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## Green & Palmer, IN SEARCH OF THE SOUL

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Schellenberg observes that there *is*, in fact, a body of literature focusing on the rationality or irrationality of *persons* in holding religious beliefs, and he footnotes Plantinga's *Warranted Christian Belief* as an example (p. 178). But even the question of whether the individual believer is warranted in his belief is not considered for its own sake. It is set within a more general context: are there any good *de jure* objections to Christian belief? Have we reason to suppose that Christian belief is merely the product of some belief-producing mechanism that is not truth-aimed? In all of this, I suggest, the real item of interest is the epistemic status of the truth claim itself. This no more indicates a concern for the justification of *responses* or *respondents* than does Reid's reply to Hume regarding beliefs about one's own cranial composition. (Indeed, Plantinga argues that nearly *any* token belief may be *justified*—and the individual justified and/or internally rational—depending upon what *seems true* to the individual who has been epistemically dutiful. If this is correct, then a concern for the justification of responders and responses would seem even less grave.)

I am inclined to think that the "received tradition," which itself includes wide disagreement, has been conducting business roughly as it ought.

*In Search of the Soul*, ed. Joel B. Green and Stuart L. Palmer. InterVarsity Press, 2005. 215 pages. \$20.00 (paper).

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When I was a student I met a man who was a sweet, gentle, Pentecostal Christian. He later sustained a closed head injury in a snowmobile accident through no fault of his own. When he emerged from his coma, his personality was thoroughly changed: no longer sweet and gentle, no longer a Christian. He had become, through a bump on the head, a bitter, angry atheist. For this firmly committed mind-body dualist of the most crass Cartesian variety (here I mean the caricature of Cartesian dualism that bears little resemblance to the dualism of Descartes), a bump on the head should not affect beliefs, emotions and attitudes. The mind, after all, exists in the non-physical world and is only connected to the body temporarily and uni-directionally—the mind rules the body but is unaffected by the physical stuff of the brain. And I began to wonder, could this man's eternal salvation hang upon a bump on the head (or any other physical processes over which he has no control)?

At that time, and for a long time thereafter, I thought that THE Christian view of the person, on which hung all of the Law and the Prophets, was mind-body dualism. And to reject mind-body dualism was at best heresy and at worse a repudiation of the Christian faith. I have since come to believe that nothing of importance, other than understanding our nature as persons, hangs on mind-body dualism: not orthodoxy, not salvation, not moral responsibility, not human dignity, not free will, and not post-mortem existence (after all, we confess to the resurrection of the *body* not the immortality of the soul); and not, for crying out loud, forgiveness and hospitality (this will become apparent later).

*In Search of the Soul* is an excellent but oddly titled collection of competing views on the nature of persons. Oddly titled since two of the contributors deny that humans have souls; these authors aren't searching for souls, they are searching for the best Christian understanding of the nature of persons. The primary contributors—Stewart Goetz, William Hasker, Nancey Murphy, and Kevin Corcoran—are already major contributors to this discussion. They are all trained in analytic philosophy, have all read the relevant supporting scientific evidence, and are all well-versed in the Christian theological tradition. Tradition, of course, is on the side of mind-body dualism, but catholic credal statements are silent on this topic. In short, there is no THE Christian view on the nature of persons. So these four thinkers explore occasionally uncharted areas within the confines of orthodoxy. Their widely divergent views range from substance dualism to materialism. All of the essays are without exception excellent at what they set out to do: communicate to non-specialists clearly and precisely each view and why each author holds that view. In addition, they discuss the ramifications of their views for important theological matters such as free will and the possibility of life after death. I will briefly present the four views and then use the epilogue to make some more general comments.

Goetz, while noting that the tradition affirms and Scripture writers sometimes assume mind-body dualism, does not thereby claim victory for his position. He modestly claims, rather, that mind-body dualism is a basic belief (when we look "inside" we find an awareness of self as "a simple substance that exemplifies psychological properties") and, hence, may be epistemically prior to the writers' religious convictions. I take it that this means that mind-body dualism may be on a par with geocentrism: both are epistemically basic and widely assumed by the biblical writers but not theologically required of Christians. He defends substance dualism against the familiar claim that material souls could not causally interact with a material body. While this sort of causality may be mysterious, it should not be rejected by Christians who believe that God, who is spirit, causally interacts with the material world.

Hasker contends that his emergent dualism has the advantages of Goetz's dualism but is sensitive to more materialistic concerns. Emergent dualism is the view that the soul is not something superadded to the body but is an immaterial yet spatial substance that naturally emerges from but is not composed of complex configurations of matter (of the brain and central nervous system). Just as a living cell can emerge from a configuration of molecules, so, too, a center of consciousness can emerge from the proper configuration of cells. Hasker claims that his theory, unlike other forms of dualism, accounts for the tight interconnection between mind and body. He argues, using physical analogies, that the emergent soul, once so dependent on its body, can survive the dissolution of the body and be reconnected with a new or restored body. Hence, he can account for a post-mortem disembodied state and resurrection.

Murphy's non-reductive physicalism moves the discussion in a decidedly materialist direction. That a Christian is a materialist about persons may come as a surprise to some Christian readers but such views are gaining acceptance among Christian philosophers. And they are gaining acceptance because of the increasing awareness of the profound dependence

of the mental on the physical. Murphy takes her cues from a philosophy of biology that makes claims about the biological basis of consciousness, language, transcendence, and goal-evaluation; she weaves these together into a physicalist account of moral responsibility. While her account of persons is powerful and enticing, she deliberately avoids the issue of libertarian free will; determinism, perhaps of the compatibilist sort, comports better with materialism than with dualism.

Corcoran's constitution view of persons is a materialist view as well. Try as he might, Corcoran (contra Goetz) simply cannot find himself believing that we humans have immaterial souls; we are essentially embodied. Corcoran contends that we are constituted by but not identical to our bodies in much the same way that a statue is constituted by but not identical to the bronze of which it is made. Although Corcoran rejects an emergent soulish entity, he affirms that soulish causal powers (for, say, consciousness, deliberation, free will) can emerge from the physical stuff that constitutes our selves.

One issue that may prove offputting to a student audience is the authors' methodology. Rather than beginning with scripture and Christian tradition, they begin with their intuitions about persons, consider the relevant contributions of contemporary science, and develop their view of persons in an analytic fashion. Although students may find it offputting, I don't see any alternative; Scripture is not a philosophical text and there are no unequivocal (or perhaps even equivocal) biblical passages on the metaphysics of persons. The best one can do Christianly is what the authors do: discuss the relationship of their views to distinctly Christian doctrines such as moral responsibility (free will), the intermediate state, and resurrection (with concomitant concerns about personal identity). Interestingly, although this is a philosophy book, filled with alleged arguments, at least three of the contributors concede that argument has little role to play in establishing, say, dualism or materialism.

Although the book has a fine introduction by Joel Green, one of the editors, the epilogue by Stuart Palmer, the other editor, is atrocious. Palmer's epilogue is not only badly argued it misrepresents the main authors' views and, in general, is an argument against their views. It is like the worst kind of book review on offer yet it is attached to the main text. The crime is multiplied because the main authors had no opportunity to respond to Palmer's inane criticisms. So Palmer speaks from on high and pronounces all of the main views "Bad." I will pursue my criticisms of the epilogue because of what it reveals about attitudes towards analytic philosophy and what theologians are looking for in a theory of persons.

Palmer criticizes Goetz for using a methodology "reminiscent of analytic philosophy" as though that alone is sufficient criticism (like rejecting a political view because it is "commie") (p. 197). And he alleges that Corcoran's use of analytic methodology "makes him vulnerable to a view of personhood ultimately defined in terms of inward consciousness and so with a dangerous inclination toward autonomous individualism" (p. 204). Corcoran can't account for forgiveness because "he uses a fundamentally analytic method" (p. 211). A little bit of analytic rigor would have helped Palmer here. In general, he has a proclivity for making unsubstantiated claims of entailment, history and motivation. For example, he contends that Goetz's

dualism is tied to modern, Western individualism (a bad thing). But Palmer fails to note that Goetz's view is not unlike the premodern views of Plato, Augustine and probably most major Western thinkers until the modern, materialist view of things became dominant. Palmer should at least point out, as nearly every contemporary secular materialist is wont to condescendingly do, how quaintly pre-modern Goetz's views are.

Palmer, following Charles Taylor, is miming the mantra that Cartesian analytic methods and dualism spawned individualism even egoism and nearly everything bad in the contemporary West. Here is Palmer's "logic." (a1) Enlightenment figures embraced certain views of knowledge, persons, and society. A few hundred years later, (b1) Western society embraced the autonomous individual with an interior "real" self (and, these are incompatible with hospitality and forgiveness). Therefore, (c1): (a1) caused or entailed (b1). Somehow, Goetz, Hasker and Corcoran all accept (a1) in defending their views and so their views entail (b1). Therefore, their views are bad. This is a textbook example of post hoc reasoning. This is especially one that Christians might find objectionable. Here's a similar argument. (a2) Holy Writ did not forbid slavery. A few hundred years later, (b2) Western Christians were actively involved in the slave trade. Therefore, (c2): (a2) caused or entailed (b2). Therefore, Christianity is bad. Perhaps philosophical and theological ideas did partially cause (b1) and (b2) (but the Lord only knows all of the contributing causes). The point is that (a1) and (b1) and (a2) and (b2) don't entail (c1) and (c2) respectively. And, to get back to views of persons: there is nothing inherent in, say, Goetz's dualism or Corcoran's analytical methodology that entails anything about (b1) (and so entails nothing about hospitality or forgiveness).

According to Palmer, the Christian test of one's view of persons is precisely how well it can accommodate the virtues of hospitality and forgiveness. Let us consider the virtue of hospitality. Although Goetz goes to great length to defend a holistic dualism in which bodily concerns are to be taken as seriously as spiritual concerns, Palmer alleges that Goetz's philosophical method and claim that personhood resides in the conscious, subjective self align Goetz with, guess what, autonomous individualism and thus make his views inhospitable to hospitality. Hasker's view is likewise committed to valuing the conscious self as the "real" person; hence, autonomous individualism rears its ugly head again, and so emergentism denigrates the body. Murphy's view, Palmer claims, is, despite her arguments to the contrary, reductionist and so offers no account of those human capacities which are reflections of the divine image. Her theory is bad because it entails feeding bodies but not feeding souls. And Corcoran's view is, as we've already seen, infected with autonomous individualism, and just another form of animism (a view that he enthusiastically and effectively disavows). He, too, should feed bodies but not souls.

I suspect that the authors were not informed that the test of their views of persons was their compatibility with hospitality and forgiveness. If they had been thusly informed, they probably would have replied: "My metaphysical views of persons are neutral with respect to hospitality and forgiveness. However, my ethical views are not." Their ethical views could go in many ways. First, Goetz, et al., could be divine command theorists. They

could affirm that Christians must show hospitality—body and soul—to the stranger precisely because God commanded it. So even if Palmer's criticism of Murphy is right (her view entails that we are "no more than our basic chemistry"), nothing follows about the moral value of assisting others, conveying dignity, etc. (p. 202). If God deems it good for us to assist and value others, then it is indeed good (whatever our metaphysical makeup). Or they may have a creation ethic: we must value the whole person body and/or soul because God created the whole person (in God's image no less). Or the authors may understand ethics in terms of human flourishing: humans flourish only when they have adequate food, shelter and clothing and only when they are properly related to their Source of light and life; hospitality and forgiveness are key means to human flourishing. In this case, morality is "built-in" to human nature in ways that any of the four competing views could accommodate. Corcoran compellingly argues that views on the metaphysics of persons are neutral with respect to a wide variety of moral matters and that the relevant issues can be decided only by introducing distinctly moral principles such as God's intentions (pp. 172–75).

Palmer's essay, however misguided, is instructive: most Christians are asking questions about the nature of persons from a more pastoral or theological point of view than are most philosophers. To me, all three points of view—philosophical, pastoral and theological—are valid but all three points of view may be asking fundamentally different questions about the nature of persons. The mistake is to privilege any of these views and so to discount the other. Should the authors wish to write a different book on the nature of persons, they might therefore see fit to accommodate those concerns. But this book is fine as it is and is highly recommended to anyone wishing to learn in a clear and concise manner four major views on the nature of persons written by respected philosophers with uncharacteristic modesty about just what they've thereby accomplished.

*Galileo, Darwin, and Hawking: The Interplay of Science, Reason, and Religion*, by Phil Dowe. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005. Pp. viii+205. \$21.00 (paper).

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The popular perception is that science and religion conflict. Phil Dowe, an Australian metaphysician and philosopher of science, known for his contribution to the topic of causation, argues that there's no such conflict, but rather a harmony, and indeed some interaction between them. The book's content overlaps philosophy of science (realism and anti-realism, inference to the best explanation, and determinism and indeterminism) and philosophy of religion (miracles, cosmological arguments for theism, and teleological arguments for theism). But the book best serves to introduce the relation between science and religion. Dowe's prose is pellucid and students, who want an introduction to the area, would do well to read the book, not only for its rich historical, scientific, and philosophical content, but for its calm and reasonable tone.