

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMAN?

- scientific perspectives
- material constitution
- body and soul one entity
- person and body

BODY AND SOUL

- what is the body?
- in what way is it ours?
- in what way is it damaged?

BODY

Water, heat, moon, air—the smells of summer locate us. They emphasize the importance, the joy, and the irreducibility of the body. To claim that I am not my body or to claim that I am more than my body in the sense that my real self is not this particular combination of cells, this confluence of amino acids, this instance of culture, is fundamentally non-Christian. It is also fundamentally deluded. The angst-filled adolescent trying to come to terms with his or her specificity rails against the parents, wondering why these parents were given to him or her. In reality, though, I could only come from my parents. In a real sense, I am their talents and their limitations. In a very similar sense, western society has developed this bodily angst that presumes that our physical substratum is only that. In fact, however, this is all we are. Christianity is often assumed to denigrate the body, to teach that the body is to be set aside, but this is true only in its falsest derivatives. Christianity, like Judaism from which it sprung, has always been about coping with finitude, about finding hope in the fact that this is all we are and about finding in our culturally-specific existence not only importance but the very presence of God.

- what is the soul?
- how is it said to be immortal?

SOUL

The Christian use of the word “soul” takes up its philosophical meaning and transforms it in light of biblical revelation. Primarily, the dual nature of human composition is rejected. It cannot be said that a person is properly soul to which a body is added. Body and soul must be seen as two aspects of the one being of the person. Second, the unified nature of soul, which tugs at both the Platonic and Aristotelian dynamisms, must be rejected. However much there may seem to be a shared aspect to our inner life, we cannot be said to be the same. The individuality of the person must be its irreducible existence. This individuality must encompass both its spiritual, souled qualities, as well as its bodily aspects.

The commonality that haunts the Greek outlook can be given proper theological grounding, though. Since the person is constituted in the Son and by the Spirit, there is a way that one’s individual personhood draws its selfhood from the creative dynamic of the Son. Thus, each person can be said to be co-creator, not just in the ordinary way of human creativity but also in a real perception of and existence in the ongoing creative dynamism of existence.

When the person attains communion with thought itself, this communion can be said to be a real communion with the Son and a real attainment of the awareness of the way in which we are drawn up into the hypostatic union. We can thus be said to attain to a real union with the Son (and Father) through the hypostatic union, realizing in ourselves the finality of the hypostatic union. This can be said to be the origin of the various pantheistic or monistic aspirations of different philosophical trends. We can and do attain a union with the whole in which our individuality is somehow submerged/overcome and also heightened. This is because in becoming truly ourselves we become "instruments" of the Son and Spirit, conduits of the divine, and thus truly become the divine in created form.

The privileging of instrumental music by the German Romantics points to this insight. In music, we give expression to an aspect of existence that lies deeper than rational thought. Thought can articulate the dimensions of existence, but these articulations rest on a deeper core where reality becomes fundamentally unknowable to the extent that it rests in the creative dynamism of God's activity. (See Jeremy Begbie's analysis in *Music, Modernity, and God*, chapter 5).

Magisterial teaching

- Constantinople II: There is no pre-existence of the soul
- Constantinople V: we have only one soul
- Lateran V: the soul is immortal as individual
- Vienne: The *anima intellectualis* is the *forma corporis*
- Benedict XII: there is an unmediated beatific vision between death and resurrection
- John XXII
 - The soul is created directly by God
 - The soul is created from nothing
 - The soul is not pre-existent
 - The soul does not have a material origin
- Pius XII: "Now it is in no way apparent how such an opinion (polygenism) can be reconciled with that which the sources of revealed truth and the documents of the Teaching Authority of the Church propose with regard to original sin, which proceeds from a sin actually committed by an individual Adam and which, through generation, is passed on to all and is in everyone as his own." (*Humani Generis*)

HUMANITY'S ROLE

- matter and spirit
- microcosm and mediator
- work in progress

ISSUES IN REGARD TO HUMAN ORIGIN

- how did humans arise?
- was there an original couple—monogenism?
- issues if one wants to say there was not.

IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD

- what is the image of God in humans?
 - mind
 - free will
 - creator
- what is it to realize a likeness to God?

HUMANS AND CREATION

- humanity's role in the cosmos

- humanity's role in perfecting creation
- the legitimacy and the dangers of technology
- what is natural?

HUMAN NATURE

- what is human nature?
- what is the purpose of human life?
- what is ideal humanity?

HUMAN POTENTIAL

- what are we called to be?
- what is our proper relationship to the son and the spirit?
- divinization

SEE

Hans Schwarz, *The Human Being: A Theological Anthropology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013).