

Luther's Theological Psychology and the Spirit

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I Gifts of the Holy Spirit and Theological Psychology

In June 1522, Luther wrote a letter to Spalatin where he gave a brief interpretation of Isaiah 11:2–3a as his version of the traditional seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.¹ Being part of a letter, the text seems to be quickly written in the midst of other urgent tasks. However, as this was a piece of biblical exegesis, Luther's main duty as a professor of theology, it was surely more than a mere reaction to an emergent theological puzzle.

The text is indeed an interesting witness to what could be called Luther's theological psychology. Luther describes the internal life of a Christian with vocabulary coming partly from the language of the Bible and partly from the contemporary philosophical view of the human being. The overall tone is theological, and his main task is to describe the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer. The following provides a brief discussion of the contents of the text together with comments on some individual questions it raises.

In the text Luther divides the matter at hand into three parts according to three phases in the life of a Christian so that each part contains two individual gifts of the Holy Spirit. The three phases are: 1. life of the soul in faith, 2. speaking of and teaching about the faith, and 3. dealings with other people.² In each phase Luther differentiates between the two gifts by another division which runs through his interpretation: gifts belonging to the mind (lat. *mens*), and those belonging to affect (lat. *affectus*). The three

1 Cf. WAB 2; 552,16–553,53, Nr. 503.

2 Cf. WAB 2; 553,20f.30f.39, Nr. 503.

phases include six gifts instead of traditional seven.³ Luther considered the part of the Vulgate text containing »spirit of piety« as an addition to the original text—obviously because it is not found in the Hebrew Bible.⁴ Consequently, the first phase includes spirit of wisdom and spirit of intellect, the second phase spirit of counsel and spirit of fortitude, and the third, spirit of knowledge and spirit of fear of God.

Luther calls the first phase »life of the soul«. This is, according to Luther, the life which a believer lives by faith.⁵ Wisdom means that the person knows God and divine things through faith. This is the gift belonging to the mind (lat. *mens*), which could here be understood as the cognitive side of a human being.⁶ The other gift belonging to the life of the soul is »intellect«. This he understands as an examination of the contents of faith day by day. Luther opens the meaning of the Latin word *intellectus* with a reference to the Hebrew original, which according to him means »sharp and diligent observation« or »inventive and explorative cognition«, and therefore belongs more to the affectual side than the cognitive side, or the mind, as Luther

3 According to Vulgate, Isa 11:2–3a reads: »Et requiescet super eum spiritus Domini spiritus sapientiae et intellectus spiritus consilii et fortitudinis spiritus scientiae et pietatis et replebit eum spiritus timoris Domini«. Cited according to Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem, ed. by BONIFATIO FISCHER et al., 31983, 1108a.

4 WAB 2; 552,18f: »Claret itaque septimum illud (scilicet »pietatis, & replebit eum spiritus«) esse adiectitium.«

Reference to the Hebrew word *bina* (WAB 2; 552,26) indicates that Luther consulted the Masoretic text in preparing the explanation. On Luther's copy of the Hebrew Old Testament, see H. VOLZ / H. BLANKE, Das von Luther benutzte Exemplar (in: Eigenhändige Randbemerkungen. In Luthers Handexemplar des hebräischen Alten Testaments von 1494, WA 60; 243 f); S.G. BURNETT, Luthers hebräische Bibel (Brescia, 1494). Ihre Bedeutung für die Reformation (in: Meilensteine der Reformation. Schlüsseldokumente der frühen Wirksamkeit Martin Luthers, hg. v. I. DINGEL / H.P. JÜRGENS, 2014, 62–68). For the original text used by Luther, see *Biblia*, 1494, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin 8° Inc 2840, f. 307^v–308^r.

5 WAB 2; 552,20f: »Ego sic sentio: pii hominis vitam in tria dividendam. Primum ad ipsius animę vitam, qua ex fide vivit, pertinere.«

6 Cf. WAB 2; 552, 22.37.

calls it. Further, Luther characterizes the gift of intellect as »use, exercise, investigation, progress, power, and increase of wisdom«. ⁷

The description of the first phase already contains some notions characteristic of Luther's use of anthropological or psychological terminology. On one hand Luther puts his description in a kind of loose structure of human internal life, which is here represented by the distinction between mind and affect, the cognitive and affectual sides of a human being. The latter includes much of what we would today call emotional and voluntary aspects of the human mind. ⁸ Nevertheless, many of the words he uses—such as invention, exploration, exercise and investigation—are still very cognitive in nature. Yet even they are somehow more dynamic in nature than terms like wisdom and faith, which in this case appear as more or less static ground for dynamic operations denoted by intellect. Luther underlines this aspect by terms like »progress« and »increase«. This reflects the nature of the term ›affect‹, which was connected to the idea of creating movements in the soul. ⁹

Nevertheless, Luther does not seem to be overly interested in the *structure* of the soul or the psychology of mental faculties, even though he uses the term »soul« here. In contrast, what he discusses are primarily the *operations* of the soul, how they differ from each other through different terms used to designate them, and only secondarily how we can classify these activities with terms denoting a kind of structure of internal life like ›mind‹ and ›affect‹.

The second phase is about bringing out expressions of faith. It includes two gifts: spirit of counsel and spirit of fortitude. ¹⁰ Whereas Luther described the first two gifts in their relationship to God and the content of faith, these next two gifts come about in dealings with other people. This transition makes visible yet another crucial distinction: internal versus external. In the description of the first phase, the term ›soul‹ represents the internal life of faith, whereas here the interaction between the internal life

⁷ Cf. WAB 2; 552, 23–27.

⁸ Cf. P. KÄRKKÄINEN, Art. Emotions and Experience (The Oxford Encyclopedia of Martin Luther 1, 2017, 436–448), 437.

⁹ Cf. loc. cit., 437.

¹⁰ Cf. WAB 2; 552, 30–38.

of faith and the external works is thematized; nonetheless, the relationship between internal and external appears asymmetrical since Luther considers the external dealings as an effect or realization of the internal life of the soul and faith.

Luther proceeds:

When an intelligent and wise person has wisdom and intelligence, one begins to bring it forth, live accordingly, speak and teach, and then begins also persecution and the cross, since the world does not bear faith and words of wisdom and intellect.¹¹

The external things here are specifically the hardships which the Christian faces, and with this characterization Luther connects the discussion of these gifts with the wide thematic of the theology of the cross, which he had been working with for several years at that time.¹² At this point of Christian life, spirit of counsel and fortitude help the person to endure the hardships. As a sign of the interconnectedness and the roles of the first and second phases, Luther says that counsel and fortitude »flow« from wisdom and intellect as from their source.¹³

Again, Luther divides the two gifts into cognitive and affectual: counsel is more cognitive, and fortitude, which makes one actually endure the hardships, is affectual in nature.¹⁴ The categorization of the latter as affectual is more obvious than in the case of the first two gifts since enduring the hardships has more straightforward emotional and voluntary aspects, whereas counsel can be considered more as a cognitive deliberation about how to understand the hardships faced. It is also obvious here that even if one of the two phases is chronologically partly subsequent to the other, they are

¹¹ WAB 2; 552,30–33: »Cum intelligens & sapiens sapientiam & intellectum possederit, iam incipit proferre foras, ita vivere, loqui & docere, tunc incipit persecutio & crux, quia mundus fidem & verba sapientie & intellectus non patitur.«

¹² For literature, see TH. DIETER, *Der junge Luther und Aristoteles. Eine historisch-systematische Untersuchung zum Verhältnis von Theologie und Philosophie* (TBT 105), 2001, 107 (n. 314).

¹³ WAB 2; 552,33–35: »Hic spiritus consilii & fortitudinis regnat, vt homo prudens sit, quid faciat & sequatur in tribulationibus, quod tamen & ipsum fluit ex sapientia & intellectu ceu ex fonte.«

¹⁴ WAB 2; 552,35–38: »Porro fortitudo seu potentia ad affectum pertinet, vt sustineat & vincat in persecutionibus. Igitur Sicut sapientiam, ita & consilium ad mentem, vt Intellectum, ita & potentiam ad affectum referas.«

also two simultaneous aspects of Christian life and their respective order is not mainly chronological, but one of priority.

A similar structure applies to the third phase of Christian life, which Luther characterizes as »external dealings with other people«. ¹⁵ Here it is even more evident that what we have is more like another aspect to Christian life than any chronologically subsequent phase. As in the second phase, this phase is also about the external manifestation of the believer's internal life in faith. Here the cognitive gift is the spirit of knowledge and the affectual gift is the spirit of the fear of God. Luther focuses here on the freedom of the Christian, to which he had devoted the famous tractate two years earlier. ¹⁶

In the spirit of the *Freedom Tractate*, Luther describes the gift of knowledge as showing the freedom of the Christian concerning external works. What belongs to the body is principally free for a Christian to choose or not to choose, whether it be decreed by humans, or even by nature. ¹⁷ What this latter comment means exactly is not clear. Notably Luther does not mention God's decrees, such as the commandments of the Decalogue, but targets his criticism to ascetic practices like fasting and choosing specific clothing. As in the *Freedom Tractate*, Luther counterbalances the principal freedom of the Christian with another aspect. Whereas in the tractate the other aspect was dialectically pointed servitude of the neighbour, here Luther calls for a moderation and practical consideration in the form of fear of God. ¹⁸

Luther categorizes the spirit of fear of God according to his overall scheme under the affectual aspect. In Luther's writings, the expression »fear

¹⁵ WAB 2; 552,39: »Tertium est ipsa externa conuersatio cum hominibus.«

¹⁶ Cf. WA 7; [12–19] 20–73 (*Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, 1520).

¹⁷ WA 2, 552,40–553,43: »Hic scientia & timor domini regnat. Scientia, vt sciat omnia esse libera, valetque contra hypocrisin & superstitionem in cibis & potibus, vestibus & quicquid vel homines statuunt vel ipsa natura sibi fingit, Agitque id vnum, vt corpus libere, sed tamen discrete, hoc est: cum scientia, domet & regat.«

¹⁸ WA 2; 553,44–46: »Timor domini affectum regit, ne superbiat firmus contra infirmum & libertatem vertat vel in occasionem carnis vel in scandalum fratri, Sed vtatur libertate in timore domini modeste & salubriter.« Cf. WA 7; 49,22–25: »Christianus homo omnium dominus est liberrimus, nulli subiectus. Christianus homo omnium servus est officiosissimus, omnibus subiectus.«; cf. WA 7; 67,7–37; 69,24–31.

of God« had multiple meanings, which all carry an emotional connotation.¹⁹ In this case »fear of God« as a positive virtue of a Christian may best be understood as respect for God. So, the term ›fear‹ suggests an emotional content, but otherwise the consideration and moderation mentioned here sounds very cognitive. However, through a reference to Paul's example of a weak brother and the related appeal not to let the disdain towards a weak brother rule one's affect, Luther justifies the idea of moderation with empathy and humility towards one's neighbour, which certainly is not lacking emotional aspects. In Luther's wording, one can find sensitivity to the fact that voluntary and emotional aspects are an inseparable part of our dealings with other humans, whether it be enduring resistance from other people or being tolerant of other people's shortcomings.

As a summary of Luther's interpretation, we can trace some points of his way of describing the internal life of a Christian under the influence of the Holy Spirit. This might serve as a kind of draft of Luther's theological psychology at this point of his career. At its core are the six gifts of the Spirit, which are something like divinely given virtues but without any reference to metaphysical structure, apart from a loose categorization into cognitive and emotional or voluntary classes and the internal life represented by the term ›soul‹ and the external dealings with other people. The gifts are defined in their relationship to external realities such as God, the adversities of life and the neighbour.

One question that I have not mentioned yet concerns Luther's use of the term ›spirit‹ here. Does it refer exclusively to the Holy Spirit, or perhaps to something attributed to a Christian person in the sense of traditional gifts of the Spirit? On the one hand, I have hinted at the latter option above in characterizing the different spirits as something like divinely given virtues, which have a specific, albeit loose, connection with a human psychological setting represented by the terms mind, affect and soul. On the other hand, Luther considers the gifts as gifts of the Holy Spirit, and they can also be considered as manifestations of the sovereign divine Spirit in human life, a kind of activity of a subject external to the human itself.

The text itself does not explicitly address the problem of the principal subject of the gifts. A further glance at the genesis of Luther's use of psycho-

19 Cf. TH. DIETZ, *Der Begriff der Furcht bei Luther* (BHTh 147), 2009, 124 f. 255 f.

logical terminology, especially at his use of the terms spirit and soul gives at least a partial answer. How did Luther arrive at this kind of description in 1522? The answer to this question sheds some light on the nature of Luther's theological psychology in the context of the psychological traditions around him.

II Soul, Spirit and Psychologies

Luther was a thinker whose writings were characterized by strong dialectical contrasts. However, in closer analysis such contrasts often appear less categorical than they do at first sight. The view of the human mind belongs to the topics concerning which Luther strongly attacked the main authority of his time, Aristotle. In the early 1520s Luther ended up recommending that Aristotle's treatise *On the Soul* should no longer be used in university teaching, which had been the case for about three hundred years in the Western universities.²⁰

For a theologian like Luther, the reasons for such harsh words against Aristotle were first and foremost theological. If Aristotle's view of the soul was one side of the contrast, the other side was what Luther considered as the Scriptural or Christian view of human inner life, where the concept of spirit plays a prominent role. Sometimes Luther describes the whole human being as a being consisting of a body and a spirit, but in several other cases his descriptions are more complex, and the word ›soul‹ appears there as a third main actor.²¹

Favouring the use of the word ›spirit‹ in describing the innermost part of the human being is not for Luther just playing with words. There are indeed other words which Luther adopted from the biblical writers for sim-

20 Cf. WA 6; 457,31–38; S. SALATOWSKY, *De Anima. Die Rezeption der aristotelischen Psychologie im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (BSPH 43), 2006, 37 f. For medieval science of the soul, see S. DE BOER, *The (Human) Soul* (in: *The Routledge Companion to Sixteenth Century Philosophy*, ed. by H. LAGERLUND / B. HILL, 2017, 411–435), 411 f.

21 On the constituents of human being in Luther's texts until 1521, see I. KARIMES, *In Your Light We See the Light: Martin Luther's Understanding of Faith and Reality between 1513 and 1521*, 2017, 94–116.

ilar purposes, like the word ›heart‹.²² For Luther, it was rather a question of meanings than of words. How was one to describe the inner life of human beings in a way that is compatible with the language of the Christian faith? I will come later to Luther's more constructive suggestions for a Christian view of human internal life, or as the title suggests, theological psychology. A crucial point there will be: What is the relationship between the two spirits, namely the human spirit and the Holy Spirit that dwells in Christians through faith? Before that I will briefly focus on Luther's more provocative answer, according to which one cannot use Aristotle's view of the human soul as the substantial form of body as a starting point for a Christian theological psychology.

Luther was well aware of the fact that Aristotle's definition had for a long time been precisely such a starting point which he wanted to get rid of.²³ This situation was institutionalized in the university curricula, where Luther, among others, had taken the course on Aristotelian psychology in the Faculty of Arts, which provided a basis for understanding discussions, for example, about the doctrine of grace in theological studies.²⁴

I would like to add here some comments about using the term ›psychology‹ in this context, which may sound strange to modern ears and, furthermore, was not yet used as such in Luther's own time. Since Aristotle wrote a treatise entitled *On the Soul*, there had been a tradition of discussing certain topics belonging to the human mind, emotions, animal behaviour, and even the physiology common to all living beings, including plants, under the same heading. During the Middle Ages, this was often labelled as »knowledge of the soul« (lat. *scientia de anima*). As in ancient philosophy, it was considered a part of natural philosophy, which corresponds roughly to what we nowadays know as natural science. Concerning its methodolo-

22 Cf. N. SLENCZKA, Art. Herz (in: Das Luther-Lexikon, hg. v. V. LEPPIN / G. SCHNEIDER-LUDORFF, 2014, 293 f).

23 Cf. DIETER, Der junge Luther (see n. 12), 471–475.492–494.

24 Cf. E. KLEINEIDAM, Universitas studii Erfordensis, vol 1 (EThSt 14), ²1985, 240f, for the curriculum of the Faculty of Arts in late medieval University of Erfurt. For the role of philosophical anthropology in Gabriel Biel's late medieval theology, see H.A. OBERMAN, The Harvest of Medieval Theology, 1963, 57–68; D. METZ, Gabriel Biel und die Mystik (Contubernium 55), 2001, 75–80.

gies, Aristotelian natural philosophy has little in common with modern empirical sciences, but they had the common interest of trying to understand the world as we know it through the sense perceptions and, in the case of human psychology, also by introspection.²⁵

Regarding the scope of the medieval and modern disciplines of psychology, it must be remembered that Aristotelian psychology discussed many things which would now belong to physiology, like reproduction and metabolism.²⁶ Furthermore, the medieval discussion centred many times on semantic and metaphysical problems, which were closely connected to the disagreements in wording of different authoritative writers. In this regard, it is closer to the modern discipline of philosophy of mind, which has formed the modern philosophical psychology since empirical psychology left philosophy during the 19th and early 20th centuries.²⁷ Nevertheless, a major part of medieval psychological treatises and commentaries on Aristotle's *On the Soul* discussed the problems concerning human and animal processes of perception, emotions, principles of rational thinking, etc.

During the 16th century, some authors introduced the term ›psychology‹ as a designation for a part of the science of anthropology, the science of human beings. Being a Greek counterpart of the Latin *scientia de anima*, the term ›psychology‹ inherited the tradition of Aristotelian psychology, but now in a more limited sense focused on the human soul. Curiously enough, some of the first writers to use the term were Lutherans following the tradition of teaching initiated by Philipp Melanchthon.²⁸

With regard to the philosophical tradition of knowledge of the soul the word ›psychology‹ will be used in what follows of the descriptions of the internal processes of living beings and focusing specifically on human mental phenomena. In the discussion of Luther's views this study is not limited to purely philosophical examination of human mental activities, but also includes theological aspects, which will be referred to as theological psychology.

25 Cf. DE BOER, *The (Human) Soul* (see n. 20), 412 f.

26 Cf. loc. cit., 413.

27 On this process, see: *Psychology and Philosophy: Inquiries into the Soul from Late Scholasticism to Contemporary Thought* (Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind 8), ed. by S. HEINÄMAA / M. REUTER, 2009.

28 Cf. DE BOER, *The (Human) Soul* (see n. 20), 411; SALATOWSKY, *De Anima* (see n. 20), 302–306.

Already during his studies of theology in Erfurt, Luther was most sceptical of ancient philosophers, and among the worst he mentions Aristotle by name. Several scholars have tried to trace the writers who would have served as inspiration for the young Luther in his criticism. Along with possible similarities with writers of his philosophical and theological background, the *via moderna*, or his own order, the Augustinians, a major source of inspiration was undoubtedly the Church Father Augustine. Luther's earliest critical remarks on Aristotle can be found in his early marginal glosses on Augustine's works and in the closely related glosses on Peter Lombard. In some cases, Luther even merely adopts Augustine's criticism of Aristotle, which was perhaps reflecting the Church Father's own position as a Christian thinker strongly influenced by Neoplatonist tradition.²⁹

For our present purposes, however, Luther's earliest critical remarks do not shed any specific light, since they do not explicitly concern Aristotle's psychological views. Instead, Luther joined Augustine's criticism of Aristotle's view on happiness, which considered happiness as fulfilment of one's own personal virtue. Still the overall attitude for preferring Augustine's Christian philosophy over Aristotle is a feature worth noting since the earliest extant writings of Luther.³⁰

Perhaps the only indication of a nascent criticism of Aristotle's psychology in this early phase is the often-highlighted passage where Luther exerts cautious criticism of the concept of a created habit of love, which had its roots in Aristotle's ethics. There Luther highlights Lombard's view, which considers the Holy Spirit itself as the immediate supernatural cause behind our acts of charity without a need to posit a separate created habit of love in humans. Luther shows some sympathy towards Lombard's position, which was rejected by subsequent medieval theologians, but does not dare adopt it as his own thought. The passage is still noteworthy as an anticipation of Luther's later criticism of the use of the Aristotelian concept of habit for ar-

29 Cf. P. KÄRKKÄINEN, *Augustinian, Humanist or What? Martin Luther's Marginal Notes on Augustine* (in: *Papers presented at the Seventeenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2015*, vol. 13: *Augustine in Late Medieval Philosophy and Theology* [StPatr 87], ed. by J.T. SLOTEMAKER / J.F. WITT, 2017, 161–166), 163 f.

30 Ibid.

ticulating the Christian view of grace when he notes that the very concept of habit derives from »the words of Aristotle, the stinking philosopher.«³¹

III Criticism of Aristotle's Psychology and the Spirit

After having moved to Wittenberg, Luther launched an attack against the foundations of Aristotle's psychology and especially against its use in the service of theology. This was a considerable part of Luther's overall attack on Aristotle's philosophy, which culminated in 1518 in the philosophical theses of the Heidelberg Disputation. Luther's criticism of late medieval theology consisted of several issues that fall under the field of psychology, such as the capacity for knowing the ultimate good, the possibility of loving the highest good, freedom of the will and the aforementioned use of the Aristotelian concept of habit in theology.³²

For understanding Luther's view of theology and the human mind however, his most general criticism of Aristotle's view of the human soul appears to be the most interesting. In the Heidelberg Disputation, this was put in the form of a claim that Aristotle considered human souls mortal, and Luther even claimed that this is in perfect harmony with the general principles of Aristotle's natural philosophy.³³ Later in his career, Luther explicitly applied a similar view to an even wider range of ancient non-Christian philosophers. He admitted that Plato had written about immortal human souls, but Luther stated that Plato had only recited some opinions he had learned without providing argumentation for them since, according to Luther, natural reason without divine assistance simply cannot demonstrate the immortality of the soul.³⁴

As for Christian theology, the denial of the immortality of the soul was for Luther an abomination. It seems that Luther took the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul as granted, regarding it as a part of the

31 Cf. WA 9; 42,39–43,8; AWA 9; 16–320,9; P. KÄRKKÄINEN, Martin Luther (in: *Medieval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, vol. 2, ed. by PH.W. ROSEMAN, 2010, 471–494), 479 f.

32 Cf. DIETER, *Der junge Luther* (see n. 12), 49–64. 149–256.

33 Cf. WA 59; 410,14 f. 412,1.414,6. For an analysis of the texts, see DIETER, *Der junge Luther* (see. n. 12), 489–563.

34 Cf. WA 20; 70,26–33; SALATOWSKY, *De Anima* (see n. 20), 67.

Christian doctrine of eternal life. Since the majority of medieval philosophers had argued that Aristotle considered the human intellectual soul immortal and the Church had even officially considered the Aristotelian view of the human soul as a form of the body consonant with the Christian faith, Luther used all his powers to argue that this was not the genuine interpretation of Aristotle's texts.³⁵

Paradoxically, in Luther's argumentation for his interpretation in the Heidelberg Disputation, one can trace some individual elements in Aristotle's views that Luther actually incorporated into his theological view of human psychology. Here it should be noted, as Theodor Dieter shows in detail in his study on young Luther and Aristotle, that Luther's arguments for his interpretation were not always convincing or at least not very clear.³⁶ Basically, Luther tried to show that for Aristotle the human soul, as the substantial form of the body, dissolves together with the body in death, as does every being consisting of matter and form, such as stones, plants, and animals, including their souls.³⁷

Those cases where Aristotle seems to speak of a human intellect separated from a body, Luther explains as follows: Aristotle does not speak of a human soul separated from the body in a proper sense. The soul as a form of the body is for Aristotle always connected to the body. Instead, says Luther, when using the term »separate«, Aristotle is referring to the activity or operation of the human soul, which is, in the case of intellectual activities, separate from the body, and the soul as the form of body. Or at least intellectual activities are from some viewpoint separate from the body.³⁸ Furthermore, when Aristotle calls this activity »eternal« or »divine« this must be understood in a derived meaning of the word, not properly. In itself it is not eternal or divine, but may sometimes be called such because of its participation in eternal or divine realities. According to this view, they cannot be carried out without a soul connected to the body, that is, after the bodily death.³⁹

35 On Luther's reactions to the medieval doctrines, see P. KÄRKKÄINEN, *Nominalist Psychology and the Limits of Canon Law in Late Medieval Erfurt* (in: *Lutheran Reformation and the Law*, ed. by V. MÄKINEN, 2006, 93–110), 107–109.

36 Cf. DIETER, *Der junge Luther* (see n. 12), 629.

37 For a summary of Luther's argument, see loc. cit., 627 f.

38 Cf. WA 59; 414,7–19; DIETER, *Der junge Luther* (see n. 12), 514–516.

39 Cf. WA 59; 414,20–27; 418,11–25; DIETER, *Der junge Luther* (see n. 12), 554–557.

It should be noted here that Luther frequently calls Aristotle's view confused and does not bother to analyze or systematize it in detail since his focus in the disputation is polemical.⁴⁰ For the most part, it serves as an antithesis to his own view of the human intellect or human spirit, which would for him better conform to the truths of Christian faith.

Luther did not present a unified view of the human mind as his alternative to the Aristotelian view. What we have are various drafts of such a view that Luther presented incidentally in his commentaries to various biblical texts. A key concept in Luther's theological alternative to Aristotle's view is ›spirit‹. Lexically it occurs frequently in the New Testament writings, and especially in the Pauline letters, which were an important reference for Luther during his early years in Wittenberg. In addition to the meaning of Holy Spirit or spirit of God, Luther reflected on concepts like spirit and flesh, or spiritual and carnal man, but also drew from the biblical material a tripartite view of a human being as a being made of body, soul and spirit, or a bipartite view consisting of a body and a spirit.⁴¹

In contrast, the Aristotelian psychology that Luther had learned utilized the term ›spirit‹ in a more specific sense. It was not principally used to highlight the contrast to the material world. Medieval Aristotelianism had adopted the ancient theories of vital and animal spirits, which formed a part of its explanation of how the mechanisms of movement emerge in the nervous system of animals and also how sense perception and some lower cognitive processes like memory function. These theories were heavily influenced by the medical treatises of Galen and the medieval Arab writers such as Avicenna. The usage of the word ›spirit‹ in this context was to a great extent influenced by an ancient Stoic notion that considered spirit as an extremely fine material substance.⁴²

40 Cf. loc. cit., 553.556.634.

41 Cf. KARIMIES, *In Your Light* (see n. 21), 95.

42 Cf. JODOCUS TRUTFETTER, *Summa in totam physicen hoc est philosophiam naturalem conformiter siquidem verae sophiae: que est Theologia*, 1514, f. L 4^v; Dd 3^v-4^r; SALATOWSKY, *De Anima* (see n. 20), 106-112.

IV *The Human Spirit as a Theological Concept*

The fact that standard university teaching used the word ›spirit‹ only in a sense that was connected to purely natural and even explicitly material processes of the body may have reinforced Luther's conviction that Aristotle's view of the human soul is too material to be used in theology where the term was frequently used in contrast to material reality. Luther's own usage of the term ›spirit‹ was more in line with another tradition, which can be found in the writings of Augustine.

Augustine had encountered a similar dilemma as Luther did later: the philosophical vocabulary did not clearly match the use of the word ›spirit‹ in the Bible. In the Latin translation, *spiritus* was used to translate the Greek *pneuma* both from the Septuagint and from the Greek New Testament. This led Augustine to use the term in various meanings: sometimes it means merely ›life‹, in other cases ›the whole human being‹. In many cases, spirit is equivalent to the philosophical notion of soul, which denotes the souls of both animals and humans. Lastly, in some cases spirit means specifically the rational part of the human soul, the mind. Contrary to this use, Augustine can occasionally follow the Neoplatonist wording, and call the mind the ›intellectual soul‹ in contrast to the ›spiritual soul‹ or ›spiritual part of the soul‹.⁴³

In one of his earliest writings, Luther notes Augustine's distinction between mind and spirit in *De Trinitate* 15,16: »Not every spirit is mind, but every mind is a spirit«.⁴⁴ In a comment on Augustine's *City of God* from the same time, Luther admires how the Church Father proves the immateriality of the human soul.⁴⁵ In these earliest comments, Luther seems to consider Augustine a positive example of the view that the human mind is called a spirit and that it is immaterial in nature. For comparison, among Luther's teachers of philosophy Jodocus Trutfetter vehemently demanded that a Christian philosopher must unequivocally teach the immateriality

43 Cf. G. O'DALY, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, 1987, 8.

44 Cf. AWA 9; 611,2–5.

45 Cf. AWA 9; 620,27.

of the human rational soul, but as an Aristotelian he did not call that soul ›spirit‹, but ›intellect‹ or ›mind‹ instead.⁴⁶

From the earliest marginal notes we also learn that Luther considered the medieval treatise *On Spirit and Soul* a work of Augustine in the sense that it is a compilation of Augustine's texts and reflects the position found in Augustine's authentic works.⁴⁷ For Luther's view of ›spirit‹, it is interesting that *On Spirit and Soul* contains a list of meanings for this word in the Bible. These include many instances from mere material wind to the part of the human soul that is capable of knowing God.⁴⁸ In Luther's later writings, we frequently meet similar uses of the word ›spirit‹, including notions that one of the basic meanings of the word ›spirit‹ is wind, which for Luther connotes some kind of dynamic nature such as a capability to cause motion.⁴⁹ For Luther, this does not apply only to spirits in the created realm, but also to the use of word ›spirit‹ as the name for the third person of the Trinity. In the *Disputation against Scholastic Theology* from 1517, Luther calls divine grace ›living, moving and working Spirit‹⁵⁰ and in numerous sermons on the Day of Pentecost he refers to the sign of the mighty wind as a symbol of the Holy Spirit who is constantly creating spiritual effects.⁵¹

During his time in Wittenberg until the early 1520s, Luther used the terms ›soul‹ and ›spirit‹ on several occasions to describe human internal life in contrast to the body. The human spirit is most prominently for Luther that aspect of humanity where a human being meets the Spirit of God. Luther may consider it as a part of human nature, but at the same time points out that without God's grace the spirit is dead. According to this usage, Luther sometimes distinguishes between soul and spirit, where soul is left with the knowledge of the material world, including the use of reason, whereas only spirit can grasp divine things. In other cases, Luther calls a human being a composite of body and spirit where ›spirit‹ stands more or less for the same as what was traditionally considered the human rational

46 Cf. TRUTFETTER, *Summa* (see n. 42), f. Y 2^r–Y 3^r; Dd 5^v.

47 Cf. AWA 9; 239,7–9.

48 Quoted in AWA 9; 239,16–240,13.

49 Cf. P. KÄRKKÄINEN, *Luthers trinitarische Theologie des Heiligen Geistes*, 2003, 175.

50 Cf. StA 1; 169,22–25 (*Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam*, 1517).

51 Cf. KÄRKKÄINEN, *Theologie* (see n. 49), 175 f.

soul. In addition to these cases, Luther understands the Pauline distinction between flesh and spirit in a way that applies to the human being taken as a whole. According to this usage, a human being may be spiritual concerning all its parts, be they body, soul and spirit or merely body and spirit.⁵²

An illustrative example of Luther's way of using the term ›spirit‹ in different meanings is his commentary on the *Magnificat* from 1521. Spirit is there firstly the highest part of a human being and distinguished from the soul. Without grace the spirit is dead, but through faith the Holy Spirit resides in the human spirit, and this takes place outside the light of reason, which rules in the soul. Second, Luther notes that, according to their nature, soul and spirit are both spiritual. This refers to the idea of a unified human intellectual soul that is by nature distinct from the body and capable of immortality. Third, Luther refers to a usage that all three parts of a human being can be spiritual or carnal according to the spiritual state of the human.⁵³

›Spirit‹ is not the only word that Luther uses to describe the point where a human being meets the divine grace. Consonant with his developing doctrine of justification, Luther frequently mentions faith in this context. In certain texts, such as the commentary of *Magnificat*, faith seems to be something like an activity of the human spirit, which leaves spirit as the psychological or anthropological *locus* of faith and perhaps other theological virtues such as love and hope too. Given the dynamical connotations of the word ›spirit‹ in Luther, this could hint at an understanding of the human soul as a constantly moving entity that then operates in activities like faith and love. Spirit can serve Luther as a relatively neutral, but at the same time dynamic platform for such operations or internal tendencies of the human being and therefore supplement the function of the rational soul in traditional Aristotelian philosophy. Because of the Aristotelian connotations, Luther may avoid using the term ›soul‹ in the context of knowing or loving God, and use it instead in reference to sense perception and reasoning about the phenomena of the material world.

This also seems to be the case regarding the later Luther when he describes the theological and philosophical definitions of the human being in

52 Cf. KARIMIES, In Your Light (see n. 21), 96–116.

53 Cf. WA 7; 550,19–552,4; KARIMIES, In Your Light (see n. 21), 111 f.

the theses for the disputation *On the Human Being* (1536). There, he has not forgotten his early criticism of Aristotle's view of the soul and comments on it by saying that Aristotle only wanted to joke with his audience when he called the soul the first actuality of the body. Luther's more serious claim was that Aristotle did not know anything of the formal cause of human being, the soul. At this time, Luther does not avoid using the word ›soul‹, as can be seen from the theological definition of human being, which Luther presents after the discussion of the philosophical definition. A confusion with Aristotle's view is avoided by an explicit allusion to Gen 2:7 when Luther defines human being as a being constituted of flesh and a spirated soul (›carne et anima spirante constans‹). In the expression ›spirated soul‹ Luther combines the terms ›spirit‹ and ›soul‹, but at the same time connects them to their meanings in the biblical text. Yet he does not consider them simply in the meaning of the whole human being since he considers them another part of a human being besides the body.⁵⁴

During his late years, Luther further mentions the understanding of ›spirit‹ and ›soul‹ in the commentary on Gen 2:7 of his *Lectures on Genesis*. There, Luther leaves aside the opposition of soul or spirit with the body. Here, human soul is a created spirit, which is poured into the body. Furthermore, he even mentions the immortality of the soul in a positive sense.⁵⁵

In comparison to the earlier use of ›soul‹ discussed above, Luther's use of the term ›spirit‹ did not change that much over the years. Without explicat-

54 Cf. WA 39,1; 175,16; 176,21.

55 WA 42; 8–43,11 (Veit Dietrich's lecture notes): »Et inspiravit. Was darff Mose der phrasi, het wol mugen sagen creavit in eo spiritum Sed dicit ›Inspiravit‹, ut significet spiritum quo vivificavit hominem. Idem igitur est ac si dicat: vivificavit hominem spiritu sancto. Est igitur hec definitio animae verior et clarior quam in Aristotele Quod anima est spiritus creatus et infusus corpori. Nam ante hanc inspirationem ist Adam gelegen wie ein tod mensch. Supra de animalibus non hoc dixit de spiritu. Sed creavit ea viva corpora, in homine aber ist ein sunders. Paulus eciam dicit spiritum vivificantem fuisse ab inicio, so mus er in novissimo die auch das leben geben. Queritur de anima post mortem, quo feratur. Id ego nescio. Corpus videmus quiescere, Anima fidelium kompt in gotts hand, da schlefft sie auff das aller best. Non tamen debet defendi hoc sed tantum dici man konne es nit beschliessen. Scriptura dicit dormire mit leyb und sel. Ob sie nu so schlaffen, quod pii iucunda, impii horrenda somnia habent, hoc nescio. Jch bleyb bei dem Text Esaiae: ›Iusti ambulant in quiete‹«. The printed version of the text is considerably longer.

ing a complex structure of spiritual gifts, he refers to this aspect of human life that is created and sustained by faith and God's grace. The expression ›spiritual life‹ in contrast to ›animal life‹ highlights the dynamic nature of the spirit, and focuses on the operation rather than a static understanding of the metaphysical faculties of a human being.

V Conclusion

The spiritual gifts discussed in the letter from 1522 can be understood as part of a description of a kind of theological psychology or, in other words, the way in which the Holy Spirit works in a believer according to Luther. They belong to the description of the human spirit, which not a faculty independent of God's grace, but precisely one which is created and dependent on divine influence. Building upon the different strains of learning, Luther drafts a new kind of picture of human internal life that is suited to his overall theological ambitions. However, the description remains a draft only, and Luther never develops it into a detailed account of the operations of the Holy Spirit.