



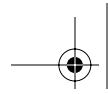
Introduction

French philosopher Blaise Pascal once remarked that the immortality of the soul is something of such vital importance to us that one must have lost all feeling not to care about knowing the facts of the matter. In this, Pascal was surely correct. It has always been a part of our nature to be curious about what we are, where we are going and how we ought to be treated. Moreover, Christians have a special interest in developing their understanding of human persons since this understanding is so central to the Christian faith.

As Alvin Plantinga has reminded us, when Christians go about developing their views on various things, including human persons, they should keep in mind certain broad intellectual motifs in order to critique those that are obstacles to advancing the kingdom of God. More specifically, Christians must recognize that the rise of scientism has contributed to a situation in which there is now no universal body of ethical and religious knowledge in the institutions of Western intellectual authority—the universities. The implications of this situation have been disastrous, among them being the marginalization of a Christian worldview, an unnecessary revision of Christian theology as science dictates the parameters in which theology must work, and a lowering of the epistemic justification of biblical, theological and philosophical claims relative to those in the hard sciences.

There are several illustrations of these tendencies. In the mid 1930s, philosopher Edmund Husserl pondered the question of just how the most educated society in history (Germany) could have been so easily lead into some of the most barbarous actions and values the world had ever seen. Husserl's work *The Crisis of European Sciences* was as an expression of his reflections on this and related questions. According to Husserl, the main culprit was the emergence of a view of the nature and limits of knowledge that had come widely to occupy culture: knowledge is to be identified with mathematical physics and the hard sciences generally.¹ For Husserl this meant that pressing questions of human significance—those





about values, meaning in life, God, the afterlife, the proper nature of the state—could not be answered with answers that would be regarded as items of objective knowledge. The effect of this view was the privatization of ethical and theological issues and the setting up of a cultural context in which people could be manipulated by powerful leaders since there was no knowledge of moral and religious truths that could be raised against them. Part of Husserl’s solution to this problem was to advance a form of dualism regarding consciousness and the self that could counter the cognitive authority of naturalism in his day.

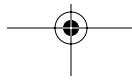
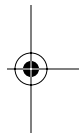
In our own time, Dallas Willard’s masterful work on spirituality, *The Divine Conspiracy*, warns us that giving up our understanding of humans as spiritual substances in favor of physicalist alternatives will result in a devitalization of the spiritual life among Jesus’ followers. Says Willard, “To understand spirit as ‘substance’ is of the utmost importance in our current world, which is so largely devoted to the ultimacy of matter. It means that spirit is something that exists in its own right—to some degree in the human case, and absolutely so with God.”²

Speaking of the negative impact of secularism, of which scientism is a part, Willard goes on to say that

the crushing weight of the secular outlook . . . permeates or pressures every thought we have today. Sometimes it even forces those who self-identify as Christian teachers to set aside Jesus’ plain statements about the reality and total relevance of the kingdom of God and replace them with philosophical speculations whose only recommendation is their consistency with a “modern” [i.e., contemporary] mindset. The powerful though vague and unsubstantiated presumption is that *something has been found out* that renders a spiritual understanding of reality in the manner of Jesus simply foolish to those who are “in the know.”³

Willard concludes that in order to restore spiritual vitality to the church, we must recapture a view of Jesus as an intellectually competent person who knew what he was talking about. For Willard this will include accepting—as absolutely central to the spiritual life—a view of human persons as having substantial, immaterial souls.

In our view, the complementarity approach to integration (roughly, the view that science and religion are noninteracting, complementary descriptions of reality) as practiced by many of its advocates inadvertently con-



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tributes to the scientism noted above and, thereby, to the various results of scientism. In Plantinga's sense this approach is not sufficiently critical of the milieu in which we now live and move and have our being. What is needed is a Christian natural philosophy of living things, especially of human persons, that provides two things—a central role for philosophy and theology in contributing to the ontology of human persons and a proper ordering of science relative to philosophy and theology in the ontological task.

The classical understanding of the human person as consisting of body and soul has come under attack for some time. For example, in his review for *Books & Culture* of several books on consciousness and the mind (many of which we will interact with throughout this book), Allen C. Guelzo points out that “it is remarkable how little Christian thinkers have risen to meet it [i.e., the challenge of those who deny the soul]. Philosophers such as Paul and Patricia Churchland—who deny the existence of the soul and hold to a physicalist view of a human person [and with whom we will interact throughout this book]—issue the challenge to dualists such as ourselves in this way: Mind-body dualists, who think the mind or soul is *not* fundamentally dependent on the brain, owe us a plausible account of these functional dependencies—an account that, so far as I know, is not forthcoming.”⁴ Guelzo continues by throwing down the gauntlet more explicitly to theologians when he suggests that “from the theologians, there is not only a deafening silence, but not even much recognition that a problem is being brewed under their noses. If we are being saved in both body and soul, hadn't we better secure a reasonably good grip on what we mean by the *soul* if the very idea of salvation is to remain coherent? Where is the evangelical theologian writing on the *soul*?”⁵

Though we believe the nature and reality of the soul is the central issue, and not its functional interaction with the brain, with this caveat in mind, our work is an attempt to provide such an account of human personhood and the soul, to answer the challenge of the physicalist and to reflect on certain ethical issues relevant to it. Morality is very much affected by these metaphysical questions. For example, the naturalist Edward O. Wilson has argued for a biological basis for morality in an attempt to construct a system of morality from philosophical naturalism.⁶

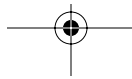




We hold that metaphysics and morality are intimately connected and that our dualist view of the body and soul provides the most compelling account of human personhood and its moral dimension. The book is divided into two parts. In part one we clarify and defend our version of substance dualism, and in part two we analyze and argue for crucial ethical positions that follow from the position maintained in part one.

Part one consists of six chapters. In chapter one we analyze several different sorts of dualism and locate our version of Thomistic dualism in this taxonomy. As we make clear, there are different opinions about the precise details of Thomas Aquinas's philosophical-theological anthropology, and we do not claim to offer a version that conforms to Aquinas's in all details. Still, our view shares enough of the important aspects of a Thomistic approach to warrant our using that label for our position. Next, we argue that a proper understanding of God and angels as spirits and a careful exegesis of Scripture present a biblical anthropology that is inconsistent with physicalism and that is most reasonably associated with Thomistic dualism. Finally, we present what we believe to be the best methodology for approaching the task of forming a model of the constitution of human persons. This methodological approach stands in stark contrast to a complementarity approach in that the former places biblical exegesis, theology and philosophy above the hard sciences in order of importance while, arguably, complementarians reverse this order.

In chapter two we lay out a metaphysical framework of central importance for developing an adequate view of human persons, and we compare and contrast two metaphysical analyses of wholes with parts: substances understood in the classic sense and property-things, or ordered aggregates. Regarding the metaphysical framework, we present a brief philosophical analysis of important metaphysical notions that, in keeping with our methodology set out in chapter one, come to center stage in arguments for and analyses of human persons: properties, relations, events, identity and identity statements, different types of reduction, and different sorts of parts and wholes. In the second section of the chapter we compare and contrast substances and property-things in seven different areas. This distinction is crucial for chapters three through six because there we argue that both strict and complementarian naturalists (Christian or non-Christian) typically depict human persons as prop-





erty-things. By contrast, we claim that they are substances and that this fact is best captured by Thomistic dualism.

Chapter three clarifies the nature of human persons in strict naturalist and complementarian perspectives. The first half of the chapter describes various versions of philosophical naturalism and the view of human persons entailed by them. The second half of the chapter presents a Christian complementarian view of the integration of science and other fields, such as theology, and it centers on the complementarian understanding of human persons. Metaphysically speaking, the Christian complementarian understanding is virtually identical to naturalist depictions of human persons on most of the central metaphysical aspects of human personhood. The chapter closes with a brief presentation of the ethical implications of a Christian complementarian anthropology for certain end-of-life ethical issues. These will be developed in more detail in part two.

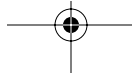
In chapters four and five we argue that human persons are identical to immaterial substances, namely, to souls. In chapter six we explain the soul's relationship to the development and functioning of its body. However, in chapters four and five we limit our investigation of human persons to those considerations that support the claim that human persons are essentially immaterial substances. We direct our attention to three important areas:

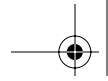
- human agency and freedom (chapter four)
- the nature of our conscious, mental lives and what this tells us about the types of things we are (chapter five)
- a set of critical considerations about personal identity (chapter five)

In each of these areas of investigation, our argument follows this form:

1. There are certain features about ourselves that we know or at least about which we have a right to be sure (i.e., to take ourselves to be justified in believing). There are adequate grounds for believing these features to be real, and naturalist or complementarian attempts to provide alternative depictions of these features fail to be convincing.

2. The features mentioned above support the claim that human persons are essentially immaterial substances for at least two reasons: (a) when these features are accurately described and reported to others, these descriptions and reports express facts that are best captured by a substance-dualist model of human persons, and (b) the best explanation for the reality of these fea-





tures is a substance-dualist model of human persons.

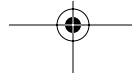
In chapter four we compare libertarian and compatibilist views of human action and argue that libertarian agency is the better model. We also claim that the existence and nature of libertarian actions and agents are not plausibly harmonized with physicalist views of human persons but, rather, have as their best explanation a substance-dualist view of libertarian agents. Thus libertarian agency provides evidence for substance dualism.

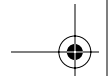
In chapter five we present and defend three basic arguments for substance dualism. First, we argue that mental properties and events are genuinely mental entities not adequately captured by various physicalist (e.g., functionalist) views. We also argue that mental properties are kind-defining properties—that is, they tell us about the essence of the human persons who have them. Second, we present and defend a modal argument for substance dualism that takes as its starting point the conceivability of disembodied existence. Third, we analyze various views of personal identity and argue that substance dualism is the best position. Along the way, we state and offer a brief criticism of a version of physicalism currently gaining ground: the material-composition position.

In chapter six we develop a view of the soul's relationship to the body. It is here that we part company with Cartesian dualism and advocate Thomistic dualism as both of those are frequently understood. In this chapter we do the following:

- explain our version of Thomistic dualism more fully and indicate the sorts of evidence that support it
- consider a set of objections to Thomistic dualism
- apply our model of Thomistic dualism to questions about the origin of the soul in normal and abnormal cases (e.g., twinning, cloning, frozen embryos)
- briefly indicate certain ethical implications that follow from our form of Thomistic dualism

Part two of this book takes the metaphysical conclusions and applies them to the complex world of bioethics and biotechnology. Many of the most pressing and complicated issues faced by those in academic medicine and by professional bioethicists have a view of personhood at their core. That is, those making moral decisions and public policy in bioethics assume a particular view of a human person. Issues such as abortion and



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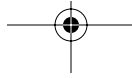
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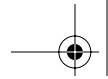
physician-assisted suicide are well publicized in the popular media. Clearly abortion has a view of human personhood at its foundation. But many other important issues have often unspoken assumptions about what a human person is, assumptions that are critical in informing those who must make decisions in these areas.

Chapter seven takes up the ongoing debate over abortion and the equally important, though less publicized, discussion of fetal-tissue research and transplantation. We attempt to show how the Bible suggests a continuity of personal identity from conception to adulthood, which is consistent with the Thomistic substance view we are defending. We analyze many of the arguments for abortion rights and show how they frequently make question-begging assertions about the personhood of the unborn. However, with some abortion-rights advocates this may be changing, for they are forced by better prenatal technology to recognize that the unborn child is not simply a “product of conception” but a living human being. We interact with philosophers in the abortion debate who hold a functionalist view of a person, such as Mary Ann Warren and Bonnie Steinbock. We further interact with the more radical views that attempt to justify infanticide as well as abortion. Finally, we suggest that the use of fetal tissue from induced abortion is morally tainted since the means of obtaining the tissue has a moral dimension, as does the end for which the tissue is used.

Chapter eight takes up the issues revolving around the burgeoning infertility industry. The central issue is the moral status of extracorporeal embryos, particularly those that are created through in vitro fertilization and kept in storage in laboratories. We will argue that these embryos are persons with moral status, and as such, that they should not be discarded or used for experiments after infertility treatments are complete and, similarly, that they should not be created in the lab for purposes of research. Further, selective termination of pregnancies when infertility treatments have been “too successful” cannot be justified. We explore how the couple who views the human person from our perspective can use reproductive technologies without violating moral boundaries.

In chapter nine we enter the brave new world of genetic technologies and human cloning. Here the view of a human person surfaces more subtly, but this view is no less important here than in the above areas of abortion and of fetal and embryo research. Gene therapy, prenatal genetic

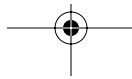


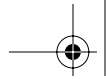


testing, the Human Genome Project and human cloning are also controversial areas in which the view of a human person makes a difference. Foundational to this discussion is the view that the essence of a human person can be reduced to or taken as emergent upon his or her genetic content. We interact with the new hallowed ground of genetics—genetic reductionism—and argue that a person is much more than one’s genetic material. We suggest that human cloning does not involve creating soulless persons and that the concept itself is an oxymoron. Further we maintain that the bias toward abortion in some prenatal genetic-testing areas is problematic, given our view of a human person.

Finally, chapter ten moves us toward the other end of the bioethical spectrum. Here we take up issues at the end of life such as euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide and the treatment of patients in a persistent vegetative state. Though the notion of personhood is not the central concept in the euthanasia debate, some have argued that one who is terminally ill at the end of his or her life is no longer a person and, thus, that euthanasia in this case does not violate the sanctity of life nor the commandment “Thou shall not kill.” We reject this argument and interact with some of the leading advocates of such a view. The more difficult area is the moral status of persons in a persistent vegetative state. We maintain that they are still persons but that further treatment of them, including medically provided nutrition and hydration, is futile and thus is not a moral obligation.

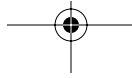
In our view this area of metaphysical and ethical reflection is important because it is central to so many of the issues debated today and to developing a fully biblical view of the world. The concept of personhood that we defend and apply to bioethics is largely dismissed in secular academic circles today. Even in some Christian circles, it is considered inconsistent with biblical teaching. We believe that our view of a human person is both intellectually defensible and biblically based. We realize that this is a highly technical work in many places and that some readers may feel it takes sophisticated philosophical training to follow our argument. We have chosen to write the book at what we consider to be a fairly high academic level because we are convinced that the view of a human person we affirm must be articulated and defended at that level for it to gain a hearing both within the Christian community and in the secular academic setting. Still, we hope a nonspecialist will be able to gain much from the pages to follow.

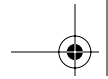




Part One

Metaphysical Reflections on Human Personhood





Throughout the centuries Christians have believed that each human person consists in a soul and body; that the soul survived the death of the body; and that its future life will be immortal.¹

H . D . L E W I S

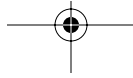
In terms of biblical psychology, man does not have a “soul,” he is one. He is a living and vital whole. It is possible to distinguish between his activities, but we cannot distinguish between the parts, for they have no independent existence.²

J . K . H O W A R D

How should we think about human persons? What sorts of things, fundamentally, are they? What is it to be a human, what is it to be a human person, and how should we think about personhood? . . .

The first point to note is that on the Christian scheme of things, God is the premier person, the first and chief exemplar of personhood . . . and the properties most important for an understanding of our personhood are properties we share with him.³

A L V I N P L A N T I N G A





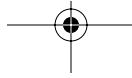
CHAPTER 1

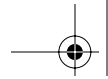
Establishing a Framework for Approaching Human Personhood



IT IS SAFE TO SAY THAT THROUGHOUT HUMAN HISTORY, THE VAST majority of people, educated and uneducated alike, have been dualists, at least in the sense that they have taken a human to be the sort of being that could enter life after death while one's corpse was left behind—for example, one could enter life after death as the very same individual or as some sort of spiritual entity that merges with the All. Some form of dualism appears to be the natural response to what we seem to know about ourselves through introspection and in other ways. Many philosophers who deny dualism admit that it is the commonsense view.

When we turn to an investigation of church history, we see the same thing. For two thousand years, the vast majority of Christian thinkers have believed in the souls of men and beasts, as it used to be put. Animals and humans are composed of an immaterial entity—a soul, a life principle, a ground of sentience—and a body. More specifically, a human being is a unity of two distinct entities—body and soul. The human soul, while not by nature immortal, is capable of entering an intermediate disembodied state upon death, however incomplete and unnatural this state may be, and of eventually being reunited with a resurrected body. Augustine says,





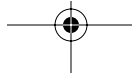
“But the soul is present as a whole not only in the entire mass of a body, but also in every least part of the body at the same time.”⁴ Similarly, Thomas Aquinas claims “we now proceed to treat of man, who is composed of a spiritual and corporeal substance.”⁵

Today, things have changed. For many, the rise of modern science has called into question the viability of dualism. In popular and intellectual cultures alike, many argue that neurophysiology demonstrates the radical dependence and, in fact, identity between mind and brain, that genetics has shown genes and DNA are all that are needed to explain the development of living things, that advances in artificial intelligence make likely the suggestion that humans are just complicated computers and that cloning seems to reduce us to mere structured aggregates of physical parts.

Interestingly, among contemporary Christian intellectuals there is a widespread loathing for dualism as well. We are often told that biblical revelation depicts the human person as a holistic unity whereas dualism is a Greek concept falsely read into the Bible by many throughout the history of the church. Christians, we are told, are committed to monism and the resurrection of the body, not to dualism and the immortality of the soul. In short, dualism is outdated, unbiblical and incorrect.

Concurrent with the alleged demise of dualism is the rise of advanced medical technologies that have made prominent a number of very important and difficult issues about ethics at both edges of life. Central to these issues are questions about the nature of human personhood, about the reality of life after death and about the existence, nature, accessibility and degree of justification of ethical or religious knowledge as compared to scientific knowledge. It is not too dramatic to say that we are facing a contemporary crisis in ethics, a crisis that has led to a good deal of moral confusion, chaos and fragmentation.

In our opinion the concurrence of the demise of dualism (specifically a Christian form of dualism) and the ethical and religious crisis just mentioned is no accident. We believe that what is needed is a more careful formulation and defense of Christian dualism—a defense that renders intelligible a solid Christian anthropology and that shows the relative importance and specific roles science, theology and philosophy have in the integrative task of developing a model of human personhood that is adequate to what we know or justifiably believe from all the relevant disci-





plines. Such a task requires a multidisciplinary effort, and even if we were able to take on such a work (which we are not), a fully developed Christian anthropology would be impossible to complete in a single volume. Given these limitations, we shall offer what we hope will be an adequate defense of the most reasonable and biblically accurate depiction of human personhood, and we hope to relate that depiction to crucial ethical concerns that affect us all. This task is important for some of the reasons just mentioned. But it is also relevant because of the general human curiosity and angst about what persons are and wherein lies their destiny. As Blaise Pascal once put it, “The immortality of the soul is something of such vital importance to us, affecting us so deeply, that one must have lost all feeling not to care about knowing the facts of the matter.”⁶

In this chapter we shall look at a taxonomy of versions of dualism, investigate the Christian understanding of a human person as it has been traditionally conceived and discuss the broad contours of what a proper approach to human personhood should look like.

What Is Dualism?

As does any broad philosophical and theological notion, dualism comes in several varieties. At its root, *dualism* simply means “two-ism,” and it expresses a commitment to the proposition that two items in question are, in fact, two different entities or kinds of entities instead of being identical to one another. *Cosmic dualism* is the view that reality in general is composed of two different entities (e.g., individuals, properties, realms of reality) that cannot be reduced to each other. Cosmic dualists sometimes go beyond this and accept the claim either that these two entities are both metaphysically ultimate—that is, one did not come from or is not dependent on the other for its existence—or that one entity is inferior in value to the other. For example, Zoroastrianism teaches that Ahura-Mazda (the good, wise Lord) and Angra Mainyu (the spirit of evil) are opposites locked in a cosmic struggle between good and evil. In Taoism the yin and the yang are bipolar forces (good-evil, male-female, light-dark, etc.) that constantly react to and with each other in governing all of reality. Gnostic dualism implies that spirit and matter are different and that the latter is of little value compared to the former.

Is Christianity a form of cosmic dualism? The answer is no and yes.



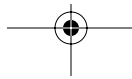
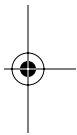
Christianity does not affirm that there are two ultimate, independent realities. Everything besides God owes its existence to him in some way or another. Nor does Christianity teach that spirit is good and matter is evil. Yet there are clear cosmic dualities presupposed by and taught in Holy Scripture: God-creation, good-evil, truth-falsity, immaterial-material world, being-becoming and, we believe, soul-body.

In addition to cosmic dualisms, there are various forms of dualism regarding the constitution of human persons (and animals, though we will focus here only on human persons). These *anthropological dualisms* may be divided into three categories: *metaphysical*, *eschatological* and *axiological*. Let us take these in order.

Metaphysical. The metaphysical category of anthropological dualism centers on the question of the constitutional nature of human persons. This version of dualism is the chief focus of this book. *Property-event* dualism is the idea that mental and physical properties or events are genuinely different kinds of entities. Thoughts, sensations, beliefs, desires, volitions and so on are mental events in which mental properties are embedded (e.g., they have intentionality—the property of being of or about something—or the property of being self-presenting); various brain events with physical properties are nonidentical to mental events. The rival to property-event dualism (indeed, to any form of anthropological dualism) is *strict physicalism*, or *monism*, the view that all properties, events, relations, individuals and so on are strictly physical entities. Monists believe that there may be an irreducible duality of language: for example, an event that is caused by a pin stick can be described by the two nonsynonymous terms *pain* and *C fiber firing pattern*. Nevertheless, monists insist that these two terms have the same referent and that the referent is a physical state.

Substance dualism is the view that the soul—I, self, mind—is an immaterial substance different from the body to which it is related. In order to adequately understand substance dualism, one must get clear on the nature of a substance, and we shall look at this topic in chapter two. But for now, suffice it to say that the substance dualist is committed to the claim that the soul is an immaterial entity that could, in principle, survive death and ground personal identity in the afterlife.

Two major variants of substance dualism will be the focus of attention



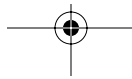


in chapter six⁷: *Cartesian* and *Aristotelian/Thomistic* dualism. (Hereafter, the former will be referred to simply as Thomistic dualism.) Cartesian dualism explicates the philosophy of René Descartes. On this view, the mind is a substance externally related by a causal relation to the body, a corporeal substance that is merely physical. For a Cartesian the mind is an immaterial ego that contains the capacities for mental functioning.

By contrast, Thomistic dualism focuses on the soul, not the mind. The mind is a faculty of the soul, but the latter goes beyond mental functioning and serves as the integrative ground and developer of the body it animates and makes alive. For the Thomistic dualist the soul contains capacities for biological as well as mental functioning. Thus the soul is related to the body more intimately and fully than by way of an external causal connection, as Cartesians would have it. Some Thomistic dualists identify the person with the whole body-soul composite whereas others identify the person with the soul, which contains a natural exigency for embodiment even while disembodied. As we will see in the next section, at a minimum a Christian should hold that the human person can sustain identity in a disembodied intermediate state and after the reception of a new resurrection body.

Both versions of substance dualism are consistent with *functional holism* but not with *ontological holism*. According to functional holism, while the soul (mind) is in the body, the body-soul complex is a deeply integrated unity with a vastly complicated, intricate array of mutual functional dependence and causal connection. But functional holism allows for the possibility that the soul (mind) may exist independent of the body with which it is currently functionally integrated or in a disembodied state altogether. It is a serious mistake to take substance dualism as being inconsistent with functional holism.

Ontological holism is the view that the mental constituents of a human person—the mental property-instances, states, relational complexes, fields or self—are inseparable entities (although the self may be identified as some sort of unity of the mental entities just mentioned or as a more substantial, though emergent and dependent, entity). The mental constituents are ontologically dependent upon a properly functioning physical body or brain, and thus disembodiment is not possible. Ontological holism is consistent with property dualism but



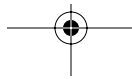


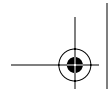
not with substance dualism in either form.

Eschatological. Besides the metaphysical versions of anthropological dualism, there are versions of eschatological and axiological dualism. Eschatological dualism categorizes versions of dualism according to their view about the immortality of the soul. *Platonic dualism* held that the soul had a natural immortality. Plato's version of dualism is quite sophisticated in its totality, and much of what Plato taught is very much at home in a Christian worldview, though some of his ideas are clearly not compatible with Christianity. Only an issue-by-issue investigation can determine whether Plato's dualism is compatible with Christian teaching. However, this aspect of Plato's thought is obviously inconsistent with the Bible, which teaches that God alone is immortal and that all human persons owe their moment-by-moment existence to the sustaining power of God, whether before death, during the intermediate state or after the final resurrection.⁸

Does a rejection of Platonic eschatological dualism entail that there is no sense in which the soul is immortal according to Christian theology? No, it does not. In fact the most natural way to take the Scriptures—indeed, the way most thinkers in the history of the church have taken them—is to view the soul as immortal in this sense: the individual soul comes into existence at a point in time; it is sustained in existence by God throughout its existence, including a time of temporary disembodiment in the intermediate state; and there will never be a time in which it will cease to be after its creation. In the next section we will look at the biblical support for this view and compare it to two rival depictions of the soul and the intermediate state.

Axiological. Finally, axiological dualism divides anthropological positions according to the relative value placed on the soul and body. According to Gnostic and (on a traditional interpretation) Platonic dualism, the body is inferior to the soul in value, and more generally the material world is inferior to the immaterial world. Indeed, some versions of axiological dualism have claimed that matter, including the body, is evil. Some advocates of this form of dualism have used it to depreciate the value of physical labor, sexuality, physical health and so forth. It should be apparent that these versions of axiological dualism are inadequate and that Christians affirm the value of both the body





and the soul and both the material and immaterial world.

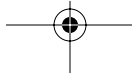
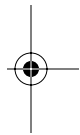
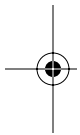
This completes our brief survey of varieties of dualism. At this point we must ask the question, does the Bible teach some form of anthropological dualism that ought to be affirmed by Christian intellectuals and integrated into their intellectual work and practical lives? In spite of the fact that a growing number of Christian thinkers would answer this question in the negative, we think the answer is clearly yes.

Does the Bible Teach Anthropological Dualism?

Christian aversion to anthropological dualism. In recent years there has been something of a craze regarding dualism among Christian thinkers that, in our view, has led some to come perilously close to committing the bandwagon fallacy—taking a position against dualism in order to fit in with the majority of secular thinkers. For many Christian scholars the very idea that some form of anthropological dualism is correct and required by Christian teaching is out of the question. Thus Wolfhart Pannenberg asserts that “the distinction between body and soul as two . . . different realms of reality can no longer be maintained. . . . The separation between physical and spiritual is artificial.”⁹

In our view, this aversion to dualism is sustained largely by sociological factors (e.g., a widespread distaste for Greek philosophy and its alleged influence on biblical exegesis) or by various confusions (e.g., that dualism is a rival theory to the resurrection of the body, that it is incompatible with a holistic emphasis that treats humans as unities, that science has somehow shown that dualism must be rejected). However widespread Christian monism is, we believe that it cannot be sustained by a careful exegesis of the biblical text. Holy Scripture clearly teaches some form of anthropological dualism. It will be impossible to justify adequately this claim in the short space of one section of this chapter. For a definitive defense of the biblical affirmation of anthropological dualism, we recommend John W. Cooper’s excellent work *Body, Soul and Life Everlasting*.¹⁰ In this section we offer a brief summary and defense of the biblical and theological issues.

An argument from the nature of the paradigm cases. Before we turn to biblical exegesis, there is a theological argument for dualism that should be considered. John Calvin once remarked that “no man can survey him-





self without forthwith turning his thoughts towards the God in whom he lives and moves.”¹¹ Along similar lines, the great Old Testament scholar Franz Delitzsch claimed that “in order to apprehend the nature of the . . . human soul, it is first of all essential to apprehend the nature of God.”¹² More recently, Alvin Plantinga has argued that Christians ought to take the commitments that constitute Christian theology as items of knowledge to be employed in forming an integrated worldview, in doing research and so forth. Among the things that Plantinga takes to be central to theological knowledge is the proposition that God is a person:

How should we think about human persons? What sorts of things, fundamentally, *are* they? What is it to be a human, what is it to be a *human* person, and how should we think about personhood? . . . The first point to note is that on the Christian scheme of things, *God* is the premier person, the first and chief exemplar of personhood . . . and the properties most important for an understanding of our personhood are properties we share with him.¹³

In the spirit of Calvin, Delitzsch and Plantinga, we offer the following argument for dualism.

God is the paradigm case (i.e., clearest example) of a person, and arguably angels are as well. Now it is clear that God is an immaterial reality (Jn 4:24), most likely an immaterial substance. Moreover, we know angels are immaterial beings from the following examples:

- They are explicitly referred to as “ministering spirits” (Heb 1:14; cf. vv. 5, 13).
- Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against principalities, powers, rulers of this present darkness and “spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12 RSV).
- Demons are fallen angels and are regularly described as spirits (cf. Mt 8:16; Lk 11:26; Acts 19:12; Rev 16:14).
- Alleged embodiments of angels who appear to people can be explained on the grounds that these were examples of temporary abilities to manifest themselves sense perceptively and that this temporary ability may or may not imply temporary embodiment. In the Old Testament the angel of the Lord appears to have been God himself (cf. Gen 31:11, 13; Ex 3:2, 6), and like angels, God was capable of the same sort of temporary mani-





festation. Traditional Christians do not think that this makes God a physical being, so the mere fact that angels are capable of temporary sense-perceptible manifestations does not imply that they are essentially or permanently bodily creatures.

If God and, perhaps, angels are paradigm-case persons and since they are immaterial spirits, then it is at least consistent that something be both a person and an immaterial spirit. But more than this, if the paradigm-case persons are immaterial spirits, then this provides justification for the claim that anything is a person if and only if it bears a relevant similarity to the paradigm cases. Arguably, the relevant similarity between other (kinds of) persons and the paradigm cases is grounded in something all persons have in common and that constitutes that which makes the paradigm cases to be persons in the first place, namely, personhood. Personhood is constituted by a set of ultimate capacities of thought, belief, sensation, emotion, volition, desire, intentionality and so forth. As we will argue later in the book, none of these ultimate capacities is physical, and therefore neither is personhood itself. Nor is an individual person qua person. As Boethius (c. 480-524) said, “A person is an individual substance with a rational nature.”¹⁴ The rational nature to which Boethius referred is what we are calling *personhood*. Neither the rational nature nor the individual constituted by it is physical qua person. None of this rules out the possibility that certain kinds of persons—for example, human persons—can be *more* than immaterial (e.g., a unity of body and soul). But human persons qua persons are immaterial substances and not material ones.

In our view this argument is a good one, but the monist does have a response to it.¹⁵ He can say that personhood is not a nature that an individual exemplifies; rather, it is a set of functional states that an individual realizes. Either personhood or a soul/spirit is much like software, and it can be realized by different kinds of individual hardwares. For example, Warren S. Brown, Nancy Murphy and H. Newton Malony claim that a soul is “a functional capacity of a complex physical organism, rather than a separate spiritual essence.”¹⁶ Roughly, a functional state is something characterized not by its intrinsic features but by its inputs and outputs that constitute its role in a system. Now God and angels are immaterial substances that realized the functional state we call personhood, and the



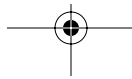
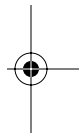
human brain/body realizes personhood even though it is, strictly speaking, a physical entity. We cannot pursue this issue further here except to make two brief points. First, it seems fairly apparent that in scriptural descriptions of God as a thinking, feeling, acting, desiring and conscious being, Scripture is describing attributes God possesses, not functional states external to him and that he somehow realizes. Second, if various mental states are really functional states whose description is neutral to whether the entity realizing that state is a spirit or a brain, then just exactly what is the content of “spirit” when we say that God is a spirit? We believe that the functionalist will have real difficulty answering this question.

In the next few chapters we will examine further problems with functionalism. If there is an adequate rebuttal to this monist argument, then in the absence of a more compelling response, the fact that God and angels are immaterial spirits qua persons gives grounds for claiming the same thing of human persons.

Arguments from biblical exegesis. Before we look at biblical exegesis, it is important to note that an important issue in biblical teaching is the Bible’s view of the intermediate state. Currently, there are three views of the intermediate state. The first view is the traditional *temporary-disembodiment position* that we defend below: A person is an immaterial soul/spirit deeply unified with a body that can enter a temporary intermediate state of disembodiment at death, however unnatural and incomplete it may be, while awaiting a resurrection body in the final state. This view is clearly dualistic in nature.

The second view advocated by thinkers like Bruce Reichenbach is monistic and is called the *extinction/re-creation position*¹⁷: Persons are identical to properly functioning bodies (or brains); when the body dies the person ceases to exist since the person is in some sense the same as his or her body. At the future, final resurrection, persons are re-created after a period of nonexistence either ex nihilo or by reforming either the very same body that died prior to extinction or by taking some subset of parts of that body and re-creating a new body around that subset.

Murray Harris is a major advocate of the third view, the *immediate-resurrection position*¹⁸: At death each individual is immediately given his or her resurrection body, thus eliminating a disembodied intermediate state





as well as a future, general resurrection. We will discuss issues involved in debates about personal identity in chapter five, but suffice it to say here that the immediate-resurrection view seems to be dualistic. Why? Because it claims that the very same person can have two different bodies, and thus the person is not identical but only contingently connected to each body. As Harris admits, “the link between the Christian’s successive forms of embodiment—the physical and the spiritual—lies in the same identifiable *ego*. . . . There are two dwellings but only one occupant. There is an identity of occupant but not of dwelling.”¹⁹

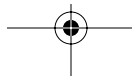
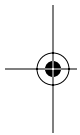
Space considerations forbid us to critique directly the extinction/re-creation and immediate-resurrection positions. However, our treatment of the key passages, though unfortunately brief, will indicate the superiority of the temporary-disembodiment position vis-à-vis the other two.

Old Testament Exegesis

The main emphasis in Old Testament theology is on the functional, holistic unity of a human being. But the Old Testament depiction of this unity includes an ontological duality of immaterial-material components such that the individual human being can live after biological death in an intermediate state while awaiting the future resurrection of the body. There are two main lines of argument for this claim: an analysis of Old Testament anthropological terms and of Old Testament teaching about life after death. Let us look at these lines of argument in order.

Biblical anthropological terms exhibit a wide field of meanings, and Old Testament terms are no exception to this rule.²⁰ Perhaps the two most important Old Testament terms are *nephesh* (frequently translated “soul”) and *ruach* (frequently translated “spirit”).

The term *nephesh* occurs 754 times in the Old Testament and is used primarily of human beings, though it is also used of animals (Gen 1:20; 9:10) and of God himself (Judg 10:16; Is 1:14).²¹ When the term is used of God, it certainly does not mean physical breath or life. Instead, it refers to God as an immaterial, transcendent self—a seat of mind, will, emotion, and so on (cf. Job 23:13; Amos 6:8). According to *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (by F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs), the term has three basic meanings: the life principle, various figurative





usages and the soul of a human that “departs at death and returns with life at the resurrection.”²²

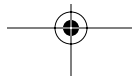
To expand on this, in some places *nephesh* refers to a body part—for example, the mouth (Is 5:14) or the neck (Ps 105:18)—and it can even be used to refer to a dead human corpse (Num 5:2; 6:11). It sometimes refers to a desire of some sort: for example, a desire for food or sex.

On other occasions, *nephesh* refers to either life itself (Lev 17:11 KJV: “the life [*nephesh*] of the flesh is in the blood”) or to a vital principle or substantial entity that makes something animated or alive (Ps 30:3 KJV: “Thou hast brought up my soul [*nephesh*] from the grave”; cf. Ps 86:13; Prov 3:22: “So shall [wisdom and discretion] be life [*hayyim*] unto thy soul [*nephesh*]”). *Nephesh* also refers to the seat of emotion, volition, moral attitudes and desire or longing for God (Deut 6:5; 21:14; Prov 21:10; Is 26:9; Mic 7:1).

Finally, there are passages in which *nephesh* refers to the continuing locus of personal identity that departs to the afterlife as the last breath ceases (Gen 35:18; cf. 1 Kings 17:21-22; Ps 16:10; 30:3; 49:15; 86:13; 139:8; Lam 1:1). Death and resurrection are regularly spoken of in terms of the departure and return of the soul. Indeed, the problem of necromancy throughout Israel’s history (the practice of trying to communicate with the dead in Sheol; cf. Deut 18:9-14; 1 Sam 28:7-25) seems to presuppose the view that ancient Israel believed people continued to live conscious lives after the death of their bodies.

It is sometimes said that in these and other contexts *nephesh* is simply a term that stands proxy for the personal pronoun “I” or “me,” and as such it simply refers to the person as a totality. One way of putting this objection is to claim that, frequently, the term *nephesh* is used in a figure of speech known as a synecdoche of part for whole, that is, when a part of something is used to refer to the whole (e.g., “All hands on deck!”). Thus, *nephesh* does not refer to a part of the person but to the person as a whole psychophysical unity.

In our view this claim assumes its conclusion prior to making the argument because it fails to take seriously that it is in virtue of the *nephesh*—and not the body per se—that the individual human is a living, sentient being capable of the various states of emotion, volition and so on. Thus, even if certain passages use *nephesh* to refer simply to the whole person (Ps



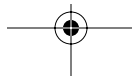
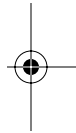


103:1: “Praise the LORD, O my soul [*nephesh*]”), it is the whole person as a unified center of conscious thought, action and emotion, that is, as an ensouled body to which reference is being made. Further, in cases of synecdoche of part for whole, implicit in the employment of the figure of speech is an acknowledgment of the reality of the part, even though the whole may be the intended referent of the term. When we say, “All hands on deck!” we may be referring to entire persons, but we do so by way of a part—hands—that exist and are literal constituents of the wholes of which they are parts. The same is true of the *nephesh* when it is used in a synecdoche of part for whole.

Another argument against the dualistic construal of *nephesh* has been raised by Hans Walter Wolff. Speaking of the Old Testament use of *nephesh* to refer to a principle of life that can depart or return, Wolff says, “We must not fail to observe that the *nephesh* is never given the meaning of an indestructible core of being, in contradistinction to the physical life, and even capable of living when cut off from that life. When there is a mention of the ‘departing’ (Gen. 35:18) of the *nephesh* from a man, or of its ‘return’ (Lam. 1:11), the basic idea . . . is the concrete notion of the ceasing and restoration of the breathing.”²³

Unfortunately, Wolff gives no adequate argumentation for this claim. Indeed, the clear reading of texts like Genesis 35:18 and 1 Kings 17:21-22 implies that here *nephesh* is both a substantial principle of life and a ground of consciousness and personal identity that leaves, continues to exist after biological death and can return. This seems evidently to be how *nephesh* (as the immaterial, conscious, living ground of personal identity) is used when it is employed to refer to God himself. In our view Wolff’s inadequate understanding of a functionally holistic form of substance dualism—that is, an inadequate understanding of philosophical issues—is turning his exegesis into isogesis.

Moreover, when the Old Testament speaks of blood atonement to redeem the *nephesh* (Lev 16), the soul cannot merely refer to physical breath or life alone. A person’s soul transcends mere physical or biological life, and thus it has a form of significant, intrinsic value that goes beyond mere physical breath or bodily functioning taken simply as a set of physical processes. Similarly, when the Old Testament contains injunctions for people to inflict their souls (Lev 16:29; 23:27), they were not being com-





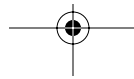
manded to torture their physical bodies or their biological life. They were to experience grief and sorrow in their transcendent selves. Finally, the term *nephesh* is always translated *psychē* and never *bios* in the Septuagint. The term *bios* is the Greek word for mere biological or physical life, and the regular avoidance of this term by the translators of the Septuagint is best explained by their recognition that *nephesh* refers to a transcendent, irreducible aspect of living things that goes beyond mere breath or physical life.

The other key Old Testament term is *ruach*, frequently translated as “spirit.” The term occurs 361 times, and the breakdown of some of the specific translations in the King James Version are as follows: the Spirit of God (105 times), angels (23 times), the spirit in humans (59 times), the wind (43 times), an attitude or emotional state (51 times), mind (6 times) and breath (14 times).²⁴ *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* lists nine meanings for the term:

1. God’s Spirit
2. angels
3. the principle of life in humans and animals
4. disembodied spirits
5. breath
6. wind
7. disposition or attitude
8. the seat of emotions
9. the seat of mind and will in humans

Definitions 1, 2 and 4 seem to have straightforward dualist implications; and definitions 3, 7, 8 and 9 do as well when we realize that if dualist arguments are successful, the principle or seat of life and consciousness is a transcendent self or immaterial ego of some sort. *Ruach* clearly overlaps with *nephesh*. However, two differences seem to characterize the terms. First, *ruach* is overwhelmingly the term of choice for God (though it is also used of animals; cf. Gen 7:22; Eccles 3:19). Second, *ruach* emphasizes the notion of power. Indeed, if there is a central thread to *ruach*, it appears to be “a unified center of unconscious (moving air) or conscious (God, angels, humans, animals) power.”

Ruach often refers to the wind insofar as it is an invisible, active power standing at God’s disposal (Gen 8:1; Is 7:2). In this sense, the *ruach* of





God hovers over the waters with the power to create (Gen 1:2). The term also signifies breath itself (Job 19:17) or, more frequently, a vital power that infuses something, animates it and gives it life and consciousness. In this sense the *ruach* in humans is given or formed by Yahweh (Zech 12:1); it is that which proceeds from and returns to him, and it is that which gives humans life (Job 34:14-15). In Ezekiel 37 God takes dry bones, reconstitutes human bodies of flesh, tendons, skin and so on and then adds a *ruach* to these bodies to make them living persons. Ezekiel 37 is parallel to Genesis 2:7 in which God breaths *neshama*—a virtual synonym to *ruach* that means “the breath of life”—into an already formed body. In both texts the entity God adds is that which animates and makes alive, and it is something that is added by God and is nonemergent. The *ruach* is something that can depart upon death (Ps 146:4; Eccles 12:7). There is no *ruach* in idols of wood or stone; thus they cannot arise and possess consciousness (Jer 10:14; Hab 2:19).

Ruach also refers to an independent, invisible, conscious being, as it does when describing how God employs a spirit to accomplish some purpose (1 Sam 16:14-16, 23; 2 Kings 19:7). In this sense Yahweh is called “the God of the spirits of all flesh” (Num 27:16; cf. 16:22 NASB). Here, *spirit* means an individual, conscious being distinct from the body. Moreover, *ruach* also refers to the seat of various states of consciousness, including volition (Deut 2:30; Ps 51:10-12; Jer 51:11), cognition (Is 29:24), emotion (Judg 8:3; 1 Kings 21:4) and moral or spiritual disposition (Prov 18:14; Eccles 7:8).

In light of our brief study of *nephesh* and *ruach*, it should be obvious that belief in some form of Old Testament anthropological dualism is *prima facie* justified. Indeed, the burden of proof is on the monist, a burden made even more difficult when we turn to a direct examination of Old Testament descriptions of the intermediate state in Sheol.

The Old Testament on life after death. The Old Testament evidently depicts individual survival after physical death, however ethereal that depiction may be, in a form that seems to be disincarnate, that is, without flesh and bones. The dead in Sheol are called *rephaim*, or shades. As with most Old Testament terms *Sheol* has a variety of meanings, including simply the grave itself. But there is no question that a major nuance of *Sheol* is a shadowy realm of all the dead (with the exception of Enoch and Elijah).

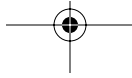
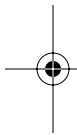


For a number of reasons Old Testament teaching about life after death is best understood in terms of a diminished though conscious form of disembodied personal survival in an intermediate state. First, life in Sheol is often depicted as lethargic, inactive and resembling an unconscious coma (Job 3:13; Ps 88:10-12; 115:17-18; Eccles 9:10; Is 38:18). However, the dead in Sheol are also described as being with family and as awake and active on occasion (Is 14:9-10). Second, the practice of necromancy (communicating with the dead) is understood as a real possibility and, on some occasions, an actuality (cf. Lev 19:31; 20:6; Deut 18:11; 1 Sam 28; Is 8:19). Third, we have already seen that the *nephesh*—a conscious person without flesh and bone—departs to God upon death (cf. Ps 49:15). Finally, the Old Testament clearly teaches the hope of resurrection beyond the grave (Job 19:25-27; Ps 73:26; Is 26:14, 19; Dan 12:2). It is possible to interpret these resurrection texts in a way that denies a conscious intermediate state, and we will look at this possibility shortly when we turn to the New Testament teaching about the intermediate state. However, it seems apparent that the most natural interpretation is to see the soul-spirit as the locus of personal identity that survives death in a less than fully desirable state and to which a resurrection body will some day be added.

John Hick has objected to the disembodied-soul view of the afterlife on the grounds that throughout primitive cultures, as well as in the Old Testament, the entity that survives in the afterlife is not an immaterial soul but rather an ethereal surviving being—a shadowy, insubstantial, counterpart to the body, a quasibodily being.²⁵ In response, it must be admitted that the dead in Sheol are, in fact, depicted in sense-perceptible language and that the ethereal-body view cannot be ruled out absolutely.

But for at least four reasons, we think that the ethereal-body view of the intermediate state is much weaker than the disembodied-soul view.

- The *nephesh* or *ruach* is viewed in Old Testament teaching as something that can depart at death, continue to exist and return; and the *nephesh* or *ruach* seems to be an immaterial, unifying locus of personal identity and ground of various mental and living functions.
- Throughout Scripture, sensory imagery is used in a nonliteral way to describe immaterial, invisible realities, including heaven and hell, angels and demons, and God himself. In these cases, the visual imagery is not





taken literally, especially in descriptions of spirits and God. Moreover, it is possible to understand the various visitations of angels, of Moses and Elijah in the transfiguration and of the Angel of Yahweh (God himself) as either temporary embodiment or the power to manifest sense-perceptible qualities without being physical.

□ Old Testament teaching implies that the soul or spirit is added to flesh and bones to form a living human person (Gen 2:7; Ezek 37) and that the resurrection of the dead involves the reemodiment of the same soul or spirit (Is 26:14, 19). This is more consistent with the disembodied-soul view than with the ethereal-body position.

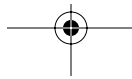
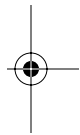
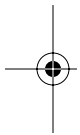
□ John W. Cooper has shown that intertestamental Judaism used *nephesh* and *ruach* to refer to deceased, immaterial persons in a disembodied intermediate state and that the best way to explain this usage is to see it as expanding on and clarifying ideas already contained in Old Testament teaching.²⁶

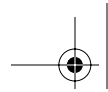
In sum, the Old Testament teaches that the soul/spirit is an immaterial entity that grounds and unifies conscious, living functions; that constitutes personal identity; that can survive physical death in a diminished form in the intermediate state; and that, eventually, can be reunited with a resurrection body.

New Testament Exegesis

When we turn to the New Testament, this dualistic view of human persons becomes even more compelling. However, before we look at the New Testament, four preliminary remarks should be made.

First, we acknowledge that the New Testament does not attempt to develop a philosophical anthropology as its primary focus. It does not follow, however, that New Testament data do not provide sufficient evidence to rule out certain anthropological models (i.e., monism) and to justify others (i.e., some form of dualism). Second, we acknowledge that certain New Testament texts use *psychē* (soul) or *pneuma* (spirit) as a synecdoche of part for whole (cf. Lk 12:19). However, there are obvious texts where these terms are most naturally taken to refer to an immaterial self. And as we saw in conjunction with Old Testament synecdoches, their employment still affirms the ontological reality of the part (soul/spirit) that stands for the whole. Third, New Testament anthropological terms





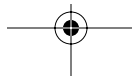
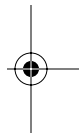
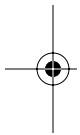
possess wide fields of meaning, and the precise usage of such terms should be determined on a text-by-text basis.

Fourth, in intertestamental Judaism, the intermediate state was widely understood as follows (cf. *1 Enoch* 22; *2 Esdras* 7)²⁷:

- The dead were evidently referred to as “souls” or “spirits,” and these terms were widely employed to refer to disembodied persons.
- The dead were considered conscious and active in the intermediate state.
- Resurrection was depicted as the reunion of soul and body in a transformed, revived bodily existence, though there were differences of opinion about the precise nature of the resurrection body.
- The Pharisees were among the groups that accepted the three points above. The Sadducees appear to be the major exception to the rule, but opinion is divided about the precise nature of their beliefs. Some interpret them as believing in anthropological monism and annihilationism; others take them to have held to Old Testament teaching about Sheol in which the dead are cut off from God and usually unconscious and inactive. These insights about intertestamental Judaism clearly place a burden of proof on anthropological monists, since New Testament teaching ought to be interpreted in terms of what the original audience would have understood unless there is evidence to the contrary.²⁸

New Testament non-Pauline anthropology. Key non-Pauline New Testament passages appear to use the term *spirit* in a dualistic sense. In *1 Peter* 3:18-20 we are told that when Jesus was killed, being alive in spirit he went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison who had been disobedient during the days of Noah. This text has two points of relevance for the anthropological debate.

First, we must determine to whom Jesus preached. There are three main interpretations. Some argue that this text refers to the preincarnate Christ’s preaching to the wicked during the days of Noah. This interpretation is not likely, however, because it breaks with the chronological order of the passage: Jesus died (v. 18), he preached (v. 19), and he ascended to heaven (v. 22). Verse 18 contains two aorist participles (“having been put to death,” “being made alive in the spirit”) that present actions occurring at the same time as does the main verb (“Christ died”), so the events described occurred at the time of the crucifixion. The sec-





ond and third interpretations imply that between his death and resurrection Christ preached either to disembodied spirits in the intermediate state or to imprisoned angels, respectively. The former view entails anthropological dualism, though the text is too ambiguous to allow dogmatism toward either interpretation.

The second point of relevance centers on Christ himself. Between his death and resurrection, he continued to exist as a God-man in the intermediate state independently of his earthly body. Whatever it was about Jesus that allowed him to continue to be a human, it could not be his earthly body. The most reasonable solution is that Jesus continued to have a human soul/spirit, a solution consistent with “being made alive in the spirit” (v. 18).

Hebrews 12:23 refers to deceased but existent human beings in the heavenly Jerusalem as “the spirits of righteous men made perfect.” *Spirits* is used to refer to human beings either in the intermediate state or after the final resurrection. Either way, deceased human beings are described as incorporeal spirits, a description fitting the context in which the heavenly Jerusalem is contrasted with what can be touched and empirically sensed (Heb 12:18-19). When this language is used of angels, it seemingly entails the idea of an angelic person who is identical to a substantial spirit, and the same implication for human persons is most naturally seen in this text. Moreover, the verbs of Hebrews 12:18-24 are in the present tense, so it is highly probable that the verse is referring to disembodied persons in the intermediate state who await a final resurrection (cf. Heb 11:35).

Several texts refer to death as “giving up the spirit” (Mt 27:50; Lk 23:46; cf. 24:37; Jn 19:30; “giving up the soul” [*ekpsychō*] is used in Acts 5:10; 12:23). Most likely, this phrase expresses the idea of the departure of the person into the intermediate state and not simply the cessation of breathing because Jesus committed himself, not his breath, to God (Lk 23:46); because this was a standard way of referring to the disembodied dead in intertestamental Judaism; and because Luke 24:37-39 clearly uses *spirit* much like *rephaim* is used in the Old Testament, namely, as a disincarnate person without “flesh and bones” (v. 39 NRSV).

There are also key non-Pauline New Testament passages that appear to use the term *soul* in a dualistic sense. In Revelation 6:9-11, dead saints are referred to as the “souls” of the martyrs who are in the intermediate state



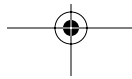
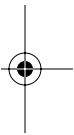


awaiting the final resurrection (cf. Rev 20:5-6). Here the intermediate saints are depicted as conscious and alive, and they are described metaphorically with sense-perceptible imagery in a way we have already described in our discussion of Old Testament imagery of Sheol. Further, Matthew 10:28 says, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” In this text *psychē* seems to refer to something that can exist without the body. Thus *soul* and *body* cannot simply be two different terms that refer to the person as a psychosomatic unity. The most natural way to take Jesus’ view here is to see it as an expression of a Jewish form of anthropological dualism.

Non-Pauline teaching on the intermediate state. A number of non-Pauline passages are most reasonably taken to affirm a disembodied intermediate state between death and final resurrection. In Jesus’ debate with the Sadducees (Mt 22:23-33; Mk 12:18-27; Lk 20:27-40), Jesus specifies the time of the resurrection as a general future event in the age to come (Lk 20:35). This understanding of the resurrection was embraced by the Pharisees of that time, and as the context shows (Lk 20:39) they approved of Jesus’ teaching about the intermediate state and resurrection. In John 5:28-29 and 11:23-24, Jesus also affirms that the final resurrection is a future event. Further, Jesus asserts that the patriarchs, as representatives of all people, are currently alive in the intermediate state because “to him all are alive” (Lk 20:38). Matthew 22:32 clarifies this remark and shows that it does not mean that the patriarchs were alive to God’s memory, for here Jesus grounds his argument about the intermediate state in the continuous present tense of the verb that he takes to be implicit in the Old Testament text he cites: God *is*—that is, *continues to be*—their God, and thus they continue to be.

Furthermore, in the transfiguration (cf. Mt 17:1-13) Elijah (who never died) and Moses (who had died) appear with Jesus. The most natural way to interpret this text is to understand that Moses and Elijah have continued to exist—Moses was not re-created for this one event—and they have been made temporarily visible. Thus the transfiguration passage seems to imply an intermediate state; though taken alone, it does not rule out the view that persons have bodies in that state.

In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19-31, we have





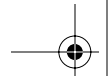
a description of the intermediate state in Hades (not the final resurrection in Gehenna). It is hard to know how far to press this parable and, specifically, how much to make of the bodily, visual imagery in the text. But it seems safe to conclude from it that Jesus is at least teaching the existence of conscious, living persons in the intermediate state prior to the final resurrection.

In Luke 23:42-43 Jesus promises the thief on the cross that “today you will be with me in paradise.” The word *today* should be taken in its natural sense: the man would be with Jesus that very day in the intermediate state after their deaths. In intertestamental Judaism paradise was understood as the dwelling place of the faithful dead prior to the final resurrection. This text (coupled with other New Testament teaching on Christology) implies that Jesus continued to exist as a fully human person after his death and prior to his bodily resurrection. That is, he was a disembodied human soul with a full human nature united with a divine nature during the period between his death and resurrection. This would seem to imply that the thief existed in a disembodied intermediate state just as Jesus did, which is possible only if the thief was more than his body.

New Testament Pauline anthropology. When we turn to Pauline teaching, we find that several strands of evidence unite to justify the claim that he taught a dualistic anthropology. In Acts 23:6-8 Paul affirms his solidarity with the Pharisees over against the Sadducees in affirming the reality of angels, spirits and the final resurrection. When Paul refers to his acceptance of the “resurrection of the dead,” he means to affirm the Pharisaic teaching of the afterlife, which included the notion of the person as a disembodied spirit awaiting the final resurrection.

Paul affirms the idea (1 Thess 5) that at the parousia of Jesus, the dead shall be resurrected and gathered prior to the gathering of those alive at that future time. This seems to teach that individual deceased believers await a future, general resurrection. Moreover, Paul’s depiction of those in the intermediate state as “asleep” describes persons who, while conscious and active, are not active in an earthly, bodily way. First Thessalonians 5:10 refers to those who are “asleep” as being alive together with Christ, a description that does not allow for an extinction/re-creation view of the afterlife.

First Corinthians 15 reaffirms the general teaching of 1 Thessalonians

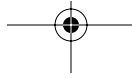


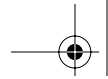
4:13-18: there will be a future general resurrection at the end of the age (cf. 1 Cor 15:20-24, 51-52) following a period of sleep (1 Cor 15:18, 20, 51)—a period of conscious and active, though diminished, survival in a disembodied intermediate state. Moreover, verse 35 seems to make a distinction between persons and their bodies for Paul questions which sort of body the dead have at the resurrection.

The traditional way of understanding 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 is as follows: Paul desires to live until the parousia because this would mean that he would have his earthly body immediately replaced with his resurrection body and thus that he would not have to go through an unnatural state of disembodiment in the intermediate state. Paul refers to the earthly body as the “earthly tent” (v. 1), and he describes the resurrection body as a “building from God,” a phrase that cannot refer to a heavenly dwelling since it is something that can be put on (cf. vv. 2-3). Further, Paul refers to the disembodied intermediate state as a state of nakedness or of being unclothed (vv. 3-4), and he explicitly says that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (v. 8), thereby affirming the real possibility of disembodiment.

The passage’s previous context adds further weight to this interpretation. In 2 Corinthians 4 Paul’s theme is that, given the ministry of the new covenant, we should not lose heart in the face of hardship. The progression of Paul’s thought is quite important. In 2 Corinthians 4:7-11 he addresses the issue of persecution, especially bodily persecution, by claiming that one should continue to manifest the life of Jesus in one’s “mortal body” (v. 11). Part of our endurance comes from our future hope of our resurrection—which he compares to Jesus’ resurrection—from the value of the new covenant ministry and from the assurance that though outwardly we are decaying, inwardly we are being renewed (vv. 12-18). (In regards to Paul’s comparison of our resurrection to Jesus’, it should be noted that Jesus was not re-created at his resurrection; he continued to exist consciously as a God-man between the crucifixion and the resurrection, at which time he was reunited with his body, now a resurrection body.)

The natural question this raises is, what sort of hope do we have if the body itself is destroyed? In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul addresses this by teaching about the intermediate state and its relationship to the future resur-





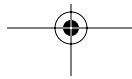
rection. If this interpretation is correct, then it has obvious dualistic implications.²⁹ Philippians 1:21-24 provides a parallel teaching to 2 Corinthians 5: Paul contrasts living in the body with temporary disembodiment with Christ in the intermediate state.

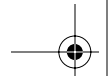
In 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 Paul describes a visionary experience he had lived through fourteen years earlier. In verse 3 he says that he does not know whether he was still in his body during the experience or whether he was in a state of temporary disembodiment. It doesn't really matter for our argument which was correct. The simple fact that Paul allows for the possibility of his own temporary disembodiment is sufficient to show that he did not take himself to be identical with his body. It is because Paul understands himself as a soul/spirit united to a body that this was a real possibility for him.

In Romans 8:18-23 and Philippians 3:20-21 Paul seems to affirm a future general resurrection associated with the restoration of all things—a view that stands in stark contrast to an immediate personal resurrection position.

In our view, the Bible clearly teaches some form of anthropological dualism, and in the next four chapters we will spell out a version of substance dualism that we claim does the best job of accounting for the biblical data. We will try to show that our version of dualism is a reasonable inference from philosophical and commonsense things we have a right to believe about ourselves. We will argue that our version of substance dualism solves certain ethical dilemmas. We will also argue that it is consistent with, and perhaps more in line with, scientific data than the most popular current rival view when addressing those rare cases in which the findings of science are at all relevant to the formation of a model of the human constitution. In our view, Christian intellectuals have a moral and intellectual obligation to theorize about human persons in light of some version of substance dualism or at least in light of a view like substance dualism that preserves the biblical teaching cited in this chapter.

We have already given some reasons why a number of contemporary Christian thinkers regularly eschew substance dualism—for example, they (mistakenly) think it is a Greek notion eisogetically read into the Bible. However, there is one further objection against substance dualism one finds repeated over and over in the literature³⁰: the belief that dualism





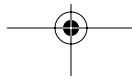
fragments the unity of the human person and that various biblical terms like *body*, *soul* and *spirit* do not pick out separable faculties of human persons but rather express different ways of referring to the same holistic unity. J. K. Howard expresses this objection nicely: “In terms of biblical psychology, man does not have a ‘soul,’ he is one. He is a living and vital whole. It is possible to distinguish between his activities, but we cannot distinguish between the parts, for they have no independent existence.”³¹ In our view, this objection expresses a very simplistic view of substance dualism and a deep misunderstanding of the metaphysical issues involved, as we will make evident in the next chapter. For now, we close this chapter by asking this question: What is the proper way to approach the question of the constitutional nature of human persons?

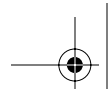
What Is the Proper Method of Approach in Forming a Model of the Constitution of Human Persons?

Among Christian thinkers there is a widely accepted approach to the relationship between science and theology in general. This is sometimes called the *complementarity approach*, and it entails certain ideas about the nature of human persons that we find inadequate. Since we will take up the complementarity view in chapter three, our purpose here is simply to state its features that are relevant to the question of methodology. To get at these features, consider the following statement from Arthur R. Peacocke: “The aim of this work is to rethink our ‘religious’ conceptualizations in the light of the perspectives on the world afforded by the sciences.”³² Peacocke also writes that

there is a strong *prima facie* case for re-examining the claimed cognitive content of Christian theology in the light of the new knowledge derivable from the sciences. . . . If such an exercise is not continually undertaken, theology will operate in a cultural ghetto quite cut off from most of those in Western cultures who have good grounds for thinking that science describes what is going on in the processes of the world at all levels. The turbulent history of the relation of science and theology bears witness to the impossibility of theology seeking a peaceful haven, protected from the sciences of its times, if it is going to be believable.³³

For Peacocke this means that we formulate our view of human persons by starting with natural scientific descriptions of human beings—apparently because science has more cognitive authority than theology when it



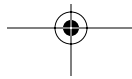
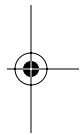


comes to describing what is real in the “natural” world—and that we adjust theology to come in line with science by adding theological descriptions as complementary perspectives to what natural science requires. On this view, it would be inappropriate to require science to adjust its views or limit its anthropological claims if theology seems to require it. For Peacocke this approach requires the adoption of anthropological monism and an extinction/re-creation view of the afterlife.³⁴

Along similar lines, Karl Giberson claims that “science, after all, is but one limited perspective on the world, although I would argue that it is the most epistemologically secure perspective that we have.”³⁵ Apart from the fact that Giberson’s claim expresses a self-refuting form of scientism, this naive and inadequate theory of knowledge does not do justice to the variegated texture of the intellectual life. More specifically, Giberson’s approach has the effect of placing theology in some upper story where it deals with meaning and significance; theology is to be accepted by an act of faith, but it is not allowed to offer a metaphysics of entities like human persons, which might carry enough epistemological authority to require certain scientific claims to be readjusted.

For thinkers such as Peacocke and Giberson the complementarity approach is a sort of default position because of the low epistemological authority of theology vis-à-vis science. On this view, *prima facie*, certain areas of biblical teaching or theological reflection may seem to imply propositions that run contrary to scientifically justified beliefs as in, for example, the areas of creation and evolution or theological affirmations of a substantial soul. When this happens, the area of theology should be revised so as to make it complementary to science. In this way theology retains its credibility in light of the scientific requirements of intellectual respectability even if the price to be paid is a revision of theology beyond what seems recognizable by normal exegesis of the biblical text.

In our view, when it comes to addressing the nature of human persons, science is largely incompetent either to frame the correct questions or to provide answers. The hard sciences are at their best when they describe how physical systems work, but they are largely incompetent when settling questions about the nature of consciousness, intentionality, personal identity and agency, and related matters. Recently, philosopher and scientific naturalist John Searle has argued that fifty years of focus on philoso-





phy of mind, artificial intelligence and cognitive psychological models of consciousness have been a waste of time in a number of ways. Says Searle:

How is it that so many philosophers and cognitive scientists can say so many things that, to me at least, seem obviously false? . . . I believe one of the unstated assumptions behind the current batch of views is that they represent the only scientifically acceptable alternatives to the antisecularism that went with traditional dualism, the belief in the immortality of the soul, spiritualism, and so on. Acceptance of the current views is motivated not so much by an independent conviction of their truth as by a terror of what are apparently the only alternatives. That is, the choice we are tacitly presented with is between a “scientific” approach, as represented by one or another of the current versions of “materialism,” and an “unscientific” approach, as represented by Cartesianism or some other traditional religious conception of the mind.³⁶

We do not agree with everything Searle says here, but he is correct in claiming that various disciplines studying the nature of human persons have been mired in chaos and confusion for at least a half a century. In our view, the reason for this chaos has been the assumption that science is the best way to approach the relevant questions. However, it is easy to see that this is not the case. Consider the following groups of assertions:

1a. The essence of a pain is its intrinsic, felt quality available to first-person introspection.

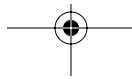
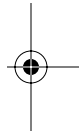
1b. A pain is whatever brain state realizes the correct functional role—that is, whatever is caused by certain inputs (e.g., a pin stick), causes certain other “internal” states (e.g., tendencies to feel self-pity) and causes certain bodily outputs (e.g., grimacing and shouting “Ouch!”).

2a. A certain type of thought is a type of mental state with intrinsic meaning and intentionality, and it is regularly correlated with a specific type of brain state.

2b. A certain type of thought is a type of mental state with intrinsic meaning and intentionality, and it is regularly caused by a specific type of brain state.

2c. A certain type of thought is to be understood according to some physicalist perspective and, thus, is identical to something physical.

3a. A human person is a properly functioning brain that emerges when a certain level of physical complexity appears.





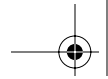
3b. A human person is a soul that God creates at the time of fertilization (creationism).

3c. A human person is a soul that comes to be according to certain metaphysical laws or powers at the time of fertilization (traducianism).

In each set of propositions different views are presented, and it is hard to see how science could adjudicate among the competitors.³⁷ One of the burdens of chapters two through six of this book will be to formulate and address a number of issues relevant to the nature of human persons. These issues are not pseudo-problems, nor are they incapable of being rationally discussed in spite of the fact that, with the exception of certain issues in chapter six, science has little to offer in their formulation and resolution. If you do not agree with this statement, we hope you will ask yourself this question as you read the chapters to come: How would natural science be able to formulate this issue and provide a resolution to it? We believe it will become obvious that science is of secondary importance to the main desiderata relevant to the nature of human persons.³⁸

If the hard sciences are not the proper starting point for the formulation of an adequate ontology of the human person, how shall we proceed? We think the following four steps amount to the best approach:

Step one. Plantinga has urged Christian scholars to bring everything they know to the task of formulating an adequate Christian worldview—specifically, to bring their theological *knowledge* into the process.³⁹ Plantinga's suggestion expresses the idea that Christianity is a knowledge tradition; that is, its central theological claims provide us with *knowledge* of their subject matter. By way of application we should try to get clear on biblical teaching about human persons by doing careful exegesis. As a part of formulating a biblical and systematic theology of human persons, the main contours of church history should be consulted, and a burden of proof should be placed on any view that is at odds with what the majority of great thinkers have held throughout church history. We are not suggesting that the voice of church history is univocal or infallible, but in our view, the teachings of the great intellectual leaders of the past provide insights that should be taken seriously. Thus we concur with Christian philosopher Stephen T. Davis: "Respect for Christian tradition must (or so I would argue) grant great weight to views held by virtually all the fathers of the church unless there is serious reason to depart from what



they say.”⁴⁰ We believe that step one supports some form of substance dualism as the correct model of human persons in which the soul is an immaterial continuant that can survive in a disembodied intermediate state.

Step two. The field of philosophy is the proper discipline to play the central role in formulating, clarifying and defending the anthropology of step one. By its very nature philosophy studies precisely those issues that are central to an ontology of the human person. Moreover, as George Bealer points out, philosophers do not seek what merely happens to be the case—for example, what physical states are contingently correlated with certain states of consciousness or the “coming to be” of persons—they seek what necessarily must be the case; they employ their methods to get at the nature or essence of things like life, mind, soul, agency, personal identity and so on.⁴¹ We recognize that philosophers do not agree about the correct model of human persons. But the main issues in debates about these models are largely philosophical in nature, an observation that becomes obvious when the details of the relevant anthropological issues are laid bare. Like it or not, philosophy is at the core of this area of study.

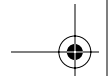
In employing philosophy to formulate an adequate ontology of human persons, special emphasis should be placed on scriptural teaching. We should also be guided by commonsense beliefs we inevitably hold, especially those due to our own first-person awareness of ourselves and our inner states. We ought to preserve these beliefs if possible. We agree with philosophers Joshua Hoffman and Gary S. Rosenkrantz, who say that “if entities of a certain kind belong to folk ontology [the ontological presuppositions of our commonsense conceptual scheme], then there is a *prima facie* presumption in favor of their reality. . . . Those who deny their existence assume the burden of proof.”⁴²

In this way, step two follows the advice of philosopher Roderick Chisholm: “I assume that, in our theoretical thinking, we should be guided by those propositions we presuppose in our ordinary activity. They are propositions we have a right to believe. Or, somewhat more exactly, they are propositions that should be regarded as innocent, epistemically, until there is positive reason for thinking them guilty.”⁴³

Among the propositions we have a right to believe are these:

- A pain is essentially something that has a certain felt texture of which I





can be aware by attending to the pain.

- This pain I am now feeling is necessarily such that it could not have been someone else's pain, though someone else could have a pain just like this one.
- I can be aware of and gain knowledge about myself and my conscious states through first-person acts of attending to myself and my states.
- I was a teenager, I am now forty-nine years old, and I will be fifty years old next year if I live long enough.
- I have a personality and a body, but I could develop a different personality (and I could have had a different one than I currently possess). And even if life after death is false, I am necessarily such that disembodied existence is at least metaphysically possible for me; more generally, even if it is false, out-of-body survival is coherent and metaphysically possible.
- Sometimes I myself intentionally and freely raise my arm or move my body for various reasons that constitute the ends for the sake of which I act.
- The heart functions for the sake of pumping blood. Hearts that do not so function are dysfunctional; that is, they are not functioning the way they (irreducibly) ought to function.

Among other things, in the next five chapters we shall clarify and defend these propositions.

The combined effect of steps one and two is to provide a philosophy or theology of natural organisms, specifically, of human persons. So understood, steps one and two express the idea that philosophy and theology are properly suited to provide knowledge about the ontology of living things, including human persons—a form of knowledge that is largely (though not entirely) independent of, conceptually prior to and epistemically foundational for scientific insights about human persons.

Step three. Insights from other disciplines, including the various sciences, should be incorporated into the model where relevant. This step will be of special importance to the issues discussed in chapter six. The fact that step three places the hard sciences below philosophy in integrative importance captures the following two principles expressed by Bealer:

I wish to recommend two theses. [1] *The autonomy of philosophy.* Among the central questions of philosophy that can be answered by one standard theoretical means or another, most can in principle be answered by philo-



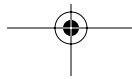
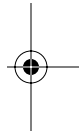


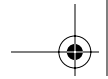
sophical investigation and argument without relying substantively on the sciences. [2] *The authority of philosophy*. Insofar as science and philosophy purport to answer the same central philosophical questions, in most cases the support that science could in principle provide for those answers is not as strong as that which philosophy could in principle provide for its answers. So, should there be conflicts, the authority of philosophy in most cases can be greater in principle.⁴⁴

Applied to integration, this approach claims that philosophy is autonomous from and more authoritative than science even in some areas that are properly within the domain of science itself (e.g., the nature of time, space, causation, consciousness, the person). More specifically, philosophy, not science, is the primary tool for getting at what is real in many areas relevant to theology, and the limited role of science in integration requires philosophical evaluation and clarification before it can be appropriated. Nowhere are these insights more appropriate than in the study of the nature of human persons. As philosopher Alvin Goldman notes:

Philosophical accounts of mental concepts have been strongly influenced by purely philosophical concerns, especially ontological and epistemological ones. Persuaded that materialism (or physicalism) is the only tenable ontology, philosophers have deliberately fashioned their accounts of the mental with an eye to safeguarding materialism. . . . According to my view, the chief constraint on an adequate theory of our commonsense understanding of mental predicates is not that it should have desirable ontological or epistemological consequences; rather, it should be psychologically realistic. . . . Its depiction of how people represent and ascribe mental predicates must be psychologically plausible.⁴⁵

Step four. Use ethical knowledge as a source of information for adjusting the ontological model when appropriate and relevant. We assume that Scripture and natural law (roughly, the existence of objective ethical values and truth rooted in the way things are made and knowable to humans without special revelation) provide ethical knowledge, though we do not claim that various ethical issues are always easy to resolve. But if there are some items of ethical knowledge—say, that all humans have equal and intrinsic value as such—then this knowledge can be used to help adjudicate between alternative ontologies. For example, if some model of human persons has as a natural consequence the proposition that some





human persons have more intrinsic value than others, perhaps by implying that human personhood is an emergent property that can be realized to a greater or lesser degree, then this implication tends to count against the truth of that model. In a theistic universe ethics is grounded in ontology and thus can be a relevant factor in getting at what is real.

In the chapters to follow, our approach to anthropology is an expression of what Thomas V. Morris calls theological realism:

The Judeo-Christian religious tradition is not just a domain of poetry, imagery, mystical transport, moral directive, and noncognitive, existential self-understanding. Interacting especially with the philosophically developed tradition of Christian theology, [I] join the vast majority of other leading contributors to contemporary philosophical theology in taking for granted *theological realism*, the cognitive stance presupposed by the classical theistic concern to direct our thoughts as well as our lives aright. It has been the intent of theologians throughout most of the history of the Christian faith to describe correctly, within our limits, certain important facts about God, human beings, and the rest of creation given in revelation and fundamental to the articulation of any distinctively Christian world view. In particular, reflective Christians throughout the centuries have understood their faith as providing key insights into, and resources for, the construction of a comprehensive metaphysics.⁴⁶

In the remainder of this book we shall seek to apply a theological realist stance to the task of developing a metaphysical and ethical view of human persons that is responsive to the teachings of special revelation and to the most important information from outside special revelation relevant to the task at hand. In our view, the theological-realist stance, as expressed in our four-step methodology, differs from a widely practiced employment of the complementarity approach in at least this regard: our approach does not result in an inappropriate reinterpretation of Christian theology under the demands of an inadequate scientism, however well intentioned it may be.

