

## **Befriending the Soul to Live the Good Life**

### **Part II**

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## Chapter 4: Philosophical and Theological Analysis

### Secular Philosophy

The secular culture of our time considers the idea of the soul with skepticism and derision. This is due to the materialism that pervades our society and to the culture's preoccupation with the self. This is not a bias of recent appearance in postmodernity. In the seventeenth century, John Locke lamented that the idea of the soul was regarded as an obscurity. People were immersed in the study of material substances and, as a result, they rarely subjected their analysis to anything beyond themselves.<sup>45</sup>

Science provides "evidence" for the material nature of the individual which relegates our identity as humans to nothing more than the behavior of an immense compilation of neurons and their atomic makeup.<sup>46</sup> In sum, these are the assertions of the materialist and the empiricist.

Materialists (also known as physicalists) dismiss the soul as a mythic conception contained in and across cultures and religious traditions.<sup>47</sup> Physicalists argue that, due to the sheer amount of evidence supplied by science regarding the physical life, we can explain consciousness without proposing the existence of the soul.<sup>48</sup> As the name suggests, physicalism proposes that the only things that exist are physical substances and that a human being is only a physical creature where consciousness consists of physical events (neurological) in the brain.<sup>49</sup>

The empiricist views a person as a property-thing that derives its identity through change. This change occurs in small steps. The person is *the* body with continuous psychological elements or processes. As a result, the thought of a soul is a useless conception. There is no soul or ego as these things are pre-scientific and unobservable.<sup>50</sup>

The self provides evidence through the exaltation of our experience as the authority on epistemology. Therefore, since the soul cannot be objectively verified by experience, we

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<sup>45</sup> J.P. Moreland and Scott B. Rae, *Body & Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 228.

<sup>46</sup> Francis Crick, *The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994), 3.

<sup>47</sup> Jaegwon Kim, "Lonely Souls: Causality and Substance Dualism" in *Soul, body and Survival*, ed. Kevin Corcoran (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 30.

<sup>48</sup> Nancy Murphy, "Human Nature: Historical, Scientific and Religious Issues" in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* Eds. Warren S. Brown, Nancy Murphy, and H. Newton Malony, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 18.

<sup>49</sup> J.P. Moreland, *What is the Soul? Recovering Human Personhood in the Scientific Age* as part of the RIZM Critical Questions booklet series (Norcross, GA: RZIM, 2002) 9-10.

<sup>50</sup> J.P. Moreland and Scott B. McRae, *Body & Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics*, 180, 181.

cannot know it. How can we believe in something that we cannot know?<sup>51</sup> The contemporary analytical school of thought also adds traction to the argument by their reference to the observable human being as the empirical individual who is born, matures, behaves and dies. Man is what he appears to be externally, rather than a nonphysical soul interacting with a physical body in ways we cannot comprehend or tangibly verify. Man is seen as a finite, mortal and behavioral form of life.<sup>52</sup> Current secular scholarship asserts that the self is who we truly are even though it may appear mysterious, inexpressible and unlimited. It is only known by what it does. It has become modernity's replacement for the soul. This philosophy has permeated our lives to the point that our first instinct in seeking to understand the world leads us to introspection and not to the nature of reality.<sup>53</sup>

### **The Fathers, Calvin, The Westminster Confession of Faith, and Edwards**

The thought and reason of the early Church was influenced heavily by Greek philosophy. In turn, the Fathers influenced the Reformers. Origen, Jerome, Tertullian and Augustine were all involved in debates regarding the origin, nature and continued existence of the soul. From these discussions, the following historical views were presented: preexistentism, traducianism and creationism.<sup>54</sup>

The Alexandrian School of Origen and Scotus Erigena argued for the existence of the soul in a previous state (pre-existentism). Events that occurred to the soul or the behavior of the soul in the preexisting state accounted for the current condition in which the soul was presently found. In fact, Origen used this theory to explain the incarnation. As noted by Kelly:

We recall his belief that the world of spiritual beings, including human souls, pre-existed from all eternity; he applied this as the key to the incarnation. One of these souls, the one destined to be the soul of the man Jesus, in every respect a human soul like the rest, was from the beginning attached to the Logos with mystical devotion; it burned with love and desire for justice. All the other souls, by the misguided exercise of their free will, fell away from the Logos, to whom they ought to have adhered; but this unique soul, as a result of its adoring contemplation, became inseparably united with Him.<sup>55</sup>

This view had more to do with philosophy than concrete Scriptural proof and, as a result, was rejected by the Reformers.

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<sup>51</sup> John Hick, *Death and Eternal Life* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 92.

<sup>52</sup> John Hick, "Immortality and Resurrection," 327.

<sup>53</sup> Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 173, 179.

<sup>54</sup> L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939), 196-201.

<sup>55</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), 155.

Tertullian made a case for traducianism which later influenced Luther's views on the soul. In traducianism, the soul is proliferated concurrently with the body in reproduction and, therefore, passed on from parents to children at birth. The traducianist argument believes it finds Scriptural warrant in Genesis 1:28 and 2:7 where it points out that God left man to propagate the species. It goes on to speculate that Eve's soul was created in Adam since she is "of man" (1 Cor. 11:8) and the account in Genesis is silent regarding the creation of her soul. God ceased from His creative activity on the seventh day and, therefore, has allowed souls to be created through traducianism especially in light of the fact that descendants are spoken of as being in the loins of their fathers (Gen. 46:26; Heb. 7:9, 10). This view is also supported by the peculiar cognitive and behavioral traits which cannot be accounted for by education as they are evident in children who are not raised by their birth parents. This view also asserts that it offers the best explanation for the inheritance of spiritual depravity in man since moral failure is a condition of the soul and not the body.

While this view has prima facie scriptural proof, it does encounter several philosophical contradictions and makes scriptural assumptions. It opposes the philosophical doctrine of the soul as a simple, pure and unified spiritual substance. This view argues that the soul is either divisible from each parent and, as a result, must separate from the soul of the parents, or that the soul is potentially present in the mother or father (which leads to materialism) as the creator(s) of the soul (preexistence). Scripturally, this view presupposes that God works only through means to create after his direct involvement in completing the original work of creation. Without modifications, it presents a challenge for understanding how humans are only responsible for the sin of Adam and not of their parents?

The creationist view of the soul's origin was grounded in the belief that each soul is an immediate (direct) creation of God at an undetermined time. This appears to be the prevailing view of Scripture as noted in Ecclesiastes 12:7, "...and the dust returns to the earth as it was and the spirit returns to God who gave it" and, similarly, in Numbers 16:22, Isaiah 42:5, Zechariah 12:1 and Hebrews 12:9. It also has secondary, philosophical concurrence in that it presents the soul as an indivisible essence and, as a result, it alleviates the traducianist challenge in Christology since Jesus did not share the same numerical essence of all humanity that participated in the original sin of Adam.

In light of its scriptural provision and harmony with philosophical thought regarding the soul's essence, creationism does have three objections to it. The most stern protest suggests that God is the author of moral evil either by allowing the soul to be originally possessed of moral depravity or by allowing the soul to be originally pure but subjected to a depraved, corrupt body. However, it is important to note that the creationist views original sin as a matter of imputation and not solely inheritance. From their perspective, the original disobedience of Adam had been accounted to all men, which resulted in God's just withholding of righteousness. This, in turn, results in the contamination of sin into the lives of all men. The weaker objection is that it does not account for the reappearance of moral or mental characteristics in the child since the parents only propagate the body of their progeny. However, these traits may not be accounted for

solely on the basis of heredity. Berkhof states, “God does not create all souls alike, but creates in each particular case a soul adapted to the body with which it will be united and the complex relationship into which it will be introduced.”<sup>56</sup> The child’s personality may also be influenced by their physical make up as well as the influence of their parents. The last objection seeks to harmonize God’s present relationship with the world by assuming that He only works through secondary causes and has ceased from His creative work (deism). But, it is an assumption that breeds more difficulties in its defense than as a criticism of creationism.<sup>57</sup>

What is apparent from these three views is that the existence of the soul was assumed from both philosophical and scriptural proof. While Scripture reveals how Adam’s soul was created, it does not present an explanation for the creation of subsequent souls. If we are perplexed by this fact and from the opposing views of the process, we can be encouraged as Augustine also found it difficult to choose. In light of the above, we must follow in the steps of Berkhof and proceed with humility and caution. He believed some form of creationism deserved priority as it agreed with philosophical criticism and avoided the Christological mistakes of traducianism and that the creative process of “soul making” must be closely associated with the natural process of propagation.<sup>58</sup> Berkhof may have been encouraged by the fact that Calvin also believed that the soul depended on God for its existence.<sup>59</sup>

Calvin’s views on the soul are presented in the texts of *Psychopannychia*<sup>60</sup> and *The Institutes of Christian Religion*.<sup>61</sup> In *Psychopannychia*, he articulates the different terms and usages found in Scripture as the ultimate authority before he utilizes the analysis and testimonies of the early church fathers. He then moves through an understanding of the soul in classic philosophy and by joining all three aspects, he makes a defense regarding the immortality of the soul. His specific purpose is to clarify the intermediate state of the soul between the death and resurrection of the body in response to a view held by the Anabaptists who espoused a doctrine of soul sleep. He asserts that the soul is still empowered with senses and intellect after the death of the body (it is a “soul awake”) and, more importantly, that the eternal state promised in John 5:24 began in this life.<sup>62</sup> In book 3, chapter 25 of the *Institutes* Calvin promotes the idea that justification for an intermediate state of the soul should be provided to uphold and encourage those believers who are facing persecution and/or death.<sup>63</sup> That reason, coupled with Calvin’s adherence to *sola scriptura*, prevented him from speculation

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<sup>56</sup> L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 200.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 196-200.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 201.

<sup>59</sup> G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 249, fn.22.

<sup>60</sup> G.H. Tavard, *The Starting Point of Calvin’s Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1-19.

<sup>61</sup> J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III.

<sup>62</sup> G.H. Tavard, *The Starting Point of Calvin’s Theology*, 67.

<sup>63</sup> J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, Chapter 25.6

regarding the intermediate state but it also allowed him to affirm the doctrine that, after death, the soul of the believer will live immediately in the presence of Christ. His focus then turns to the final state with an emphasis on the resurrection of the body where the soul and body are united and the believer is raised to a glorified, immortal life.<sup>64</sup> The Westminster divines put creed to Calvin's conviction in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*:

The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption: but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them: the souls of the righteous, being made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.... At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up, with the self-same bodies, and none other (although with different qualities), which shall be united again to their souls forever.<sup>65</sup>

Approximately eighty years later, the influences of The Westminster Confession and Aristotelianism would mold Jonathan Edwards' idea of the soul. The soul was that entity which gave a human the ability to understand and experience life. He states:

Here it may be inquired, what the affections of the mind are? I answer, the affections are no other, than the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul. God has endued the soul with two principal faculties: The one, that by which it is capable of perception and speculation or by which it discerns and judges things; which is called the understanding. The other, that by which the soul is some way inclined with respect to the things it views or considers: or it is the faculty by which the soul beholds things – not as an indifferent unaffected spectator, but either as liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting. This faculty is called by various names: it is sometimes called the inclination; and, as it respects the actions determined and governed by it, the will: and the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, is often called the heart.<sup>66</sup>

The soul expresses the volitional character of man in union with the body and, as a result, has an effect on the physical nature of man. The soul has its locus of control in

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, Chapter 25.7, 25.8

<sup>65</sup> *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Chp. 32.1,2 (Atlanta: Committee for Christian Education & Publications, 1990), 96-97.

<sup>66</sup> J. Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* in "The Works of Jonathan Edwards" Vol. 1 (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson) 237.

the mind, and the mind, in turn, houses the affections. This combination results in a synonymous relationship between the soul and consciousness. All of a person's thoughts, ideas and feelings are expressed by the soul. In a mystical sense, the soul may express these characteristics without the use of a body.<sup>67</sup> The soul could be impaired and distressed by sin,<sup>68</sup> but a remedy for sin could be found in faith, which Edwards understood to be the soul's active union with Christ.<sup>69</sup> It was in the soul's experience of faith that the affections could direct the life of an individual as a heavenward expedition. As a result, death was seen as the final existence for the earthly life. However, if the religious affections ruled the earthly life of the soul, it would find faith's consummation in heaven where the soul would find eternal life and rest.<sup>70</sup>

### Reformed Systematic Theologians

After God had made all other creature, He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image, having the law of God written on their hearts, and power to fulfill it: and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Besides this law written in their hearts, the received a command, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.<sup>71</sup>

J. Gresham Machen begins a sermon on God's creative activity in man by quoting the first sentence of the above confession. His appeal was pastoral, "I think we ought to hold not that man has a soul, but that it is important that he should know that he has a soul."<sup>72</sup> He did not spend his time explaining the historical arguments for the creation, existence and immortality of the soul but rather sought to understand what it means to have a soul and what the Bible means when it suggests that people have them? It was within the realm of answering these questions that he sought to refute materialism and reveal a scriptural recognition of dualism within the unity of man. The soul is consciousness or mind (distinct from the brain) and that consciousness is a unity as it is the mind of an individual. This individual retains the same identity, as person, throughout their lifetime.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 237.

<sup>68</sup> J. Edwards, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* in "The Works of Jonathan Edwards" Vol. 2 (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson) 8.

<sup>69</sup> J. Edwards, *The Soul's Eternal Salvation* in "The Works of Jonathan Edwards" Vol. 1 (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson) 626 - 627.

<sup>70</sup> J. Edwards, *The Christian Pilgrim* in "The Works of Jonathan Edwards" Vol. 2, 244-246.

<sup>71</sup> *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Chp. 4.2, 16.

<sup>72</sup> J. Gresham Machen, *The Christian View of Man*, (London: Hazell Watson & Viney Ltd., 1937), 125.

He has a cryptic side step in his understanding of the soul found in the notion of the soul in isolation. It is difficult to tell if this is a by-product of the immortal and unified aspect of the soul or if he is referring to some other metaphysical state? He is adamant that Scripture refers to the loneliness of the soul as a mark of the man, but the reference seems out of place (at least for today). It may be possible to reconcile these comments if we understand them in light of and as a preface to his argument against a tripartite division in man. Machen concludes his thoughts on the soul by affirming that it is the total nature of man as that which the Spirit of God transforms.<sup>73</sup>

Berkhof provides his case for the soul in his comprehensive yet concise *Systematic Theology*. Within his work on the constitutional nature of man, he views Scripture as presenting a complex dichotomic nature in man. Man has two elements, but they constitute the same subject, therefore man should be viewed in his wholeness since this is the view of the person provided by Scripture. Berkhof then presses forward with an assessment of how these elements relate to each other. He offers a quick paragraph on Monistic theories (assumption that body and soul are of the same primitive substance) before offering three views of dualism (Occasionalism, Parallelism, and Realistic Dualism). Berkhof does not publish his own thought but offers the following commentary on realistic dualism which may offer insights into his own conviction from the comparative amount of attention given to this theory of the others: "body and soul are distinct substances which do interact, though their mode of interaction escapes human scrutiny and remains a mystery for us. The union between the two may be called a union of life: the two are organically related....some actions of the body are dependent on the conscious operation of the soul...the operations of the soul are connected with the body as its instrument in the present life...."<sup>74</sup> He does express his view regarding the origin of the soul in the individual (after reviewing pre-existentism, traducianism and creationism) by preference to creationism. This is based on an absence of philosophical complications and Christological errors that traducianism is affected by and it is most in line with his covenant idea and the person of Christ.<sup>75</sup>

In his systematic theology, John Murray begins his explanation of the nature of man by affirming that the nature and integrity of man is represented by both body and soul. The distinctions are metaphysical but this diversity does not involve an essential conflict.<sup>76</sup> He contends that if we make reference to a deceased person then, by our act of recognition, we are affirming an aspect of that person which is untouched by physical death. Therefore, the soul is that entity which provides the basis for the survival of the personality. He then proceeds to provide Scriptural footing for this proof.

He differentiates himself from the other Reformers by tying together the biblical evidence for the disembodied state as one of personality and consciousness (Hebrews 12:23; 1 Peter 3:19) with the mindset of Paul when he declares his preference for

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 137-142.

<sup>74</sup> L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 192-196.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 201.

<sup>76</sup> John Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray*, Vol. II Select Lectures in Systematic Theology, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), 14-15.

departing (being absent in body) in order to be with Christ. For Murray, Paul's only possibility for this state was that he would retain his personality, identity and consciousness in their fullest sense possible by communion with the Lord. His succinct view is conveyed:

There is an aspect to his [man's] person distinct from the body. There belongs to his identity as man an entity metaphysically differentiated from his body, and endowed with properties and qualities in virtue of which it is not subject to the dissolution which the body undergoes at death.... and continues to exist and be active in a realm and mode of existence consonant with and adapted to the disembodied state. The highest exercises of man as a rational, moral, religious being are predicable of man by reason of this aspect. All that we are most characteristically as beings created in the image of God has its seat, unity, and abiding meaning in this entity. There is an 'ego', spiritual in nature, indivisible and indestructible, continuously subsistent and active through all the changes of life in this world, in the disembodied state, and in the resurrected life in the age to come.<sup>77</sup>

From this dualism, Murray concludes, as does Berkhof, that these entities form one organic unit in an integrated interdependency. Their relationship is not based on discord or dissonance but how they relate is unknown to us.<sup>78</sup>

After a rigorous anthropological survey, G.C. Berkouwer appeals to the limits and boundaries of Scripture when presenting his case for the soul. In light of the fact that the creationist and traducianist account utilize dubious scriptural evidence, he believes they have been asking the wrong question which has led successive attempts by us in the same boat. The proper use of Scripture should lead us to recognize that we have replaced our concern for the origin of man with a concern for the origin of the soul. Since the Bible presents an account of the former and not the latter, we should be content to appreciate the testimony it makes to the creation of the whole man. Therefore, he echoes the hesitation of Augustine when it comes to determining the source of the soul, and he stresses the origin of man in his entire consciousness and creatureliness which allows us to ascend the impasse of the former theories.<sup>79</sup>

He continues to affirm the limits of Scripture regarding the essence of the soul as conveyed in his exegetical answer to David's question in Psalm 8:4, "what is man that you are mindful of him....?":

The amazement expressed in this question is incompatible with an explanation that God is mindful of man because of certain qualities of a man's soul. The dichotomy of soul and body seems inevitably to produce

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 20-21.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>79</sup> G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, 307.

an ontological emphasis which throws its shadows over the Scriptural witness to man as he actually is sought and found by God. In Scripture we hear no ontological explanations, but rather a religious affirmation, that Christ died for us “while we were yet sinners” (Rom. 5:8)... and in such a context any answer to that question in terms of “man’s soul” is completely insufficient. There is no dichotomy which could lead us to the Scriptural answer. The wonder of the divine concern for man, which Scripture speaks of as “the tender mercy of our God” (Luke 1:78), cannot be explained in terms of man’s soul alone. But we should remember that it is the whole man who is restored and saved.<sup>80</sup>

For Berkouwer, man’s existence makes sense only in relation to God as surveyed in Scripture. Science, philosophy and theology may provide a language and technical analysis in attempts to understand the soul, but they must also be evaluated within the limits of their meaning and discipline.<sup>81</sup> He continues this emphasis on Scripture as the vehicle for understanding man in relation to God when he tackles the problem on the soul’s immortality. While he acknowledges several biblical references to the fact of an after life (Luke 23:43, Philippians 1:21-24, II Corinthians 5:1-8), he points out that Scripture is silent when we look for an anthropological understanding of what remains after death and that our immortality must be understood in light of union with Christ (relation to God). If we are to reach a doctrine on the immortality of the soul then it must be through a scripturally-enlightened reason and not through some idealistic perspective of immortality. The immortality of the soul is not found in some inherent quality of man’s own being or its own structure or as a permanent feature of this life (classic Greek dualism) but in the fact that God will judge the entire man, and as a result, the soul’s continued existence lies in man’s relationship to God as giver of grace. The only hope for an immortal soul is for God to destroy death once and for all.<sup>82</sup>

Wayne Grudem presents the historic arguments we have noted previously regarding the creation and character of the soul. He leans towards creationism but acknowledges the silence of Scripture on the matter and encourages prohibition against additional speculation on the subject.<sup>83</sup> In addition, he affirms those Reformed theologians who have gone before him regarding a dualistic or dichotomic perspective on man. However, his contribution to a systematic theology of the fundamental makeup of man is an argument for dichotomy [dual emphasis on unity] based on Christian maturity. An increase in faith and our growth as believers involves all aspects of our lives. Our being must have the disposition of 2 Corinthians 7:1, “...let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.” Our minds are to increase in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10), and our will and

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 229.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 309.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 263-268.

<sup>83</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 486.

emotions are to lock step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:17) as they express the fruit it bears in our lives (Galatians 5:22).<sup>84</sup>

### Contemporary Evangelical<sup>85</sup> Philosophers

J.P. Moreland rejects physicalism<sup>86</sup> and affirms substance dualism.<sup>87</sup> Moreland reviews (like Berkhof) three forms of dualism which are worth noting due to their influence on the contemporary mindset. The first is *Cartesian* dualism which focuses on the body as a corporeal and physical substance. The mind is immaterial and external to the body but is in a causal relationship with it. It contains the capacity for mental functioning. The next, *Thomistic* dualism, concentrates on the soul (contra mind) as the broader context for personhood, rather than the mind, since the soul encompasses both capacity for consciousness as well as foundations for physical life and operation. The body is an ensouled physical structure, not just a physical substance. Last, an *emerging substantial immaterial self* perspective finds the brain and central nervous system transpiring until they reach their own fundamental powers. This soul continues to be sustained by God after death.

It is important to note that all three views share the similar standpoint of the soul as an immaterial substance that bears consciousness.<sup>88</sup> Moreland proceeds to explicate the first two options further by clarifying the position that both are consistent with functional holism but are inconsistent with ontological holism. He describes functional holism as an understanding that the soul is contained in the body but their relationship to each other is intricate and interdependent within multiple complex connections. However, this holism allows for the soul to exist apart from the body while it is still operationally influencing it or the soul may exist in a disembodied state altogether. Ontological holism

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 482.

<sup>85</sup> I chagrin at using this word to describe these men as evangelicalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century brings similar connotations to that which “fundamentalism” had in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century and these men do not exemplify that “fundamentalism.”

<sup>86</sup> “Physicalism is not consistent with Scripture, it cannot allow for a disembodied intermediate state, science in no way requires it, the best philosophical arguments run contrary to it, and it has disastrous ethical implications.” From an interview with J.P. Moreland by Intervarsity Press, [www.ivpress.com/spotlight/1557.php](http://www.ivpress.com/spotlight/1557.php)

<sup>87</sup> Substance dualists affirm that conscious properties and events are mental not physical but in contrast to simple physical dualism, which adheres to consciousness residing in the brain, substance dualist hold that the brain is purely a physical thing whereas the mind or soul is a mental substance with properties in kind.

J.P. Moreland, *What is the Soul? Recovering Human Personhood in the Scientific Age*, 28.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 28-29.

holds the view that mental properties, states and relational consciousness are dependent for their existence on a living and active body or brain.<sup>89</sup>

Moreland elaborates on the constitution of the human soul by offering a working philosophical definition of soul as “a substantial, unified reality that informs the body.”<sup>90</sup> It is analogous to the body like God is to space in that it is present at every place and time within the body. He also explains that the soul and body have a cause and effect relationship and therefore, influence each other. He continues his characterization of the soul by illustrating and explaining the states and faculties of the soul. He notes five different states:

1. Sensation: the state of conscious awareness (example: Visual sensation – seeing a tree, the soul experiences it [“sees”] by means of the eyes. The eyes are the instruments for sight but the soul is that which has the sensation of seeing.)
2. Thought: expressed mental content in sentences that exist only as they are being “thought” (example: All pencils are made of wood).
3. Belief: an individual’s view of how things really are, but unlike thoughts beliefs are not subject to current conscious activity or contemplation for their existence. (Example: I will graduate from RTS in May).
4. Desire: inclinations towards an experience. (Example: I would like to pray more).
5. An act of will: exercise of purposeful choice. (Example: I will run this race).

Moreland also provides an explanation of the faculties of the soul by characterizing them as compartments containing a hierarchical family of capacities. These are faculties of sense perception (sensory), the will, emotions, the mind and spirit. He offers the following illustration to clarify his point,

All the soul’s capacities to see are part of the faculty of sight. If my eyeballs are defective, then my soul’s faculty of sight will be inoperative

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<sup>89</sup> J.P. Moreland and Scott B. McRae, *Body & Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics*, 21-22. It is important to note that Moreland uses the words “functional” and “ontological” with regard to the historic and traditional view of the soul in the Bible. In an interview with Intervarsity Press regarding the above text he states the reason’s for the current distaste for dualism, “The current distaste for dualism is not substantive; rather it is a result of several factors we mention in the book. Three of these are 1. Confusions about what science actually say and what it does not say (it does not make dualism less likely); 2. Confusions about the supposed differences between Hebraic holism and Greek dualism (the Bible is functionally holistic but ontologically dualistic, and this is actually quite close to what many of the Greeks and early fathers of the church held); and 3. Misunderstanding about substance dualism (that the only version of it is the popularized understanding of Descartes, that it means the body is less valuable than the soul).” [www.ivpress.com/spotlight/1557.php](http://www.ivpress.com/spotlight/1557.php)

<sup>90</sup> J.P. Moreland, *What is the Soul? Recovering Human Personhood in the Scientific Age*, 38.

just as the driver cannot get to work in his car if the spark plugs are seriously damaged. Likewise, if my eyeballs work but my soul is inattentive (say I am daydreaming), then I won't see what is before me either. There's more to seeing what's before us than having functional eyes; I see because I attend to or focus on what's before me.

He finishes his explanation on the nature of the soul by mentioning two distinct faculties due to their importance in his understanding of the subject; the mind and soul. The mind is the faculty of thought and belief exercising the related abilities to have them.

The spirit is the faculty utilized to relate to God (Psalm 51:10; Romans 8:16; Ephesians 4:23). This faculty is dead for the unregenerate but is activated and enhanced by the Spirit's power at conversion. The enhancement involves the introduction of new, immature capacities which can be nurtured and developed.<sup>91</sup>

While aligning with J.P. Moreland's understanding of the soul, Dallas Willard offers several additional characterizations that are key to understanding the influences of substance dualism. In fact, Willard's description of the soul is less technical than Moreland's (by his own admission and for it to remain relevant to the context and content of his writing) but nonetheless effective in giving us a summary of his view.

He maintains that the soul is the primary constituent in an individual's life, but it is not the only factor involved in that life. The soul is the most fundamental part of a person. He understands this to be the historic position of Western thought. Even though the soul lacks parts that occupy space, it is a major *part* (although it is not a spatial part in the sense of a physical entity) of the individual which coordinates all capacities and dimension of the human being. It provides a path for interactive education in the formation of their life. Willard provides the following clarification:

...a soul is essentially a component of a person – as is the mind and will. Which are among the person's essential parts-and does not exist without a person whose soul it is. It or its parts cannot lie around like a spare part of an automobile or computer. But it is equally true that persons do not exist without a soul. A person is a living entity that has a certain kind of life: primarily one of self-determination in terms of adopted values, with the possibility (and vital need) of worship. The soul is that entity within a person that integrates all of the components of his or her life into their life, *one life*.<sup>92</sup>

He refines his usage of the soul in light of pastoral care by contextualizing it in reference to the "hidden" or "spiritual" element of a person. It would be comprised of thoughts (mind) and feelings (heart) and the intents or choices of the will, but it also includes the

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 38-41.

<sup>92</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission*, (San Francisco: Harper, 2006), 139.

life lived out in our physical bodies as we are involved in relationships with other people.<sup>93</sup>

J.P. Moreland and Dallas Willard have offered insightful technical and academic analysis of the soul. But, I believe in order to best summarize the thought on this subject it may take a talent for saying the literally unspeakable.<sup>94</sup> Although C.S. Lewis was not a theologian, clergy or philosopher, the critical way he *thought* about God and wrote about those thoughts have had a profound impact on our own epistemology, and our “Christian” understanding of life. Some of his remarks regarding the soul resonate with classic philosophy. It may also resonate within us.<sup>95</sup> But, it is in his allegorical reflection that we find a way to imagine the reality that Moreland and Willard communicate:

...How long could ye bear to look (without Time’s lens) on the greatness of your own soul and the eternal reality of her choice? And suddenly all was changed. I saw a great assembly of gigantic forms all motionless, all in deepest silence, standing forever about a little silver table and looking upon it. And on the table there were little figures like chessmen who went to and from doing this and that. And I knew that each chessman was the idolum or puppet representative of some of the great presences that stood by. And the acts and motions of each chessman were a moving portrait, a mimicry or pantomime, which delineated the inmost nature of his giant master. And these chessmen are man and women as they appear to themselves and to one another in this world. And the silver table is Time. And those who stand and watch are the immortal souls of those same men and women.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 122-123.

<sup>94</sup> William Luther White, *The Image of Man in C.S. Lewis*, (New York: Abingdon, 1969), 8.

<sup>95</sup> “This signature on each soul may be the product of heredity and environment, but that only means that heredity and environment are among the institutions whereby God creates a soul. I am considering not how, but why, He makes each soul unique. If He had no use for all these differences, I do not see why He should have created more souls than one. Be sure that the ins and outs of your individuality are no mystery to Him; and one day they will no longer be a mystery to you. The mold in which a key is made would be a strange thing if you had never seen a lock. Your soul has a curious shape because it is a hollow made to fit a particular swelling in the infinite contours of the divine substance, or a key to unlock one of the doors in the house with many mansions. For it is not humanity in the abstract that is to be saved, but you – you, the individual reader, John Stubbs or Janet Smith. Blessed and fortunate creature, your eyes shall behold Him and not another’s. All that you are, sins apart, is destined, if you will let God have His good way, to utter satisfaction. The Brocken spectre ‘looked to every man like his first love’, because she was a cheat. But God will look to every soul like its first love because He is its first love.” C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1940), 151-152.

<sup>96</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*, (San Francisco: Harper, 1946), 141-143.

Now that our survey of scriptural, philosophical and historical usage is complete it would be advantageous to articulate an understanding of the soul that we will use to move through the remainder of this project. We will think about the soul as that immaterial entity which constitutes the totality of our being and existence while continuing to manifest itself in a relationship with our body through the inner life of our spirit (heart, mind, consciousness).

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