

HUMANS AS SPIRITUAL ANIMALS:  
A CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN "EMERGENT" ANTHROPOLOGY  
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I. Introduction

- A. Modern anti-body/soul dualism in theology, philosophy, and science
- B. Philosophical alternatives: materialism; emergentism; also panpsychism and idealism
- C. Recent evangelical Christian physicalism and emergentism: Murphy and Hasker
- D. Issue: some sort of dualism is required by historic Christian anthropology
- E. I hold a Thomistic-Reformed dual-principle monism. A human is *one substance/entity*, constituted by a *soul* structuring *matter* as a personal-spiritual-living being. *Person* and *organism* are distinct but interrelated substructures of human beings. Soul/person is not naturally immortal or functional without a physical body. But God can supernaturally enable disembodied souls to exist and function as persons between death and resurrection.

II. Criteria for an Adequate Christian Philosophical Anthropology

- A. Theological: consistency with Scripture regarding the nature, history, and destiny of humans
- B. Philosophical: coherence; metaphysical adequacy to account for personal identity, personal agency and responsibility, and the irreducible characteristics (*qualia*) of mental-spiritual phenomena
- C. Scientific: consistency with established facts (not necessarily all the hypothetical aspects)
- D. Common sense: universal human beliefs assumed true unless shown to be false

III. Relevant Biblical Framework

- A. Composition/constitution. One being ("living soul") from two ingredients: dust, breath of life.
- B. Destiny: temporary disembodied existence "with Christ"; permanent resurrection embodiment
- C. Conclusions

- 1. Some combination of unity, duality, and possible dichotomy is required.
- 2. Thomist/Reformed dual-principle monism fits better than substance dualism

IV. Key Philosophical-Theological Topics

A. Soul and body

- 1. Metaphysical duality in unity: one substance, two constituents: soul and matter.
  - a. Soul: individual spiritual principle that structures matter as a living human organism with personal capacities and potentials; integral to body, not naturally subsistent or immortal.
  - b. Organism: an irreducible, holistic sub-system of the soul, constituted of physical-chemical ingredients. The genetic code is an important aspect of the soul.
- 2. Origin of the Soul. Traducianism (inherited): God created human nature good, it fell, and it is passed on to all humans. Creationism implies that God keeps creating fallen souls.
- 3. Person: The Essential Core and Full Actualization of the Soul
  - a. The person is the subject/agent of the integrated capacities for consciousness, self-consciousness, interpersonal relationships, practical-moral deliberation/action, spirituality, etc.
  - b. Person exists *in potentia* from conception and normally becomes actual (*emerges*) developmentally. A person can fail to develop capacities or lose them.
- 4. Person-Body Relation
  - a. *Person and organism* are distinct, relatively autonomous functional substructures/systems of the human being that are interrelated in various ways, including causal interaction.
  - b. The person depends upon and is influenced by the organism in many ways.
  - c. The person causes and influences many things that occur in the organism.
  - d. The bodily person as a whole is the subject of most experiences and acts.

## B. The Will: Conditional Voluntarism

1. Personal agency depends on and is influenced by many physical, biological, psychological, social, cultural, moral, and spiritual factors.

2. Personal agency has the capacity for libertarian freedom in that it can engage in basic and causally undetermined acts of deliberation about possible motives and actions and can perform causally undetermined acts implementing its decisions.

3. Many of our actions are free because we explicitly deliberate and choose.

4. Many of our actions are habitual or motivated by non-voluntary factors without explicit deliberation and choice.

5. Augustinian-Reformed Christianity holds that religion is a deep, basic attachment, orientation, and disposition that moves humans to believe, trust, love, hope, and act; religion is not the result of libertarian free choice. Christian faith results from regeneration by the Holy Spirit, which *frees* the mind, will, and affections to relate deliberately and positively toward God and neighbor. Divine sovereignty in salvation does not involve coercion of the will. It is more like being enabled to fall in love again.

## C. Biblical View of Death and Final Destiny

### 1. Death

a. an ontological accident occasioned by human rejection of God, the Life-Source

b. God supernaturally sustains the soul apart from the body, which disintegrates

c. the soul is implicitly/potentially bodily even when disembodied (cf. ghosts)

### 2. Interim existence

a. conscious personal fellowship with Christ and the saints

b. temporary (but other-worldly time-consciousness)

c. ontologically deficient but redemptively "far better" (Paul)

### 3. Resurrection

a. God reconstitutes bodily persons from souls and residual earthly bodies.

b. God's Spirit makes the soul and thus the body immortal and glorious

c. Resurrection body is constituted from the remains of the earthly body, if possible (cf. food cycle, cannibalism, nuclear vaporization, etc.), but its identity derives from the soul

## D. Personal identity

1. Numerical identity is metaphysically and logically absolute; not just subjective (self-awareness), epistemic (identifiability by others), or divine intention (God regards  $x$  and  $x'$  as identical)

2. The soul is the enduring locus of personal identity from conception on.

## V. Conclusion

Christian dual-principle monism meets the theological, philosophical, scientific, and common sense requirements of philosophical anthropology more completely and coherently than any kind of substance dualism, physicalism, emergentism, panpsychism, or idealism.