law on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they will be my people."-- Then each one among them will no longer have to teach his neighbor--each his "brother"--while saying, "Learn to know Yahweh. For all will know Me;-- from the smallest to the greatest - God's word from Yahweh - because I am going to forgive their/their crime and will think no more of their/their sin."

Note - The term "knowing God" in the Biblical sense means "dealing intimately with Him"

The Greek meaning "intellectual knowledge" is at most an aspect of the typically Biblical 'knowing.' In *Ezekiel 36: 26vv*, Yahweh specifies, "I will give you a new heart and pour out a new spirit within you; I will see to it that you keep my laws and keep my precepts carefully." It is the language of Moses.

The spirit of Pentecost. -

Joel 3:1 describes the radical universality of the divine project "After this I will pour down my spirit on all flesh (*note*: all people as they actually are): your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your elders will have dreams, your young men will see visions. Even over the servants and servantesses, men and women, I will then pour out my spirit." Which is copied verbatim in *Acts 2:17/18* when interpreting the descent of the Holy Spirit on Mary, the apostles and disciples. Descent that continues here and there to our days.

The letter to the *Hebrews 8:6v* quotes *Jer. 31: 31v* and immediately adds, "Speaking of 'the new covenant' makes the earlier covenant old. So, what is old and worn out will disappear".

This changes the position of a Church mediator: he is at the service of the new covenant to bring the faithful into direct and intimate individual contact with the Holy Trinity. Of this Christ is the epitome: he tells the world what he has heard from the Father who sent him (*John 8:26, 8:28*), that is, thanks to his intimate contact with the Father. By saying, "all shall be taught by God" (*John 6: 45*), He clearly affirms direct contact with God: He actualizes the message of *Joel 3: 1* in its generality.

Psalm 51 (50)

Psalm 51 (50) sets us - already in the context of the old testament - on the path of the new covenant, and its double effect: the forgiveness of sins and the giving of the Holy Spirit to all.

1. *Sin forgiveness.* - "Be merciful to me, God who is love; You, boundless mercy, erase what I have done wrong. Wash me clean from guilt, cleanse me from my sin. I confess: I have misbehaved, my sin continually charges me. Against You alone I have sinned, I have done what is evil in Your sight."

2. *The gift of the Holy Spirit.* - "God, create in me a pure heart, renew my spirit, make it steadfast. Do not cast me off, away from your countenance (note: from your intimacy), do not take your Holy Spirit away from me. lord, give me the joy of your salvation, strengthen me with your generous spirit.

This prayer - mercy - although dating from the Old Testament - is still the prayer of the New Covenant. - Note that the verb "create" ("create in me a pure heart") is characteristic of God: thoroughly changing man who was merely "flesh" is the same as bringing him to life. Which means that the change from "flesh" to "spirit" involves a new creation. Only God can accomplish such a thing.

9. Individual responsibility according to Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 18:1/32. - This chapter can be summarized as follows: ""The one who is unrighteous (*note: unscrupulous*) will 'die'". We quote and emphasize the main point.

The essence is the decalogue. -

The righteous, understand: one who behaves ethically, does not attend pagan sacrificial meals (to the mountains e.g.), does not dishonor his neighbor's wife, does not approach a woman in her stroud, does not oppress anyone, gives back to the debtor the collateral and does not appropriate another's property; shares his food with the hungry and provides the naked clothing; does not lend at interest, does not take usurious profits, abstains from injustice and makes a fair judgment between two parties; lives according to my precepts and keeps my commandments scrupulously: such a person will "live" (remain in contact with God).

The error is personal. -

"But he in turn receives a son, who sees all the evil that his father does but nevertheless does not emulate that evil example; (...), then that son will not die because of his father's iniquity, he will certainly live. But his father, who was a usurer who appropriated other people's goods and did among his relatives what is not good, he shall die because of his iniquity, and his 'blood' (*note: the ethical responsibility for his life*) shall come down upon himself" (*18:10/13*). Thus the sacred text itself. It is evident that "life" and "death" are used here in the occult sense.

Conversion is personal.

- "If an evildoer repents of the sins he has done and keeps all my commandments and acts according to right and law, he will 'live'; he will not die. (...). Would I sometimes take pleasure in the death of the sinner - God's word from Yahweh - and not much rather see him mend his ways and continue to be provided with godly life? (*18:21vv.*)

The fall is personal. -

"But if a righteous person deviates from the way of righteousness and starts doing evil (...), he will die. (...). It is because of the evil he has committed, that he dies" (emphasis: loses divine "life"). (*18:24vv.*)

The "death / life" couple. -

Clearly, the terms "death" and "life" in their typically Biblical sense refer to the result caused by the other pair "flesh/spirit. Death here represents "spiritual" death, and "life" represents spiritual life. An evil person who does not repent is a "dead" person. An ethical person is a person who "lives.

The pair "sheol/ in the sight of God." -

Because Biblically speaking, a spiritually dead person belongs to the depths of the underworld, he is the visible and tangible representation of these underworld realms on our

earth, whereas a person who lives in accordance with God's will is already living here "in God's sight," i.e. in intimate God-contact, as *Psalms 16 (15): 8vv.* clearly puts it: I keep Yahweh before my eyes without ceasing, (...). for You do not give up my life to the realm of the dead, You cannot leave my soul to its fate in the sheol, You cannot let your friend see the grave (*note: the subterranean realms*). If one contacts a God-friend, one is, through him, in daily life in direct and tangible contact with God himself.

Decision. -

"Therefore I will judge each one of you according to his deeds (...). Repent, turn away from all your misdeeds; otherwise they will become fatal to you. Get rid of all the misdeeds you have committed; and renew your heart (*emphasis: your deeper soul*) and your spirit, for why should you die (...)? I take no pleasure in the death of anyone - God's word from Yahweh. So repent and remain alive!" (*18:30vv.*)

Behold the impressive message of the prophet Ezekiel, who shows us the true God of the old testament, who is so often contrasted with the God of the new testament, - not without having demonized the one of the old covenant and extolled that of the new covenant.

Remark. -

If man is not overwhelmed by the by the faults of his ancestors and his own past, then we find that the prophet speaks only of the guilt, but not of possible other consequences brought by his ancestors or his own past. -

In this light, we consider *Rom. 5:12vv*: "Therefore, just as by one man sin entered the world, and with sin came death, and so death has come upon all men, since all have sinned...." Even with this original sin, we are then forced to see it under point of view of "guilt" as a personal sin with its consequences.

10. "Do not trust every spirit but examine the spirits." (1. John 4:1)

Listening to *1 Kings 22* - The land is divided into two kingdoms, that of Israel and that of Judah. Ahab (-874/-853) rules the north of Israel and Josaphat (-870/-848) rules the south of Judah. It is the time of the wars against the Arameans (Aram). One day Josaphat visits Ahab with a view to making a covenant. -

Of course, one consults Yahweh through prophets: Josaphat - a God-fearing man - says to Ahab, "Consult first the word of God." The latter gathers his prophets "in the number of about four hundred" (*1 Kings 22:6*). These were not God-friends but were serving the king. They must answer the question, "Should yes or no attack?" They answer, "Attack! The Lord will deliver them to the king".

But Josaphat who knew that these prophets were not godly, asked, "Is there not a prophet of Yahweh here through whom we can consult Him?" To which Ahab replied, "There is one more man through whom we can consult Yahweh, but I dislike him because he never foretells anything good to me (...). It is Mikajehoe (...). But Jehoshaphat said, "The king should not speak like that." Ahab had Mikajehoe called.

Mikajehoe's message. -

The two kings were each seated on their thrones, in full armor. Ahab's prophets all prophesied before the kings. All prophesied to Ahab, "Your campaign will succeed (...). -

The messenger sent to fetch Mikajehoe said to him, "The prophets have unanimously made a favorable prediction to the king; let your word agree with theirs and predict something good." But Mikajehoe replied, "So that Yahweh lives: I will only say what Yahweh commands me." When he had come to the king, he somewhat mockingly repeated, "Attack; your campaign will succeed; Yahweh will deliver them to the king." But the king fell out against him: "How many times must I implore you to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of Yahweh?" Thereupon Mikajehoe said, "I saw all Israel scattered over the mountains like sheep without a shepherd. And Yahweh spoke, "They have no lord; let everyone return home in peace."

Note: -

The seership ("I saw") accompanies the word of God ("Yahweh spoke to me") Ahab anticipated it. Mikajehoe resumed, "Listen rather to the word of Yahweh! I saw: Yahweh seated on His throne. All the army of heaven (*note*: the spirits that make up God's court council (cf. *Job 1:6; 2:1; Ps. 58 (57); Ps. 82 (81)*) to the left and right of him. Yahweh asked, "Who will deceive Ahab (...). The spirits answered; one so; the other otherwise. Then "the spirit" (*note*: generic term for all that is prophetic spirit of Yahweh,-- neutral, meliorative and, as here later, pejorative) stepped forward: "I! I will deceive him!" Yahweh asked, "How?" He: "I will go and make me a lying spirit in the mouths of his prophets (*note*: the four hundred). Yahweh: "You will deceive Ahab. You will succeed! Go! Execute!". Mikajehoe immediately adds, "Look,

then: Yahweh has sent a spirit of falsehood into the mouth of all that is present here as your prophets! But as for Yahweh himself: he has prophesied doom to you". Thereupon Sedecias goes up to Mikajehoe and slaps his cheek: "How would the spirit of Yahweh have left me to speak to you?" Mikajehoe: "That very thing thou shalt see the day thou shalt flee into a secluded place to put thee away!". Ahab commanded, " Keep him! Place him under the supervision of Amon (...). Thou shalt say to them, "Thus speaks the prince: put this man captive, with only bread and water until when I am well and healthy again." -

Mikajehoe said, "If you return healthy and well, Yahweh has not spoken through my mouth." The two kings go to war. Ahab thinks he can escape Yahweh's judgment by disguising himself as an ordinary soldier. However, at one point an adversary tightens his bow without knowing at whom he is aiming. Ahab is mortally struck and dies that very night. So much for the story. For clarification, let's dwell on this.

1. Thus, among other things, the prophetic spirit of Eliseus (*2 Kings 2/13*) is like a double-edged sword: if one recognizes his divine calling, he saves; if one does not recognize it (by mocking him, e.g.), he destroys. - What Micheas describes as a scene of the afterlife presupposes a spirit of Yahweh who is himself double-edged: if he is confronted by false prophets pretending to be inspired by Yahweh, he leads them to destruction by invading their souls: "I will become a spirit of lies in the mouths of their prophets."

2. St. Paul reasons in a similar way in *2 Thessalonians (2:9/12)* where he talks about the antichrist who deceives people, including by miracles. All this is then "destined for those who are lost, because they have closed themselves off from the love of the truth, which could have saved them. And therefore God sends them a power that tempts them to give faith to the lie (...)." - If one is merely "flesh," fleeing the truth, lying spirits are given the opportunity to thus predict all that one desires, but then they are lies. If, however, one devotes oneself to the divine "spirit," one escapes this mechanism and achieves what one really desires: true inspiration.

11. The secret and its revelation.

Every man faces secrets. When S. Paul is shipwrecked in Malta, he throws some barren wood into the fire in which a viper sticks to his hand. The Maltese interpret : "This man is a murderer : he escapes the sea a moment ago and divine vengeance does not leave him alive" (*Acts 28:3v.*). They reasoned from consequence to a `divine' cause. - In emergencies they resorted to public fasting and prayers to expose a fault (*Recht. 20:26; 1 Kon. 21:9; Joel 1:14, 2:15*).

Note:-

Biblically, the causal relationship rests on *Gen. 6:3*: the flesh (fault) provokes in God the withdrawal of his spirit. Which with the people - given a mysterious mutual solidarity - shows itself in a vulnerability as a result of the fault committed.

In the book of Daniel, too, the problem of the hidden and its revelation is central: amid a host of `sages' (diviners, conjurers, magicians) (*Dan. 2:2*) who specialized in the "interpretation of mysteries" within non-Biblical framework, Daniel puts "the Exalted God" (*2:45*) or even "the God of gods" (*2:47*) first as "the revealer of mysteries" (*2:47*), who reveals deep things and secrets and knows what is in the darkness (*2:22*).

Hidden error.-

1 Kon. 17:17v.- The prophet Elijah (Elias) lives with a widow at Sarepta. The woman's son fell ill and gave up the ghost. Whereupon she said to Elijah, "How is it between me and thee, man of God? Thou hast thus come to me to remind me of my faults and cause my son to die!". Elijah says nothing but heals the child.- This incident shows us a characteristic of a "God-sent one": just by their presence, unconscious errors surface, are exposed, and God's judgment accelerates in the form of unexpected miscalculations.

On a public scale, one observes that in difficult times people proclaim fasts and public prayer services (*Judges 20:26; Joel 1: 14/15 (the day of Yahweh comes as a destruction.) 1 kon 21:9*) to reveal some error that shows itself in its painful consequences.

Who sinned?

- *John 9:1vv.*- Jesus notices a man born blind. The disciples ask, "Rabbi, who sinned - him or his parents - so that he was born blind?" That his parents qualify is a case of the genealogical thinking spread worldwide.

This brings us to the old covenant. Indeed, *Jeremiah 31:29* says, "The fathers have eaten green - unripe - grapes, and the teeth of the children taste bitter." This means, e.g., that a descendant dies because of someone else's fault. - Curious: in doing so, the students do not rule out the hypothesis of a personal error before birth. Which leads one to conclude a mistake even

before conception, - in a previous life. In that case, the blind person is himself responsible for being born blind. -

Reincarnists conclude reincarnation from this. With the fault of the parents, the hypothesis of a fault before conception is considered possible.... But Jesus states that neither he nor his parents sinned : the blind man does show the works (signs, miracles) of God.

Note:-

The text does not necessarily involve reincarnation. - The blindborn may have committed a mistake in the mother's womb: one thinks of *Luke 1:41, 1:44*, where Elisabeth says that when Mary arrived, the child "sprang up in her womb." Which perhaps indicates awareness of in the mother's womb with the possibility of sin. Personal error, peculiar to the blindborn, makes reincarnation logically non-emergency.

At the commission of Jesus in the temple, Simeon points out, "This child will bring with him the fall and the resurrection (understand : judgment shifting) of many in Israel (note: the judgment shifting of God) ... that the secret thoughts of many hearts may be exposed" (*Luke 2:34v.*). After all, Jesus is a person sent by God. There he shows himself to be the great God of the prophet Daniel who clearly sees "flesh" and "spirit" at work among men.

Biblical examination of conscience.-

1 Cor. 4:3vv.-"I do not judge myself. Although my conscience does not reproach me, that does not make me justified (understand: in order with God). The Lord is my judge.- Consequently: judge not prematurely. Let the Lord come (understand: at his second coming): he will illuminate the secrets of darkness and uncover the intentions of hearts. Then everyone will receive from God the praise due to him." The "then" represents the final judgment at the end of time. Thus S. Paul, examining his conscience for unconscious errors as if the glorified Jesus had already returned before the final judgment. This eschatological (end-time-oriented) way of thinking is typical of the entire Old and New Testaments.-.

Note: -

If moderns maintain that they have discovered the unconscious, then in St. Paul they have a forerunner of stature who was under no illusions concerning our consciousness as a blobber of truth. *Matt. 11:25.*-"Jesus said : Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I bless you because you (understand: the mysteries of his action) have hidden it from the wise and prudent and have revealed it to the very small."-Jesus speaks as *Ps. 72 (71)* already says it : the small, the children of the poor, do not get their right from the powerful on earth. Jesus, the All-Manager as the just judge, initiates "the little ones" into the mysteries of God's justice.

12. God speaks to man.

In essence, the Bible is a kind of library containing a diversity of all kinds of texts. Some have only historical significance so that they are no longer so important to us. Also, the Bible contains a lot of repetition. But some texts, notwithstanding their advanced age and the cultural distance that separates them from us, still have topical value. We find an example of this in *Job 33:14vv.* It concerns lived experiences. - "God speaks repeatedly, but no one paying attention, in dreams, nightly visions, when man is in deep sleep, or slumbering in bed." It seems as if the sacred author has determined that contemporaries do not appreciate the divine value of some such experiences.

Nighttime phenomena. -

When the human mind has somewhat calmed down in nocturnal sleep then God "speaks" through dreams and nocturnal visions or he startles them by apparitions. The divine significance of such phenomena, according to the author, is so that "man would reflect on his works and put an end to his pride": "God thus restrains the soul from the abyss (*opm.*: death), from his life just before the swamp of death."

An example. -

Wisdom 17:1vv dwells on the exodus, when the Israelites left Egypt. "For the Egyptians (...) thought to remain hidden in their secret sins, (*op.*: their religious practices) (...) but they were dispersed, in fierce fear and bewildered by delusions. For even the shelter that hid them did not exempt them from fear, and downcast noises echoed around them, and sad specters with lurid faces showed themselves."

The author describes the plague of darkness that fell upon the Egyptians (*Exodus 10:21v.*) and brought them into contact with the depths of the underworld (the subterranean realms) (*Wisdom 17:14*).- In *Wisdom 18: 17*, the author says that these apparitions and dreams "made known to them why they died. For this had been previously revealed to them by the dreams that had bewildered them, so that they would not perish without knowing why they were so sorely afflicted." Bible interpreters believe that this is an eschatological form of description (it refers at the same time to events at the end of time). Remember that the New Testament is thoroughly eschatological, continuing the tradition of the Old Testament.

Suffering.

God also speaks through sickness. - *Job 33:19vv.* - "Also sickness, bedridden and deeply ingrained fever in his bones point out to him (i.e. the sick man). - He can no longer see food, even his favorite food stands him back; his body is visibly deteriorating; you couldn't see his ribs before, now you can count them."

Then God speaks, "Then the abyss comes near and he stands right before the swamp of death. But if an angel then stands by him, one of the innumerate ones stands up for him and

shows him the right way, then God is merciful to him and says (note: the angel to God), "Hold on, he doesn't have to go into the abyss, I will find the ransom for his life." Then his body becomes young and fresh again (...). He may pray again, for God loves him, He grants him His favor, His joy and new righteousness. (...). "I sinned, went wrong ways, but God did not treat me according to my fault. He saved me from the abyss and I enjoy the light again".

An example. -

Wisdom 18:21vv. - The sacred writer cites Aaron's intervention: "A blameless man hastily leaped into the breach before them, equipped with the weapons of his own service, prayer and atoning incense offering. He withstood the wrath and put an end to the calamity; thus he showed that he was God's servant. (...). When the dead were already lying in heaps upon one another, he stood in the middle, repulsed the wrath and cut off the way to the living. (...) For this the exterminator (op. the angel who executes the judgment of God) softened, for this he was apprehensive: just a show of wrath was enough."

All this is typical of the "old testament." Moreover! The God of the old testament, - who is so often contrasted with that of the new - does not show himself indifferent to the intervention of "mediators" who have a say by their interventions.

The Word of God. -

It will have been observed that the expression "God speaks" hides a special meaning. To "speak" on the part of God means to "address to. What occurs "in one way, then in another" (*Job 33:14*). God brings us into situations of daily life, so to speak. He does not "speak," He does not "preach. He "situates," inspiring our deeper souls with His counsel - aided or not by mediators. But already at the time of the ordained writer "people" were hardly paying attention to it.

13. A good shepherd completes conflicting choices.

The parable of the good shepherd - *John 10* - is sufficiently well known, but situating it in the whole biblical context reveals to us the guiding ideas of the Bible itself.

The "knowledge/voice" pair. -

In the parable, the shepherd enters through the door or he is the door itself, calling his sheep one by one (*Jeremias 31:34: "All shall know me"*). "His sheep he calls each one by his name" (*John 10:3*). "And when he has brought his sheep all out, he goes out before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. A stranger, however, they will never follow; on the contrary, they flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers. - Jesus limits himself for the moment to the Jewish people but he already shows himself as a universal shepherd: "I have other sheep who are not of this stable (note: the Jewish people). These too will listen to my voice" (*10:16*).- Jesus repeats in *John 10:27*, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life". Knowing - the intimate contact - and listening to His voice go hand in hand.

Two voices... -

Moses and the book of *Numbers 11:29* mention it: the prophet, through a special spirit, hears and listens to his father's voice. - In *John 8:47*, Jesus is in full discussion with some hostile Jews who desire his death. Jesus tells them, "He who is of God hears the words of God: if therefore ye hear nothing, it is because ye are not of God." And *John 8: 38vv.* "I, I speak as I have seen with my Father. Ye, ye act as ye have heard from your Father. In short: To understand Jesus as the Father-inspired "son of God" (hermeneutics), one needs to be inspired by God himself (mantics) when listening to Jesus' message.

The works are in accordance with the ingatherer. In *8:40* Jesus specifies, "You are bent on killing me, while I have proclaimed to you the truth which I have heard from God. (...). You are carrying out the works of your father(...). The reason : thou art incapable of hearing my word. Thou springs from the devil, thy father. The desires of thy father,--that wilt thou carry out. There Jesus characterizes the devil: "The devil, from the beginning, was a man-killer. Nor was he at home in the truth. Because in him there is no truth. So when he lies, he speaks as he actually is, by being a 'liar' and the father of lies."

Fatherhood. -

It is clear: the word "father" has two meanings: "he who gives life" and "he who is the source of inspiration in the soul's depths. - The height - or lowness - of his ethical nature shows itself in his works. Here: the will to kill an emissary of God - a prophet - and the lie, the refusal to enter into the truth. The difference with Christ's ethical nature is obvious: "I am the good shepherd: I know my sheep and the sheep know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I give my life for my sheep". (*John 10:14v.*). Instead of killing the sheep as the robbers or the mercenaries and the blinded Pharisees do. So there are criteria for judging the

"inner word" according to its ethical value. These are summarized in the Decalogue or Ten Commandments. So the distinction of inspired words and their respective "father" is indeed possible.

Faith and blindness. -

In *John 9:39* Jesus says: - "For the purpose of a shifting I have come into this world: that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." Jesus is talking first of all about those who have a real contact with God. These are those who, like the blind man, are acutely aware that they are facing a mystery and confess that it is opaque. They "do not know."

Then Jesus talks about those who have no real contact with God, but who, he says, see clearly in the real nature of Christ. The Pharisees hear His words and ask Him, "Are we also among those 'blind'?" Jesus: "If ye were 'blind' (*note*: in an honest way not seeing clearly), then ye were without sin. But ye claim 'we see' So remains your sin". The signs of Christ's glory make no difference here: he who does not see does not see. *John (12:39)* quotes the prophet *Isaias (6:9)*, "God hath blinded their eyes, their hearts he hath petrified, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts; lest they repent."

The most striking example of this blindness is Judas. The mechanism is clear:

"Meanwhile, the devil had induced Judas to hand Jesus over" (*John 13:2*). Jesus, as a seer, knows it. He is concerned and says, "He that eats my bread lifts up the heel against me" (*Ps. 41(40): 10*; -- which is to say, "Even he whom I confided in acts against me"). Even now I say it before it happens. So that when it happens, ye believe that "I am"; (*John 13:18/20*)-.

"When Jesus had said this, he was moved in his spirit: "Verily, verily. I tell you: someone among you will deliver me up". (...) "Lord, who is it?". Jesus: "It is he to whom I will give a piece of bread". Jesus dipped the bread in the wine and handed it to Judas. At that moment Satan entered him. Jesus thereupon : "What you are doing, do not delay". No one, however, of the table companions understood why he spoke thus to Judas(...). Immediately after accepting the mouthful of bread, Judas went outside. It was night. (*John 13:26*). Judas thought only of the money and did not believe, as *John 6:64* puts it, "But there are some among you who do not believe." Indeed, Jesus knew from the first moment who it was who did not believe and who it was who would deliver Him up." Jesus, as judge, even accelerates the mechanism of that demise.

14. Praying as intimate contact with God.

In *Matt. 26:41* Jesus says, Watch and pray so as not to fall into temptation. The spirit is strong but the flesh is weak". When one prays, one gets a direct and individual contact - which is the goal of Christianity - with the Holy Trinity, who at that moment pours out her spirit on the one who prays, on his situation and on the problem presented. The one who prays thus transcends his weakness, and becomes "strong.

Weakness. -

All this does not prevent *St. Paul* in *Rom. 8:26* from making light of our weakness: "We do not even know how we ought to pray." And almost everyone, including Christians, will not contradict this.

Causes: -

They are manifold, individually and collectively. We do not even dwell on them, except for a few. The Pentecost event in Jerusalem was centuries ago, and the coming of the Son of Man at the end of time hardly seems to affect us in our daily lives. All scripture and all Christian tradition have always stressed that the time between Pentecost and the coming of the Son of Man is far from simple. And the Lord's Prayer - the prayer left to us by Christ - expresses it clearly. The name (the important role) of the Father is sanctified only by a minority of people. His will is done only very partially on earth and in heaven. The reason: His kingdom is barely beginning, yes has yet to come. "Thy kingdom come" we say with Christ. For the kingdom is not yet here. - The earthly atmosphere somewhat stifles the intimate contact with the Holy Trinity, - and interferes, sometimes even to a great extent, with the realization of the new covenant, goal of Christianity.

Causes: -

Scripture and tradition are formal: the days of the antichrist are at hand. "Certainly, the mystery of alienation from God is already at work. But someone is holding it back. Only when it will be eliminated will the alienated from God - the evil antichrist - push through. But the Lord - Jesus - will destroy him by the power of his coming" - (*2 Thessal. 2:7v.*). Current religious apostasy insinuates that this time is coming. It at least explains the stifling atmosphere that Christianity is undergoing in our day, at least as a new covenant. Which makes Christ's prayer "thy kingdom come," now, more than ever especially topical.

Prayer in the spirit. -

St. Jude 20v. asks believers to pray "in the power of the Holy Spirit," and *St. Paul* in *Rom. 8:15* says, "The Spirit you received (...) who makes us cry out: Abba, Father". And *Rom. 8:26* clarifies, Likewise the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness. For we do not even know how we ought to pray. But the Spirit himself pleads for us with inexpressible sighs." -

Conclusion: Not only do we address the Holy Trinity but as we pray we come into intimate

contact with the Holy Trinity.

Gratitude. -

The New Covenant Christian never forgets to give thanks: "Do not be anxious, but let all your desires be known to God by praying and supplicating and saying a prayer of thanksgiving" (*Phillip. 4:6*).

The New Covenant Christian remembers Jesus' words before Pilate (*John 19:8*). - Pilate learns that Jesus presents Himself as the "Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he became even more alarmed: "He entered the pretorium again and asked Jesus the question, 'Where did You come from?' But Jesus did not answer. "You do not speak against Me?" said Pilate. "Surely You know that I have the power to release You, but also the power to have You crucified." Jesus answered, "You would have no power over Me at all if you were not granted this by heaven. (...)."

The Christian can turn to the Holy Trinity "in need," but always ask himself the question, "Is what I want given from above?" For the plans of the Holy Trinity sometimes, and rightly so, include things beyond us. In all cases, much is given to us from above through the love of Holy Trinity.

Remember that the heavenly Father "who makes the sun rise on the unjust and the righteous" (*Matt. 5:45*). If already the wicked are treated with kindness, how much more than a Christian who seeks to live in accordance with the wishes of the Holy Trinity? For, according to *Gal. 4:6*, "God has sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." 'Father' expresses the intimacy of a child towards his 'father'. This 'nearness' - don't we forget - remains accessible to the Christian even though we are far from perfect.

15. The meaning of baptism.

1 Peter 3:18 tells us, "Jesus was put to death, at least insofar as he was 'flesh' (poor man). He was made alive insofar as he was 'spirit' (divine life)." It is the content of the liturgical celebration of Easter that contrasts the earthly life of Jesus (who is a 'dead' from the divine life (from the 'spirit')) with his glorification (his eternal 'life' from the spirit). Clarify this by some other Bible texts.

John 3. - Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to Jesus in the night to confess his faith to Him, "For no man can do those signs which You do, when God is not with him. (3:2). Whereupon Jesus specifies that no one can see the kingdom of God (*note*: live a truly godly life) if he is not born "from above." Nicodemus understands this expression from a biological standpoint, which obliges Jesus to clarify: "I assure you: only he who is born of water and spirit is able to enter the kingdom of God. Whatever is born of flesh (*note*: biological life without Divine Spirit), is flesh; and whatever is born of the Spirit (*note* of the baptism that John the Baptist assumes), is spirit (3:4v.) - -.

Remark:

This interpretation of baptism shows itself in the custom of baptism as part of the Easter liturgy, for baptism is essentially a transition from the flesh to the spirit, a transition that is the essence of the Easter liturgy.

Rom. 6. - Paul is talking about the fact that we, as baptized people, have become one with Jesus' cross pass and resurrection pass, because with him we die and rise in and through the sacrament of baptism. "If we have become of the same nature thanks to the likeness of Jesus' death, but then we will also be (thanks to the likeness) of his resurrection."

Paul mixes several things together: the transition from flesh to the spirit of Christ at Easter, the ancient custom of immersing the baptized in water, the mysterious solidarity (the "mystical bond") of the baptized with the crucified and glorified Christ, as baptism shares in the transition from flesh to spirit, thanks to the paschal mystery. The "life" that preceded Christ's coming was more like a form of being "dead. With Christ came true and divine life. The mixing of all these factors complicates the proper understanding of Paul's text. But after all the explanation and situated in the overall biblical context, it becomes transparent.

Continuing *Rom. 6*: "If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. For we know that Christ, once raised from the dead, dies no more: death has no more power over Him" (6:8v.). The expression "death" has several meanings. It means biological death, but it also means the flesh as a "life," which, compared to divine life, is a "being dead" rather than being alive. To be "dead" means to have died biologically as well as spiritually.

Ethics are emphasized. *Rom. 6:10vv.*: By the death He died, He dealt with sin once and for all; the life He lives is a life with God. This is also how you must consider yourself: as dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." -

"Death to sin" means the inevitable death of every unethical life. "Life for God" is our orientation to God in our daily lives, among other things as expressed in the Decalogue (the ten commandments). The flesh/spirit couple goes hand in hand with the lack of ethics and a life that bears witness to conscience. This is already evident in *Gen 6:3vv.*:

Yahweh saw how much the wickedness of men had increased on the earth, and how much the lust of their hearts went out to evil all day long. Yahweh regretted that he had made man ..." (*Gen. 6:5v.*).

Yahweh puts it as follows: "That my spirit be no more responsible for man for he is flesh." Consequence: "weakness. Mean: vulnerability, man is from then on exposed to the dangers of creation. (the flood e.g.). - This too is included in the term "death," as Paul saw it.

Rom. 5:12 clarifies the concept of "first sin": "(...) Through one man ('Adam') sin entered the world, and through sin death, and so death has come upon all men, since all have sinned."

Consequently, human nature itself has "died" and is thus vulnerable due to a lack of divine spirit.

16. The mystery of Christ.

Begin with St. Peter's decisive sentence: what follows: "Jesus was put to death, at least insofar as he was 'flesh' (poor man). He was made alive insofar as he was 'spirit' (divine life)." (*1 Pe. 3:18vv.*).

Look more carefully at our solidarity with this transition through baptism, as Paul describes it in *Rom. 6:3v*: "Baptism has made us one with Christ; it is in his death that we have all been baptized. Through baptism into his death we were buried with him, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the power of his Father, we too might live a new life. For if we are, as it were, fused with His death, we must also follow Him in His resurrection." The antichristian view of baptism holds that through the cleanser, water, we acquire divine, Trinitarian life, and immediately, are cleansed of original sin and other impurities.

Note that the term "being fused with" expresses a deep solidarity. We are fused with Christ and undergo a "similar" process: like Christ and with Christ we pass from "death" to "life," as St. Paul puts it in *Col. 2:12* ("In baptism you are buried with Him, but also risen with Him.") This being "buried" is clarified in *Eph. 4:7v*.

The gifts. -

Eph. 4:7 vv. - "But to each of us individually grace has been granted according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says: by ascending to on high He carried away captives and distributed gifts to men. He ascended: what does this mean other than that He first descended into the depths to the earth? He who descended is the same who also ascended, high above all the heavens, to fulfill all things."

Paul refers here to Christ's descent into hell (*Num. 16:33*), where sinners reside, and to his ascension as the consummation of his glorification. Indeed, after his ascension, Jesus, together with the Father, sends us the Holy Spirit with his charisms to all those whom he freed from the subterranean realms. -

As Pentecost is the consummation of Easter, so baptism is the sacrament of confirmation. Regarding the gifts in detail, we refer to *1 Cor. 12:4ff, 12:18ff*. - Christ, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, fills all that exists by His creative presence, as *Wisdom 12:1* puts it, "Your imperishable spirit is in all things." (cf. *Wisdom 1:7* "The spirit of the Lord fills the whole earth"). By creating in each Christian a new man (*2 Cor. 5:7, Eph. 2:10*), He accomplishes on a higher level His creative presence which, on a lower level, already fills the whole universe: He thus becomes "the consummation" in a new and strengthened sense (*Eph. 1:23, 3:19, 4:12, Col. 2:9v., - Rom. 8:19v.*).

"You also, who were dead because of your sins ... God has made alive again with Christ. (*Col. 2:13*). - Paul concludes: no more return to past beliefs and practices "according to the

elements of the world (*op.*: which controlled you). Annual feasts, new moon, Sabbath, - food and drink (to be avoided or taken): done with it all. Do not touch, do not taste, do not grasp". Behold the precepts. From the moment the Christian no longer considers "the elements of the world," why should he bow to their precepts? "Now if you have been raised to life with Christ, seek also what is above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God" (*Col. 3:1*).

One sees solidarity with Christ not only in the transition from flesh to spirit, but also - and especially - in daily life. This solidarity presupposes, among other things, a participation in the sufferings of Christ (*Col. 1:14*: "I accomplish in my flesh (says S. Paul) what is lacking in the trials of Christ"), for the world is and remains in some degree hostile .

The mystery of Christ.

'Mystery' means 'secret,' - "impenetrable secret doctrine" (Plato), "magical formula or rite," " secret rite of initiates leading to salvation" (usually plural), secret divine revelation (in the Gnostic sense). - In *Col. 4:3* ("*the mystery of Christ*"), "mystery" means "divine secret, known only by divine revelation. In S. Paul's language, the term is central and coincides with the gospel. Indeed the Father and the Holy Spirit act in and with Christ, only begotten Son, in a mysterious but decisive way for salvation. But this saving action differs radically from the non-Christian mysteries by its rites and morality.

17. The Eucharist.

Beginning with *S. Luke's* text (22:19v.). - "Jesus took the bread, spoke the prayer of thanksgiving, broke the bread into pieces and gave it to the apostles, saying, "This is My body; which is given to you. Continue to do this to remember Me.". After the meal, He similarly said of the cup, "This cup is the new covenant through My blood; which is shed for you."

To begin, note two things. -

First, the framework, the Passover meal of the old covenant, which commemorates the exodus from Egypt to the promised land. Christ emphasizes his transition from this earth ("put to death according to the flesh" (*1 Peter 3:18*)) to paradise or heaven where he sits "at God's right hand" ("raised to life according to the spirit" (*1 Peter 3:18*)), - and through which he makes our transition possible (beginning with baptism and confession of faith). -

Every celebration of Mass is indeed the present proposition of this sacrament, in which this is repeated. Note next that *S. Luke* says that the bread and wine stand for the new covenant, a term Paul repeats in *1 Cor. 11:25*, connecting us to *Jeremias 31:31vv.*. The meaning of the Eucharist lies in that everyone can live in direct and individual contact with the Holy Trinity.

The offering. -

The gates of hell (*Matthew 16:18*), in the person of Satan (*Lu 4:13; - 22:3* (Satan comes in Jude); *22:53* (the power of the underworld)), required the exclusion of Jesus. He is incarnate ("made flesh") and thus vulnerable in his body and blood. As a result of his condemnation, he sacrifices his body and blood on the cross. In the form of the last supper, his body is "given" and his blood "shed" but his body and blood are those of the glorified Christ and are thus bread and wine, i.e., that which gives eternal life. The ritual eating of the remains of a sacrifice in the old covenant signified participation in this sacrifice. In the new covenant, this ritual participation remains: we eat the bread and drink the wine after the consecration (the transition from "flesh" to "spirit").

The liturgical year. -

The last supper is situated in sacred history: it signifies the end of the old covenant and the beginning of the new. It lies between Advent and the parousia (the return in glory) of Christ. The liturgical year unfolds this period, - not only to situate the celebration of h. Mass, but to indicate that the Mass represents the summary of this important salvific event. Thus, the liturgical year unfolds the content of the Last Supper.

Significance. -

"But by his judgments the Lord shows us the way and keeps us from being condemned with the world." - The word "world" - in biblical language - has several meanings: "the totality of creation" (neutral meaning), "the new world after the present one (meliorative meaning), but mostly: "the present world, stripped of its divine spirit" (pejorative meaning): this world is condemned without hope. -

The divine judgments situate themselves in this world for our "betterment": they are first the announcement of the last judgment which already gives a sample of what it will be, then they are a divine invitation to conversion "while there is still time. The Holy Trinity is and remains the great educator.

18. The sheol: powerful but also exhausting.

Hell shows itself somehow, if not, one would not talk about it. In the New Testament, it is the possessed who are exorcized by Jesus who show how their souls and their behavior suffers under the influence of the sheol. But let us pause for a moment to consider some texts of the Old Testament that show us the layering of the sheol. The stay in the subterranean world refers to a previous stage in human evolution, or of a degeneration due to too low a morality. In the two cases, man in the sheol lacks divine energy or "spirit" and the "flesh" is decisive.

In accordance with *Genesis 6:3*, *Psalms 104 (103)* says: 29v: "If You (Yahweh) hide Your face, they (Your creatures) perish with terror: deprive them of their breath, they gasp for air (...).But give You Your breath, they are recreated (...)." It is the typically divine spirit that is decisive in what follows.

Agreement. -

*Isaiah 28:15*vv.. - In fear of the encroaching Assyria, the rulers make a pact with hell: "We made a pact with death (understand : the infernal powers); with the sheol we made a pact. The threatening scourge will pass us by without afflicting us (...)." -.

If hell was not a source of energy and thus did not increase the chances of success, those in power would not have decided to make a deal with it. Compare this with *Acts of the Apostles 19:16*, where a spirit possessed by an evil spirit throws himself on some Jewish exorcists, overpowers them and mauls them to such an extent that they escape naked and covered with injuries."

When Jesus is arrested, he says to the Jewish rulers, "This is your hour and the power of darkness" (*Luke 22:53*). What is meant is legal power, for it was indeed there. Wir nennen dies die obere Schicht der Unterweltreiche.

The bottom layer. -

Take *psalm 88(87): 11*v.: Do You (Yahweh) perform miracles for the dead? Do the phantoms in the underworld rise up to praise Thee? Do men wail of Thy love in the pit of the grave? Of thy truth in the place of destruction (*op.*: Abaddon)? Does one in the darkness know thy miraculous works? In the place of lostness, does one know anything of Thy conscientiousness?". - No divine energy is left there. Existence there is bleak and impotent.

Behold a "psychological" representation of the deadly life in the underworld! The gates of hell, apparently, do not just permeate political systems: they permeate the soul life of people who apparently live in God's friendship and cooperation, as in the case of the psalmist who wrote this psalm. Not to engage in poetry but to typify an inner life soured by the powers of hell.

Cynical wealth.-

Ps. 49 (48):11 vv.. - It concerns a man devoted to cynical mammon. "Man in his opulence does not realize it (...). Such people live confidently and die in complete satisfaction with their lot (...). In fact, they are a herd that one puts to graze in the underworld: death puts them to graze. While those with conscience take it out on them. The underworld, behold the residence of the self-assured. People of conscience will rule over such". - This last sentence clearly expresses the impotence of hell". Yet see: "In the morning their 'image' (*note: image impression, image*) is no longer there. The Sheol: behold their 'abode'". But You, Holy Trinity, buy our souls free from the grasping arms of the underworld and take us to You, Holy Trinity." The image some "see" is not that of power. It is the bottom layer, radically depleted. And what is more: exhausted.

Resume Psalm 88. -

Failure on earth is a sign of the rise in this world of the bleak life of hell. Faced with illness, the writer laments, "My life is on the edge of hell. As already experienced as one who is buried, I have been there, (...), resembling those who have died lying in the graves, those of whom thou, God, thinkest no more. (...). Thou hast placed me in the depths of the grave, in the darkness, in the abysses (...)." The consecrated writer uses poetic language to depict a real sacred experience: to be sick is to be hell as rising from the depths on earth and showing itself experientially. Behold what the writer senses. With this hell there is no agreement. It is exhausted and stripped of divine life force. Again and again *Genesis 6:3*: God no longer invests - for the time being or permanently - life force in such people: "That my spirit (*note: God's own, supernatural life force*) may not endlessly be responsible for man (*note: collectively taken*) since he is 'flesh' (*note: cosmic life without God's 'spirit'*).

Do not think that such texts are mere poetry. It may be poetically worded, but the experience is typically sacred, religious. And this is consistent with the degree of clairvoyance. The writer sees the earth imbued with hell. *Psalms 86 (85):7* says:

"In the day of fear (understand: the experience on earth of the underworld) I cry to You (...). Among deities there is none like Thee, Yahweh. Nothing resembles what Thou dost perform. Exalted art Thou and miracles do Thou, Thou alone (...). I am grateful to Thee (...) for Thou hast saved my soul from the lowest of hell". In other words, especially do not think that the sacred writers are "selling poetry" when they describe in figurative language the power and especially the impotence of hell.

In *Marc. 2:3v*, Jesus is confronted by a paralytic: Jesus sees faith and says to the paralytic, "My child, your sins are forgiven." To respond to unbelief regarding forgiveness of sins, Jesus says, "So that you may know that the Son of Man (Jesus) can forgive sins on earth, I command it to you - says he to the paralytic - Take your berry and go home."

Unscrupulousness - assumed here as the cause of lameness - is the entrance already on this earth into the underworld which, precisely because of this, shows itself on our earth o.a. in the consequences of the absence of God's essential life force. The latter alone ultimately protects against the challenges that creation, insofar as given up to flesh and underworld, contains (such as disease, natural disasters etc.).

The pride, illuminated from wisdom. 19.

Take the pride of the great of the earth, as it is described in *Daniel 4:1/34* (the madness of Nabuchodonosor) and *5:1/30* (the feast of Balthazar). - *Ezekiel 25:1/32:32* (prophecy against the nations) gives us the key:

1. First, there is earthly wealth (economic wealth, political power) but based on "flesh" (forgetting God and not shunning immoral means);

2. Eventually God no longer invests His life force and sinners "will descend to the underworld, where those who have descended before you dwell forever. (*Ezekiel 26:20*). One can see: it is a straightforward application of *Genesis 6:3*. It is necessary to read these biblical texts as describing the subterranean empires as they present themselves to our world. What Daniel describes is the political power of Nabuchodonosor when God withdraws his spirit accompanied by a choice of repentance, and the fall of Balthazar as a political leader when God simply withdraws his spirit. Behold two types of "judgment of God.

Nabuchodonosor. -

Daniel, revealer of secrets, is called to explain a dream of the king about a tree that grows large and fruitful. But "a watchman" (op. an angel who keeps constant watch), and who has descended from heaven, calls out

"Cut down the tree and cut down its branches (...) But leave its root stump in the earth. In fetters of iron and bronze he must dwell in the greenery in the field, (...). His human heart shall be changed into that of an animal. Thus seven times shall pass over him". (...). Daniel explains the meaning of the dream to the king. "The tree is the king himself; the message of the watchman foretells that the king will be cast out of the community of men and will live a time like an animal among others will be driven away. So seven times will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High disposes of human kingship, and can give it to whom He wills. (*4:22*). But the fact that you were commanded to let the root stump of the tree sit means that you will regain kingship as soon as you recognize the power of heaven. Will you therefore, king, follow my advice: Avenge your sins by alms and your crimes by mercy for the poor. Then your happiness will be lasting."

One notices Biblical ethics as the basis of the life force that decides success on earth. (...). A year later he once walked on the royal palace in Babel and then exclaimed: 'Is this not the great Babel, which I have built by the power of my riches and to the glory of my glory (...).' Hardly had the king spoken those words, when a voice from heaven echoed, "King Nabuchodonosor, it is hereby announced to you that the kingship has been taken away from you. (...). That sentence was immediately executed to Nabuchodonosor (...). But when the time had passed, I, Nabuchodonosor, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and I regained my wits. I praised

the Most High and honored Him who lives forever. (...). I regained my mind and at the same time with the glory of my kingship, my splendor and glory."

So much for this wisdom text. The wisdom consists in the description of the rise and fall of power: "If one behaves immorally, even at the height of his political power, one can expect a fall which God has then foreseen. Understood: "Because the divine life force is no longer there." The dynamistic aspect is not explicitly mentioned in this story, but is nevertheless abundantly present.

Balthazar. -

we find a similar structure in this: during the feast "with his kingdoms, his wives and concubines," he had the gold and silver tableware taken from the temple in Jerusalem. While drinking wine, they worshipped the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone. Suddenly a hand began to write on the wall of the palace. The conjurers, Chaldeans (*im.* magicians) and devil exorcists could not find an explanation for it. Daniel did succeed: unlike Nabuchodonosor, Baltahsar turned against Yahweh and desecrated vessels of the temple.

Therefore the Lord of heaven sent this hand, which very alone wrote these words, "Mene, tekel, parsin." Mene: God has weighed your years of reign, counted them and put an end to them; tekel, you have been weighed on the scales and found too light; parsin, your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

This wisdom text has the structure of a ballad: in the middle of the feast, disaster strikes: that same night Balthasar, king of the Chaldeans, was killed. His kingdom fell into the hands of Darius.

In both cases it is pride that is fatal, and it is pride against God and His law. In this pride, for those who have the (wise) eye for it, the attitude of the subterranean empires in their mighty stratum shows itself.

20. A death caller.

The belief in an afterlife is the source of seeking contact with the departed so that *Leviticus 19:31, 20:6* and especially *20:27* forbid it: "The man or woman among you who calls up the dead or who practices divination shall be put to death. (...). Cfr. *Isaiah 8:19, 19:3*. - A summoner of the dead is one who controls the spirit of the dead (by summoning them e.g.).

1 Samuel 28:3vv. -

King Saül (-1030/-1010) had driven the death summoners and soothsayers out of the land, but lo and behold: he waged war against the Philistines: - "When Saül looked upon the army camp of the Philistines, fear overtook him: his heart trembled. He consulted Yahweh. But Yahweh did not answer: neither in dreams nor through oerim - toemmim (*opm.*: oerim/toemmim is a mantic practice; a system of casting lots from the ephod (garment), cf. *1 Sam. 14:41*) nor through prophets. Thereupon Saül said to his courtiers, "Find me a woman who raises the dead that I may visit them to seek counsel." (*Note*: Saül had forbidden all kinds of magical and mantic practices, in the spirit of *Deut. 18:9/12*. Now that he himself is "in extreme need," he exceeds his own measure).

The courtiers: "In En-Dor there is such a death caller." Saül dressed up and set out with two men. In the night they arrived at the woman". "I beg of you : foretell me my future destiny thanks to the ghost of a deceased person. Summon for me the one whom I shall call thee". But the woman : "But thou knowest thyself what Saül has done,--how he has purged the land of death summoners and soothsayers. Wherefore seekest thou to ambush my life to make me die?". Saül thereupon made this oath to Yahweh: "So where Yahweh is a living, so true thou shalt not suffer punishment for this deed." The woman "Whom should I call for thee?". Saül: "Call for me Samuel".

Note: The prophet Samuel had died and all Israel had lamented over him. He was buried in Ramah, his city. (*1 Sam. 25:1*). "Thereupon indeed the woman saw Samuel, uttered a cry, said to Saül, "For what reason hast thou deceived me? Thou art Saül!" The prince: "Yet have no fear! What seest thou?" She: "I see an 'elohim'. (Elohim here means a superhuman, 'divine' being - *Gen. 3:5; Ps. 8:6*) rising from the earth (*Num. 16:33*, sheol or underworld)." Saül: "What is the view?". The woman: "An old man. He comes up, dressed in a cloak". (*Note*: as a sign of a prophet). "Saül immediately knew with certainty that it was Samuel. The face bowed down to the earth, Saül threw himself to the ground".

Samuel said to Saül, "Why disturb my peace by summoning me?" (*Note*: Apparently the dead do not like to be constantly involved in solving earthly problems and want to be left alone.) "Saül: "Great fear is within me : the Philistines make war against me, and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers: neither through prophets nor in a dream. This is why I have called you: tell me what to do!". Samuel: "Why consult me when God has turned away from you and become your adversary? Yahweh has dealt with you as he said through my mediation:

he has snatched the kingship out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. Because ye have not obeyed Yahweh and ye have not obeyed his "glowing wrath" against Amalek. This is the reason why Yahweh is now treating you this way.

However, there is more: with you, Yahweh will simultaneously deliver your people Israel into the hands of the Philistines. Tomorrow - you and your sons - you will be with me - in the sheol (*note*: the subterranean realms, cf. *Num. 16:33*). The army camp also shall Yahweh deliver into the hands of the Philistines".

Saül was so startled by Samuel's words that he slammed flat against the ground. He was also at the end of his strength, for all day and all night he had eaten nothing. The woman came to Saül and saw that he was completely upset. She said to him, "Come, your servant has listened to you; I risked my life and did what you told me. Now listen to your servant yourself. Let me serve you some food. Eat that; then you will be able to continue your way again." Saül refused at first. Only when the courtiers and also the woman urged him, did he eat some and leave that same night.

- **Note:** The death summoner belongs to a particularly gifted type, she is even able to subject a deceased prophet to her summoning power: she is an "elohim. A being with great spirit power.

- **Note:** That God is invoked in political matters was far from unusual at the time of Samuel. It was the time of the old covenant, where the Jewish people were led in the midst of many other nations. Until the new and universal covenant.

21. The Resurrection, before and after Jesus.

We begin with the theophany (appearance of God) in *Exodus 3:6*. - Moses saw a burning bush, yet it was not consumed by the fire. He heard a voice saying, "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."

In a discussion with the Sadducees (who believed in the first book of Moses (the first five books of the Bible) but denied the resurrection, Jesus shows them this contradiction (*Mark 12:23*): "As to whether the dead are raised, did you not read in the book of Moses, in the story of the thorn bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob'? So He is not a God of the dead but of the living. You are in error." So Jesus clearly assumes that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are "alive" and therefore "risen. Even in the Old Testament the "resurrection," a resurrection from the dead, is a fact. And the three patriarchs were not the only living in the other world: the sheol (the subterranean realms) were full of "living.

Survival, but not in the sheol. -

Psalm 16 (15): 9 is clear: Our soul rejoices; our deeper soul rejoices. And our flesh (note: body) shall rest secure, (...) for Surely Thou canst not expose our souls to the underworld. Surely Thou cannot make those who are friends with Thee live in the depths of the underworld." "He who befriends Thee" hides a condition: "If I befriend Thee," let me not perish in this form of "being dead" which only contents a bleak survival in the depths of the sheol.

The consecrated writer is "befriended" for he says he keeps the Lord before him without ceasing. (*16 (15): 8*). He wishes just the opposite of staying in the sheol: "Thou shalt teach us the conduct that leads to life with Thee. (*16 (15): 11*). Which means "in Your friendship," a friendship that is precisely absent in the sheol. There is "abundance of joy" and there are "eternal joys." - So there were believers at that time who prioritized the couple "sheol/ life in God's sight."

The Spirit of Christ. -

A life in friendship with God is the result of a typically divine spirit. So, Jesus states, "I am the resurrection. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he has died" (*John 11:25*). Jesus clearly introduces a new form of resurrection for he says, ""If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink, namely, the one who believes in me." This according to the scripture, "Out of his depths shall flow rivers of living water." (*Exod. 17:1/7*). He was talking about the Spirit to be received by those who believed in him.

In passing, "spirit" was not yet there since Jesus had not yet been glorified" (*John 7:37v.*).

In particular, His glorification begins with His death on the cross. And from that moment the new resurrection materializes as *Matthew 27:52* puts it, "the graves were opened, and the

bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised to life. (...) They came out of the tombs and went into the holy city (note: heaven). They also appeared to many". - It is the dream of *Psalm 16 (15)* but to an enhanced degree because Christ had risen.

As we read it in *1 Cor. 15:44v*: "A natural* body is sown, a spiritual* body rises." The resurrection before Christ was merely "psychic," (resting on the immortal soul); the resurrection Christ provides for us is "spiritual," (resting on the post-resurrection spirit). Put succinctly: the former is "flesh," the latter is "spirit" (cf. *Epistle of Jude 19*: These are the people who cause schism, go up in the world, and do not possess the Spirit). -

"If there is a psychic body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written: the first man, Adam, was made with a living soul; the last Adam (*Christ; Rom 5:15vv.*) with a living spirit. But it is not the spirit that appears first, but rather the psychic, only then the mind. The first man, sprung from the earth, is from the earth; the second comes from heaven (*Daniel 7:13*: the Son of Man the one who comes from heaven)." This clarifies *John 5:29v*: "an hour is coming when all who are in the grave will hear his voice and come out; those who have done good will rise to live, those who have done evil will rise to be condemned." Compare *Daniel 12:2*: "And many of them that sleep in the land of dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, others to the humiliation of everlasting shame." -

So there are two kinds of pre-existence in the other world: those who are devoted to the "flesh," and those who are full of "spirit. So the expression "eternal life" has a neutral meaning, "a life eternal," a meliorative meaning, "an eternal life in the spirit," and a pejorative meaning, "an eternal pre-existence in the flesh."

Behold the main thing regarding the resurrection idea, situated in the leading ideas of the Bible. All this shows us the logical coherence of Biblical thought. Especially when one tries to read the Bible from the logical standpoint, its coherence and strength is shown.

22. The sacred, viewed delicately.

We begin with a text from *Isaiah 65:1vv.* ... - God speaks. - (...) "Here I am," I say to a people who do not call on My name. (...) A people who taunt Me right in My face. They continually sacrifice in gardens, burn incense on tiles. They sit in tombs and spend the night in hidden places (*note*: to contact other beings). They eat meat from pigs, and from their dishes they eat sauce from unclean meat (*note*: they ignore taboos). They say, "Stay where You are, do not touch me, for I would sanctify You." -

Isaiah here describes pagan rites performed by the Israelites. Draw our attention to two important terms:

1. 'unclean', the opposite of 'pure', a rather difficult couple to define accurately due to the fact that these terms are not used unambiguously and already vary in their meaning e.g. from place to place.

(2) "Do not touch me, for I would sanctify you." This is a mode of speaking, peculiar to people who have participated in rites through which they have received something "holy" or "sacred": a kind of subtle matter and energy, which is transitive, e.g., through physical contact. However, this sacredness is double-edged; it can overload or 'sanctify' the participants in the rite with this fine substance or energy and be beneficial; however, it can harm the others - the outsiders. And with this we are in the midst of religious dynamism.

Ezekiel 22.23vv. -

Yahweh's word is addressed to the prophet. Yahweh complains about the rulers and also and especially the priests who neglect their work: "The priests violated my law (understand: the Decalogue and its Old Testament extensions) and desecrated my sanctuaries. Between the sacred and the profane they made no distinction, and they did not teach the difference between the unclean and the pure (...)." Cfr. *Ezekiel 44:23*).

Remark:

All this brings us to *Leviticus 17:1vv.* (the law of holiness). Consecrated reality, by its twofold effect, must remain respected. God is essentially "holy. 'Holiness' is by its very nature or rite, divine. Thus places (temples, appearances), times (the Sabbath), persons (priests), or objects (garments) can be holy or sacred by their participation (coherence or metonymy) in such a rite. From the moment such a sacred rite is involved, it must be performed purely and inviolately. Before God, the sacred and the pure are subject to moral requirements (Biblical moralism), something that extra-biblical religions usually know only in part.

Model. -

Ezekiel 4:15vv. - The priests enter Yahweh's sanctuary and approach the altar. To respect the sacred nature of rite and place they put on their service clothes, including linen clothes, etc. "When they go out (...), toward the people, they will discard the garments in which they

performed sacred acts and immediately put on other clothes so as not to sanctify the people (note: who do not possess the same level of holiness) through their garments." The people as profane, i.e. of lower level of spirit, are not resistant to the rarefied energy that priests and their garments radiate." One notices: the people are "profane," i.e., they do not possess the required particulate matter and energy to come into contact with the "sacred" without being sanctified by this themselves (which can harm them in a particulate way). -

Note: -

Ezekiel 44:25. - "The priests may not defile themselves by coming near a dead person. However, in a number of cases and in conditions that may greatly surprise us modern and postmodern people, this is allowed. The underlying belief here is that a corpse gives off a rarefied matter and energy invisible to ordinary people that permeates the priests and "sanctifies" them but here in the negative sense. Their life force suffers damage, spoils, and renders them unfit for the rites Yahweh asks them to perform. -

This shows us that these beliefs are based on a dynamistic religion - view: everything is seen and lived through in connection with fine material energy and life force. In a universe that takes this into account situates what *Colossians 2:20* says: From the moment that you have overcome the elements of the world, (*note:* the visible and invisible beings that rule the world), why still bow to their precepts as if you were still living in their world? "Do not touch, do not taste, do not grasp!".

In other words, a Christian, if he reaches the fine material level that St. Paul here means, transcends this stage. We do say, "if he reaches the fine material level that St. Paul here means," because it is not that simple. The experiences of many Christians, even very convinced ones, prove it: they undergo fine material influences for good or for evil, whether they want to or not.

The Holy Spirit as particulate matter and energy. -

Luke 8:43vv. - The woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years touched the hem of Christ's garment. Immediately her bleeding stopped. "To which Jesus said, 'Who is the one who touched me?' All denied. Peter said, "Master, it is the crowd that intrudes and presses upon you." Jesus: "Someone did touch me, for I felt that a power (dunamis') flowed out of me." It is the new spirit that also expresses itself as fine matter and energy. The cloths and linen that Peter had touched also had healing and exorcising power (cf. *Acts of the Apostles 19:11v.*).

The Bible, too, is apparently familiar with solving life's problems of all kinds, albeit in a fine-grained way.

23. The fine material and the spiritual body.

Read *1 Samuel 28:13v.* -

The death summoner sees an *elohim*, a powerful being, rising from the earth, t.v. from the sheol. The Greeks spoke of the "Hadès". "It is an elder who ascends, he is clothed in a prophet's robe," the death summoner said. The prophet Samuel clearly has a body and this is even clothed. The fact that he ascends from the earth through "solid" matter shows that he is also material, but different from the matter of our biological body. Call this type of body by its traditional name: "the subtle body." This subtle body is material but is not subject to some limitations like the physical or biological body as we know it. What is more, this subtle body can take different appearances. In the case described above, it is dressed as a prophet. - Conclude that the Old Testament has a subtle body in addition to the biological body.

Luc 9:28vv. -

Jesus takes Peter, John and James and climbs a mountain to pray. "While He was praying, He changed His appearance and His clothes became brilliant white. Suddenly two men were conversing with Him. They were Moses and Elias who appeared in glory and spoke of His passing (opm.: His death), the consummation of His life in Jerusalem. Peter and the others ... saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him." (9:32). -

2 Peter 1:16v. says:

"When we proclaimed to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we did not invoke contrived myths (*note*: like the inventors of pagan stories), but we spoke as eyewitnesses of his glory." - This shows us that the body of Christ can change its form (with its clothes) and that this glorified body is usually hidden by the biological body. Although in ordinary circumstances not physically or biologically noticeable, yet such a glorified body is equally real. -

Notice the appearance of two men: these do not ascend from the earth but are there "in glory. Which refers to *Psalms 16 (15): 10v.* ("life before the face of Yahweh") or *Psalms 56 (55): 14.* They are there physically but in a body appeared "in glory. -

Decision. -

The New Testament also has a biological body and a fine material body that is not situated in the sheol but elsewhere, in glory.

The glorified particulate body of Jesus. - *John 20:19vv.* - "On the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were gathered together. Although the door was locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came. Suddenly He stood in their midst". He showed the wounds in His hands and His side.

John 20:26.

- "Although the door was locked, Jesus came into their midst" and said to Thomas, "here are my hands; now come with your finger. And come with your hand to feel the opening in my side". - So first there is the subtle body of Jesus that passes through material objects (door, walls); then He materializes this subtle body so that it becomes visible and tangible, including to Thomas. When Jesus disappears again, His body becomes fine material again.

The particulate body of Jesus. -

Usually this is hidden. But sometimes it reveals itself. *Luke 8:43vv.* - A woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years (...) came to Jesus from behind and touched the hem of his garment. Immediately her bleeding stopped". But she did not realize that Jesus was sensitive. Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" All denied. Peter said, "Master, it is the crowd that intrudes and presses upon you." Jesus: "Someone did touch me For I felt that a power (dunamis') flowed out of me." (*Note: usually translates by "I have felt it" but in Greek it speaks of "I have known it"*)

The woman became aware that she had been discovered; came trembling near and threw herself before Jesus and told ... why she had touched Him and how she had been healed at the stroke." *Mark 6:56* states, "Wherever He went, to villages or towns or hoofs, they laid the sick down in the marketplace, and they asked Him to be allowed to touch at least the hem of His garment. And whoever touched Him was saved".

Paul, 1 Cor. 15:42vv, says of the new resurrection since the resurrection of Christ, "A natural body is sown, but a spiritual body rises." It is clearly the spiritual body of Christ, hidden in his "natural" (carnal) body, that responds when one faithfully touches him as the source of typically divine energy.

Dynamic aspect. -

1 Cor 11:27vv. emphasizes the energetic side. - Paul experiences that among his listeners "there are so many among you who are sick and weak." Also, some have already died prematurely. One may ask how this comes about. Paul says of this, "Everyone must examine himself before eating of the bread and drinking from the cup. For whoever eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks his own judgment ... and sins against the body and blood of the Lord."

The sick, disabled and dead have become afflicted in their "spirit," which tended too much, far too much to the "flesh. Hence their 'weakness' in the face of the challenges of earthly life, understand: hence their vulnerability.

Paul further specifies, "If we examine ourselves before we eat of the bread and drink from the cup, we will not be condemned." These diseases and premature deaths are the sign of a judgment of God, an intervention of God in the course of events, caused precisely by the

weaknesses and unethical behavior of these people. *La Bible de Jerusalem*, in its preface to the book of Esther puts this dormant judgment of God this way, "God does not show his power externally, and yet he directs events." The Spirit (the typically divine energy) in man depends on the height of his own morality. If certain limits are exceeded, if actions become particularly immoral, then "God is no longer responsible for this spirit, for the man in question is then merely 'flesh,' as expressed in *Genesis 6:3*: "That my spirit (*note*: life force) may not be infinitely responsible for man, since he is 'flesh' (*note*: animated life but without God's life force).

24. The rock of misunderstanding.

The refusal to believe. -

In *Mark 6:1vv*, Jesus commiserates with his followers, "Is he not the carpenter ...?" What annoyed many listeners is "the wisdom given to him, and the miracles he performs." Result: Jesus could not perform any miracle there except to lay hands on some sick people. Jesus marveled at their unbelief (6:5v.) - One sees the mechanism: one sticks to "the flesh" (the carpenter), one understands nothing of "the spirit" (wisdom, miracles). Notwithstanding the rock of divine power Jesus possesses, he remains powerless - out of deep respect for the freedom of choice of his creatures.

The untrue belief. -

John 2:23vv. - Seeing the miraculous signs Jesus performed, many believed in Him (*note*: and in His life force). "But Jesus on His part had no faith in them, because He knew them all no one needed to teach Him anything about man, He Himself knew what one had in a man." - So there is a form of false faith: one believes e.g. because of a tangible benefit (a healing, an exorcism of a demon) (the flesh) without nevertheless understanding the real message of Christ.

The end of time. -

2 Tim3: 1vv. - Do realize that there will be difficult times in the last days. For men will be selfish and lustful for money, arrogant and haughty, slanderers, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, ungodly, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious, uncontrolled, cruel, enemies of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, more self-indulgent than godly; they will keep up the appearance of piety, but deny its essence (...).

Refusal of Sacred Doctrine. -

"For a time will come when people will no longer tolerate sound doctrine, but on the contrary, according to their own tastes, will gather around them teachers who caress their ears. And they will close their ears to the truth, to listen to all kinds of myths." (*2 Tim. 4:3*).

The rock of refusal. -

From the hades (sheol) the rich man addresses Abraham, who lives in the face of God (heaven), that God would send him Lazarus, who also lives in the face of God, to his five brothers on earth "to warn them" that the kingdom of the dead will torment them if they do not behave godly. But Abraham said, "They have Moses and the Prophets; they must listen to that." But the rich man replied, " (...) If anyone of the dead comes to them, they will repent." But Abraham replied, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead."

According to circumstances, this rock of unbelief takes the form of persecution, as *2 Tim 3:12* puts it, "All who want to live piously in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." So this refusal

is not so innocent. Among other things, this unbelief led to the crucifixion of Christ, notwithstanding His wisdom and His miracles.

Decision. -

There are other Bible texts that confirm it or suggest it (without explicitly saying so), it is undeniably true that the Old and New Testaments speak as if humanity is moving more and more toward an end time, toward a final judgment of God - toward an eventful time, seen from the point of view of nature (cosmic aspect) and from man (cultural aspect). To an unprecedented reversal. At the same time, it will appear that worldly misunderstanding will increase and harden, provoking these events.

This has always provoked thought among Christians, but in our day, this theme seems to be more pronounced. That part of the Bible and of theology that deals with the end times is called "eschatology. It has always been an integral part of tradition, but in our days Christians are questioning its possible actuality.

In particular, this lack of understanding takes the form of a biblical hermeneutics (doctrine of interpretation) that updates it, not from the premises of the Bible but from the premises of our modern and postmodern world to make the message of the Bible comprehensible. This modernization of the Bible takes the form of a refusal of the true core of the faith. A core that is neither modern nor postmodern. A refusal that, moreover, is spreading widely, thus continuing the massive refusal of faith. Is this the great apostasy in full development?

25. The individualization of religion.

Jeremiah 18:18 tells us that among believers there are priests, prophets and wise men who act as mediators to explain the law and the commandments. And Jesus in *Matthew 23:34* calls them "prophets, wise men, scribes." They are those who bear witness to religious experience, and they are an instrument in the hand of God to help and guide other believers. Behold religion by virtue of intermediaries.

***Jeremias' critique.* -**

In *Jeremias 31:29vv*, the prophet clearly proposes a religion based on direct contact with God, that is, without mediators in the traditional sense. He says it clearly : "I, God, will forgive their sin. One no longer has to say to the other : "Learn to know God (note: deal intimately with)". All, great and small, will know God. He will put the law within them."-

One text establishes genealogical solidarity (*Jer. 31: 27/34*): "In those days," i.e., when God's glory is particularly strong in "works" ("miracle works"), one will no longer say, "The fathers have eaten green - unripe - grapes, and the teeth of the children taste bitter. But everyone will die because of his own committed error. Every person who will have eaten 'green grapes', his/her own teeth will taste bitter".

One sees that the prophet quotes a proverb: "green grapes" represents "error (sin)" and "bitter tasting" represents "death. A kind of hereditary guilt - of which original sin is an example - passes from parents (and ancestors) to descendants. That is the manistic or ancestor religion, concerning inheritance debts of all kinds. Yahweh introduces a new covenant, in other words: the judgment of God undergoes a structural change: "Behold the days are coming - divine speech of Yahweh - in which I - Yahweh - will make a new covenant (...). I will situate My law in the depths of their being, and I will write My law on their hearts. (...). Then each among them will no longer have to teach his neighbor - each his "brother" while saying, "Learn to know Yahweh. For all will know Me; from the smallest to the greatest (...) because I am going to forgive their/their crime and will no longer think of their/their sin.

Note: - the term "knowing" in the Bible means "having intimate contact with God.

***Summarize.* -**

The core is the forgiveness of sins. -

1. On this basis, God renews inner contact with man. This brings to fulfillment a wish of Moses (*Numbers 11:29*), "May all Yahweh's people be prophets because He caused His life force to descend upon them."-That is, Moses grants each person individually the right to be a "prophet," God's confidant and inspired, so that each person also hears the voice of God in his deeper soul (*Numbers 14:22; John 8:47*).

2. God also introduces individualization: the intermediaries lose their predominant role. For God addresses Himself directly to the individual. The mediators do not become superfluous for most: they try to bring others into intimate contact with God, if they themselves at least have direct contact with God, and can preside over homo religiosus.

Ezekiel. - In *Ezekiel 18:1* the prophet says, "How do you (...) come to use this proverb: 'The fathers have eaten unripe grapes and the teeth of the children are stiff from them?'" As I live (*note*: the typical divine life) no one will ever be allowed to use this proverb again. (...). All human lives are equal before Me; the life of the father and the life of the son, both are worth the same to Me. Only thus the one who sins will die. - In *Ezekiel 36:26vv.* Yahweh says, "I will give you a new heart and pour out a new spirit within you My spirit I will pour out in you, and I will see to it that you keep My laws and keep My precepts accurately. Behold what Jeremiah prophesied with the emphasis on internalization ("a new heart") and the gift of "the new spirit" (life force) from God.

Joel. -

The generality of direct contact with God is expressed in *Joel 3:1* Then it shall come to pass: I will pour out my spirit on all men (*understand*: all men as they are); prophesy shall your sons and your daughters, (*note*: they shall act like prophets), your elders shall have dreams, your young men shall see visions. Even over the servants and servantesses I pour out My spirit in those days. *Acts of the Apostles 2:17v* reiterates this Pentecostal text.

This religion of intimate God-contact is eminently characteristic of Christianity as a "new covenant." *The letter to the Hebrews 8:6v* clearly repeats the text of *Jeremias 31:31v*. The letter immediately adds, "speaking of the new covenant, he renders the first covenant obsolete. So, what is obsolete and decrepit will disappear".

It is clear: by saying of himself that he "says to the world what he has heard from the Father who sent him" (*John 8:26; 8:28*) Christ shows us direct contact with God. And by saying, "All shall be taught by God" (*John 6:45*), Jesus is certainly not excluding people from intimate contact with his Father: on the contrary, he makes Joel's message very real.

Yahweh's religion becomes more individual than before (from "God of our fathers" it becomes "my God") it becomes more interior ("in the depth of the soul: "on the heart") and God forgives sin, source of death. Behold three new traits of the Yahweh religion on the horizon. Our time seems to create pre-eminently the climate in which this religion is required.