

## The Mind/Body Problem In Biblical Perspective

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Evangelical Christians have often been trapped by a picture in thinking about man's constitution, a picture which, because of its inappropriateness, has led to many an "anthropological headache." That picture of man which so often captures Christians has been vividly dubbed by Gilbert Ryle as the "the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine,"<sup>[1]</sup> a picture suggesting that man is made up of two different kinds of substance: matter and immaterial. The latter is looked upon as the operator of man's body which "evaporates" to heaven at the time of death (commonly denominated "the immortal soul"). So renown, a theologian as Charles Hodge did not flinch in propounding the doctrine of substantial dualism:

The Scriptures teach that...man consists of two distinct principles, a body and a soul: the one material, the other immaterial; the one corporeal, the other spiritual. It is involved in this statement, a substance distinct from the body...The Scriptural doctrine of the nature of man as a created spirit in vital union with an organized body, consisting, therefore, of two, and only two, distinct elements or substances, matter and mind, is...properly designated as realistic dualism.<sup>[2]</sup>

Primarily due to the affinities this presentation has with Greek dualism (wherein "soma sama," the body is the tomb which imprisons the rational-divine soul of man until it is released from its evil-material contamination in death or ecstasy), other Christian writers have gone to great lengths to emphasize the oneness or unity of man as a creation of God - yet not wanting to divorce themselves completely from the traditional picture with its representation of diversity in man. The tension which results from this diversity-in-unity approach to anthropology is suppressed by Laidlaw with dialecticism (the Bible stresses the oneness of man's essentially bipartite constitution<sup>[3]</sup>), by Dooyeweerd with dimensionalism (man, who exists amidst the modal diversity of the temporal horizon of the law-spheres, has a supratemporal "heart" or transcendental selfhood<sup>[4]</sup>) and by Berkouwer with linguistic sophistry (man is a "duality" but not a "dualism"<sup>[5]</sup> - a distinction which would have been senseless to Berkhof, who denied that man is "a duality, consisting of two different elements"<sup>[6]</sup>). Strangely enough, both Laidlaw and Berkouwer are anxious to qualify their negative assertions by (further) denying the implication of materialistic or diffuse monism;

Laidlaw in particular affirms that substantial monism is *not* supported by his views, but rather the body-soul division! Clearly the fly needs to be let out of the bottle (to use a Wittgensteinian image).

In the course of this paper I wish to discuss and analyze the mind-body question from a conceptual standpoint, look at the scriptural teaching with respect to man's soul-spirit-heart-mind, and finally offer some suggestions for a Christian view of man's constitution. The alternative which I wish to pose for the official dogma of a ghost in a mechanism is, basically, that man is a substantial monism, a material body which is special for reason of its capabilities (not its added substantial ingredient). Historically, theologians have attributed a substantial soul to man in order to guard the teachings of man's dignity, immortality, moral responsibility, and personal identity; I propose that the ghost-machine dogma does not really guarantee these doctrines, and that while my alternative does not render human nature any less mysterious than the official dogma, it has the two-fold advantage of more properly locating the mystery and alleviating unnecessary philosophical problems which are set forth against the dual substance view in this day.

Wittgenstein has an insight which at once explains a great deal of the historical mind-body debate and offers a way out of the dilemma: Where our language suggests a body and there is none: there, we should like to say, is a *spirit*.[\[7\]](#)

Remembering this, we go on to our survey. The mind-body problem has most likely given rise to more ism's than any other issue in philosophy; this might be expected from the involved nature of the questions which must be answered: is a distinction valid between "mind" and "body"? do the terms actually denote real entities then? what is their relation then? The dualist holds to referential non-identity, giving a positive reply on all three scores, while the monist depicts dual referents. There has been no attempt to prove the mind-body question a pseudo-problem which has withstood scrutiny (although such attempts may have demonstrated the mind-body situation to be an anomaly - meaning a new paradigm is needed instead of the old double substance picture), for it is extremely difficult to see human beings as automata devoid of such common-sense occurrences as thinking, deliberating, believing, willing, imagining, hoping, etc. Even the rationalists of the French Enlightenment (e.g. La Mettrie, Holbach, Cabanis), T.H. Huxley, and Karl Marx did not deny mental events.[\[8\]](#) However, there is an opaqueness which afflicts the notion of mind as sharply distinguished from body (a notion set out by Plato, developed by Augustine, and systematized by Descartes). Attempting to protect the human mind from the implications of the developing natural sciences of his day, Descartes said (in effect) that minds are not bits of clockwork, but rather are bits of "not-clockwork"[\[9\]](#) (a notion to which we will return). David Hume said that the mind is "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity and are in a perpetual flux and movement."[\[10\]](#) Since for Hume the principle of connection between these perceptions was extrinsic and accidental, and since the perceptions were constantly changing, he had only an artificial unity for the mind (the events might just as well be regrouped into other separate "bundles" or minds) and forfeited its identity completely (as he himself admitted on both counts). Locke attempted to salvage the bundle theory of Hume by stipulating that events are in the same mind when they are capable of being

remembered later - a consideration which begged the question (for memory presupposes mind, does not prove it) and failed to provide a necessary condition (for the same person can often not remember past thoughts and impressions). The stream-of-consciousness definition of mind (cf. Wm. James) falters over the fact that states of unconsciousness occur; thus it must answer either the difficulties attend the substance or bundle theories of mind. Anticipating the failure of Cartesian dualism, we note that the unity in "mind" would easily be accounted for on the monistic alternative that mind is a set of mental characteristics ascribable to one particular personal body. The problem is posed, then, as to why some events, states, acts, processes, etc. are designated "mental," rather than all being labeled "physical." The criterion of "mental" would not be immediacy of judgment, for simple physical judgments are made without mediating interferences; nor would it be incorrigibility, for mental reports are often corrected by the reporter or even those who know him well (this is always possible in principle); nor would it be solely privileged access, for then judgments concerning some attitudes (e.g. ambition) would cease to be mental due to the necessity of comparison with others (it is possible to reply, however, that such judgments ought not be considered "mental" after all then). The actual reason that some events or characteristics are designated "mental" is that they are made in the language sphere<sup>[11]</sup> of "person" (or literary personification); that is, "mental" characteristics such as thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears, memories, expectations, moods, deliberation, judging, willing, intending, etc. are applied exclusively to beings considered by us to be personal (or beings which are personified, such as one's pet dog). Hence the attribution of "mental" to some events is based on a form of life<sup>[12]</sup> in which people are recognized to be persons, not mechanistic automata; sitting-in-the-road is a physical act which can be performed by a human body or by a donkey, but planning to sit in the road is an act which only can be ascribed in persons - hence it is a "mental" event. Although most people held that statements in the language sphere of persons cannot be translated into statements in the language of physical bodies (this does not deny that both language spheres have a perspective on a single event; e.g. the psychological and physician may write different things about the same behavior of a patient) a person can rebel against the form of life in which people are viewed as persons, not automata, and force out such translations (as in the case of behavior J.S. Watson or B.F. Skinner; or conversely, as with G. Berkeley).

Although we have found justification for distinguishing between "mental" and "physical" characteristics, we have yet to find an adequate explanation of mind in the bundle concepts of Hume and Locke or the stream concept of James. So we return to the classical, substantialist understanding of mind in Descartes. Herein mind is taken to be an incorporeal, indivisible, non-spatial, substance (i.e. capable of independent existence). Descartes' argument for the existence of such a mind-substance amounted to this: since I can doubt the existence of my body but cannot doubt my own existence, my selfhood must be non-identical with body - thereby leaving mind (non-body) as identical with self. Besides the incongruity of a "dualist" speaking of the true self as one component of the anthropological combination, we must note that his argument is invalid since the indiscernability of identicals does not hold in intensional contexts (i.e. those dealing with believing, guessing, supposing, doubting, etc.; e.g., I cannot conclude from the fact that I believe water to be drinkable but H<sub>2</sub>O undrinkable that water is not identical H<sub>2</sub>O). Consequently Descartes' doubts establish nothing with respect to a non-bodily substance. Furthermore, even granting that his argument were sound, a counter argument is easy to adduce: because my self can chop down a tree but my mind cannot, my self must be identical with my body but not my mind. In Descartes' view the mind is characterized in all negative terms; what, then, is actually affirmed?

After all the negative qualifications, what remains is a mysterious X, a "something-I-know-not-what-which-acts-in-some-way-I-know-not-how." The essential characteristic of mind-substance is not engaged in mental acts does it cease to exist? On Descartes' substantival basis the answer would have to be affirmative. We conclude that the mind-substance concept is obscure and unworkable. The dualist can and has offered other reasons for accepting the mind-substance view. It has been argued that thinking is a private state, and well it is; yet to say that thinking is a private state is not the same as saying that it is the state of a private thing (i.e. mind-substance). The dualist has often appealed to the experience of willing, believing, thinking, etc. as instances of introspection, proving that there is a mind-substance. However, this is carrying the implication too far; the fact of thinking proves that some bodies think - not that there are mind-substances! In most cases we consider the person (i.e. personal body in the case of humans) as performing mental acts, not minds isolated from brains. Moreover, Ryle has convincingly argued that "introspection" is actually retrospection; a person knows himself in the same manner as others know him: by observing his behavior. What is looking to oneself is considering one's past record. Although a person can grasp his silent monologue and conceal it from others, others can detect things about him which he is not aware of. A person detects his "mind" when at work at the bench, not in some, private, interior life curtained off from all others' observation.[\[13\]](#) At times the dualist has argued that the irreducibility of "mind" and "body" proves that there are minds and bodies in which, respectively, mental and physical events take place; despite the problem involved in arguing from grammar to ontology, this argument is (like others) overstated. The irreducibility of language about mind to language about body does not prove mind-substance, but merely that materialistic explanations are not the only way of speaking (primarily because our form of life includes language about persons who perform mental acts). Another form of argument has been used by the dualist wherein he cites the fact that a neuro-physiological account cannot explain how imagination can give rise to emotional perspiration (as when a student thinks about a coming exam for instance); a biological explanation of the sweating process does not show how thought is a particular physical event in the causal sequence leading to the physical state of sweating. But again, this merely proves the inadequacy of materialism and that some bodies exhibit extraordinary states not testable by empirical science - not that there exists a substance which thinks (unless *persons* are designated "substances"). The imagining process is dependent (in this life anyway) upon brain function while not being rigidly determined by empirical factors alone; that is, there exists a special kind of body which thinks (i.e. a personal body). So we note that none of the dualist arguments validly prove the existence of mind-substance (although they certainly point us to the reality of mental events); lacking anything which approximates verification for mental-substance and dying the death of a thousand qualifications[\[14\]](#) by its pervasive negative qualifications, the dualist's explanation of thinking by reference to mind-substance seems as plausible as the explanation of wind by the wind-gods (which is not surprising since both myths trace back to Greek mythology and its late sophisticated expression in "reason" and "philosophy"). Another difficulty which attends the dualist's understanding of the mind-body situation is the gradation of intelligence which is found in nature. Do animals also have minds? If mind-substance is not inherent in all created matter, then when (between embryo and adult maturity) does mind come into existence in the person? The traditional dualist position stumbles over these questions.

Taking a slightly different tack from that of Descartes, C.J. Ducasse argues in *Nature, Mind and Death* That a study of the phenomenon of perception leads to the positing of mind as a substance.[\[15\]](#) Ducasse's notion of "substance" is somewhat closer to the Aristotelian idea of "sub-

stratum" that which exhibits properties and capacities. He argues that when we introspect (not taking account of Ryle's analysis of introspection) we find that the mind has impressions, control over the body, and ability to cause events in the consciousness. Although there are notable improvements in the dualist position here, the argument still fails to show a necessity for anything more than a special kind (i.e. personal) body - not an added substantival ingredient to the body. Furthermore, Ducasse can no more explain the relationship between mind and body (substantially viewed) than can Descartes. If mind-substance is non-physical, then it cannot be spatially predicated as "in" the body, and if the mind is not assuredly related to an individual person we are led into manifold absurdities. Ducasse and Descartes both chose to see direct causal interaction between mind and body (rather than occupation of one in the other); it is to Descartes' advantage and embarrassment that he found a place for these two substances to interact (i.e. the pineal gland)! For Ducasse it is an analytic truth that there is causal interaction between mental and material substance (i.e. a mind's body can only be that body with which it directly interacts), and all events must have a cause by definition (Ducasse views causality as the advent of a single difference in a given state of affairs. Why must mental events be seen as caused by a "substance"? because Ducasse defines "substance" as a system of causal capacities! So by the fiat of his pen Ducasse has "proven" (read, "defined") that there must be mind-substance from the well-acknowledged fact of mental events; such circular reasoning is inconsequential and uninteresting. Moreover, a dualist like Ducasse needs to tell us why a part of me (i.e. my mind-substance) is the agent of a mental event, e.g. fear, rather than my whole person being the cause (normally we say "he was afraid," not "his mind was afraid"). And again, does the dualist contend that man as we know him experiences mental events which are solely caused by mind-substance? It is a well-recognized empirical fact that bodily causation (i.e. brain) is always at work in a man performing mental acts. Finally, with respect to both Descartes and Ducasse, their recognition that "mind" cannot properly be said to occupy the "body" due to its non-spatial nature (whereas bodies are spatial due to their corporeality) might lead logically to the assertion that "mind-substance" is completely non-individualized, for the material principle of individuation and identity has been ruled out. Thus, I do not have a mind separate from yours (i.e. no mental substance dwells in my body) but share that one grand Mind-Substance with all other people - in which case "my beliefs" are not my own after all!

The above comments are not meant to deny the common experiences of what has been designated (misleadingly) as "interaction." Drugs do indeed boggle the thinking process, and self-generated thoughts (i.e. silent monologue not exhaustively explained or empirical terms) can lead to accelerated heart-beats. What is being denied is that this kind experience necessitates a substantival view of mind; an interaction of "mental events" and "bodily states" is a suitable explanation and one which no more presupposes a mental substratum than does meteorological events.

The postulation of mind-substance, then, is superfluous and should be abandoned according to the law of parsimony. The affirmation of "interaction" along with the denial of mental-substance must be accompanied by a further denial of mechanistic determinism (which claims that a full account of human behavior is in principle possible solely in terms of bodily and brain-states) in order that the genuineness of interaction and/or mental activity is not impaired. Not all explanations are physical ones, and physical explanations do not cover personal decisions; therefore, mental acts and states can act upon and be affected by bodily acts and states without being reduced to brain states. All of this is affirmed without any dependence upon the substantival concept of mind. Of

course such a position as here outlined contains an element of mystery; interact is, indeed, puzzling. And the naturalist like B.F. Skinner will certainly object, just as he rebels against the form of life which makes these affirmations meaningful and necessary. The materialist demurs because his desire to reduce all phenomena to one single system of laws (physicalistis is foiled; he is uncomfortable with puzzling conditions (i.e. interaction between mental states and bodily states). However, the puzzle of interaction is, perhaps, no "deeper" than that which holds for causation between two physical events (cf. Hume's discussion of causation), and certainly the fact of interaction cannot be denied simply because we are puzzled over the mode of causality involved! The materialist has been wont to argue against interaction by saying that it violates the principle of conservation and that dissimilar events cannot be causally connected. Yet it is question begging for him to assume that the laws of physical causation apply to mental-physical interaction; moreover, even if it could be shown that this interaction involved the loss of physical energy, the proper conclusions would not be a rejection of mental states and acts but the conclusion that the conservation of energy principle had been disproved! The objection that dissimilar events cannot be causally related rests upon the doctrine, now rejected, that causality is analogous to deduction (so that the cause-premises must contain the properties of the effect-conclusion; this principle would arbitrarily disqualify many genuine causes because they were dissimilar in nature from their effects (e.g. mosquito bites causing fever, electrical activity causing a magnetic field to arrange iron filings in a pattern, etc.). Causal connections are where we find them, not where we define them due to empirical dogmatism. The materialist contention that purposive behavior is only reflex action (i.e. stimulus-response) with a time lapse is not only unconvincing, unsupported and absurd (involving the mixing of language games dealing with different kinds of reasons; e.g. "why did he discard two cards?" is no a question which expects, nor can be given, an extended explanation of an empirical process), it fails to note the non-deliberative nature of reflex and the creative, active capacities of human behavior as rooted in mental processes; there is a qualitative difference between reflexes and deliberations - as each man's experience tells him. Finally, the materialist complaint that one cannot form a clear concept of mental theoretical usage) and perceptual images (which are experientially and empirically determined); a picture of mental process may not be forthcoming but the application of the concept is obvious and clear.[\[16\]](#)

In the foregoing mind-substance has been rejected, along with mechanistic determinism, while mental processes and interaction have been affirmed. In the rejection of the concept of mind-substance the following answers to the mind-body problem are automatically excluded (since they assume what is denied): psycho-physical parallelism (cf. Leibniz), occasionalism (cf. Geulinx, Malebranche), subjective idealism (cf. Berkeley), and pan-psychism. Before going on to a discussion of the materialistic answers to the mind-body question we should pause to consider the view propounded by C.A. van Peursen in *Body, Soul, Spirit: A Survey of the Mind-Body Problem*.[\[17\]](#) Van Peursen's view has some similarity with the double-aspect view to be discussed shortly. "Mind" is a ways of referring to the fact that "I" is not simply an object in the world but is the subject of knowledge according to van Peursen; as capable of self-identification and awareness of exterior objects, man cannot be grasped as an object among objects, but rather he has a transcendental unifying and intentional function as a subject; "mind" is this allusive "I," this mysterious element in man which cannot be "objectivized." The "I" must be a concrete thinking subject in correlation with the world; because it has the ability to objectivize all other areas, the agent "I" cannot be given an exhaustive theoretical explanation. Man is assured of his inalienable personality as he is bound up with, yet distinct from, the linear, complex reality on which he

orientates himself. "I" must be apprehended in reply to the world as a "ground," and hence can never be isolated from among other things. "I" must turn up in concrete living as the subjectivity exhibited among events and things, it has an intrinsic relationship to culture and the social world. The otherness of man's fellow "thous" is necessary for self-identity. Mind is stressed by van Peursen, then, as the transcendental and intentional aspect of the total bodily human being; van Peursen's dependence upon the transcendental unit of apperception in Kantian philosophy, the intentional studies of such phenomenologists as E. Husserl and F. Brentano, the existentialism of a thinker like Sartre, and the social theories of G.H. Mead is too obvious for elaboration. Neither can the parallels with the cosmomic philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd be missed. The problem attaching to this viewpoint is as old as Kant: the mixing of the phenomenal self (temporal) and the noumenal self (transtemporal) in the same person. This is a contradiction or a dualism which is just as problematic as Descartes' position. The placing of an immaterial self beside the body (as with Cartesian dualism) is as problematic as placing an immaterial self behind or "above" body (temporal personage - the latter is certainly no less dualistic than the former).

In holding that mental events are merely the effects of brain events, the epiphenomenalist must deny the causal efficacy of mental processes in the face of experience's testimony to the contrary. In order to explain away the illusion the epiphenomenalist must see mental events as bodily-produced precursors to later body events - an hypothesis which is as implausible as it is untestable. The view of C.D. Broad as present in *The Mind and Its Place in Nature*[\[18\]](#) is that of emergent materialism: reality is material with mind being an emergent characteristic thereof; the mind is dependent upon the nervous system in addition to a distinct, yet further emergent factor, psychic quality. The conscious mind is seen as a combination of neural and psychic factors (in this, Broad rejected the emergent neutralism of Samuel Alexander as well as the mentalistic neutralism of Bertand Russell). In the long run, then, the views of both Broad and the epiphenomenalist come down to materialism in some form. In *Man a Machine*, La Mettrie expounded the argument which has been the materialist's stronghold since the time of Lucretius: because mental states vary with bodily conditions, the soul must be a property of matter. As La Mettrie saw things both animals and humans were sensible machines, their only difference being brain size and the use of language. Accordingly the soul was identified with a material part of the brain.[\[19\]](#) There have been two basic forms of materialism; the more extreme form is called "reductive materialism." This position (held by members of the Vienna circle like Otto Neurath and Rudolf Carnap) asserts that everything depending on matter; hence judgements about mental processes are either meaningless or synonymous with physicalistic utterances. The great drawback of this position was its failure to provide plausible translations of all mentalistic reports; even such a stringent anti-dualist as Gilbert Ryle admitted that reports of sensations and feelings could not be analyzed in terms of physicalistic statements.[\[20\]](#) Being discontent with the narrowly behavioristic physicalism of J.B. Watson, G.H. Mead propounded the thesis that the organic and social factors must not be separated in explaining human action; also in *Mind, Self and Society*[\[21\]](#) he characterize mind and size as emergents of a basic social process dependent upon communication between creatures using "significant symbols" and recognizing their individual self-identities over against the "generalized other." With dissatisfaction over extreme materialism, such as Mead represented, the moderate materialist granted that mentalistic utterances have their own (irreducible) meaning, but are always factually false! Mental processes do not exist, they held. Yet very unsatisfactory and artificial lengths had to be resorted to by the moderate materialist (whereby he drastically revised his common beliefs and theoretical concept of belief) in order to keep his position from becoming self-refuting (e.g. "I

believe moderate materialism is true"). Although it was to the materialist's credit that he recognized that mental states did not have to be consisted by a non-physical entity called a "mind," still his mechanistic view of human behavior led him to rebel against the most common form of life, which personal language is pervasively used, and to devalue language about mental processes. Some materialists denied that mentalistic judgements were genuine indicative statements, viewing them rather as symptomatic of inner physical conditions (e.g. "I am sorry" is just the linguistic form of a particular kind of sign); yet in this they overlooked the fact that mentalistic statements often are used for making assertions open to the predicates of truth and falsity (e.g. "I am sorry" can be a lie, but a sigh can be neither true nor false). The vast majority of materialists, then, have held to the identity theory: a denotative, factual identity holds between thoughts and neuro-physiological states (although the connotation of the different words is not identical); such a viewpoint dispenses with the difficulties inherent in dualistic interactionism, explains the gradations of intelligence in nature, and has the advantage of parsimony. This view is defended by men such as J.J. C. Smart, H. Feigl, and E. Nagel. It falters on the fact that a demonstrated correlation between brain events and mental processes does not prove identity between them (only regular association), that although its proponents do not want to deny the existence of thoughts, their established identity certainly impairs one side of the identity as to its separate existence, that one must point to neural activity as the location of pain rather than in the portion of the body where it is actually felt, that we feel a neuro-physiologist is not really competent to observe electro-chemical processes and tell a person what he is thinking (i.e. we are hesitant to forfeit privileged access - even theoretically). Undoubtedly though, the central difficulty with the identity theory is the location problem. The law of transferable epithets would demand that, if a wish is identical with a neuron-firing, it would be just as meaningful to say that "the wish occurred three inches from the base of his skull"; however, the former sentence does not make sense (so the identity theory is nonsense). Nagel's reply to this problem called for a simple verbal rearrangement of the identity theory using "states" of a wish and a neuron firing; however, the slight of hand did not alleviate the fact that the statements about "states" all entailed further statements which did not speak of "states." So the original problem returns after only one simple step entailment. Nagel then proposed that the identity of composition wherein the law of transferable epithets does not hold (e.g. a chair is identical with its atoms; yet it is not equally meaningful to say that the chair is covered with paint and that the atoms are covered with paint). But in identities of composition it makes sense to locate both the macro and micro entities; hence the original location problem reenters. Moreover, is it meaningful to suggest that a wish is divisible into parts (as the identity of composition would require)? Apparently not. We conclude that the materialism position is not a suitable answer to the mind-body question; personal language cannot be reduced to physicalistic language, made to be forever false, or seen as denotatively identical with physicalistic judgements.

There are three views which, although having crucial flaws, begin to approximate an appropriate answer to the mind-body question without going to the extremes of dualism and materialism. Neutral monism maintains that minds and bodies are complex collections composed of the same kind of neutral (i.e. neither inherently mental or inherently physical) stuff; this "stuff" has been variously identified as perceptions (Hume), sensatic (E. Mach), pure experience (Wm. James), logical constructions from sensibilia (B. Russell), sense contents (A.J. Ayer). Yet how could anything be so neutral as to constitute my mind and its objects at the same time? This would appear to collapse into either materialism or the view of double aspect, or else be totally obscure. Moreover, when all is said and done, it actually appears that physicalistic statements could not be



analyzed into judgements about neutral entities after all (all the discussions are strongly weighted with materialistic connotations). The double aspect theory maintains that the mental and physical are different aspects of something which is neither mind nor body; they are not different properties but full descriptions under different categories (i.e. are different levels of explanation; cf. Fechner's analogy of an undulating line). This view has mainly suffered under its inability to specify that the underlying unit was; Spinoza obscurely called it God (or Nature), Herbert Spencer acknowledged much in labeling it "the Unknowable," and P.F. Strawson circularly defined it as the "person." In addition, the nature of "aspect" needed clarification.[\[22\]](#) Finally, we note the view set forth by Aristotle in *De Anima*.[\[23\]](#) According to him "soul" was the organizing and functioning of a body (its formal cause: i.e. the form which matter took), its origin of movement (i.e. efficient cause), and its end purpose (i.e. final cause) - in a sweeping sense soul is the life-principle. Mind constituted the thinking part of the soul. The passive mind is the potential place of the forms; being related to the thinkable as sense is related to the sensible, it however is not limited (as with material sensations) to its objects. Thus mind cannot be a combination of matter and form: it is immaterial. The active mind is the condition for all particular knowledge; it makes all things in thought in a way parallel to light making all potential colors actual. Only the active mind was immortal for Aristotle. Despite all the obscurities and difficulties attaching to Aristotle's notions of active-passive mind, immateriality, final cause, form-matter scheme, etc. his concrete suggestion that "soul" is a function of the body (actually, matter) - or form of its activity - is well worth noting. Certain bodies, then, are characterized by soul or mind (to stretch Aristotle's point a bit).

In recent years the writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Gilbert Ryle have aided much in clarifying the mind-body question; although this author cannot agree completely with their treatments, the following discussion advances those elements which seem correct and beneficial in working out a Christian analysis of man's constitution. Wittgenstein's main philosophical insight was the recognition that words are used as tools, not labels, in a multiplicity of ways according to different language games (in most cases, then, the meaning of a word is its use in a particular game). Since different language games are related in highly complicated ways, you can only go wrong in attempting to reduce their relations to a simple formula. Language does more than labeling things, and the form of life engaged in by a speaker provides the different uses of language to his grammar, then is not a uniform thing tied down to indicatively denoting things in the world; the set of total human values and attitudes shapes the grammar of a man's language. To agree in language use, therefore, is to agree (more than in opinions) in a form of life. Remembering that language does more than indicate objects or describe them, we can see why Wittgenstein would that expressions referring to body or mind or spirit do not intend to point to things in the world, thereby construing a view of dual substance as it were (and certainly no occult locus as a mind-substance is pointed to!).[\[24\]](#) This disperses the confusion which has plagued so much of the history of philosophy pertaining to the mind-body question; many thinkers have mistaken the grammar about bodies with the grammar about minds. Now we should recall the quote from Wittgenstein given at the outset of our survey: where our thinking has not been sufficiently analytical we have mistaken the use of language about minds with a grammar which appears to suggest a body (substance), but not finding such an immaterial substance we resort to calling it "spirit" (or soul, mind). This sort of confusion is easy enough to understand, for one can only relate his "inner" experiences, thoughts, etc. by means of a grammar applicable to public or social living; hence the grammar used in body talk will bear upon his relating of mental events (giving rise to talk about "mind"). On the other side of the coin, behaviorists have tried to flatten out the world and our language pertaining

thereunto. Since man is made in the image of God and is surrounded by a clear and unavoidable revelation from God in his environment, he cannot escape a form of life which acknowledges personality in his fellow human and in himself; try as he will, he cannot eradicate personal language by reducing it to physicalistic language. Our form of life as God's creatures made in His image (even as fallen) prevents making mentalistic language (used with respect to persons or personified objects) identical (denotatively) with physicalistic language or reducing personal predicates to impersonal ones or treating "mind" utterances as meaningless. Human behavior is not explicable on empirical principles alone, as our language "reveals" to us. Returning to Wittgenstein, he notes that the person, not his physical body, is taken to have a pain, for we comfort him, not just a portion of his body.[\[25\]](#) However, for certain tasks we need to perform, human behavior can be discussed with respect to just one principle among many possible aspects[\[26\]](#) (e.g. the surgeon's language about a patient on the operating table). Ryle comes in well at this point. He says that discussing only the physical or only the psychic is to use a particular viewpoint even though the datum (which I would take to be the personal body) is the same. The invariable effect bodily conditions have on the mental processes must prevent us from divorcing them from brain (it should be noted that Ryle does not make enough of the converse: mental processes, though something of a "personal" mystery, can markedly affect the body state - as I see it). The polarizing of mind and body in dualistic fashion amounts to committing a category mistake in the use of language, for facts about mental life belong to a different logical category than physicalistic statements. When this is forgotten or obscured then an occult locus is paralleled to the body and labeled "mind." Hence the descriptions of mental processes and bodily processes should not be mixed; the conjunction or disjunction of (denotatively understood) mind and body is a category blunder likened to "he bought a right hand glove, a left hand glove, and a pair of gloves" or "she came home in a V.W., not a flood of tears." Properly understood, language referring to "mind" is actually speaking (not of an immaterial substance) of certain kinds of intelligent behavior. "mind" is related adjectivally and adverbially, not substantively, to body. Man is neither a ghost nor a machine; rather he is a complex psycho-physical organism capable of a peculiar and complete sort of behavior called "intelligence" (and I would add, morality). Intelligence denotes some of the ways in which human beings behave, not an unperceived, non-spatial entity somehow "within man". (We should note that Ryle has no explanation for man's special capability of intelligent behavior whereas the Christian does). Ryle makes an astute point when he notes that one main reason for the rise of dualism was to provide an explanation of rational (and hence moral) behavior but that the attempt failed, for if mental states are entirely private (isolated in mind having no necessary connection with behavior or brain) we have no ultimate way of telling if a person is truly rational or not (his behavior being no genuine indication) and we have no basis for comparing the rationality of our own behavior.[\[27\]](#)

Our conclusion to this point, then, is that mentalistic language is a different game from physicalistic language, and that both are warranted by our form of life as creatures made in God's image. Consequently we reject both dualism and mechanism; there exists no mental substance in the anthropological constitution (what could a mental substance be?), and empirical explanations do not cover the whole range of events or language in the world (e.g. volitions, personalistic utterance). Corollary to this is the affirmation of mental processes (acts, events, states and interaction between them and physical-bodily states (etc.)). Although the two function in correlation with each other they are not denotatively identical or reducible. Man is different from the animals not in virtue of an extra added substance in his constitution, but in virtue of his unique

capabilities for rational and moral behavior. Man is a very special kind of body (although not by reason of physiological complexity), that is a personal body - as our form of life and language tell us. Man's dignity above the beast (i.e. his capabilities) is the result, not of a donum superadditum of mind-substance (which in many theologians borders on divinization, for God is taken to be the Mind-Substance par excellance) but of his creation as (or "in") the image of the personal God.

How does this comport with the scriptural use of the words "soul" and "spirit" however? Does it warrant a view of immaterial substance in man? Lengthy study and analysis of the relevant scriptural words and their extremely manifold appearances in the text of scripture results in the following. Man is definitely seen as having a private (inner) life as well as a public (outer) life; however, this is not expressed in terms warranting a view of dual substance. The unity of man is never compromise by dividing him up into definite components. We note the following about "soul" (nephesh-psuche): it is attributed to God (Isa. 42:1; Jer. 6:8; 15:1; Amos 6:3; Matt. 12:18; Heb. 10:38) as well as to animals (e.g. Gen 1:29; 2:19; 9:10; Lev. 11:46; Ezek. 47:9; Rev. 8:9; 16:3), so it is hardly a distinctive of man. It is pervasively used for the whole man (e.g. Gen. 2:7; 17:14; Job 9:21; Acts 2:41; Rom. 13:1; etc. etc.); as such it functions as a reflexive pronoun (e.g. Gen. 12:13; etc.; Lk. 12:19; 2 Cor. 12:5; etc), standing for the person (e.g. 2 Sam. 14:14; Rom. 2:9 etc. etc.). The soul is quite plainly the self (Isa. 42:1; Ps. 146:1; Mk. 8:36; cf. Lk. 9:23). It is the life, then, of man (e.g. Gen. 9:5; 1 Sam. 19:5; Job 12:19; John 10:11; Rom. 11:3; Rev. 12:11), even the blood of man (Gen. 9:3; Lev. 17:11, 14; Dt. 12:230. The soul refers both to the inner and outer man; it touches (Lev. 5:2), does work (Lev. 23:30), is torn by a lion (Ps. 7:2), has blood (Prov. 28:17), is murdered (Num. 31:19); is healed (Ps. 41:4), is made fat (Prov. 13:4), grows weary and faint (Heb. 12:3, hungers for food and is satisfied, thirsts for water and is quenched (Ps. 107:5, 9; Prov. 25:25; Isa. 29:8; Num. 11:6; Eccl. 2:24; 4:8; 6:2-9; 7:28); experiences emotions and passions (Gen. 42:21; Dt. 12:15; Ps. 35:9; Dt. 12:15; Ps. 35:9; Dt. 6:5; Matt. 26:38; John 10:24; Acts 14:2; Lk. 10:27); it performs mental acts (e.g. Ps. 139:14; Prov. 23:7; Acts 14:22), as well as volitional acts (e.g. Gen. 23:8; Isa. 66:3; Ps. 77:3); along with the flesh it desires God (e.g. Ps. 63:2). The combination of "heart and soul" or "body and soul" are idiomatic for the whole person (every part of him, inner and outer): e.g. Dt. 4:9; Josh. 23:14; Matt. 10:28; Isa. 10:18 - for if something is done from the inner self, it is done with the whole self (Eph. 6:6; Col 3:23). A group of united mind and intention has such as a "soul" (e.g. Num. 21:4f; Acts 4:32; Phil. 1:27). So, salvation of the soul is salvation of the whole person (e.g. Lev. 17:11; Ps. 34:22; 1 Peter 1:9; 3:20; Jas. 1:21; 5:20; Heb. 10:39). Death can be called giving up the soul (e.g. Gen. 35:18; Acts 15:26), yet the corpse can be called the soul (e.g. Lev. 19:28; 21:1; Num. 5:2; 6:6, 11; 19:11; Hag. 2:13; etc. etc.) even as the disembodied person is called a soul (e.g. Rev. 6:9; 20:4). The dead corpse is still given the personal pronoun (e.g. 3:19; "and he died" in Genesis; Mat. 23:6; Jn. 11:43; 1 Cor. 15:4). Therefore, the biblical use of "soul" does not connote the traditional understanding of an immaterial substance; it is the life, the self, the whole person, with public and inner self variously stressed.

The words "soul" and "spirit" are interchangeable in scripture, as consultation of any concordance will demonstrate (e.g. Lk. 1:46-47); so we would expect that similar conclusions must be reached on spirit, as on soul. Spirit (ruach-pneuma) means breath (e.g. Job 15:30; 2 Thess. 2:8) or wind (e.g. Gen. 8:1; Heb. 1:7; Jn. 3:8). God is characterized as Spirit (e.g. Num. 17:25; Isa. 11:2; Ps. 51:13; Matt. 3:16; Acts 5:9; Phil. 1:19; etc.), animals have spirit (e.g. Eccl. 3:21) as do men (Gen. 2:7; Zech. 12:1; Job 27:3; 1 Cor. 2:11; etc. etc.). Hence it is a sign or symbol of life (e.g. Gen. 6:17; 7:15, 22; Ezek. 37:5-14; Matt. 27:50; Lk. 8:55; 23:46; Acts 7:59; Jas. 2:26). It can stand for

the self or ego (e.g. Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 16:18; Gal. 6:18; 2 Tim. 4:22) and can emphasize the inner life (e.g. Matt. 5:3; 26:41), emotions (e.g. Isa. 26:9; Lk. 1:47), will (e.g. Ps. 51:12; Ex. 35:21; Acts 19:21), mental acts (e.g. Ex. 28:3; Ps. 77:7; Dt. 34:9; Mk. 2:8), disposition and moral character (Isa. 59:21; Ps. 32:2; Gen. 41:8; Dt. 2:30; 1 Cor. 4:21; Gal. 6:1; Rom. 11:8; 1 Peter 3:4; Lk. 9:55, etc. etc.). Hence, spirit can be joined with "flesh" to idiomatically speak of the whole man (e.g. 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Cor. 7:34), or with body or soul with the same effect (e.g. 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12); yet it can be contrasted with sinful "flesh" (e.g. Rom. 8:4; 8:10-11; Gal. 3:3; Jn. 6:63). As with "soul," "spirit" can be said to depart at death (e.g. Ps. 78:39; Job 17:1; Isa. 57:16; Eccl. 12:7; Lk. 23:46; Acts 7:59; Ps. 104:29; etc.); the disembodied dead are designated as "spirit" (e.g. Job 4:15; 1 Peter 3:19; Heb. 12:23) - indicating a living selfhood. Consequently "spirit" cannot be taken from scripture to support a doctrine of immaterial substance in man; even a passage so strongly positing discontinuity between "spirit" and bodily flesh as Col. 2:5 cannot be read to mean a man's immaterial substance left his body to be elsewhere! "Spirit" can certainly designate man's inner, private life (e.g. Dan. 7:15; 1 Cor. 2:11), and death can be seen as the loss of "life-breath" (= "spirit"; e.g. Ps. 104:29), and the dead can be affirmed to still have self-conscious life by being called "spirit" (though very infrequently in scripture to be sure), but nowhere does scripture imply that man is a dual substance which divides as he dies (unless you read the Bible through Cartesian glasses). "Spirit" means life (centered in the breath image - just as "soul" is life centered in the blood image).

Even the scriptural term "heart" (lavav-kardia) is not so divorced from the body (how could such a bodily image?!) that it does not speak of it as being satisfied with food (i.e. having physical appetite: e.g. Gen. 18:5; Jud. 19:5, 8, 9; Ps. 104:15; Acts 14:17; Jas. 5:5). The term most basically denotes "the inner, middle, or central part" as is demonstrated in its non-personal applications (e.g. Ex. 15:8; Pr. 23:34; 30:19; Ps. 46:3; Ezek. 27:4, 25-27; 28:2, 8; 2 Sam. 18:14; Ps. 45:2; Dt. 4:1; Jonah 2:3; Matt. 12:40). Hence when applied to man it designates his inner life and events (not substance; neither "transcendental"); e.g. Ps. 73:26; Joel 2:13; Dt. 6:5; Josh. 22:5; Prov. 14:30; Jer. 22:17; 1 Kings 8:23; 2 Cor. 5:12; Matt. 15:8; Lk. 16:15; 1 Tim. 1:5; etc. etc. etc. including emotions, mental and volitional events, and disposition (e.g. Isa. 30:29; Ps. 27:14; Prov. 6:23; Dt. 8:5; 1 Sam. 7:3; Ps. 119:112; Ps. 24:4; Dt. 9:5; Ezek. 18:31; Rom. 1:24; Jn. 14:1 Acts 7:23; Rom. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:9; Lk. 2:51; 2 Cor. 9:7; Acts 5:4; Heb. 3:8; Matt. 11:29; Eph. 6:5; etc. etc. etc.). "Heart" can even stand for the whole man himself (e.g. Dt. 7:17; Ps. 4:5; Isa. 14:3; Job 1:5; Zeph. 1:12; Gen. 17:17; 1 Sam. 1:13; etc. etc.). The heart represents the person, then, especially as concerns his inner life and events (but not exclusively, and not substantively) - in this "heart" is akin the N.T. use of "mind" (nouns: thought, thinking understanding; e.g. Rom. 11:34; 1 Cor. 2:16; Lk. 24:45; 2 Thess. 2:2; Rom. 12:2; Col. 2:18; 1 Tim. 6:5; Titus 1:15; etc. etc.). And even though scripture recognizes this inner life of man, it does not make it out as the essential man. The man is to serve God with his body as well as his mind (e.g. 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 5:23; Rom. 12:1; 6:12-13; 1 Cor. 6:13-20; cf. Ps. 84:3; 63:2). And even when Paul speaks of putting off the observable, public form of his existence (i.e. the earthly dwelling place; e.g. 2 Cor. 5:1-10; cf. 2 Peter 1:13-14; Job 4:19) he stresses an alternative tabernacle with which the "unclothed" self will be "clothed upon" so as not to be naked in the intermediate state! The idea of an immaterial substance surviving death is foreign to the scriptural account. God created man as a unity, a personal body made as the image of the Personal God; scripture deals with the whole man. In the intermediate and mysterious-to-us state God will make some provision for the person who has had his personal body put in the ground by supplying a heavenly tabernacle (replacing the earthly tent). This state is an "irrational"

one from the standpoint of man's created normalcy; it has been necessitated by sin (an irrational force) and made possible by God's gracious del of punishment on the sinner and desire to have persona fellowship with His elect during the playing-out of the period of grace upon earth. It is certain that man does not sleep in death until the resurrection (cf. Lk. 23:43; 16:22f; Matt. 22:32; 2 Cor. 5:1; Phil. 1:19-24; Eccles. 12:7; Matt. 17:3; 1 Sam. 28:11-20), but it is also certain that the man as body decays in the ground. Hence it is not yet manifest what we shall be! (1 John 3:2). Those who live out all of life in this earthly mode of existence have nothing to compare for a different mode (especially an irrational mode). But the human mind is not the source of possibility; all things are possible with God. So Paul can call those who entertain skeptical questions with respect to the future state of man after death (his stress is on the resurrection state) "fools" (1 Cor. 15:35-36). Being tied to earthly imagery and analogies, Paul speaks of being "absent from the body, present with the Lord" by means of a reflexive anthropomorphism (speaking as though he were still in the state which he now knows). Though there may be great mystery here (and it is understandable that there should be, for the future condition is necessitated by irrational causes in sin, the gracious plan for the future as God holds it is incomprehensible, and in understanding man's constitution we are attempting to understand that which is the analogue of God, who contains mystery for us) Paul yet stresses the fact that man will not be a mental substance in the intermediate state but will have something corresponding to his earthly tabernacle, and Jesus indicates that the intermediate state but will have something corresponding to his earthly tabernacle, and Jesus indicates that the intermediate state will know bodily misery such as burning thirst (Lk. 16:24). Man is not to be viewed as essentially ghost who temporarily gets placed in a machine (i.e. during this life).

Man is a personal body created in God's image. the Bible makes quite clear that man's hope is in resurrection of the body, not release from the body (John 2:19-22; Lk. 24:40; Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor; 15:3-4, 44, 48-49; 2 Cor. 5:1-5; Isa. 26:19; 66:22-23; Dan. 12:2). Moreover, it is embodied existence which is the criterion of future judgment (2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27). We may not know all the answers with respect to the intermediate state, but we do know what our final hope is, what our true constitution is, and how to ring some of the logical changes on the fact of the intermediate state (e.g. one does not despair in death before Christ's return, etc. etc.). Further, we assured through all this that man does not lose his identity, for he has personal continuity through all his anthropomorphic changes. In this life identity is maintained in the fact that not everything about a man changes at once; there is change yet overlapping with past characteristics and states (somewhat like Wittgenstein's example of the rope: there is not *one* continuous thread, but overlapping ones). The same holds true for the future states of man; although his body be placed in the ground (change) there will be a continuation of his sanctified personality (continuity), and although he receives a resurrection body at Christ's return (change his glorified personality continues (continuity). Paul himself stresses this glorious change-amidst-continuity in 1 Cor. 15:37-54. Personal identity is found in one's personality traits and aptitudes which are his, though he change around "every twist of the twine" in the rope which is his history. Self-identity is found in one's personality, and as seen earlier, this personality is man's distinction from the animals; man's personality is the image of God in him, the work of the personal Creator. Which leads us to conclude, then, that man's identity if found in his God. Self-knowledge presupposes God-knowledge.

We conclude with an insightful comment by Wittgenstein; he says that in believing men have souls "there is a picture in the foreground, but the sense lies far in the background; that is, the application of the picture is not easy to survey...but only when one knows the story does one know the significance of the picture."[\[28\]](#) To understand the constitution of man, the nature of his inner self and spiritual capacity, one must be familiar with man's history, that history which is the outworking of the divinely predetermined story: both man's creation in the image of God and future hope of resurrection. Then we will not have a dualistic conception of man as a bipartite-substances, but will view him in his created integrity as a personal body. Man is a creature able to make moral decisions, glorify God and enjoy Him, and behave in an intelligent fashion; the behavior of his body cannot be divorced from an understanding of his "soul." As Wittgenstein said "The human body is the best picture of the human soul."[\[29\]](#) We began this paper in obscurity and confusion; we have concluded accepting mystery. For its subtlety, that hopefully represents a significant advance.

[1] Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949), pp. 150.

[2] C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology* vol II (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; n.d.), pp. 42, 46.

[3] J. Laidlaw, *Bible Doctrine of Man*, p. 128.

[4] H. Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (New Jersey: Craig, 1968), esp. "What is Man?", pp. 173-195.

[5] G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: the Image of God*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 211.

[6] L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939), p. 192.

[7] L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), I #36.

[8] J. Schaffer, "Mind-Body Problem", *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), vol. 5, pp. 338-339.

[9] An image for which I am indebted to *ibid*.

[10] *Treatise on Human Nature*, I, iv.

[11] Wittgenstein, *op. cit.*, #7, 23-24, 43, 65-77, 83, 90, 130, 138, 304, 371.

[12] *Ibid.*, #19, 23, 241, pp. 174, 226.

[13] Ryle, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-198.

[14] Cf. A. Flew "Theology and Falsification," *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, ed. A. Flew and A. MacIntyre (New York: Macmillan, 1953), pp. 96-99.

[15] C.J. Ducasse, *Nature, Mind and Death* (Open Court).

[16] I was aided in the formulation of some of the above discussions by Schaffer, *op. cit.*, Halverson, *Concise Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1965), and Taylor, *Metaphysics*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1963).

[17] See C.A. van Peursen, *Body, Soul, Spirit: A Study of the Body-Mind Problem* (New York: Oxford, 1966), esp. pp. 143-165.

[18] Cf. C.D. Broad, *The Mind and Its Place in Nature*, (Humanities Press).

[19] See La Mettrie, *Man a Machine*, (Open Court).

[20] Ryle, *op. cit.*, pp. 240ff.

[21] G.H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, (University of Chicago Press).

[22] The preceding information about these two theories supplied by Schaffer and Halverson, *op. cit.* on both.

[23] Aristotle, *On the Soul*, translated J.A. Smith (Random House).

[24] Compare Wittgenstein, *op. cit.*, #199-206, 241, 256-268, 404-422, 663-664; pp. 178-180, 222-226, plus note 11 above.

[25] *Ibid.*, #286.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

[27] The above discussion based on Ryle's work, *op. cit.*.

[28] Wittgenstein, *op. cit.*, #422, 663.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 178.