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ABSTRACT

“LET US MAKE אָדָם”: AN EDENIC MODEL  
OF PERSONAL ONTOLOGY

by

Marla A. Samaan Nedelcu

Adviser: Richard M. Davidson

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: “LET US MAKE אָדָם”: AN EDENIC MODEL OF PERSONAL ONTOLOGY

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Date completed: April 2019

Personal ontology studies human constitution and human nature, an increasingly debated topic in Christian theology. Historically, the most prominent models of personal ontology in Christian theology have been substance dualist models. More recently, physicalist models have offered prominent alternatives. This dissertation studies the conflict of interpretations between these two major model groupings. By applying a canonical theology, it then presents an Edenic model of personal ontology that can address the current conflict of interpretations.

To achieve this end, the dissertation briefly analyzes substance dualism and physicalism according to the rubrics of constitution and nature, using a model methodology. It then compares the advantages and challenges each offers, and asks whether a model based solely on the normative source of the biblical canon might prove

beneficial to the current debate. This question is explored next through a close reading of the Eden narrative (Gen 1-3), which is the biblical pericope that is most foundational to a study of personal ontology. Utilizing the final-form canonical approach and phenomenological-exegetical analysis, this reading delivers answers to the questions of constitution and nature and reveals an Edenic model of personal ontology. In short, the Edenic model highlights both the physicality and the uniqueness of human ontology. It points to a human constitution that is physical, and yet it does not compromise humans' unique identity or place in God's creation. This is because the text shows the image of God to be the mark of human identity. This *imago Dei* is manifested in every function of human nature (all of which are physically constituted), and enables humans to fulfill God's commission to them.

Next, we compare the Edenic model with substance dualism and physicalism, using the same two rubrics of constitution and nature, to see which models may have higher explanatory powers in dealing with current questions of personal ontology. We see that a model of personal ontology that arises from the Eden narrative emphasizes both human physicality and human uniqueness. Such a twin emphasis proves helpful in the current debate in Christian theology, whereas substance dualism emphasizes human identity, and physicalism often highlights human physicality more than human identity. The dissertation ends by encouraging Christian theologians to explore further the new questions about personal ontology that are being raised, but to do so within these twin parameters and on the basis of a model that arises from Scripture. This approach will not only have implications for a study of personal ontology, but likely for an array of Christian beliefs and practices.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

“LET US MAKE אָדָם”: AN EDENIC MODEL  
OF PERSONAL ONTOLOGY

A Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

by  
Marla A. Samaan Nedelcu

April 2019

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From the age of sixteen, I felt God's calling to serve him and earn a Ph.D. in Theology. Many years have passed since then, but I finally offer this dissertation to Him in gratitude. He is my ultimate Teacher, and I am also thankful to Him for the many teachers He has blessed my life with through the years—teachers who have inspired and guided me through the sharing of their minds and hearts. First, I want to thank my first teachers—in life and school—my parents Dr. and Mrs. Philip and Sherilyn Samaan. Thank you for setting me on this path and encouraging and supporting me along the way. Thank you so much for your love and your faithfulness to Scripture that have shaped who I am.

Next, I want to honor two significant teachers in my life who are now awaiting the resurrection of life. Dr. Jan Haluska (1941-2015) was my first college professor who opened my mind to see earth's history as the unfolding of philosophical systems—and from then on I was hooked! He modeled how Christian ideas can engage with those systems, and inspired me as a result. Dr. Miroslav Kiš (1942-2016) was my Seminary professor whose example of faithfulness to Scripture and neighborliness was a true blessing. He encouraged my academic goals from my teenage years on, suggested this topic for my dissertation, and was my doctoral adviser and a member of my dissertation committee.

Dr. Fernando Canale, my dissertation chair before his retirement, has had the most profound impact on my intellectual thinking for nearly two decades. He showed me how to recognize the underlying philosophical presuppositions of any notion, and how to bring the philosophy of Scripture into dialog with them. Because of you, I want to continue seeking to articulate a biblical system of theology for my whole life. Thank you for your time and energy in guiding me through my graduate studies. Dr. Richard Davidson, my current dissertation chair, has my immense gratitude for helping me to accomplish my doctoral goals and finish my dissertation. It has been wonderful to engage with a scholar who not only loves the biblical text, but the same texts and topics as I do. Thank you for your guidance and support to me always, and especially this last year.

Next, I have been enriched by the kindness and guidance of my two other dissertation committee members as well. Dr. Paul Petersen, thank you for stepping up to this task, and thank you for staying on through the end. I so appreciate the perspective you have brought to my study. Dr. John Peckham, thank you for accepting to be on my committee this last year and for guiding me so well. I am inspired by your scholarship, and thankful that the vision Dr. Canale imparted to us in his classes continues to develop ever more through your work. These are the professors who have been the most involved in my dissertation work. But my life is what it is because of the support, belief, and inspiration of so many others at Andrews University and Southern Adventist University. Thank you for believing in me, for employing me, for being there for me.

I have also been blessed by the most amazing sisterhood of friends. You have prayed me through this dissertation and everything else in my life—in person, by

voicemails, and through texts! We have laughed and cried, grown up and praised God together. Thank you also to all the wonderful women and girls who have watched my children so that I could study. Obviously, there would be no dissertation without you. A special thanks must go to Mrs. Lucinda Cox, who even now is caring for the kids and preparing a celebration with them for when I finally submit this dissertation. You have been a godsend to me, and I thank you for blessing our family with your kind servant's heart.

Finally, my husband and children, you are God's good gifts to me. Adrian my love, I have been working on this degree our entire married life, and never once have you spoken words other than encouragement for my academic pursuits. You wanted to marry a smart and capable mate, and even if I would not always call myself these, it is an unspeakable blessing to be married to one who values and assists me in what God has called me to do. Thank you for your loyalty, love, and support. Simon my buddy, you have expanded my mind to study the mysteries of the universe as I attempt to learn alongside your excellent curiosity. Thank you for helping me to love science and engineering, and all of God's creation. Thank you for all your special surprises to encourage me as I study. Nadia my jewel, what a joy you are. Thank you for your laughter and smiles, for your love of music and prayer and people. May you and Simon ever live out God's dreams for you.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background**

The ontological question is one of the earliest questions in philosophy. In Western philosophy, it arose as early as the Milesian School; in Eastern philosophy, it can be found in the teachings of Zoroaster and, 600 years earlier, in ancient Hinduism.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the opening lines of the Bible also address the basic questions of being.<sup>2</sup> Initially, Western ontological questions dealt more with the existence and nature of deity (theology) and with the origin and nature of the world (cosmogony and cosmology). But

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<sup>1</sup> Thales (ca. 580 B.C.) is said to have called water the “first principle” and “basic nature” of “all things” (Philip Wheelwright, ed., *The Presocratics* [New York: Odyssey Press, 1966], 44). His analytical thinking and rejection of mythological explanations have earned him the titles of the “Father of Science” and “Father of Western Philosophy” (Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* [Bodmin, United Kingdom: MPG Books Ltd, 1996]), 15. Others from the Milesian School identified basic nature as the “Boundless” (Anaximander) and as air (Anaximenes).

Zoroaster described reality as a radical dualism between truth/order (*asha*) and falsehood/disorder (*druj*) (Daniel E. Haycock, *Being and Perceiving* [United Kingdom: Manupod Press, 2011], 473). In Vedism (ancient Hinduism), the foundation of all things is order (*rita*), while later Hindu ontological formulations are dualistic (See Raimundo Panikkar, *Vedic Experience: An Anthology of Hinduism’s Sacred and Revealed Scriptures* [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2001] and Swami Krishnananda, *A Short History of Religious and Philosophical Thought in India* [Rishikesh, India: The Divine Life Society, 1994]).

<sup>2</sup> In theology: God is established as Creator in the first three Hebrew words of Scripture (Gen 1:1). In cosmogony/cosmology: Gen 1:1 reveals *how* “the heavens and the earth” came into existence; and the creation week account identifies some things of which the heavens and earth consist. In anthropology: Gen 1 and 2 describe the origin, constitution, functions, and significance of human beings (1:26-31; 2:7, 15-25).



later, questions about the nature, origin, and destiny of human beings began to be addressed as well.<sup>3</sup>

From Plato (427-347 B.C.) onward in Western philosophy, the most prominent views on the nature of human beings have included an element of dualism.<sup>4</sup> Dualism accepts that there are two fundamental ontological principles that constitute the reality of humans and of this world, as contrasted with one fundamental ontological principle in monism.<sup>5</sup> Philosophy of mind, a branch of study within philosophy, identifies those two dualistic principles as the mind and the body (in theological anthropology, they are often known as the soul and the body).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Plato was first to deal specifically with anthropology in such a significant way. His tripartite division of the human person (rational, spirited, and appetitive) is still influential. Anaxagoras, with his concept of *Nous*, is an earlier philosopher who touched on the subject of anthropology but did not delve as deeply into it.

<sup>4</sup> In Eastern philosophy, dualism goes back at least to the Yoga school in Hindu philosophy (7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), which divided the world (including the human person) into the mind/spirit (*purusha*) and the material (*prakriti*).

<sup>5</sup> Having said this, I must also state that while being a dualist or a monist may apply to one's view of both cosmology and anthropology, it is not necessary that it apply to both. For example, one might be a monist in regard to anthropology but a dualist in regard to cosmology (as Christian monists would claim to be). Looking at the history of dualism, however, it is evident that cosmological and anthropological dualism are often linked.

In reference to monism, one can also either be a materialist monist (holding that the one fundamental substance is physical) or an idealist monist (holding that the one fundamental substance is non-physical). Materialist monism in regard to anthropology is certainly more common today than is idealist monism. For more on monism, see Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 495-96.

<sup>6</sup> "Soul" is at times referred to as "spirit" or "mind"—and "body," as the more pejorative "flesh."

Philosophy of mind is "a reflection on the nature of mental phenomena and especially on the relation of the mind to the body and to the rest of the physical world" ("Georges Rey, Philosophy of mind," <https://www.britannica.com/topic/philosophy-of-mind> [accessed January 10, 2018]). The discipline of philosophical anthropology is broader, tackling human metaphysics and phenomenology, and humans' relation to each other and their environment. Theological anthropology is the Christian doctrine of the Nature of Man, or Human Nature and Destiny.

In Western philosophy, the terminology of "soul" has increasingly been replaced by talk of human identity and the "self." For the sake of clarity in this dissertation, I have chosen to use the terms "soul" or "mind" instead of "self," since soul and mind clearly refer to one aspect of the human entity, whereas self can sometimes refer to the human entity as a whole and sometimes to the distinguishing characteristics of the human entity. For more on the introduction of the term "self" into the discussion of philosophical

What then is the relationship between mind/soul and body? This is the main issue in what is called the mind-body problem, a major field of study under the domain of philosophy of mind.<sup>7</sup> The underlying questions involve what and who we are—in other words, what we are made of (constitution), and who we are in distinction from other living beings (nature). Specifically, these are questions of personal ontology, and a proper answer to them should also satisfactorily explain the existence of a whole range of human characteristics and capabilities.<sup>8</sup>

The mind-body problem has been a central philosophical issue through the ages.<sup>9</sup> Yet historically it has not been an area of major contention within Christian theology since ontological dualism has generally been assumed, bolstered by the common belief that the soul transcends the materiality of the body. Nevertheless, some theologians have explored views that deviated from that normative tradition, notably during the Reformation and especially in the last century.<sup>10</sup>

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anthropology, see Jerold Seigel, *The Idea of Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Paul S. MacDonald, *History of the Concept of Mind: Speculations about Soul, Mind and Spirit from Homer to Hume* (Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> I have chosen to use the term personal ontology because it is defined as “the ontology of human persons,” and is the most satisfactory descriptor I have found of the area this dissertation will study. The question of personal ontology—What am I?—can be divided into two areas, constitution and nature, with their respective questions, “What am I composed of?” and “What does ‘I’ refer to?” (Eric T. Olson, *What Are We?: A Study in Personal Ontology*, Philosophy of Mind Series [New York: Oxford University Press, 2007]), ch. 1. Using other terms that are current in theology (theological anthropology, biblical anthropology, nature of man, doctrine of man, human nature and destiny) or philosophy (philosophical anthropology, philosophy of mind, mind-body problem) would be troublesome since those terms are broader than these specific questions and would take this study into areas that are outside of its scope. In contrast, theory of mind in philosophy explores the “cognitive capacity to attribute mental states to self and others” (Eric Margolis, Richard Samuels, and Stephen P. Stich, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Cognitive Science* [Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2012], 402).

<sup>9</sup> Jaegwon Kim, “Problems in the Philosophy of Mind,” *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1995), 574-79.

<sup>10</sup> John P. Wright and Paul Potter, eds., *Psyche and Soma: Physicians and Metaphysicians*

Presently, a conflict has arisen largely because that traditional dualistic view (which is also the old view of science) is no longer compatible with the current, generally accepted views of scientists.<sup>11</sup> Thus, for the most part, science and tradition no longer agree.<sup>12</sup> For example, advances in brain-mapping and genetics have appeared to pinpoint the location of certain “human” qualities in the brain or genes, qualities previously considered “attributes of the soul.”<sup>13</sup> For many, this evidence can point to a monistic

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*on the Mind-Body Problem from Antiquity to Enlightenment* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon, 2000). As early as the second or third century A.D., we read this statement in support of anthropological dualism in the Christian apology *The Epistle to Diognetus*: “The soul dwells in the body, yet is not of the body.” (L.B. Radford [Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2007], 1.27. Contemporary theologians who are ontological dualists include John W. Cooper (*Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate*, 2d ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000]) and Stewart Goetz (“Substance Dualism,” in *In Search of the Soul: Four Views of the Mind-Body Problem*, Joel B. Green and Stuart L. Palmer, eds. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2005]).

Historically, views that deviated from the norm quite often fell under the umbrella of “Christian mortalism” (later more commonly referred to as “conditionalism”) and include, for example, segments of the radical Reformation, Wycliffe, Tyndale, Luther (who was open to the idea of “soul sleep”), Milton, Bultmann, Cullman, Wright, the Seventh-day Adventist Church and various organizations of the Church of God. For a historical survey of some of these views, see LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Conditionalist Faith of our Fathers: The Conflict of the Ages over the Nature and Destiny of Man* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1965). More on this in subsequent chapters.

<sup>11</sup> Current discussion on personal ontology has been instigated by recent discoveries in scientific research, especially in the field of cognitive neuroscience, which studies the biological substrates of mental phenomena (Patricia Smith Churchland, *Brain-Wise: Studies in Neurophilosophy* [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002]). But many other fields touch on this issue from different angles (e.g., Stuart Russell and Peter Norvig, *Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach* [Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995]). Most theories of biological evolutionism and philosophical naturalism also do not support the dualistic model. Christian theology has grappled with these theories by choosing to defend the biblical account of origins, to reject it, or to accommodate it to those theories. Frederick Buechner is an example of a theologian who holds to the evolutionary theory and accordingly finds the resurrection model of the afterlife to be more tenable than belief in an immortal soul. As he puts it, “We go to our graves as dead as a doornail and are given our lives back again by God” (*Beyond Words: Daily Readings in the ABC’s of Faith* [New York: HarperCollins, 2004], 168).

<sup>12</sup> Through history, the view of the dichotomous nature of soul and body prevailed in philosophy, religion, and science. The first Western scientists were also the first philosophers, and they sought natural rather than supernatural answers for the questions of life. Indeed they were the ones who originally supplied that dualistic model.

<sup>13</sup> This increasing understanding of brain science and genetics has generated discussion in science-religion studies (*Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*, ed. by Warren S. Brown, Nancy Murphy, and H. Newton Malony [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998], viii-xiv). For example: Francisco J. Ayala, “The Biological Roots of Morality,” *Biology and Philosophy* 2 (1987): 235-52; Jorge Moll, et al, “The Neural Correlates of Moral Sensitivity: A Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Investigation of Basic and Moral Emotions” (*Journal of Neuroscience* 22/7 [2002]),

understanding of the human person. Indeed, the worldview of scientific naturalism holds to a fully materialistic monism in which what it means to be human is sufficiently explained by brain and genes.<sup>14</sup>

Those who side with Christian tradition in this discussion, however, consider a strictly material or physical explanation to be unsatisfactory or even scandalous. They believe that there must be more to human identity than simply what science can study.<sup>15</sup> Others do not hold to either dualism or materialism, and insist that the mental and physical are one substance, the same one substance that composes the universe itself.<sup>16</sup>

Still others who attempt to reconcile tradition and today's science are reticent to use the

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2730-36; John C. Loehlin, *Genes and Environment in Personality Development* (Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1992); Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1989); Robert B. Cairns, "Aggression from a Developmental Perspective: Genes, Environments and Interactions," in *Genetics of Criminal and Antisocial Behavior*, CIBA Foundation Symposium 194 (Chichester, United Kingdom: Wiley, 1995), 45-60; Malcolm Jeeves, ed., *From Cells to Souls—And Beyond: Changing Portraits of Human Nature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004); Justin L. Barrett, *Cognitive Science, Religion, and Theology: From Human Minds to Divine Minds*, Templeton Science and Religion Series (Conshohocken, PA: Templeton, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> As Francis H. Crick, who with James Watson discovered the structure of DNA, proclaimed: "You are nothing but a pack of neurons" (*The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for a Soul* [London: Simon and Schuster, 1994], 3; Sandra Blakeslee, "Humanity? Maybe It's All in the Wiring," *New York Times* [December 9, 2003]: F1).

For the rest of the dissertation, when the word "science" is used (without qualification), it refers to this worldview of scientific naturalism.

<sup>15</sup> Stewart Goetz, for example, argues that persons have the right to believe certain things about their own nature. He says that he falls in the long tradition of Christians and philosophers who hold that the most natural thing to believe about themselves is that they are divided into body and soul (*In Search of the Soul*, 33). He quotes the philosopher William Lyons: "That humans are bodies inhabited and governed in some intimate if mysterious way by minds (souls), seemed and still seems to be nothing more than good common sense" (*Matters of the Mind* [New York: Routledge, 2001], 9). In James Porter Moreland and Scott B. Rae's *Body and Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), science is engaged although the model of substance dualism is retained. There is an attempt to reconcile the two, but in such a way that most scientists would not accept. For example: "the substantial soul is a whole that is ontologically prior to the body and its various inseparable parts. The various physical and chemical parts and processes (including DNA) are tools—instrumental causes employed by higher-order biological activities in order to sustain the various functions grounded in the soul" (205).

<sup>16</sup> These monists are panentheists (although it can be debated whether all panentheists are monists), and panentheism as it relates to personal ontology is the area of process anthropology. Some of the views subsumed in this area are panpsychism, neutral monism, dual-aspect monism, and reflexive monism.

term “soul,” but may take the entity of the “mind” or the “psyche” (referring to the mental) to be a more suitable explanation for human identity than that of the “brain” (a strictly physical entity).<sup>17</sup> In the last couple decades, scores of books and articles have probed this complex and intriguing area of study,<sup>18</sup> and many new models have joined the already existing models offering various solutions to this problem.<sup>19</sup> Yet the recent flurry

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<sup>17</sup> These are still considered anthropological monists, though they avoid the naturalistic theory that humans are nothing more than highly developed animals. They can all be grouped together as nonreductive physicalists, as opposed to reductive physicalists/materialists who apply evolutionary theory or even a larger naturalistic worldview directly to their understanding of personal ontology. To some extent or another, they buy into the philosophical concept of emergentism.

<sup>18</sup> For example, works by Paul M. Churchland, David J. Chalmers, Richard Swinburne, William Hasker, Lynne Rudder Baker, John W. Cooper, Max Velmans, Todd E. Feinberg, Joseph LeDoux, Owen Flanagan, Anthony O’Hear, Joel B. Green, Kevin J. Corcoran, Nancey Murphy, Daniel C. Dennett, John R. Searle, Peter Hacker, Maxwell Bennett, Mark Graves, Wesley J. Wildman, and Christopher C. Knight (see bibliography).

<sup>19</sup> Here is a sampling of the older and newer alternatives. On Parallelism and Occasionalism, see: John Heil, *Philosophy of Mind: A Contemporary Introduction*, Routledge Contemporary Introductions to Philosophy (New York: Routledge, 2004), 27-33. Substance Dualism: Goetz, in *In Search of the Soul*, 33-60. Hylomorphic Dualism: Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952). Emergent Dualism: Hasker, *The Emergent Self*. Naturalistic Dualism: Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind*. Dualistic Interactionism: Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles, *The Self and Its Brain* (New York: Routledge, 1977). Token Physicalism: Daniel Stoljar, “Physicalism,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta, ed., <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/physicalism> (accessed March 12, 2015). Predicate Dualism: Howard Robinson, “Dualism,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2007 Edition)*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2007/entries/dualism> (accessed March 12, 2015). Reductive Physicalism: John Bickle, *Philosophy and Neuroscience: A Ruthlessly Reductive Account*, Studies in Brain and Mind (New York: Springer, 2003). Biological Naturalism: John R. Searle, *Mind: A Brief Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). Functionalism: Ned Block, “What is Functionalism?” in *Readings in Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1980). *Materialism: Paul K. Moser and J.D. Trout, eds., Contemporary Materialism: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995). Type Physicalism: Herbert Feigl, “The ‘Mental’ and the ‘Physical,’ in *Concepts, Theories and the Mind-Body Problem: Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, vol. 2, Herbert Feigl, Michael Scriven and Grover Maxwell, eds. (Minneapolis: MN: University Press, 1958), 370-497. Philosophical Behaviorism: Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1949). Eliminative Materialism: Paul M. Churchland, “Eliminative Materialism and Propositional Attitudes,” *Journal of Philosophy* 78 (1981): 67-90. Neutral Monism: William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2007). Panpsychism: John C. Gilmour, “Analogical Generalization and Whitehead’s Panpsychism,” Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University (1966). Dual-Aspect Monism: Carl G. Jung and Wolfgang Pauli, *Natureerklärung und Psyche* (Zürich: Rascher, 1952). Reflexive Monism: Max Velmans, *Understanding Consciousness* (London: Routledge, 2000). Constitutional Materialism: Kevin J. Corcoran, “Persons, Bodies, and the Constitution Relation,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 37 (1999), 1-20. Nonreductive Physicalism: Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Emergent Materialism: John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive: Being a Connected View of the Principle* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1868). Anomalous Monism: Donald Davidson, “Mental Events,” in *Actions and Events* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon, 1980). Phenomenalism: Ernst Mach, *The*

of study has largely been more philosophical and scientific than biblical and theological.<sup>20</sup>

### **Statement of the Problem**

In Christian theology there exists a conflict of interpretations over personal ontology. The dominant models held by tradition are dualistic, and newer models, influenced by modern science, lean towards materialism. With this impasse, a fresh and careful consideration of Scripture could offer a valuable contribution, for it is the one source of Christian revelation that is generally afforded priority among Christians.<sup>21</sup>

Does Scripture itself offer or assume a model of personal ontology that might integrate some of the strengths of other interpretations while at the same time overcoming some of their weaknesses?

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study's purpose is to sketch and compare current interpretive models of personal ontology in Christian theology, and to see whether a fresh exploration of the biblical teaching on personal ontology, focused on the Eden narrative, may provide a way

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*Analysis of Sensations and the Relation of Physical to the Psychical* (New York: Dover, 1959).  
Epiphenomenalism: Thomas Huxley, "On the Hypothesis that Animals are Automata, and its History,"  
*Method and Results: Essays by Thomas H. Huxley* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1898).

<sup>20</sup> Moreover, biblical theological research generally has seemed to center around Pauline anthropology and the concept of the resurrection. See, for example, studies by the following authors (see bibliography): Rudolf Bultmann, Oscar Cullmann, Charles Davis, L. Cerfeaux, Robert Jewett, F.F. Bruce, H.C.C. Cavalin, Robert H. Gundry, Peter Müller, Murray J. Harris, Richard N. Longenecker, Joel B. Green, Ray S. Anderson, and N.T. Wright. A recent comprehensive and extensive contribution to biblical anthropology, however, is David H. Kelsey's 2-volume, 1500-page tome: *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> Wayne Grudem's claim is still one that is widely affirmed: Christian "theology should be explicitly based on the claims of Scripture" (*Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994], 15).

toward overcoming the present conflict. The hope is to help heal present divisions within Christian theology.

## Methodology

### Final-Form Canonical Approach

In seeking to uncover an Edenic model of personal ontology, this dissertation will utilize a final-form canonical approach. This means that the Bible is studied in its extant form, as we have it today.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, this approach holds that the biblical canon is comprised of the sixty-six books that are the most widely recognized throughout Christianity as belonging to the Bible.<sup>23</sup> In recent years, scholars have begun to

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<sup>22</sup> According to John Peckham, who has done extensive work developing the “canonical theological method” which utilizes the final-form canonical approach, this is the source used because of “the lack of access to a complete, original, final form. As such, attention is directed to the received corpus of canonical texts and not to non-manuscript-based reconstructions of the text(s). At the same time, the best findings of textual criticism in recovering the original text should not be excluded” (“The Concept of Divine Love in the Context of the God-World Relationship,” Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University [2012], 10; also see his *Canonical Theology: The Biblical Canon, Sola Scriptura, and Theological Method* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016]). In developing this method, Peckham has built on the work of a few other theologians and biblical scholars, including Brevard Childs (see especially Childs’ *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* [London: SCM Press, 1985]).

<sup>23</sup> According to Peckham, this canon “has been correctly recognized (intrinsic canon) but not determined by the community (community canon)” (“The Concept of Divine Love,” 10). For a justification of why the 66-book canon should be accepted, see his “The Canon and Biblical Authority: A Critical Comparison of Two Models of Canonicity,” *Trinity Journal* 28/2 (2007): 229–49. However, Peckham adds that “one need not subscribe to this view of the scope of the canon in order to implement the [final-form canonical] approach” (“The Concept of Divine Love,” 10). Yet, for an approach that takes the Bible as its sole normative source, it seems logical that the version of the canon most widely recognized in Christianity would be utilized. In addition, since in this approach the Bible is the normative source of theological truth, and since the Bible assumes its own internal coherence and congruence, it also seems fitting to accept such a final-form approach to the Bible that also upholds the Bible’s coherence and congruence. Indeed, “the canon itself contains numerous examples that provide the basis of something like a canonical approach” (ibid., 13). For some examples, see Isa 8:16, 20; Exod 17:14; Deut 31:9, 12; Josh 1:8; 23:6; 1 Kgs 2:3; Neh 8:8-18; 9:3; Amos 3:1; Jer 2:4; Ezek 6:3; Hos 4:1; Rom 3:10-18; 4:3; Luke 10:26; 2 Tim 1:13; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:14; Titus 1:9; 2 John 9-10; Jude 3; Matt 7:24, 26; Luke 24:27, 44, 45; Matt 5:17, 18; John 5:39, 46, 47; 10:35; Acts 24:14; 2 Cor 4:2; Gal 1:8-12; Acts 2:42; Titus 3:8; 1 Thess 2:13; Acts 17:11; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:19; 1 Cor 2:13; Heb 1:5-13; 2:6, 8, 12, 13.

increasingly value approaches to the Bible that take the biblical canon to be coherent and congruent.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, a major presupposition of the final-form canonical approach is that evidence presented as biblical evidence must have internal coherence and correspondence to the canon. Such criteria will be operant for any biblical evidence this dissertation presents as well.

Some may wonder with the multiplicity of sources available for Christian theology, why a model would be desired that is based on solely one normative source, that of Scripture. It is because the various models of personal ontology in existence in Christian theology are currently in conflict. This conflict in interpretations can be traced, in large part, to different sources of authority that are operative on the most foundational level of each model. Perhaps a model that is based on the biblical canon (the one source which Christian theology most widely accepts to be a legitimate source for theology) might offer new insights into this issue, a way to heal some of the divisions which exist today in this theological debate.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See, for example, David Noel Freedman, who holds that “almost exactly half of the Hebrew Bible, was the end product of [a] single mind or compiler (or a very small committee)” (Freedman, Jeffrey C. Geoghegan, and Michael M. Homan, *The Nine Commandments: Uncovering a Hidden Pattern of Crime and Punishment in the Hebrew Bible* [New York: Doubleday, 2000], 1, 164). Or Hans W. Frei, who sees Scripture as a unified narrative (*The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974]). Additionally, Richard Rice (“Book Review: The Love of God; A Canonical Model,” *Ministry* [January 2016]: 28, 29) acknowledges that “a growing interest in the scholarly world exists to move beyond historical criticism, with its preoccupation with the composition of the biblical documents. After all, these documents have functioned as a unity for centuries within communities of faith and may still do so. Nevertheless, one may affirm the unity and divine authority of the biblical writings without ignoring or disregarding the history behind them.” Rice continues by commenting on Peckham’s canonical theological method: “As Peckham himself notes, one can embrace a ‘canonical horizon’ from a literary perspective and treat the final form of the canon as a unified document” (Peckham, *The Love of God: A Canonical Model* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015], 57).

<sup>25</sup> With the various possible sources for Christian theology outside of the Bible, there is disagreement as to which ones are legitimate and trustworthy sources for Christian theology and what their hierarchy in regards to each other should be. The answers vary according to which religious or philosophical traditions are giving the answer. However, the overwhelming majority of Christians, regardless of their particular traditions, would acknowledge that Scripture has a place as a normative source



Given commitment to a canonical approach, a more exhaustive canonical model of personal ontology would cohere with Gen 1-3. Indeed, there is growing scholarly evidence that points to Gen 1-3 containing the theological center of the Bible.<sup>26</sup> The Edenic narrative is “set apart from the rest of the Bible, constituting a kind of prologue or introduction. These opening chapters of Scripture are now widely regarded as providing the paradigm for the rest of the Bible.”<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, the first three chapters of the biblical canon are programmatic for the rest of Scripture’s testimony related to personal ontology. When one looks at issues of personal ontology, there is a long scholarly tradition that considers Gen 1-3 as the basis for a biblical understanding of theological anthropology. Statements like the following are broadly held to be true: “The Bible’s first statement concerning humankind

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for theology. They may dispute the relative authority of Scripture or which form of Scripture should be used to provide evidence, but they do agree that Scripture in some form is a legitimate normative source for theology. There is no agreement of this sort over any other possible source for Christian theology. Thus this makes the biblical canon unique, in that it is the only source that receives widespread support in its claim to be a legitimate and trustworthy source for Christian theology. This truth should make a model of personal ontology based solely on Scripture a model that is worth uncovering and exploring. Additionally, any epistemological search necessitates a starting point. Increasingly, and in postmodern epistemology, it is not considered possible to assert the superiority of one’s starting point *a priori*; the value of one’s starting point might only be known by its effectiveness in yielding a coherent and valuable theory. Thus, if no starting point has any advantage *a priori* that would merit its being chosen, why not choose a starting point that at least the majority of Christians accept to be a legitimate normative source for Christian theology? As Fernando Canale states: “If the meaning of the ultimate framework for intelligibility rests on human choice, why not choose divine revelation as available in Scripture?” *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: Searching for the Cognitive Foundation of Christian Theology in a Postmodern World* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 10.

<sup>26</sup> Subscribing to the final-form canonical approach and the divine inspiration of Scripture undeniably makes this claim more plausible.

<sup>27</sup> Davidson, “Back to the Beginning: Genesis 1–3 and the Theological Center of Scripture,” 10, 11. Davidson sees the theological center contained in Gen 1-3 as being sevenfold and illustrates it through a graph (28) that shows: 1) the substitutionary atonement; 2) Christ; 3) the plan of redemption/man’s uplifting; 4) sandwiched chronologically on one side by the creation/original purpose; 5) and on the other side by the keynote (goal) of the climax/second advent; 6) tackling the issue of the character of God (theodicy) in the context of the cosmic conflict (great controversy); 7) in the setting of the sanctuary (a window into the biblical system of truth and setting for the cosmic conflict). This chapter of Davidson’s also shows how he finds these same seven themes in Job (the “chronological introduction” of the Bible) and in the last three chapters of the Bible (Rev 20-22).

remains the normative statement that governs all others.”<sup>28</sup> It is not only the origin of the Bible’s teaching on anthropology but a microcosm of the biblical teaching on it. Moreover, Gen 1-3 does more to comprehensively answer both the question of human constitution together with the question of human nature than does any other biblical passage.

Of these three chapters, it is generally agreed that Gen 1:26-28 is the most important and succinct passage that sums up the Bible’s teaching on anthropology (and more specifically, personal ontology). The eminent Hebrew Bible scholar Theodorus C. Vriezen even goes as far as to say that it is the “best synthesis of the whole Old Testament message.”<sup>29</sup> And Kenneth A. Matthews, author of the New American Commentary on Genesis, states that this passage is “essential for interpreting the Christian faith with its proclamation regarding human life, the universal sinfulness of mankind, and the sole resolution of sin through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ.”<sup>30</sup>

If one holds to the theological method of a final-form canonical approach that considers Scripture to be divinely revealed and inspired by God, it is tenable to accept Gen 1-3 as programmatic for the entire canon’s teaching on personal ontology—an introduction and synthesis of it. This is so because of the unique nature of Gen 1-3 described above. It is also because this final-form canonical approach assumes that we

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<sup>28</sup> The quote is from biblical scholar and feminist theologian Phyllis Bird (“Bone of My Bone and Flesh of My Flesh,” *Theology Today* 50 [1994]). See footnote 55. The long tradition that sees Gen 1-3 as the ultimate statement on biblical anthropology goes back to Origen and Irenaeus, for example.

<sup>29</sup> *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell, 1970), 145. See Richard Davidson, “Biblical Anthropology and the Old Testament,” paper presented at the Third International Bible Conference, Israel (June 16, 2012).

<sup>30</sup> *Genesis 1—11:26* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 167.

should expect correspondence and coherence within the whole Bible, and that therefore such a comprehensive passage would not contradict the rest of Scripture's teaching on this matter.<sup>31</sup> For these reasons, and to manageably define the exegetical task of this dissertation, I chose Gen 1-3 as the passage from which to unfold a model of personal ontology that would be programmatic for a more complete model of personal ontology based on the whole biblical canon.

### Phenomenological-Exegetical Analysis

Phenomenological-exegetical analysis works effectively within the final-form canonical approach in part because of its suspension, insofar as possible, of *a priori* macro-hermeneutical principles of interpretation (many of which may be extra-biblical presuppositions).<sup>32</sup> This kind of analysis “attempts to describe the facts without resorting to hidden, behind-the-scenes sources, ideas, or causes. With this approach, one has to

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<sup>31</sup> See Peckham's "The Concept of Divine Love," ch. 1. It is true that biblical texts sometimes seem to contradict each other. In this case, one should exegete and study the passages with a mind to discover some correspondence and coherence that may have been overlooked. Additionally, I believe that if a model is uncovered from a biblical passage that is so foundational and comprehensive as Gen 1-3, such a model can serve as a guide to interpreting texts that may be more obscure, or may seem confusing or even contradictory.

<sup>32</sup> Macro-hermeneutical principles are the principles of ontology, epistemology, and articulation that underlie interpretation of theological data and of micro- and meso-hermeneutical principles (where micro-hermeneutics refers to biblical principles of interpretation and meso-hermeneutics refers to theological principles of interpretation). Canale borrows this terminology from Hans Küng, who uses it to analyze the matrix of disciplines within theological interpretation (Küng, *Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View*, trans. Peter Heinegg [New York: Doubleday, 1988], 134; Canale, "Evolution, Theology, and Method, Part 1," *Seminary Studies* 41/1 [Spring 2003]: 67, 68; Canale, "Evolution, Theology, and Method, Part 3," *Seminary Studies* 42/1 [Spring 2004]: 20, 21; Canale, "Evangelical Theology and Open Theism: Toward a Biblical Understanding of the Macro Hermeneutical Principles of Theology?" *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 12/2 [Autumn 2001]: 20-26). See also Peckham, "The Rationale for Canonical Theology: An Approach to Systematic Theology After Modernism," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 55/1 (2017): 83-105.

work with concrete realities and what is implicit in them.”<sup>33</sup>

Phenomenological-exegetical analysis is ideally suited to the unique methodological goals of this dissertation. For what is sought here is a model that arises, as purely as possible, from the text of the biblical Eden narrative itself. As the Eden narrative provides answers to the questions of personal ontology, the answers will stand on their own in this model—without assuming any framework of dualism, monism, or any other explanation that may seek to fit the biblical evidence into its own pre-established views of reality. This may deviate from the norm in Christian theology, where philosophical systems seem to be favored as the “as the main provider of the ‘system’ or intellectual framework for the development of Protestant theology.”<sup>34</sup> The goal of this dissertation, utilizing a final-form canonical approach and phenomenological-exegetical analysis, is for inner coherence to guide this study “to conceive and formulate its presuppositional structure employing a biblical rather than philosophical or scientific interpretation.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology: A Hermeneutical Study of the Revelation and Inspiration of the Bible* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005), 50. For phenomenological-exegetical analysis, these “concrete realities” are the phenomena of the biblical canon, and in no way draw from Husserl’s ontology and his theory that reality is based in human experience (Peckham, “The Concept of Divine Love,” 17). Peckham goes on to explain that such analysis “utilizes exegetically derived canonical data in order to uncover the first principles of reality that are implicit in the canon and, in so doing, address the conflict between the interpreter’s presupposed (whether conscious or unconscious) metaphysical framework and that which is constitutive of the internal logic of the canon.” This guards the exegete from a fate that Bultmann warns against: “Every exegesis that is guided by dogmatic prejudices does not hear what the text says, but only lets the latter say what it wants to hear” (*Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings by Rudolf Bultmann* [London: Collins, 1964], 343).

<sup>34</sup> Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 53. Along this line, Grant R. Osborne states that “all decisions are filtered through a network of tradition and preunderstanding, which itself exerts tremendous influence on our interpretations and choices” (*The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991], 396).

<sup>35</sup> Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 149. Canale argues that this goal should drive all development of Christian theology.

How can this be achieved? Through the following, which are some of the basic components of phenomenological-exegetical analysis, working within the context of a final-form canonical approach. At a fundamental level, phenomenological-exegetical analysis operates by utilizing the device of phenomenological *epoché* that “brackets out” macro-hermeneutical presuppositions and suspends judgment in order to let the text speak for itself.<sup>36</sup> The principle of “to the things themselves” furthers this goal, bringing the focus to the meaning of the text itself “as it appears,” instead of on interpretations that go “beyond” such text.<sup>37</sup>

With these guiding principles in place, the exegetical task begins.<sup>38</sup> The objective in this exegesis is to hear the intention of the author in the framework of the analogy of

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<sup>36</sup> After the macro-hermeneutical presuppositions are “bracketed out,” one can critically analyze the presuppositions and formulate ones that arise from the text itself. But before this, the text must be evaluated using textual, contextual (context of the pericopes), and intertextual analysis. This analysis can follow standard exegetical procedures as long as the principle of *epoché* is employed while doing so. *Epoché* as a device was popularized by Edmund Husserl, as a prerequisite to his method of phenomenological analysis. The following quotation illustrates this “suspension of judgment” at work: “All sciences which relate to this natural world . . . I disconnect them all, I make absolutely no use of their standards, I do not appropriate a single one of the propositions that enter into their systems, even though their evidential value is perfect, I take none of them, no one of them serves me for a foundation—so long, that is, as it is understood, in the way these sciences themselves understand it as a truth concerning the realities of this world. I may accept it only after I have placed it in the bracket” (*Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. by W.R. Boyce Gibson [London: George Allen & Unwin, 1952], 109). He applies phenomenological *epoché* to the mental and natural sciences (171).

<sup>37</sup> This principle was used in philosophy by Martin Heidegger (*Being and Time* [New York: Harper & Row, 1962], 2.7.c.).

<sup>38</sup> It is important in phenomenological-exegetical analysis to employ the tools of hermeneutical exegesis like textual, contextual, structural, grammatical, lexical, and historical-cultural analysis. For more on these tools, see: Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Primer for Students and Pastors*, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984); Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, rev. ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1993); Lee Gugliotto, *Handbook for Bible Study* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1995); Gerhard F. Hasel, *Understanding the Living Word of God* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1980) and *Biblical Interpretation Today* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1985); Osborne’s *The Hermeneutical Spiral*; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981).

Some examples of phenomenological-exegetical analysis in use: Canale, *Exodus 3:14: Toward a Biblical Ontology* (Unpublished Paper, 1981); his *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983); his *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: Searching for the Cognitive Foundation of Christian Theology in a Postmodern World* (Lanham, MD: University Press of

Scripture, and so this purpose is given prominence over other purposes such as isagogics.<sup>39</sup> Once the biblical data has been gathered and analyzed through hermeneutical exegesis, the interpreter asks the questions that pertain to the specific area of study being pursued.<sup>40</sup> The aim is to allow the text, which has been exegetically analyzed, to reveal its own presuppositions and theological truth on the topic, and insofar as possible, for the biblical student to simply observe and apprehend what these might be.

Another principle that enters in here, after the preliminary conclusions from the text have been drawn, is a consideration of the text's *Lebenswelt* or "life-world." When one's own worldview and presuppositions are bracketed out, this allows the text to speak for itself, which in turn allows the exegete to give the text's *Lebenswelt* the appropriate weight.<sup>41</sup> But care must be taken, once any conclusions are reached, to always go back to the text as it reads to compare and confirm that all conclusions (whether exegetical, theological, or "life-world") correspond and cohere to the text as a whole.

An appropriate metaphor to use here is Osborne's hermeneutical spiral, where biblical interpretation consists of "continuous interaction" between the text and context, the text's horizon and the interpreter's horizon—a process in which both "mutually correct one another, avoiding vicious circle [*sic*] and thereby moving closer and closer to

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America, 2001); Peckham's "The Concept of Divine Love"; and Tiago Arrais' "A Study on the Influence of Philosophical Presuppositions Relating to the Notion of the God-Human Relation upon the Interpretation of Exodus," Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University (2015).

<sup>39</sup> See Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 361, and Peckham, "The Concept of Divine Love," 16.

<sup>40</sup> Here, that study is personal ontology, and the two main questions relate to human constitution and human nature.

<sup>41</sup> Considering a text's context is not a new methodology. But the specific technical designation of *Lebenswelt* was introduced as method in phenomenology by Husserl in 1936. See his *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

the intended meaning in the text.”<sup>42</sup> This “continuous interaction between text and system forms a spiral upward to theological truth.”<sup>43</sup> But even when this theological truth has been attained, or in the case of this dissertation, even when a biblical Edenic model of personal ontology has been reached, these conclusions must always be subject to the canon of Scripture, always open to reworking based on better exegesis.

Moreover, how the results of the biblical analysis are presented should correlate to the principles above. Thus the results are to “show,” “describe,” or “hear” what is in the text itself, not to “construct” something more out of the text or “prove” a particular claim. For while phenomenological-exegetical analysis can study any “hidden” meaning (*sensus plenior*) that might be found “in” the text, it does not probe into meaning which may lie “behind” or “beyond” the text—again, because it seeks to simply allow the text to speak for itself.<sup>44</sup>

## Methodological Goals

### First Methodological Goal

Currently in Christian theology, two of the main overarching views of personal ontology are substance dualism and physicalism.<sup>45</sup> The first methodological goal (of

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<sup>42</sup> Peckham, “The Concept of Divine Love,” 16; and Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 392.

<sup>43</sup> Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 392.

<sup>44</sup> Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 296, 297. Additional resources for reading on *sensus plenior*: Raymond E. Brown, *The Sensus Plenior of Sacred Scripture* (Baltimore: St. Mary’s University, 1955); and Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 2.c.

<sup>45</sup> All in all, there are over one hundred views of personal ontology (Graham McFarlane, Review of “The Human Person in Science and Theology,” *Science and Christian Belief* 14/1 [April 2002]: 94, 95). The reason that these two model groupings were chosen for this dissertation’s study is because they have been the two most prominent overarching models of personal ontology in Christian theology since the last decades of the twentieth century. An additional view that it would be well to study in light of the Edenic model uncovered here would be hylomorphism. However, such a view has received renewed interest only in the last few years, and thus has been excluded from the scope of this dissertation (James Madden,

three) is to describe these views and show how they can be schematized into models. The methodology of using models as tools to categorize and analyze major views fits the broad aims of this dissertation well.<sup>46</sup> A model is like a framework which highlights “the main components and structure of any given doctrine,” and that is exactly what the large-scale task of this study needs in order for the study to be focused and productive.<sup>47</sup> Not surprisingly, the use of models has become increasingly common and beneficial in systematic theology for it facilitates the streamlined management of ever more complex and wide-ranging topics.<sup>48</sup>

For personal ontology, either a cursory or a comprehensive reading of this topic will show that it divides into two components, which can be summarized by the

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“Thomistic Hylomorphism and Philosophy of Mind and Philosophy of Religion,” *Philosophy Compass* 8/7 [July 2013]: 664-76). Another view, panpsychism, will likely expand its influence in Christian theology in the coming years, and thus also warrants future study in light of the Edenic model this dissertation will present. More discussion of this will follow in Chapter 2.

<sup>46</sup> The description of each model will include an explanation of any essential historical and philosophical background and an identification of the various ontological views that are subsumed under it. Care will be taken to keep the descriptions concise and limited solely to what is necessary for the purposes of the dissertation.

<sup>47</sup> Canale, *The Cognitive Principle*, 115. For further reading on such a method, see the following: Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962); Ian T. Ramsey, *Models and Mystery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); and Frederick Ferré, *Language, Logic and God* (New York: Harper, 1961).

A good example of this method utilized is H. Richard Niebuhr’s classic book on Christian social ethics, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper, 1951), and Avery Dulles’ books *Models of the Church* (New York: Image Books, 1974) and *Models of Revelation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992).

<sup>48</sup> David Tracy explains that there is a “widely accepted dictum in contemporary theology” regarding the “need to develop certain basic models or types for understanding the specific task of the contemporary theologian.” This responds to contemporary theology’s becoming progressively more complex, in part due to “different sets of criteria, different uses of evidence, and varying employments of . . . [other] disciplines within theologies” (*Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* [San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1988], 22).

Personal ontology was already a complex area of study which provoked many views, but contemporary factors (including those Tracy mentions above) have contributed to it becoming even more so. Undoubtedly a study of this topic could fast become unwieldy. Thus a structured methodology such as the model method of analysis is quite advantageous. Moreover, an additional benefit of using models is that they allow and encourage the right balance of historical context and avoid the extremes of trying to say everything or saying nothing at all (Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973]).



following questions: What are humans made of? And, what are humans most fundamentally?<sup>49</sup> The terms current scholarship employs when grappling with these questions of personal ontology are, respectively, constitution and nature. Accordingly, this dissertation will divide the topic of personal ontology into these two areas of analysis.

Constitution is one of the most foundational issues in personal ontology, for how can one study issues *about* humans and their significance before coming to an understanding of *what* humans are? What is their substance, of what are they constituted? Are they constituted by a physical, mental, spiritual substance—any or all of these? Once this question of constitution is addressed, the question of nature stands. This question handles the very definition of who humans are—what their identity is and how they are distinguished from other living beings.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> A sampling of references: Chapter 1 especially of Olson’s *What Are We?*; Corcoran’s “The Constitution View of Persons” in *In Search of the Soul*, 153-176, and his *Rethinking Human Nature: A Christian Materialist Alternative to the Soul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006); Baker’s *Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View*, Cambridge Studies in Philosophy (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and her *Naturalism and the First-Person Perspective* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2013); Ryan Wasserman, “Material Constitution,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta, ed., <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/material-constitution/> (accessed January 7, 2014); Kelsey’s *Eccentric Existence*, especially chapter 7; Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro, *A Brief History of the Soul* (Chichester, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); Robert Pasnau, “Philosophy of Mind and Human Nature,” *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, eds. B. Davies and E. Stump (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2012), 348-68; Phillip Cary, *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2000); Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2010).

These questions of personal ontology were famously studied by René Descartes. “What kind of thing am I?” (the question of constitution) he asks in his Second Meditation. “I think, therefore I am” (the question of nature) he expounds on in his *Discourse on Method (Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy)*, 4th ed. [Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998]). Baruch Spinoza takes Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum* and builds his own *ego sum cogitans*, which serves as a major landmark in the development of the study of human ontology (Heine Siebrand, “Spinoza and the Rise of Modern Science in the Netherlands,” in *Spinoza and the Sciences*, Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, vol. 91, eds. Marjorie Grene and Debra Nails [Dordrecht, The Netherlands: D. Reidel, 1986]).

<sup>50</sup> “Humaniqueness” is a recently coined and apropos term that Marc Hauser, evolutionary biologist at the forefront of the study of animal and human cognition, uses to describe the “factors that make human cognition special.” Amy Lavoie, “Hauser Presents Theory of ‘Humaniqueness,’” *Harvard*

## Second Methodological Goal

Utilizing models as a method of analysis brings out the basic structure of two main, overarching views of personal ontology in Christian theology today. This model method also serves the second methodological goal of seeking a biblically warranted model to respond to the current conflict of interpretations in personal ontology.<sup>51</sup> In light

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*Gazette* (February 14, 2008), <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2008/02/hauser-presents-theory-of-humaniqueness/> (accessed June 16, 2015).

Over two thousand years ago, Aristotle probed these two philosophical questions of personal ontology—constitution and identity (nature). He used the terms substance and essence—*ousia* (which is usually translated “substance” and sometimes “essence,” via the Latin translations *substantia* and *essentia*, respectively) and *einai* (specifically “essence,” via the Latin *essentia*)—to describe similar notions as this dissertation will in its usage of the terms constitution and nature. Below is a brief discussion of Aristotle’s usage of these terms. The reason it is included here is not because this dissertation subscribes to his ontological understanding of these terms, but instead to show that they have a long history of being important philosophical issues that warrant interpretation and explanation. *Substance (ousia)* is Aristotle’s first and most important category of being. Included within this first category is also his usage of the term *essence (einai)*. To Aristotle, substance (*ousia*) is an ontological term so basic that asking “What is substance?” is the same as asking “What is being?” (This *ousia-einai* connection is most readily seen in the original Greek text: “Aristotle, *Metaphysics*,” [7.1028b.1-5] in Tufts University’s Perseus Digital Library, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0051%3Abook%3D7%3Asection%3D1028b> [accessed March 13, 2013]). Of substance (*ousia*), Aristotle says (in *Metaphysics* VII:1): “Clearly then it is in virtue of this category [substance, *ousia*] that each of the others also is. Therefore that which *is* primarily, i.e. not in a qualified sense but without qualification, must be substance” (from MIT’s “the Internet Classic Archive”: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.7.vii.html> [accessed February 19, 2013; italics supplied]). *Essence (einai)* is included in Aristotle’s first category of substance (*ousia*) and is likewise fundamental (Aristotle’s first category is *ousia*; translating it as both “substance” and “essence” together brings the fullest understanding). To Aristotle, substance (*ousia*) is essence (*einai*), with qualifications (*Metaphysics* VII:4). “The essence for each thing is that which is said [of it] [or: what it is said to be] ‘in respect of itself . . . What you are ‘in respect of yourself’, then [—that is your essence]” (*Metaphysics: Books Zeta, Eta, Theta, Iota* [Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1985], 6). Or: “What, then, you are by your very nature is your essence” (“*Metaphysics*” VII:4, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.7.vii.html> [accessed March 12, 2013]). In other words, “the essence is precisely (*hoper*) what something is,” its definition (in *Metaphysics* VII:4; quoted in Barry D. Smith’s “Aristotle” lecture, Crandall University, <http://www.abu.nb.ca/courses/grphil/aristotle.htm#A333> [accessed March 11, 2013]). Aristotle’s *Categories* can be found in Jonathan Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. I (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 3-24. Both substance (*ousia*) and essence (*einai*) should be considered because they bring out two valuable nuances: Substance deals with what a thing is materially, what it is constituted of; essence handles what it is by definition (S. Marc Cohen, “Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [Summer 2012 Edition], Edward N. Zalta, ed., <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/Aristotle-metaphysics> [accessed October 22, 2012]).

<sup>51</sup> Avery Dulles speaks to the dual purpose of model methodology: “On the explanatory level, models serve to synthesize what we already know or at least are inclined to believe. A model is accepted if it accounts for a large number of biblical and traditional data and accords with what history and experience tell us about the Christian life [this describes this dissertation’s first methodological goal]. . . . By the exploratory, or heuristic, use of models, I mean their capacity to lead to new theological insights [this dissertation’s second methodological goal]” (*Models of the Church*, 17).

of the current theological impasse, surely new insights would be beneficial. Perhaps uncovering a model that originates from the biblical canon might yield some of these insights and a new way of looking at an old theological problem.<sup>52</sup>

Accordingly, I conducted an inductive reading of the biblical canon to ascertain the scope of the passages that speak to personal ontology.<sup>53</sup> To the texts that speak most directly to it, I devoted an exegetical study in the original language, for the purpose of gaining a more in-depth and fresh understanding of these issues.<sup>54</sup> From this inductive and exegetical study, I came to believe that the essential points of what Scripture has to say on personal ontology can be found in the Eden narrative of Genesis 1-3.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See, again, footnote 21. A paradigm shift is most needed when basic assumptions no longer yield satisfactory solutions to problems, and when disagreements arise and intensify (Thomas S. K ung, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3d ed. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press], 1996). A paradigm is first a model “that rises to the status of a paradigm when it has proved successful in solving a great variety of problems and is expected to be an appropriate tool for unraveling anomalies as yet unsolved” (*Models of the Church*, 21).

<sup>53</sup> All this was a part of my pre-dissertation study, in order to arrive at the basic text source for the biblical research portion of my dissertation.

<sup>54</sup> The passages I chose to devote more in-depth exegetical analysis to were the following: Gen 1-11, Eccl, Job, Ps 8, and every New Testament occurrence of the anthropological terms *pneuma*, *psuche*, *kardia*, *nous*, *soma*, *sarx*, *splagchnon*, and *suneidesis*.

<sup>55</sup> I am not the only one to believe this. Quoting Phyllis Bird again on this topic: “The Bible’s first statement concerning humankind remains the normative statement that governs all others.” Theologians even as far back as Origen have based their theological anthropology on these key chapters (Anders-Christian Lund Jacobsen, “Genesis 1-3 as Source for the Anthropology of Origen,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 62 [2008], 213-32; also Jacobsen’s “The Importance of Genesis 1-3 in the Theology of Irenaeus,” *Zeitschrift f ur antikes Christentum* 8/2 [2004], 299-316). Furthermore, these are the biblical texts that are most at the crux of the current science-religion dialogue in regards to human ontology (Paul Jersild, “Rethinking the Human Being in Light of Evolutionary Biology,” *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 47/1 [Spring 2008], 37-52). John Rankin speaks to an even broader interpretive role of Gen 1-3: “Whether one is evangelical or liberal, it is clear that Genesis 1-3 is the interpretative foundation of all Scripture” (“Power and Gender at the Divinity School,” in *Finding God at Harvard: Spiritual Journeys of Thinking Christians*, ed. Kelly Monroe [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996], 203). See also Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Anthropology and the Old Testament,” Paper presented at the Third International Bible Conference, Israel, June 16, 2012.

Not only is Gen 1-3 like a microcosm of all of Scripture’s teaching on personal ontology, but according to Rankin above, the Eden narrative plays this role in theology as a whole. Some see this as a “tectonic shift . . . nothing short of a paradigm shift from a once-exclusive stress upon the mighty interventions of God in history to God’s formative and sustaining ways in creation” (William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride, Jr., eds., *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* [Grand Rapids, MI:

Regarding the question of constitution, the most obvious place to look for an answer in Scripture would be in the most detailed account of how humans were constituted originally. The best place in Scripture to look for an answer to the question of nature would be a passage which gives the most thorough explanation of humans' standing and uniqueness both in relation to God and to other creatures. In both of these cases, the biblical account with the most relevant information is also the first account of humans in the Bible. The fact that such a thorough description of humans' constitution and nature is given in the very first biblical narratives highlights the importance of this topic and adds weight to the answers Gen 1-3 gives to the questions we are asking.

In addition, the Eden narrative is a choice pericope to study because it shows both what personal ontology was in an ideal, perfect world, and how it changed after the entrance of sin, thus giving us a fuller and more valuable perspective. This dissertation will therefore focus on the constitution and nature of human ontology in the Eden narrative, while drawing on other biblical texts to dialogue with this narrative.<sup>56</sup> I will undertake exegesis of these passages, and will also engage with relevant scholarly

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Eerdmans, 2000], xi; see also Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007], 2-6). Increasingly, the Eden narrative is coming alongside the centrality of the Cross to serve as a foundation for biblical understanding and interpretation. See Richard M. Davidson, "Back to the Beginning: Genesis 1-3 and the Theological Center of Scripture," in *Christ, Salvation, and the Eschaton*, eds. Daniel Heinz, Jiří Moskala, and Peter M. van Bemmelen (Berrien Springs, MI: Old Testament Publications, 2009), 5-29; Lilian Calles Barger, "Eve's Revenge: Women and a Spirituality of the Body" (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2003), 128; Deborah F. Sawyer, "God, Gender and the Bible" (London: Routledge, 2002), 24, 29.

<sup>56</sup> The idea that Gen 1-3 is programmatic for the biblical model of personal ontology presupposes a wholistic view of Scripture in which the final form of the biblical canon is a justifiable unit of study, and in which Scripture serves as its own expositor. For more on this final-form canonical approach that the dissertation will adhere to, see the following: Johnson T.K. Lim, "Towards a Final Form Approach to Biblical Interpretation," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 7/1-2 (1999): 1-11; Peckham, "The Analogy of Scripture Revisited: A Final Form Canonical Approach to Systematic Theology," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 22 (2011): 41-53; and chapter 1 of Peckham's dissertation. Luke 24:27 is just one of many biblical texts that has given rise to such views: "Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he *interpreted* to them *in all the scriptures* the things concerning himself" (italics supplied). For more, see footnote 23.

exegetical work, especially that which employs the *sola-tota-prima Scriptura* principle as a methodological presupposition.<sup>57</sup> The methodology of phenomenological-exegetical analysis will be employed in this study, as well as various hermeneutical tools as needed.<sup>58</sup>

### **Third Methodological Goal**

The third and final methodological goal is to compare the Edenic model of personal ontology with the two divisions of models that will have already been discussed. As important as it is for theologians to look for new models when current models remain in conflict, their task is not complete until they “compare that model critically with other existing models.”<sup>59</sup> To this end, the final step of a model methodology often involves evaluating, by means of a comparative method, the various models that have been

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<sup>57</sup> Exegetical work that employs the *sola-tota-prima Scriptura* principle is favored because it furthers this dissertation’s purpose of unveiling strictly biblical answers (specifically, ones found in the Eden narrative) to the issue of personal ontology. The *sola Scriptura* principle declares that the Bible alone is the “final norm of truth” (Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000], 60). The *tota Scriptura* principle affirms that this refers to Scripture in all its parts, and the *prima Scriptura* principle puts Scripture in first place with the prerogative to test and judge all other sources (Canale, “*Sola Scriptura* and Hermeneutics: Toward a Critical Assessment of the Methodological Ground of the Protestant Reformation,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 50/2 [2012]: 179-205). These principles are encapsulated in the Formula of Concord: “The prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged” (Theodore G. Tappert, ed., “Formula of Concord [1575-1577],” in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 2000], 464). They are also expressed throughout the Bible (e.g., Isa 8:16, 20; 66:2; 1 Tim 3:16).

<sup>58</sup> Again, phenomenological-exegetical analysis is a purely descriptive method, as much as possible “making use of no preconceived ideas and constructions,” for “if there is to be final understanding, it is necessary to get back of all interpretations by mind, and to question and justify all assumptions.” (Marvin Farber, “The Function of Phenomenological Analysis,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1/4 [June 1941], 441, 433; see also “The Ideal of a Presuppositionless Philosophy,” in *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl*, ed. Marvin Farber [New York: Greenwood, 1968], 62).

<sup>59</sup> Tracy, 22.

presented.<sup>60</sup> This dissertation will utilize a comparative method, attempting to establish which model has the higher power of explanation and whether the Edenic model can overcome some of the disagreements that exist between current models of explanation.

This analytical goal will be achieved by comparing how the three interpretive models address the subjects of constitution and nature. Starting with constitution and then moving on to nature, the perspective of each model will be presented. Next, the points of convergence and divergence between the models will be identified. After that, it will be determined whether the Edenic model opens to view a better or more helpful alternative to the current models. Does it bring any resolution to the conflict of interpretations? Is it a strong and logical model of explanation that overcomes the limitations of existing models while answering current questions about personal ontology? Finally, a summary and conclusion of the findings will be given.

### Procedure

The dissertation is divided into five chapters that seek to reach the objective of this study—namely, to compare the three interpretive models of personal ontology in the areas of constitution and nature. Chapter 1 describes the problem and its background, the

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<sup>60</sup> Comparative methods are not novel and are utilized across the disciplines, especially in philosophy, linguistics, biology, and the social sciences. The following are a couple studies that have to do with comparative analysis about and in phenomenology: John R. Hall, “Max Weber’s Methodological Strategy and Comparative Lifeworld Phenomenology,” *Human Studies* 4/2 (April-June 1981): 131-43; Nicholas F. Gier, *Wittgenstein and Phenomenology: A Comparative Study of the Later Wittgenstein, Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1981). Some comparative methods are strictly codified, and others are freer and follow whatever rubric the researcher chooses. This dissertation falls more under the latter category. Dulles’ *Models of Revelation* gives a good example of a comparative method in use in systematic theology. After five models of revelation are explicated, Dulles includes chapter VIII—“The Models Compared.” In this chapter, he compares the models first by bringing out common points of reference, then by identifying divergences and apparent contradictions between them. Finally, he chooses seven criteria by which to appraise the values and disvalues of each model. He then uses the notion of “symbolic mediation” to combine the best from each model and form a better whole.

purpose of the study and its delimitations, and the methodology used throughout the dissertation.<sup>61</sup> Chapter 2 describes the dissertation's choice to focus on substance dualism and physicalism as two overarching model groupings in personal ontology, and briefly traces their development. Using a methodology of model analysis, these two model groupings are described and compared, employing the two ontological rubrics of constitution and nature to do so.

Chapter 3 seeks to uncover an Edenic model of personal ontology, using the phenomenological-exegetical method and a final-form canonical approach that were earlier described. Chapter 4 compares this newly uncovered model with two main models in Christian theology today, seeking to ascertain whether it might offer solutions for overcoming the present conflict of interpretations. Finally, Chapter 5 gives a brief summary of the dissertation's findings, and offers some conclusions and implications, including an exploration of the effect on Christian doctrine and praxis that might come from adopting a purely biblical view of personal ontology.

### **Delimitations**

There are many fascinating areas for theological and philosophical study that are directly related to this dissertation's topic. Yet to maintain focus, it is imperative that this study be limited in the manner described. Having said this, Chapters 2 and 3 are the

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<sup>61</sup> The following is an abbreviated summary of methodologies used. The first methodological goal is to describe two main views of personal ontology current in Christian theology and show how they can be schematized into models. This task is taken up in Chapter 2 and utilizes models as its method of analysis. The second methodological goal is to seek a purely biblical Edenic model to respond to the current conflict of interpretations in personal ontology. Accordingly, Chapter 3 utilizes phenomenological-exegetical analysis as its main method to arrive at this end. Finally, the third methodological goal is to compare the Edenic model of personal ontology with the two models outlined in Chapter 2. Here a comparative method of analysis will be utilized, and this will comprise Chapter 4. No explanation of methodology is required for the introductory and concluding chapters of this dissertation, which will follow standard form.

chapters that necessitate the most delimitation. In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, two of the main models of personal ontology in Christian theology today are delineated. This dissertation's purpose is not to offer a comprehensive historical treatment of these views, but to compare their recent manifestations with a biblical Eden-narrative model. Because of the breadth of this topic, strong effort will be made to limit the discussion of these models, saying only what is requisite for an essential understanding of them. A deeper evaluation will develop in Chapter 4's comparative analysis.

As stated previously, to limit the scope of research in Chapter 3, I will not personally conduct exegesis of all the relevant biblical texts but rather focus my exegetical efforts on Genesis 1-3, and dialogue with scholars who have conducted more extensive or in-depth exegesis. This will enable a more thorough engagement of the issues that arise from the work of biblical exegesis. The hope is that such analysis will help uncover an Edenic model of personal ontology. With this in mind, we now turn to look at the current views in Christian theology regarding the fascinating and much-debated topic of personal ontology.



## CHAPTER 2

### MODELS OF PERSONAL ONTOLOGY

#### **Historical Background of Models of Personal Ontology in Christian Theology**

Recently, there has been a voluminous flurry of research in areas of study pertaining to the philosophy of mind. In fact, it has been called one of the “most vigorously debated areas in recent philosophy.”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, in this debate, the opinions are so varied and nuanced that a plethora of new theories has developed. The mind-body problem especially “remains wide open.”<sup>2</sup> For the most part, however, the philosophical and religious foundations of current views are not novel, but actually have a long and storied history that can help us understand them better.

It is not surprising that the question of personal ontology—“What am I?”—began to be asked very early in human history. Human nature is inquisitive and reflective, so it is only natural that humans were curious about their constitution and wondered about this nature of theirs (a nature that, when compared with that of animals, uniquely caused them to ask such questions).<sup>3</sup> This dissertation has chosen two divisions of models to analyze

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<sup>1</sup> See David Woodruff Smith, “Phenomenology,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta, ed., <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/#6> (accessed July 16, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Kevin Corcoran, ed., *Soul, Body, and Survival: Essays on the Metaphysics of Human Persons* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2001), 11.

<sup>3</sup> Admittedly, the designations “animals” and “humans” I have used here may be seen as outdated. In the current debate over animals in the fields of biology, religion, and philosophy, animals are generally

because they are prominent views within Christian theology today: substance dualist models, and physicalist models.<sup>4</sup>

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referred to as non-human animals, which assumes that humans should be considered human animals. I am not against these designations. However, this chapter deals more with historical views on this subject, so I have chosen to use terms that are consistent with the usage throughout history—humans and animals. Additionally, the next chapter deals with biblical material, and the terms humans and animals work better in that context as well. Since these two chapters are the ones that deal with the sources I have chosen to gather data from, and since these designations are more consistent with the designations in my sources, I have chosen to continue using the terminology of human and animal throughout the dissertation, for the sake of clarity.

<sup>4</sup> A note here should be made about emergentism. This theory serves as an explanatory principle about how the mental can emerge (or evolve) from the physical. It is employed by both substance dualist models and physicalist models to describe this. The difference is that with substance dualist models, the mental that emerges is a non-physical substance (*Soul, Body, and Survival*, 117: “I suggest, then, ‘emergent dualism’ as a name which brings to the fore both the theme of emergence and the undeniable affinities between the ‘soul-field’ postulated here and the mind as conceived by traditional dualism”). Alternately, with physicalist models, the mental that emerges is still of the same physical substance as the body (this is called “emergent materialism”). Here is how a new entity emerges from the physical substance in “strong emergence”: Emergent laws co-exist with physical laws and are just as important as them. Such strong emergence makes possible that “the body generates the soul,” but with this new “soul” substance still so dependent on the physical that it cannot survive without it (Timothy O’Connor, “Causality, Mind, and Free Will,” in *Soul, Body, and Survival: Essays on the Metaphysics of Human Persons*, ed. by Kevin Corcoran [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001], 50; see also William Hasker’s chapter in the same book, “Persons as Emergent Substances,” 107-19, and also his *The Emergent Self*). In explaining this, Hasker uses the analogy of various fields in the physical world—for example, the gravitational field. He says: “We can say that as a magnet generates its magnetic field, so the brain generates its field of consciousness. The mind, like the magnetic field, comes into existence when the constituents of its ‘material base’ are arranged in a suitable way—in this case, in the extremely complex arrangement found in the nervous systems of animals. And like the magnetic field, it exerts a causality of its own; certainly on the brain itself, and conceivably also on other minds (telepathy?) or aspects of the material world (telekinesis?).” Even so, this “soul” is not merely an emergent property, for “a new individual entity . . . comes into existence as a result of a certain functional configuration of the material constituents of the brain and nervous system” (Hasker in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, 116). Currently, however, emergentism is “generally at a loss to explain either the criterion for this emergence or how the qualities of mind or consciousness are linked to biological/functional complexity. Emergentism, in all forms, is thus profoundly incomplete at present” (David Skrbina, *Panpsychism in the West* [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007], 185).

The theory of emergentism was first introduced by the skeptic John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) in his 1825 *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive: Being a Connected View of the Principle* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1868). However, upon arrival of the evolutionary theory, emergentism incorporated evolutionism into its philosophy, for it matched nicely with its views. Since then, emergentism has been intimately tied to evolutionism. This is seen in how C. Lloyd Morgan (1852-1936) defines emergence as how evolutionism “displays at certain points something which is genuinely new, not a mere re-grouping of pre-existent events” (Flora I. Mackinnon, “The Meaning of ‘Emergent’ in Lloyd Morgan’s ‘Emergent Evolution,’” *Mind* XXXIII/131 [July 1, 1924]: 311; see also Morgan, *Emergent Evolution* [London: Williams and Norgate, 1927]). Morgan developed the theory of emergent evolution, in which from space/time emerges matter, from matter emerges life, from life emerges mind, from mind emerges values, from values emerges the “quality of deity—the highest of all . . . in us the latest products of evolution up to date” (*Emergent Evolution*, 9-11). From here, it is not difficult to see how emergentism could be employed in religious philosophy to explain the mental aspects of personal ontology, among other things. See, for example, Hasker’s *The Emergent Self* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

The philosophical roots of these views can all be traced back early in human history, even if each view may have not become prominent until a later period. The following sections will briefly trace the evolution of these two over-arching views through history, focusing on the historical periods in which they had the most prominence, and culminating with their current manifestation in Christian theology. After setting the historical stage, the focus will then turn to a more detailed description of these two divisions of models.

### Substance Dualist Models

Plato is often seen as the earliest and most prominent dualist philosopher.<sup>5</sup> However, while this is true in regards to the Western philosophical tradition, anthropological dualism can actually be traced back a few more centuries to the Yoga school in Hindu philosophy, which posited a dichotomy between mind/spirit and the material. Some believe dualism has even earlier Hindu roots, based on myths recounted in the second-millennium B.C. Rig Veda.<sup>6</sup> It is not difficult to see correlations between dualist anthropological conceptions in both eastern and Greek philosophy, making it plausible that the older eastern philosophy may have influenced the newer western philosophy.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For a very brief summary of his philosophy, especially his two-world theory and Myth of the Cave, see Donald Palmer, *Looking at Philosophy: The Unbearable Heaviness of Philosophy Made Lighter*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006), 59-71.

<sup>6</sup> Gerald James Larson, *Classical Sāṃkhya: An Interpretation of Its History and Meaning* (London: Motilal Banarasidass, 1998), 79.

<sup>7</sup> A.N. Marlow, "Hinduism and Buddhism in Greek Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West* 4/1 (April 1954): 35-45. Rahula Basnagoda, "The Untold Story about Greek Rational Thought: Buddhist and Other Rationalist Influences on Sophist Rhetoric," Ph.D. thesis, Texas Tech University (2000).

Charles Werner, *La Philosophie grecque* (Paris: Payot, 1928), 14: "Toute la première philosophie grecque, toute cette magnifique efflorescence, n'eût pas existé si la pensée grecque n'avait plongé ses racines dans l'âme profonde de l'Orient."

In western philosophy, Plato was the earliest philosopher to present such a developed dualist model of personal ontology.<sup>8</sup> “No one, in truth, has contributed more, and in a more enduring form, to the triumph of the dualistic anthropology than has Plato.”<sup>9</sup> His views were so significant that “the conception of the soul common to all the [Church] Fathers is essentially Platonic,” and it has been said that in Plato’s *Phaedo* “occurs perhaps the highest and most sublime doctrine ever presented on the immortality of the soul.”<sup>10</sup> Although a belief in the immortality of the soul is not held by every substance dualist, a belief in substance dualism often serves as a foundation for a belief in the immortality of the soul.

Origen (185-254) was the earliest most prominent theologian to bring some of Plato’s ideas of the soul and anthropological dualism into Christianity. He was a radical dualist, meaning he believed that the soul “is separable from the body, and the person is

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<sup>8</sup> “The main characteristic of that Platonic conception of the soul is its separability from the body” (Harry Wolfson, “Immortality and Resurrection in the Philosophy of the Church Fathers,” in *Immortality and Resurrection*, ed. by Krister Stendahl [New York: Macmillan, 1965], 79). Plato believed that each soul pre-existed the body it inhabited, was then imprisoned in that mortal body, and then returned to the realm of the Forms upon the death of the body. Obviously, the substance dualist models in Christian theology today do not adhere to all these beliefs of Plato. Yet Plato’s contribution to the historical development of substance dualism (which was then adopted into Christian theology) was vital and immense.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Zucher, *Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1968), 16.

<sup>10</sup> Wolfson, 79; followed by Oscar Cullman, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 19. Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. F. J. Church (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1951). Earlier Greek philosophers who, like Plato, believed in the eternity of the soul were Pythagoras and Parmenides. But many feel still that it was Plato who implanted in the heart of philosophy the theological idea of the personal immortality of the soul” (Zucher, 16), a doctrine which is commonly held by anthropological dualists in Christian theology (see Geisler, 350-56). See this passage from Plato’s *Timaeus*: “And we should consider that God gave the sovereign part of the human soul to be the divinity of each one, being that part which, as we say, dwells at the top of the body, and inasmuch as we are a plant not of an earthly but of a heavenly growth, raises us from earth to our kindred who are in heaven. And in this we say truly, for the divine power suspends the head and root of us from that place where the generation of the soul first began, and thus makes the whole body upright . . . and in so far as human nature is capable of sharing in immortality, he must altogether be immortal, and since he is ever cherishing the divine power and has the divinity within him in perfect order, he will be singularly happy” (Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, including the Letters*, Bollingen Series LXXI (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), 1209 (90a-c).

identified with the former.” Additionally he believed in the soul’s pre-existence, incorporeality, and eternity.<sup>11</sup> He, and other neoplatonist perspectives on theological anthropology, helped to form Augustine’s views on human nature.

Augustine (354-430) emerged as the theologian who has had undoubtedly the greatest and most lasting influence on Christian conceptions of personal ontology and philosophy of mind as a whole. He did present a more moderate view of the soul than did Origen—holding to its immortality and separability but not its eternity.<sup>12</sup> Yet he still made his notion of the immortal soul (and substance dualism) a very prominent and indispensable part of his theological schema. This doctrine was not at all isolated from the rest of Christian doctrine. For instance, it developed his view of spirituality, which to him primarily meant the care and nurturing of the soul. This influenced his view of salvation, which he taught was achieved through such development of the soul. Certainly his conceptions of the soul have shaped Christian conceptions of personal ontology, and resultantly, a host of other doctrines to this day.<sup>13</sup>

Augustine’s view that “one knows one’s own soul directly” and that “the soul is to the body as an agent to a tool” associated the human person more strongly with the soul than with the body, and allowed causal interaction from the soul to the body but not

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<sup>11</sup> *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 24, 4.

<sup>12</sup> And even though Augustine strongly supported belief in the separability of the soul, he at the same time held that “only when the soul . . . again receives this body [at the resurrection] . . . will it have the perfect measure of its being” (quoted from Augustine’s *Literal Commentary on Genesis* 12.35.68 in *Personal Identity in Theological Perspective*, ed. by Richard Lints, Michael S. Horton, Mark R. Talbot [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006], 27.

<sup>13</sup> In fact, I believe that Augustinian personal ontology has had an effect on perhaps every Christian belief (Roman Catholic and Protestant)—for instance: evangelization called “saving souls,” the “communion of the saints,” spirituality as the development of the soul. For more on how dualist presuppositions have had an effect on doctrines of the Christian church, see Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

the body to the soul.<sup>14</sup> This unresolved gap in his notion of personal ontology became a major area of study for some Enlightenment philosophers of mind. First, René Descartes (1596-1650) developed a substance dualism that followed along the line of Augustine, but posited the pineal gland as the possible locus of interaction between the mind and the brain. Significantly Descartes, the father of modern philosophy, re-termed this problem of interactionism as one between the mind and brain, not the soul and body. This paved the way for the more secular discussion that developed, and still continues, regarding the mind-body problem.

While Descartes held to interactionism, the belief that mind and body interact with each other, philosophers of mind who came on the scene shortly thereafter posited different theories. Baruch Spinoza (1634-1677), with his theory of parallelism, stated that mental events and physical events are coordinated, and that God is the agent active in coordinating them.<sup>15</sup> Parallelism then took on a couple of different varieties. Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715) attempted to reconcile Augustinian personal ontology and Cartesian dualism and arrived at occasionalism, “the theory that mind and body are separate realities which do not interact but that events occur in one as they occur in the other according as God wills their occurrence.”<sup>16</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) developed a related idea of pre-established harmony, which states that “physical events cause physical events, that mental events cause mental events, and that the *appearance* of causal interaction between the mental and the physical is an illusion

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<sup>14</sup> *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 5.

<sup>15</sup> For a contemporary take on Spinoza in relation to neurobiology, see Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> Milton D. Hunnax, *Chronological and Thematic Charts of Philosophers and Philosophies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1986).

created by the fact that there is a pre-established harmony between these two independent causal chains.”<sup>17</sup>

The theories of parallelism did not remain popular, and while the majority of Christian theologians then and now would agree that mental and physical events are coordinated, they would leave this function either to the mind or to the brain. God may play a part in how minds or brains operate, but the consensus is that he certainly is not actively coordinating each specific mental event with each specific physical event. Today interactionism (between the mental/spiritual and physical) is the prevailing view of dualism, although the locus and mode of interaction has developed beyond Descartes’ theory that interaction takes place in the pineal gland.

Substance dualism, in addition to being the classical conception of personal ontology, also remains a predominant view in Christian theology today.<sup>18</sup> It claims that each human individual is constituted of two substances, the mental and the physical.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 9.

<sup>18</sup> The introduction to *Christian Physicalism?: Philosophical Theological Criticisms* (ed. by R. Keith Loftin and Joshua R. Farris [Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018]) states that “Christians who are committed to Nicene Catholic Christianity are nearly compelled to believe in the doctrine of the soul, however one may work that out . . . Short of calling Christian materialism [used here interchangeably with physicalism] a heresy, it is a deviation from the received wisdom of ecumenical Christianity. The Church has made plain the near universal agreement that some doctrine of immateriality is central to our confession of the *anthropos*” (xix, xx). Accordingly, the Westminster Confession (1647) states: “After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortable souls” (quoted in Robert Duncan Culver, *Systematic Theology: Biblical & Historical* [Fearn, United Kingdom: Christian Focus Publications, 2005], 1019).

<sup>19</sup> J.O. Buswell states, in *Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion I* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1962), 237: “That according to the Bible man is both a material and a non-material substantive entity, both body and soul, and that these two aspects of man are not only logically distinguishable, but separable, so that at death the non-material man goes into the realm of the unseen [either], heaven or the place of the wicked dead, to be reunited with his body at the resurrection, and that the body returns to the dust, awaiting the resurrection—that there is this two-fold division in the being of man as presented in the Scripture is most obvious” (quoted in Culver, 259). Culver continues, after this quote, by writing this as evidence of the truthfulness of anthropological dualism: “People have always thought this way. The slightest acquaintance with the religion and mythology of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece and Rome and any other large group known to man, demonstrates that belief in the existence and ‘immortality’ of the

According to Jaworski, it holds “that persons and bodies are distinct. Persons, such as you and I, are purely mental beings; we have no physical properties. Bodies, on the other hand, including human organisms, are purely physical beings; they have no mental properties.”<sup>20</sup> Thus substance dualism states that “persons are not metaphysically identical with their bodies nor any physical object or process.”<sup>21</sup>

Today the most common forms of dualism are pure dualism, compound dualism, and holistic dualism. Eric T. Olson argues that pure dualism is the less problematic interpretation of Cartesian dualism, even though he and most current philosophers do not subscribe to it.<sup>22</sup> Pure dualism is close to idealism and states that “your body . . . may be as intimately connected with you as you like; but it is not a part of you”: *you* are immaterial.<sup>23</sup> This view can also be called radical dualism, which is defined thus: “the soul (or mind) is separable from the body, and the person is identified with the former.”<sup>24</sup>

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soul is a universal human orthodoxy produced and enforced by conscience, *Ubique, semper, ab omnibus*” (259).

Trichotomism is a related view that holds that the person is composed of three substances—body, soul, spirit. This tended to be the view of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa; however, it is certainly a minority view in Christian theology today. For an exposition of this view, see John B. Heard, *The Tripartite Nature of Man: Spirit, Soul and Body* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2007; first published in 1875); also Culver, 273; also Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 477-78.

<sup>20</sup> William Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Chichester, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 52.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Taliaferro, “Emergentism and Consciousness: Going Beyond Property Dualism,” in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, 61. This agrees with a common substance dualist view of death, as described by Culver: “Constitutionally, as a human being, normally existing as an ensouled body or stated otherwise (either is correct) an embodied soul, death is a radical rupture—a parturition of body from soul (or spirit)” (1021).

<sup>22</sup> Eric T. Olson, “A Compound of Two Substances,” in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, 73-88.

<sup>23</sup> Olson, “A Compound of Two Substances,” 73, 74.

<sup>24</sup> *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 24.



Despite the fact that this view may feel antiquated, a few current philosophers do seem to subscribe to pure dualism. Wilbur Hart sees the thesis that “you could be disembodied” to be central to substance dualism.<sup>25</sup> This means that self is not defined as a union of soul and body (or immaterial and material), but simply as a soul or that which is immaterial, since it is capable of surviving without the body.<sup>26</sup> Along a similar vein, John Foster defines dualism as “the thesis that the mind and its contents are radically nonphysical.”<sup>27</sup> He describes how one can still be considered a dualist even when emphasizing the immaterial so much that it seems as if one is an idealist/monist, and he says that a dualist can hold reality to be wholly mental while also accepting the reality of the physical world.<sup>28</sup> Joshua Farris also recently wrote an article defending the merits of pure dualism as opposed to the more common variations of compound dualism.<sup>29</sup>

Besides pure dualism, the other more popular interpretation of Cartesian or substance dualism is compound dualism, which gives the body more importance than pure dualism does. Olson defines it as saying that “both soul and body are parts of you, though only the soul is essential to you: you could outlive your body if your soul continued to exist, but no one could survive the destruction of one’s soul.”<sup>30</sup> It is unclear

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<sup>25</sup> *The Engines of the Soul* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 5.

<sup>26</sup> This ties in with the modal argument, which states that “while the person and body are intimately causally bound together, it is metaphysically possible for the person to exist without his body and it is possible for his body to exist without him” (Taliaferro, *Soul, Body, and Survival*, 61). Hart, Taliaferro, and Swinburne speak more about this argument in their writings that are cited in this chapter.

<sup>27</sup> “A Defense of Dualism,” in *The Case for Dualism*, eds. John R. Smythies, and John Beloff (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1989), 1.

<sup>28</sup> See also Foster’s *The Immaterial Self*.

<sup>29</sup> “Pure or Compound Dualism? Considering Afresh the Prospects of Pure Substance Dualism,” *Argument* 3 (1/2013): 151-59.

<sup>30</sup> Olson, “A Compound of Two Substances,” 73, 74.

whether pure dualism or compound dualism is the better interpretation of Descartes' writings because he himself seems to support both views, even though they are incompatible.<sup>31</sup>

The next view on the spectrum of dualism is holistic dualism, defined thus: "the person is a composite of separable 'parts' but is to be identified with the whole, whose normal functioning is as a unity."<sup>32</sup> This view is similar to compound dualism, but places more emphasis on the unity of the "separable parts," likely because it tries to provide an explanation that reconciles substance dualism with recent science. It is championed most prominently within Christian theology by John Cooper, who chose this term "to capture both the unity of human nature and the possibility of personal existence without a body."<sup>33</sup> Additionally, he states that "dualistic holism" could serve as an alternative name for this view, for those who seek to stress the holistic part of this view over the dualistic part. He asserts that this view, with either name, still falls within the territory of substance dualism.

### Physicalist Models

Physicalist models of personal ontology state that the constitution of human beings is physical. Physicalism or materialism in ontology is often thought of as

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<sup>31</sup> Olson, "A Compound of Two Substances," 74. Olson gives some examples from Descartes' writing: "Descartes himself, in the Sixth Meditation, says, 'it is certain that I am really distinct from my body,' and that 'I and the body form a unit' (I and the body, not the soul and the body); yet he describes himself a few lines later as 'a combination of body and mind.'"

<sup>32</sup> *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 24.

<sup>33</sup> *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, xxx.

springing from the Enlightenment.<sup>34</sup> But its roots go at least as far back as pre-Socratic pluralists Leucippus (d. 370 B.C.) and Democritus (ca. 460-ca. 370 B.C.)—if not to the earlier Empedocles (d. ca. 440 B.C.) with his four elements or to Anaxagoras (ca. 500-ca. 428 B.C.) with his “infinite seeds” as the most basic ontological reality.<sup>35</sup> The ideas of these philosophies stood in contrast to those of Parmenides (ca. 515-ca. 440 B.C.), who believed that all is Being—“uncreated, indestructible, eternal, and indivisible” Being.<sup>36</sup> Parmenides’ ideas certainly had more of an influence over theological tradition, and it took a long while for a more materialist philosophy to gain ground within Christianity. However, it is still important to trace the development of physicalist models before they found space in Christian theology, for it is important to know their roots.

From the pre-Socratic philosophers mentioned in the above paragraph, we now jump to some philosophers and scientists who are considered to be precursors of scientific materialism, as we briefly look at the historical development of physicalist

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<sup>34</sup> Physicalism is similar to materialism: where physicalism states that everything is made of the physical, materialism states that everything is made of matter. While matter is physical, there is more to the physical than merely matter (e.g., gravity, energy). Thus, physicalism is currently a more accurate term to use than materialism, and with less negative associations. However, when materialism is spoken of in this dissertation, let it be clear that it is in this sense—as an ontological theory where matter is the fundamental reality, and certainly not the methodological theory of historical materialism associated with Karl Marx. Norman Melchert, *The Great Conversation: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> Starting chronologically, fifth-century B.C. Empedocles believed that everything was composed of four roots: fire, air, earth, water (he then added Love as a force of unity and Strife as that of destruction). He also crafted a theory of evolution (although it was of the evolution of monsters). A few years later, Anaxagoras posited “infinite seeds” of every element as the composing material of all things. He also developed the notion of Nous, what can be seen as a self-ordering principle, among other things. Following soon after came the atomists, Leucippus and Democritus. To them, the world was composed of material objects, each of which was composed of “atoms,” each atom of which was a small piece of Being (i.e., Being as defined by Parmenides). The motion of these atoms followed such strict natural laws that the philosophy that rose up from this theory was thoroughly deterministic. Palmer, 36-42.

<sup>36</sup> This is most clearly stated in Parmenides’ poem “On Nature” (VIII, 1-6): Μόνος δ’ ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο λείπεται ὡς ἔστιν· ταύτη δ’ ἐπὶ σήματ’ ἕασι πολλὰ μάλ’, ὡς ἀγένητον ἐὸν καὶ ἀνώλεθρόν ἐστιν, ἔστι γὰρ οὐλομελές τε καὶ ἀτρεμὲς ἠδ’ ἀτέλεστον· οὐδέ ποτ’ ἦν οὐδ’ ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν, ἓν, συνεχές· “Le poème de Parménide,” <http://philoctetes.free.fr/parmenides.pdf> (accessed August 23, 2017).

views of personal ontology.<sup>37</sup> Roger Bacon (1214-1292), a Late Medieval thinker, was an early experimentalist. He wrote that there were two ways of acquiring knowledge—through reason and through experiment. He believed that reason was insufficient and that it could be much more easily muddled than would knowledge gained by experience and observation.<sup>38</sup> Although his thinking was not accepted and adopted until hundreds of years later, he was one of the first who helped to shift inquiry from metaphysics to pure science, from theocentrism to anthropocentrism, from dualism to materialism. As a devout Franciscan monk, he undoubtedly would not have agreed with many features of this shift. However, this was the beginning of the development of scientific physicalism/materialism, and Bacon was a precursor of it.

In the turn from classical tradition to physicalism/materialism, we now look at Galileo Galilei (1564-1642). He could perhaps be considered the first professional scientist because he sought to study motion apart from its scholastic and philosophical attachments, or physics divorced from metaphysics.<sup>39</sup> This decision instigated one of the most momentous paradigm shifts in history. For instead of looking to something higher

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<sup>37</sup> These all led to a materialist rather than dualist understanding of personal ontology.

<sup>38</sup> In his words: “There are two ways of acquiring knowledge, one through reason, the other by experiment. Argument reaches a conclusion and compels us to admit it, but it neither makes us certain nor so annihilates doubt that the mind rests calm in the intuition of truth, unless it finds this certitude by way of experience. Thus many have arguments toward attainable facts, but because they have not experienced them, they overlook them and neither avoid a harmful nor follow a beneficial course. Even if a man that has never seen fire, proves by good reasoning that fire burns, and devours and destroys things, nevertheless the mind of one hearing his arguments would never be convinced, nor would he avoid fire until he puts his hand or some combustible thing into it in order to prove by experiment what the argument taught. But after the fact of combustion is experienced, the mind is satisfied and lies calm in the certainty of truth. Hence argument is not enough, but experience is.” In Oliver Joseph Thatcher, ed., *The Library of Original Sources, Vol. IV: Early Mediaeval Age* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2004), 369.

<sup>39</sup> Ricardo Nirenberg, “The Birth of Modern Science: Galileo and Descartes,” Project Renaissance, University at Albany lecture (Fall 1996), <http://www.albany.edu/~rn774/fall96/science2.html> (accessed May 28, 2014).

for answers about the organizing principle of reality (e.g., spirit, the gods, the Good, God), Galileo and the scientists who followed him began looking at the things themselves for answers. And even though Galileo was an astronomer and physicist, this scientific revolution that he was a part of had great consequences for dualistic models of personal ontology, for it led to new metaphysical questions being raised. Was the soul indeed non-physical and immortal? If not, what was it that could define both human constitution and nature?

Next we look at Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), who took the developing naturalist and materialist understanding of the world and applied it explicitly to human constitution and human nature. He was truly a monist physicalist/materialist, believing that everything was composed of material bodies, and that the mind was really the body. Thus to him there also was no immortal soul, and no real God either.<sup>40</sup> After Hobbes, reductive materialism and a host of cognitive and epistemological theories arose.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> “Every perception is a motion in the parts of an animal’s body; these, though they are called ‘animal spirits’ and ‘vital spirits’, are nevertheless [themselves] bodies; and the motion is aroused by objects, which are also bodies. So up to now we need to have no recourse to an incorporeal mover” (Hobbes, *Critique du de Mundo de Thomas White*, ed. by J. Jacquot and H.W. Jones [Paris: Vrin 1973], 326). Hobbes’ materialist view of the human mind is also evident in his *Objections to Descartes’ Meditations*—see Shaun Gallagher, ed., *Brainstorming: Views and Interviews on the Mind* (Exeter, United Kingdom: Imprint Academic, 2008), ch. 3.

<sup>41</sup> For example, associationism and group-mind theories, and epiphenomenalism and behaviorism. Also based on a materialist understanding of reality came the approaches of psychoanalysis (Freud, but with precursors Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Husserl) and reflexive analysis (Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, derived from Husserl, and today manifest as contemporary existentialism and phenomenology). Perhaps associationism and group-mind theories are the least well-known of these theories. Associationism, a theory of mind held by David Hume, John Locke, and other notable philosophers, is based in materialism and influences cognitive science to this day. It states that experience originates mental items, certain items then associate with each other based on experience, and then these items combine to form thought. When associationism was propounded during the Enlightenment, it stood contrary to Descartes’ theory of innate ideas, and provided a purely material explanation for mental activity. Group-mind theories, espoused by Émile Durkheim (Fr. *conscience collective*) and others, offer a sociological explanation for mental activity, in which “the individual mind mirrors the beliefs and expectations of the group or class of which it is a part.” These theories also influenced Marxism and contemporary depth psychologies. Hunnux, Chart 3: Naturalistic Theories of Mind.

Anthropological reductive materialism holds that humans are “nothing but” or “nothing more than” matter, and that the whole of what humans are can be explained by science alone (usually by physics, since the most fundamental or basic explanation is what is sought). This theory came into prominence as a result of the scientific revolution and continues strongly on to this day.

The Enlightenment also began to influence biblical scholars to seek outside historical and scientific verification in order to ascertain which parts of Scripture were accurate.<sup>42</sup> And by the late nineteenth century, German Protestant liberalism was accepting as significant only those things in the Bible which historical criticism could reconstruct.<sup>43</sup> It has been said that this “was the highest point of Protestant engagement with both the Christian message . . . and the critical epistemology of the scientific era.”<sup>44</sup> Bultmann opposed this historicist reductionism, and through his program of demythologization, sought to still retain some spiritual meaning for those parts of the Bible that were unverified and considered to be “myth.”<sup>45</sup> Agreeing with Barth’s distinction between Hebraic and Hellenistic interpretations of Christianity, Bultmann also

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<sup>42</sup> Frank M. Hasel explains that “long before modern critical scholarship, the Bible was scrutinized with open minds that challenged the predominantly dualistic view of human nature. However, with the rise of the historical-critical method and its critical stance toward ecclesiastical tradition, by the beginning of the twentieth century, skepticism toward a dualistic understanding of human nature became more and more prominent among biblical scholars” (“The Nature of the Human Being in Christian Theology,” in *What Are Human Beings that You Remember Them?* Proceedings of the Third International Bible Conference Nof Ginosar and Jerusalem, June 11-21, 2012, ed. by Clinton Wahlen [Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2015], 223).

<sup>43</sup> David Congdon, “The Word as Event: Barth and Bultmann on Scripture,” in *The Sacred Text: Excavating the Texts, Exploring the Interpretations, and Engaging the Theologies of the Christian Scriptures*, ed. by Michael F. Bird and Michael W. Pahl (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2010), 248.

<sup>44</sup> James M. Byrne, “Bultmann and Tillich,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Theology*, ed. by Gareth Jones (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 373.

<sup>45</sup> Congdon, 248.

avored the earlier, Hebraic conceptions. This led him to hold that Paul used *soma* to “characterize the human person as a whole” and that Paul’s (and the Old Testament’s) teaching was “thoroughly physicalist.”<sup>46</sup>

The twentieth-century biblical theology movement likewise emphasized the distinction between Hebraic and Hellenistic thought in biblical interpretation, an idea which also helped to shape some influential works of Christian anthropology of that time.<sup>47</sup> One was H. Wheeler Robinson’s *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, a very popular book which stated that “the Hebrew idea of personality is that of an animated body, not (like the Greek) that of an incarnated soul.”<sup>48</sup> Another was John A.T. Robinson’s *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology*, which affirmed the physicalist constitution of the human person.<sup>49</sup> Because of such developments in science, philosophy, biblical studies, and theology, numerous current Christian scholars have abandoned the traditional substance dualist models of personal ontology and gravitated towards physicalist models.<sup>50</sup>

Now having briefly traced the historical development of physicalism/materialism,

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<sup>46</sup> *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 21.

<sup>47</sup> For more on the biblical theology movement, see Brevard Childs’s *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970); also Gerhard Hasel’s *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 4th. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), Introduction.

<sup>48</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, 3d ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1934).

<sup>49</sup> *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (London: SCM, 1952). For more on these and other physicalist-leaning sources in biblical studies and theology, see *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 19-24.

<sup>50</sup> See Kim’s *Philosophy of Mind*, 11. Many others still retain the traditional substance dualist model. Culver argues this is what ancient Israelites believed: “Many modern writers of ‘Old Testament theology’ try to explain it [anthropological substance dualism] away. Yet the temptation of ‘necromancy’ or communication with the dead prohibited specifically in Deuteronomy 18:1—the practitioners were said to be ‘an abomination to the Lord’—shows that belief in separability of body and soul, with the soul enduring intact, was assumed by ancient Israelites” (259). If in fact this belief was assumed by some ancient Israelites, this still does not definitively demonstrate that those beliefs reflected the teaching of Scripture.

let us look at the main physicalist models in Christian theology today.<sup>51</sup> Probably the most prominent one currently is nonreductive physicalism.<sup>52</sup> The roots of nonreductive physicalism began in the last fifty years as philosophers began to voice doubts about scientific materialism and reductionism being a sufficient explanation for personal ontology.<sup>53</sup> Their quest to find a way to reject reductionism while still upholding physicalism caught the attention of Christian philosophers, who saw nonreductive physicalism as a way to move away from dualism to a view that was not so inconsistent with mainstream science.<sup>54</sup> Nonreductive physicalism considers itself monistic, holding

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<sup>51</sup> A note will be included here about Carsten Johnsen (1914-1987) and Jean Zurcher (1918-2003). These theologian/philosophers wrote about topics that have to do with personal ontology, and they sought to base their views on the data of the biblical canon. Their major contributions to these topics, however, occurred before scientific advances had begun to shape the discussion on personal ontology (Johnsen's *Man—the Indivisible: Totality Versus Disruption in the History of Western Thought* [Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1971], and Zurcher's *Nature and Destiny of Man* [1968]). Thus, it becomes difficult to classify their positions according to the current debate in Christian theology. Having said that, they both were strongly opposed to dualism and to materialism, and instead held strongly to the existence of the physical and the mental/spiritual that were joined indivisibly in the human person.

<sup>52</sup> The goal of nonreductive physicalism is described as “an attempt to establish a perspective on human nature that would allow for greater resonance between science and faith. We have tried to describe the nature of humans from the perspective of disciplines ranging from biology to theology in a way that is reconcilable and congruent. . . . In order to increase by a few degrees the warming relationship between science and faith, we have attempted to sound a multi-disciplinary chord. . . . Our core theme—the key of the resonant chord—is a monistic, or holistic, view of humans” (*Whatever Happened to the Soul?* xiii).

<sup>53</sup> Again, anthropological reductionism holds that humans are “nothing but” or “nothing more than” matter, and that the whole of what humans are can be explained by science alone. There is usually no place for God or an afterlife in such a view. Some of the notable philosophers who stood against such reductionism were Donald Davidson and Hilary Putnam. These and others countered with the theories of anomalous monism, psychological autonomy, and supervenient physicalism. See Jaegwon Kim's “The Myth of Nonreductive Materialism,” *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 63/3 (Nov. 1989): 31-47.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, Nancey Murphy's works on this topic that span more than two decades and that have arguably contributed the most to this theory. In *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*, she helpfully addresses the difference between methodological reductionism, causal reductionism, ontological reductionism, and reductive materialism (129), and states that nonreductive physicalism accepts ontological reductionism but not causal reductionism or reductive materialism (130). Ontological reductionism “is the view that as one goes up the hierarchy of levels, no new kinds of metaphysical ‘ingredients’ need to be added to produce higher-level entities from lower. No ‘vital force’ or ‘entelechy’ must be added to get living beings from nonliving materials; no immaterial mind or soul is needed to get consciousness; no *Zeitgeist* is needed to form individuals into a society” (129).



that the mind is purely physical, even if it is incapable of being fully explained by physical processes.<sup>55</sup> Yet it gives prominence to the reality of the mental, although it seeks to explain its existence through means that are more in line with science rather than religious tradition.

According to Nancey Murphy (who has been one of its foremost proponents), nonreductive physicalism holds that “the person is a physical organism whose complex functioning, both in society and in relation to God, gives rise to ‘higher’ human capacities such as morality and spirituality.”<sup>56</sup> A frequent challenge to nonreductive physicalism is the question of whether one can truly be honest to physicalism and also subscribe to a nonreductionist view of human ontology.<sup>57</sup> In spite of this ongoing debate, nonreductive physicalism currently remains one of the most popular ways that Christian theology seeks to integrate science and religion in regard to personal ontology.<sup>58</sup>

Another physicalist model is Christian materialism, which came on the philosophical scene in the late twentieth century.<sup>59</sup> One might wonder how Christian materialism differs from scientific materialism in personal ontology. While materialism in itself is generally atheistic, Christian materialism is theistic. Although Christian

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<sup>55</sup> See Hasker, *Soul, Body, and Survival*, 116.

<sup>56</sup> *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 25.

<sup>57</sup> The objections are probably best summed up in Kim’s “The Myth of Nonreductive Materialism.”

<sup>58</sup> See, again, footnote 52.

<sup>59</sup> Some of the proponents of Christian materialism are Lynne Rudder Baker (*Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View*), Kevin Corcoran (*Rethinking Human Nature: A Christian Materialist Alternative to the Soul*), Trenton Merricks (*Objects and Persons* [Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon, 2001]), Peter van Inwagen (*Material Beings* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990]), and Francisco Ayala (*Studies in the Philosophy of Biology: Reduction and Related Issues* [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974]).

materialism upholds an evolutionary explanation for the origin of matter and humans, it can allow room for God to be involved in the evolutionary process.<sup>60</sup> And whereas materialism by and large holds to a view of the universe as a closed system, Christian materialism accepts an open system view of the universe.

Consequently, the fact that Christian materialists believe that the evolutionary process gave rise to wholly material humans does not keep them from believing that God influences the world through his great acts in history, or through angels or the Holy Spirit.<sup>61</sup> Some Christian materialists, in fact, are quite insistent to show that this model correlates with Christian theology and the Bible, and does not rule out the possibility of an afterlife.<sup>62</sup> As can be expected, human identity and humans' unique position in God's world receives an emphasis that is not found in non-Christian materialist views. Finally, most Christian materialists attempt to hold to belief in the reality of the nonmaterial (e.g., angels, the devil, God) while avowing that these are always extrinsic to humans.

### **Current Views of Personal Ontology in Christian Theology**

Having looked briefly at the development of two of the main model groupings of personal ontology current in Christian theology, we now take a more detailed look at each one. To start with, the ontological category of constitution is the criterion used to

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<sup>60</sup> This has been called theistic evolution, and more recently evolutionary creationism. This view is prevalent in the main models of personal ontology current in Christian theology. But outside of Christian theology, this view is understandably rare, as there is no need to include God in the evolutionary account.

<sup>61</sup> Thus, even though they are anthropological monists, they are not metaphysical monists.

<sup>62</sup> See Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature*, ch. 5; Baker, "Material Persons and the Doctrine of Resurrection," *Faith and Philosophy* 18/2 (2001): 151-67; and Trenton Merricks, "The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting," in *Reason for the Hope Within*, ed. by Alvin Plantinga and Michael J. Murray (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 261-86.

determine how the models should be identified and what views should be included under them. The question of constitution asks what humans are constituted of, and if they have constituent parts, what those parts are.

There are two prominent answers within Christian theology today. The first one is that humans are constituted of “fundamentally two kinds of things,” two substances—the mental (or spiritual, or mental/spiritual) and the physical.<sup>63</sup> This answer is the one given by the substance dualist models, and the following formula is the most common way it is expressed in personal ontology: human being = body + soul (or mind). The second main answer in Christian theology to the question of constitution is that humans are constituted of one fundamental type of entity or substance—the physical. This answer is the one given by the physicalist models, and is expressed by this formula: human being = body.

It should be noted that in these discussions of mind (mental) and body (physical), the terminological usage of mind can be substituted for soul, and body can be substituted for brain. Body and brain both refer to the physical—in which the brain is the controller of the body. The similarities between what is meant by soul and mind are great; whether one or the other is used has more to do with one’s views regarding the existence of the divine and the reliance of the mental on the physical, rather than with any great phenomenological differences between the two. Keep in mind that the greatest distinction in this field of study is between what is physical and what is mental (and/or spiritual). Accordingly, the words body and brain refer to what is physical about the person, and the words mind, soul, and spirit refer to what is mental/spiritual.

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<sup>63</sup> Jaworski, 17. For the meaning of “substance,” going back to Aristotle, see footnote 50 of chapter 1.

In substance dualism, the physical (brain, body) and the mental (mind, soul) are two ontological substances, even if they are dependent on each other.<sup>64</sup> With physicalism, there is only one substance, and that is the physical (since all is believed to be physical). Some models of physicalism are non-reductionist, such as nonreductive physicalism, where the mental is not reducible to the physical.<sup>65</sup> Other models of physicalism tend towards reductionism, such as Christian materialism.

It should also be noted that the two models of personal ontology taken up in this study do not represent all the historical views on personal ontology. Furthermore, other models may be gaining influence in Christian theology but have not yet sustained this prominence over decades as substance dualism and physicalism have. For example, idealism is a model of personal ontology that originated very early in some philosophies of ancient Hinduism. In Enlightenment philosophy, it was notably presented by George Berkeley, and can be summed up with his slogan *esse est percipi*—to be is to be perceived.<sup>66</sup> However, ontological idealism’s notion that everything is mental is not a widely accepted view in Christian theology today.<sup>67</sup> Notwithstanding, ontological

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<sup>64</sup> Again, for an explanation of the term “substance,” see footnote 50 of chapter 1 (especially the last sentence: “Substance deals with what a thing is materially, what it is constituted of; essence handles what it is by definition”).

<sup>65</sup> It is not difficult to see that one of nonreductive physicalism’s main and ongoing tasks is to explain how the mental can be both physical and at the same time not reducible to the physical.

<sup>66</sup> Jaworski, 248.

<sup>67</sup> However, some idealist ideas are gaining more prominence in Christian theology. This is mostly through the influence of panentheism in Christian theology, for there is crossover between idealism and panentheism, especially in the area of the nature of God. Some of the major historical figures who were influential in introducing modern idealism to Christian theology were Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (*The Phenomenon of Man* [New York: Harper & Row, 1959]), Friedrich Schelling (*System of Transcendental Idealism* [1800], trans. by Peter Heath [Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1997]), and Georg Hegel (*Hegel’s Lectures on the History of Philosophy* [Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1996] and *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A.V. Miller [Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon, 1977]). For more on the panentheism’s increasing influence in Christian theology, see John W. Cooper’s *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006).

idealism still influences Christian views of personal ontology because of its relation to dualism. Idealism, with its one fundamental (and non-material) entity, has done much to inform dualism's conception of what the mental/spiritual is.<sup>68</sup>

One model of personal ontology that owes much to idealism and is becoming more known within Christian theology, though it has not yet gained prominence, is panpsychism.<sup>69</sup> The modern notion of panpsychism developed from the modern view of pantheism, and offered a model of personal ontology that fell in line with a pantheist worldview. Simply defined by David Chalmers, "panpsychism, taken literally, is the doctrine that everything has a mind."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Idealism has also had a great influence on dualism through history, as it is seen that the mental (idealism) has generally received precedence over the physical (physicalism) within dualism. Platonic and Neoplatonic dualism serve as good examples of this.

<sup>69</sup> Panpsychism is the pantheist view that relates most specifically to personal ontology. See Cooper, *Pantheism*.

<sup>70</sup> "Panpsychism and Panprotopsychism," *The Amherst Lecture in Philosophy* 8 (2013), [http://www.amherstlecture.org/chalmers2013/chalmers2013\\_ALP.pdf](http://www.amherstlecture.org/chalmers2013/chalmers2013_ALP.pdf) (accessed September 7, 2017). Chalmers is more a panprotopsychist than a panpsychist, but the two are closely related (see footnote 119). Some panpsychists hold that everything *is* mind, a view which can also be classified as idealism.

David Bohm connects the philosophical implications of quantum physics to panpsychism and pantheism. In describing his view, he states: "In a way, nature is alive, as Whitehead would say, all the way to the depths. And intelligent. Thus it is both mental and material, as we are" ("Nature as Creativity," *ReVision* 5/2 [1982], 39). And "I would suggest that both [mind and body] are essentially the same. . . . That which we experience as mind . . . will in a natural way ultimately reach the level of the wavefunction and of the 'dance' of the particles. . . . It is implied that, in some sense, a rudimentary consciousness is present even at the level of particle physics. It would also be reasonable to suppose an indefinitely greater kind of consciousness that is universal and that pervades the entire process [of the universe]" ("A New Theory of the Relationship of Mind and Matter," *Journal of the American Society of Psychical Research* 80/2 [1986]: 131; quoted in Skrbina, 204). Similarly to Anaxagoras, Bohm believes that "the whole of the universe is in some way enfolded in everything and . . . each thing is enfolded in the whole" (*ibid.*, 114). British astronomer Sir Arthur Eddington was one of the earliest major scientists to put forth panpsychist views, and described the inadequacies of physics in this way: Physics "is a knowledge of structural form, and not knowledge of content, which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness" (*Space, Time, and Gravitation* [London: Cambridge University Press, 1920], 200).

Although the terms panpsychism and panentheism may be relatively recent, these notions may have the longest history of any of the philosophical constructs already discussed.<sup>71</sup> Karl Krause, the “modern German scholar” spoken of in the last footnote, coined the term “panentheism” to mean “all-in-God” (Gk. *pan* + *en* + *theos*).<sup>72</sup> Yet panpsychism was brought into Western philosophy largely by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), the French philosopher, paleontologist, and Jesuit priest.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) and Charles Hartshorne (1897-2000) were both instrumental in bringing panpsychist ideas to Western thought—Whitehead in his book

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<sup>71</sup> Certainly panentheism is found in the ancient Hindu text, the Purusha Sukta, which is the last section of the Rig Veda and dates back to the twelfth century B.C. (S.K. Ramachandra Rao, *Rgveda-Darśana*, vol. 4: *Purusha-Sūkta* [Bangalore, India: Kalpatharu Research Academy, 1999]). And Charles Hartshorne even finds evidence of it in the poetry of Ikhnaton, the first monotheist pharaoh who reigned in the fourteenth-century B.C. (Hartshorne says that some of Ikhnaton’s poetry extolling the sun god is careful not to separate or identify him too much with the world, thus avoiding both traditional theism and pantheism, respectively, and pointing to panentheism; see Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, eds., *Philosophers Speak of God* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953], 29, 30). Some also see it contained within Buddhism (like Soyen Shaku, a Zen Buddhist monk, who seeks to make the Buddhist conception of the divine relatable to Westerners (“The God Conception of Buddhism,” *Zen for Americans* [Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2012]; or see it here: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/zfa/zfa04.htm> [accessed May 29, 2014]): “Buddhism is not pantheistic in the sense that it identifies the universe with God. On the other hand, the Buddhist God is absolute and transcendent; this world, being merely its manifestation, is necessarily fragmental and imperfect. To define more exactly the Buddhist notion of the highest being, it may be convenient to borrow the term very happily coined by a modern German scholar, “panentheism,” according to which God is  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$  καὶ ἓν [all and one] and more than the totality of existence.”).

<sup>72</sup> See Krause’s *Vorlesungen über die Grundwahrheiten der Wissenschaft* (Göttingen, Germany: Dieterich, 1828) and *Das Urbild der Menschheit* (Dresden: Arnold, 1811).

“Pantheism” means “all is God” or that the universe and God are identical. The  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$  καὶ ἓν referenced in the previous footnote is actually from the concept of “One and All” in the writings of the German Enlightenment philosopher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and refers to a spiritualistic panentheism (Toshimasa Yasukata, “Lessing’s ‘Spinozism,’” in *Lessing’s Philosophy of Religion and the German Enlightenment* [Cambridge, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2002]).

<sup>73</sup> His book *The Phenomenon of Man* introduced his panpsychist philosophy to the world. Although the book was initially condemned by the Roman Catholic Church, it became hugely influential, and now has gained more acceptance within Roman Catholicism.

developing process philosophy *Process and Reality*, and Hartshorne in bringing Whitehead's philosophy into Christian theology.<sup>74</sup>

Another model of personal ontology that this dissertation will not analyze is hylomorphism, which was the prominent model in the Middle Ages (based on the influence of Thomas Aquinas, who in turn was influenced in large part by Aristotle).<sup>75</sup> Presently it has been reworked and reintroduced into Christian theology. Modern hylomorphism finds its basis in the views of Aristotle and Aquinas. It states that human

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<sup>74</sup> See Whitehead's *Process and Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978), and Hartshorne's *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1948) and *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984). For Hartshorne's exposition of panpsychism, see his "Panpsychism" in *A History of Philosophical Systems*, ed. by Vergilius Ferm (New York: Rider and Company, 1950), 442-53. It should be noted that while Whitehead and Hartshorne were both panentheists and panpsychists, not all panentheists are also panpsychists.

<sup>75</sup> As a scientist, Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) took very seriously his observations of the physical world. This led him to reject much of Plato's spiritual conception of the soul in favor of a more naturalistic one that is inseparable from the body. Carsten Johnsen, in describing Aristotle's view, says this: "So soul and body, form and matter, the inward contents and the outward manifestations, are simply phases of the same total reality, and consequently concomitant and inseparable" (27). Aristotle explains his view of the soul the most in *De Anima* (trans. by Hugh Lawson-Tancred [London: Penguin Books, 1986]), especially in III. 3. Yet he still mused about the possible immortality of *Nous*, an impersonal, rational aspect of the human person (see *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 3, 4). We see that he truly tried to present a synthesis of dualist and materialist views of personal ontology, joining "in a vast synthesis all the currents of thought that had been produced before him" (Werner, 192 [quoted in Johnsen, 180]). Yet it is a point of debate as to whether he successfully accomplished this; and even after all that, Plato's dualistic view was still the one that predominated.

Aquinas (1225-1274) expanded upon Aristotle's hylomorphic conception of personal ontology, where matter is the body and form is the soul. Like Aristotle, he also held to three levels of soul—vegetative, sensitive, and rational—of which the rational soul is possessed by humans alone (*Summa Theologica*, I, q. 78). This "rational soul" Aristotle also calls the "*soul by itself*." By this he means "pure thought," intelligence (Johnsen, 173). Aquinas' theories naturally gave prominence to the unity of the person; however, it was more complicated and challenging for them to maintain the immortality of the soul (even though it was still maintained—*Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 3, 4; Johnsen, 176). Since both Aristotle and Aquinas hold that there is a non-material soul as part of the human body, I see them both as leaning more towards dualism than physicalism. Yet many strongly believe that they are not dualists (Aristotle: Diana Mertz Hsieh, "The Soul of Aristotle," *Philosophy in Action* (October 29, 2002), <http://www.philosophyinaction.com/docs/tsoa.pdf> [accessed May 14, 2014]; Aquinas: Brian Leftow, "Souls Dipped in Dust," in *Soul, Body, and Survival: Essays on the Metaphysics of Human Persons*, 120). Modern hylomorphism, on the other hand, tends towards physicalism.

beings are “psychophysical wholes.”<sup>76</sup> This means that the psychological affects the physical, and the physical affects the psychological so intrinsically that the mind and body together are an indivisible, psychophysical whole. Organization or structure is what “operates as a basic ontological and explanatory principle.”<sup>77</sup> This organization or structure is what the earliest hylomorphists called “form.”<sup>78</sup>

Our discussion will now turn back to describing substance dualism and physicalism more systematically. The same criteria are used in describing both overarching models, and this facilitates the critical evaluation of the models that comes at the end of this chapter. This in turn paves the way for Chapter 3’s study of the Eden narrative and description of findings, which likewise follows the same criteria for comparison that has been employed here.

### Substance Dualist Models

This section will discuss how substance dualist models understand the different aspects of human nature. First, the question of constitution will be addressed—according to substance dualism, of what is the human person constituted? Second, the question of

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<sup>76</sup> Jaworski, 356, 357. See also his *Structure and the Metaphysics of Mind: How Hylomorphism Solves the Mind-Body Problem* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2016). Jaworski is the modern author who has written the most about how hylomorphism offers solutions to the current mind-body problem, but others have begun to follow his direction, including James T. Turner (“We Look for the Resurrection of the Dead: An Analytic Theological Rethinking of the Intermediate State and Eschatological Bodily Resurrection in Christian Theology,” Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Edinburgh [2015], ch. 4).

<sup>77</sup> Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, 302, 303.

<sup>78</sup> And for Aristotle, the *psyche* is the “form” of the body—“the organization or structure that distinguishes a living thing from nonliving ones” (ibid., 295, 295). For Jaworski, hylomorphism does not entail immortality; it necessitates essential embodiment. Even if it were ascertained that Aristotle undoubtedly believed in the immortality of *Nous*, Jaworski (ibid., 164) holds that such a belief would have been an aberration to hylomorphism. For, according to him, to be consistent within itself, hylomorphism cannot sustain a belief in immortality.



nature will be addressed—according to substance dualism, what are humans by definition and what makes them unique as humans? After this, the study will turn to the physicalist models.

## **Constitution**

Earlier we saw that one answer to the question of human constitution is substance dualism, because it states that humans are constituted of two fundamental and distinct types of entities—the mental/spiritual and the physical. What does it mean for these two entities to be two fundamental and distinct types? It means that they exist in two ontological domains. And whereas one domain may attempt to explain the other (and may even have limited success), it is essentially unqualified to do this due to its basic ontological dissimilarities from the other domain.

Quoting the dualist philosopher Charles Taliaferro about this distinction: “At the start, we can characterize the physical in terms of the natural sciences. An object, property, or process is physical if it is posited and described by sciences such as physics, chemistry, and biology.”<sup>79</sup> This is not the case with the mental (e.g., hoping, believing, doubting, thinking), for presently even most scientists do not see the mental as being adequately explained by the natural sciences. The difference between most scientists and dualists is that most scientists believe that science is capable of explaining the mental even if current science has not yet advanced enough to sufficiently explain it.<sup>80</sup> In

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<sup>79</sup> *Consciousness and the Mind of God* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 27.

<sup>80</sup> “Most scientists” is key here, for there are a few scientists who are also dualists. Perhaps the most notable one is the neurophysiologist and author Sir John Carew Eccles, who calls other scientists “promissory materialists” because they believe that the material will in time give a sufficient explanation of the mental, though it has not yet done so.

contrast, dualists believe that science is incapable of sufficiently explaining the mental simply because science lies in the physical realm and is thus ontologically removed from the mental realm.

For substance dualists like Taliaferro, humans cannot be wholly physical, because they are basic subjects, and “have this status in a fundamental, essential fashion.” They believe a human is a *self*, and as such, cannot be broken down into “subpersonal categories.” Such a self is “underived” and “simple,” which is something that cannot be said of physical objects.<sup>81</sup> The sections below will look more at the physical and mental aspects of human constitution in substance dualism. It will also ask how the mental and physical parts of a person interact, a question that is one of the major problems that has confronted and still confronts the substance dualist models of personal ontology.

### Physical Substance

Substance dualism does acknowledge that there is a physical aspect of the human entity. However, it has a serious competitor in the mental/spiritual aspect, for the mind/soul is seen to be just as real as (and at times arguably more important than) the body. The history of Christian theology is littered with quotes such as this one of Tertullian (ca. 160-ca. 230 B.C.): “Without the soul we are nothing; there is not even the name of a human being, only that of a carcass.”<sup>82</sup> Substance dualists are certainly not

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<sup>81</sup> Taliaferro, 167, commenting on an argument put forth by John Foster in his *The Immaterial Self: A Defence of the Cartesian Dualist Conception of the Mind*, International Library of Philosophy (London: Routledge, 1991), 210.

<sup>82</sup> *On the Flesh of Christ*, trans. Peter Holmes, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1951), 956.

idealist monists—for they do believe in the reality and corporeality of the body. But the physical is often seen as less important, and often less holy, than the mental/spiritual.

A more nuanced view than that of Tertullian is one that was used by Aristotle, reworked by Aquinas, and that has predominated in Christian (especially Roman Catholic) theology for millennia. It is that the human being is a rational animal.<sup>83</sup> While on the surface level, this definition seems like it could be accepted by many scientists, actually what the word “rational” generally refers to is a mental/spiritual aspect of humans that is immortal, and thus not wholly physical.<sup>84</sup> In Aristotle’s taxonomy, plants possessed a vegetative soul (responsible for life, growth, and reproduction), animals possessed a sensitive soul (responsible for the vegetative functions plus sensation), and humans possessed a rational soul (responsible for the vegetative and sensitive functions plus reason).<sup>85</sup> So while both humans and animals possessed souls, they possessed different types of soul, and this meant that there was at least some constitutional difference between humans and animals.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *De Anima*, III. 11. While Aquinas’ views of personal ontology produced the hylomorphic model, his views also had a great influence on other models, including substance dualism.

“Human being as rational animal” is still a definition that is employed today. See Wilfred Härle’s discussion of it in his *Outline of Christian Doctrine: An Evangelical Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 365-71.

<sup>84</sup> For Aristotle, it is called the “rational principle” (λόγον ἔχον; *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2d. ed. [Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999], 1.13). Building on this, Aquinas called it the “rational soul,” the incorruptible, immaterial form of the corruptible, material body (*Summa Theologica* I, q. 75, a. 6).

<sup>85</sup> *De Anima*, II and III. Ronald H. Nash, *Life’s Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), Chapter Seven.

<sup>86</sup> Aquinas, like Aristotle, held that animals had souls, and that these souls possessed different faculties than did human souls. He described the sensitive faculties (possessed only by animals and humans) in more detail than did Aristotle. They consisted of the five “exterior senses” (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) and the four “interior senses” (*sensus communis*, *phantasia*, *vis aestimativa*, and *vis memorativa*). The *sensus communis* was responsible for apprehending and organizing the information coming in from the “exterior senses”; the *phantasia*, similar to the imagination, formed mental images of sensory data; the *vis aestimativa* was able to judge the worth or nature of sensible objects, resulting in

## Mental Substance

According to substance dualism, humans are constituted of two substances—the physical and the mental/spiritual. Dualists who believe in the existence of God would describe him to be spirit (John 4:24).<sup>87</sup> Thus, by virtue of God and the human soul being spiritual entities, theistic dualists do see some ontological correspondence between God and humans.<sup>88</sup> This correspondence, or constitutional similarity between God and human

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reactions like attack, avoidance, or acquiescence, and the emotions of love, desire, delight, hate, aversion, sorrow, fear, daring, hope, despair, and anger; the *vis memorativa* was responsible for memory. *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 5, 6.

<sup>87</sup> Atheist dualists believe that reality is composed of two entities—physical and mental—but do not believe that there is a God. The most famous atheist dualist philosopher is David Chalmers. His theory of mind is known as naturalistic dualism, but his belief in what he calls panprotopsychism may push him nearer to the panpsychist theory of mind.

<sup>88</sup> This brings up the old debate of *analogia entis*. Is there any correspondence, any “analogy of being,” between someone (or something) in the physical realm and someone (or something) that extends beyond the physical? Although the term *analogia entis* was not formally employed until the sixteenth century, the discussion started much earlier, perhaps as far back as the pre-Socratic philosophers Parmenides and Heraclitus. The term *analogia entis* itself “appears first, so far as we know, in Cajetan [Roman Catholic cardinal, philosopher, and theologian, and Martin Luther’s opponent at Augsburg in 1518] at which point . . . it became something of a *terminus technicus* in the schools of the orders—in part among the Dominicans, in John of St. Thomas, for example, but especially among the Jesuits, beginning most obviously with Suárez’s *Metaphysical Disputations* (e.g., disputations 28 and 32)” (Thomas Joseph White, O.P. ed., *The Analogy of Being: Invention of the Antichrist or Wisdom of God?* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011], 49).

Back in the *Timaeus* (28), Plato wrote: “Let me tell you then why the creator made this world of generations. He was good, and the good can never have any jealousy of anything. And being free from jealousy, he desired that all things should be as like himself as they could be” (quoted in Johnsen, 138). This included the supposed ontological similarity between the divine and the human. Johnsen continues to explain that “the most visible, most palpable things of *this* world would be supposed to have, according to the supreme triumph of Platonic automatism in *Timaios* [Greek spelling], something essential in common with the invisible, impalpable things of the *other* world; they are viewed as being *from eternity*. . . . More or less ‘religious’ varieties of Platonic idealism (making the *human soul* and its eternal destiny its particular topic of interest) have now for such a long time stressed the theory that ‘the essential part’ of man is divine” (148).

In the modern period, Erich Przywara developed and championed the notion of *analogia entis* more than any other theologian or philosopher. His views on this were epically opposed by the Reformed Karl Barth, who called the *analogia entis* the “invention of Antichrist” (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936-62], I/1, introduction). Barth, after careful consideration, took his place against the Roman Catholic *analogia entis* for a few reasons: he saw it as inseparable from natural theology, as positing a creation that is “always already in touch with God on the basis of its mere being,” and as emphasizing the continuity of the God-world relationship at the expense of the discontinuity (White, 80, 104). If there was to be an *analogia entis*, he favored it being a result of revelation instead of creation or nature. This way it could be all God’s initiative, not based on the changing nature of humans. It would also fit better with the Protestant conception of total depravity and the singular act of Christ’s reconciliation

souls, is believed to be responsible for human's capacity to know God—for it is thought that knowing God is made possible by knowing one's own soul.<sup>89</sup> In traditional classical theology, there is an “exclusion of all temporality from God's nature [that] seems to have been indebted mainly to Greek thought.”<sup>90</sup> Temporality is also excluded in many classical theological conceptions of the soul which state that while the body is mortal, the soul is eternal.<sup>91</sup> This exclusion of temporality would make possible a constitutional correspondence between God and the human soul.

Substance dualism has traditionally seen the soul not only to have a constitutional correspondence to God because of its atemporality, but to be “independently ‘above-and-beyond’ the body . . . ‘exceeding’ every closed correspondence . . . by virtue of its

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of the world provided through the Cross (see Thomas J. Furry, “Analogous Analogies? Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 63/3 [August 2010]: 318-30).

A related notion to the *analogia entis* is that of the *via eminentiae*. As defined by Justo L. González, “the *via eminentiae* is based on the presupposition that all that is good in the world has its origin in God—that all that is good is a vestige of the Creator in the creature” (*Essential Theological Terms* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005], 22). An example: if knowledge is good, then God must possess knowledge eminently, in the highest degree. But since it is difficult for humans to conceive of omniscience (knowledge to an eminent degree), the *analogia entis* here becomes relevant. It says that between Creator and creature there is a link and that link is the analogy of being. Thus even though God is above human conception, it is possible to use human language to speak of God and his attributes, since such language applies to God analogically and not literally.

<sup>89</sup> Seventeenth-century Richard Baxter, who can be called the foremost schoolman of English Protestantism, shows how *analogia entis* and *via eminentiae* explain how humans can know God through first knowing themselves and their own souls. “Knowledge of God begins from knowledge of ourselves, and whoever does not know the human soul it is necessary likewise that he does not know God” (Simon J.G. Burton, *The Hallowing of Logic: The Trinitarian Method of Richard Baxter's Methodus Theologiae* [Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 2011], 217). He believes that divine ontology is tripartite—“vital, active virtue,” “intellective virtue,” and “volitive or willing virtue”—and that “all this we certainly gather from our souls, which are God's image” (Richard Baxter, *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter*, vol. IV [London: George Virtue, 1838], 263). The concept of *imago Dei* is very relevant to this discussion and will be taken up below when we deal with the category of nature in each model (specifically humaniqueness).

<sup>90</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *Nature, Human Nature, and God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2002), 103.

<sup>91</sup> *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 6. Most classical philosophical conceptions of the soul would have it as eternal, not merely immortal as in Christian theology.

Also, it should not be overlooked that Aquinas, a major player in this debate, had reservations about the soul's immortality (because of favoring a closer union of soul and body, of form and matter).

‘being-beyond.’”<sup>92</sup> Thus in substance dualist models, the soul does reach towards God, a reaching that is made possible because of the similarity in constitution between God and the human soul, which also makes possible an analogy of being between the two.

Because of this, Augustine can say both “Do not go out, but return into yourself: truth dwells in the inner man,” and at the same time, “Do not remain within yourself, but transcend yourself; place yourself in him who made you.”<sup>93</sup>

Such conception of the mystical union of God and the human soul can be called Christian anamnesis.<sup>94</sup> It is evident that what allows for Christian and non-Christian conceptions of anamnesis is this belief that there is a constitutional similarity between the human and the divine/celestial, where the human also reaches up to a world beyond what

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<sup>92</sup> Erich Przywara, *Analogia Entis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 287, 288. This Jesuit theologian draws on Aristotelian and Aquinian terminology found in *De Anima* and *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, respectively. According to him, the soul, which is seen as the form of the material body, is in a “detached suspendedness” (in which *form* “does in fact exist in corporeal matter”) and “consists in an inner universality: in the ‘universe as it were’ of the human soul, whose features are virtually those of the divine all-unity” (*Analogia Entis*, 296; the parenthetical quote is from Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica* I, q. 85, a. 1). Przywara continues referencing Aquinas: “The human soul in a sense becomes all things, according to sense and intellect, whereby all things having knowledge approach the likeness of God, in Whom all things pre-exist” (*Summa Theologica* I, q. 80, a. 1, in *Analogia Entis*, 296).

<sup>93</sup> First quotation translated in Przywara’s *Analogia Entis*, 262, from *De Vera Religione* XXXIX, 72; second quotation translated in *Analogia Entis*, 187, from *Sermon* CLIII, vii, 19.

Karl Barth rightly acknowledged Augustine as the most notable Christian theologian at the root of what he saw as a problem in the Roman Catholic doctrine of *analogia entis*—an overemphasis of continuity to the detriment of discontinuity (*Church Dogmatics*, I/I, introduction). In “The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life,” Barth seeks to explain: “According to his [Augustine’s] teaching, God is not the ‘soul’ (*animam*): he is above the ‘spirit’ (of man), and more than it, and still, according to Augustine, he is primarily *in* the soul, its proper origin, but now forgotten, and very probably is only to be recalled to memory when grace gives it aid” (Trans. by R. Birch Hoyle [Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1993], 3, 4).

<sup>94</sup> GelliMurredu Donata, “Memory of the Past, Classical Motifs and Palinody in the Roman Diary of the Year 1944,” *Cahiers du monde russe: Russie, Empire russe, Union soviétique, États indépendants* 35/1-2 (Janvier-Juin 1994): 295-300.

It should be noted that anamnesis is also used in Christian liturgy to refer to the remembrance of God’s works (especially the Paschal mystery) and memorials such as the Eucharist.

can be seen.<sup>95</sup> Such analogy of being can be conceived as existing not only between the soul and God (for some Christians) but also between the soul and a timeless, immaterial realm or consciousness (for some non-Christians). This is how it can be possible for atheist dualists to hold that there is an ontological connection between humans and something beyond.<sup>96</sup>

For substance dualists, this analogy between the soul and God (the timeless) gives them the security to believe that their existence can continue after death.<sup>97</sup> While this view may seem to provide an answer to the question of human destiny, how does substance dualism answer the other questions of personal ontology? We turn next to the mental-physical interaction, and the question: If the mental part of a human person is truly ontologically different from the physical part, how is it possible for the two parts, of two different substances, to interact?

### Mental-Physical Interaction

Substance dualism, by definition, holds that there are two substances that make up the human person—the physical substance and the mental substance. Traditionally, these models' approach to the relationship between the two substances has been to give the mental substance superiority over the physical. The belief is that the soul is meant to

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<sup>95</sup> Although for Augustine this similarity did not mean that God and the soul's constitution were identical. Hendrik Lorenz, "Ancient Theories of Soul," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2009 Edition), Edward N. Zalta, ed., <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/ancient-soul/> (accessed May 7, 2015).

<sup>96</sup> For David Chalmers, the most famous atheist dualist philosopher, this belief led him in turn to panpsychism or panprotopsyism.

<sup>97</sup> Most Christian substance dualists believe the soul originates from God, either by creationism or traducianism. For an explanation of these terms, see, for example, Grudem, 484-86.

subjugate and transcend the body, for the physical substance of the body is viewed as carnal and corruptible.<sup>98</sup>

But with two distinct substances, the major philosophical question that arises is, How do these substances interact? In seventeenth-century philosophy, the dichotomy between the physical substance (*res extensa* or “extended substance”) and the mental substance (*res cogitans* or “thinking substance”) became arguably the most marked. In addition, answers to the problem of mental-physical interaction became more far-fetched—with Descartes even proposing the pineal gland as the locus of interaction between mind and body (brain).<sup>99</sup>

To us now, this solution to the problem of interaction seems laughable. But substance dualism, even in modern times, has not produced a solution to mental-physical interaction that holds widespread scientific credibility (even if science were to accept the notion of an immaterial soul).<sup>100</sup> Moreover, with science and medicine showing more

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<sup>98</sup> An example of the soul’s subjugation of the body is Augustine’s belief that celibacy was the best option for the Christian and his statement that soul itself “possesses a kind of natural appetite for managing the body” (*De genesi ad litteram*; quoted in Wright, 142).

An example of the soul’s transcendence over materiality is given by Augustine as he recounts an ecstatic experience he and his mother had in Ostia shortly before her death. “Our minds were lifted up by an ardent affection towards eternal being itself. Step by step we climbed beyond all corporeal objects and the heaven itself, where sun, moon, and stars shed light on the earth. We ascended even further by internal reflection and dialogue and wonder at your works, and we entered into our own minds. We moved up beyond them so as to attain to the region of inexhaustible abundance where you feed Israel eternally with truth for food” (Saint Augustine, *The Confessions*, ed. by David Vincent Meconi, S.J. [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012], Book IX, Chapter 10).

<sup>99</sup> Descartes, in an attempt to defend the soul against the atomic renaissance, postulated a very strong dualism in which all is material and subject to physical laws, except for such things as the mind, angels, and God. See his Second Meditation, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy* (II.8). Galileo, among others in the atomic renaissance, challenged conventional Aristotelian physics by positing that all phenomena (except sound) could be attributed to “matter in motion” (Marin Marsenne, *Les Mécaniques du Sieur Galilée* [Paris, 1634]).

<sup>100</sup> Sir John Eccles, a renowned twentieth-century neurophysiologist and dualist, probably came the closest to giving a scientific explanation of the interaction between the mental and physical. He called his solution dualistic interactionism. He claimed that interaction between mind and brain is possible because the mind is not of a different substance than the brain, it is of a different world. The idea of the



clearly the intimate tie between body and mind, it becomes increasingly difficult to differentiate the mental and the physical. Thus, the complex problem of mental-physical interaction remains perhaps the greatest obstacle to substance dualism being viewed as a convincing alternative to the other current views of personal ontology.

## Nature

Substance dualist models of personal ontology state that human constitution has two components—mental and physical. With these models especially, the question of nature is inextricably tied to constitution, since for substance dualism it is the existence of the mental or the soul that is what ultimately defines humans as human. For over two millennia, substance dualism’s most prominent answer to the question of human nature or

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Three Worlds (“physical world,” “mental or psychological world,” and “world of the products of the human mind”) came to Eccles because of his collaboration with the philosopher Karl Popper (see Popper’s “Three Worlds,” in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, vol. 1, ed. by Sterling M. McMurrin [Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1981], 143, 144). What exactly the ontological constitution of this “world” is remains not so clear. Eccles staunchly opposed materialism, and he thought that the dividing of the mental and physical into two substances led to materialism. Thus he chose not to speak of two substances, but instead, of mental (subjective) and physical (objective) “worlds,” sometimes referred to as states and entities, which are able to interact (*How the Self Controls Its Brain* [Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1994], 38; *The Self and Its Brain*, 36).

Yet Eccles still believed in a soul; and statements of his, such as the following, show his reliance on supernatural explanations for the phenomena of the mental world: “There is a Divine Providence over and above the materialistic happenings of biological evolution. . . . There is a fundamental mystery in my personal existence, transcending the biological account of the development of my body and my brain. That belief, of course, is in keeping with the religious concept of the soul and with its special creation by God” (Quoted in Denis Brian, *The Voice of Genius: Conversations with Nobel Scientists and Other Luminaries* [Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 1995], 371). Statements like these that offer supernatural explanations for human phenomena make it difficult for Eccles’ theory of mind to be housed anywhere else but within substance dualism. And even though Eccles called himself a dualist but not a substance dualist, those who have studied his theory often label it a form of substance dualism. Accordingly, substance dualism has celebrated Eccles’ research, which attempted to explain mind-brain interaction by postulating that the apical dendrites of cortical neurons are the sensors that serve as the connection between the soul/self and the brain. Eccles’ work, however, was never embraced within the scientific community, and in the decades following it, new discoveries in neuroscience arose that contradicted the assertions he had made (Allan Hobson, M.D., “Neuroscience and the Soul: The Dualism of John Carew Eccles,” *Cerebrum* [April 1, 2004], [http://dana.org/Cerebrum/2004/Neuroscience\\_and\\_the\\_Soul\\_The\\_Dualism\\_of\\_John\\_Carew\\_Eccles/](http://dana.org/Cerebrum/2004/Neuroscience_and_the_Soul_The_Dualism_of_John_Carew_Eccles/) [accessed July 3, 2019]).

essence was this: humans are rational animals.<sup>101</sup> This rational faculty included the passive intellect (which receives the phantasm from the sensitive faculties), the active intellect (which “abstracts the universal element present in the phantasm”), and the will.<sup>102</sup> Christian theological tradition attributed the rational faculty of the soul only to humans—this was humans’ distinguishing feature. By implication then, non-human animals were believed to be irrational.

In the previous section, the physical and mental components of human constitution were looked at, in addition to the interaction between these components. In this section, the substance dualist understanding of human nature will be explored. Specifically, what are the functions of human nature and how do these relate to human constitution (human in relation to him/herself), what makes humans “humanique” (human in relation to the world, and especially to animals like primates), and within this context, what is the *imago Dei* (human in relation to God)?

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<sup>101</sup> See the section above on “Physical Substance.” This was also the answer of hylomorphism.

<sup>102</sup> These three terms are Augustine’s. Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., gen. ed. *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 438. Aquinas, following Aristotle, links human and animal ontology more closely than do dualists along the Plato-Augustine line. However, even the Aquinian view of human and animal souls has enough of a constitutional distinction between them to warrant calling Aquinas a dualist at least in his notions of human and animal ontology. For example, in his view, the rational faculties of the human soul contribute to it being subsistent and thus immortal, neither of which can be said of the non-rational souls of animals.

Regarding the term “phantasm” (Gk., *phantasma*, *phantasmata*), Augustine uses it in this way: “Augustine explains ‘phantasma’ as the visual image formed by arbitrarily combining and working up sense impressions in contrast with the simple memory-image ‘phantasia’; e.g., his mental image of his father was a ‘phantasia,’ that of his grandfather, whom he had never seen, a ‘phantasmata.’ Augustine seems to be the first Latin writer to use the word in a philosophical sense,” Pliny being one to use it earlier in the sense of “ghost” (editors’ note in *The Confessions of Augustine*, ed. by John Gibb and William Montgomery [Cambridge, United Kingdom: University Press, 1908], 62).

## Functions

Substance dualism has typically recognized either two or three parts of human constitution as having jurisdiction over the various functions of human nature. The two parts might be the soul and body, or the *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, or the higher and lower faculties of the soul, or the immortal and mortal soul.<sup>103</sup> The three parts might be the appetite, will, and reason, or the capacities of *esse*, *vivere*, and *intelligere*.<sup>104</sup> All the functions of human nature are to fit in these. For example, the reason (the rational aspect) makes possible humans' intellectual, spiritual, moral, and aesthetic abilities.<sup>105</sup> The will (the spirited aspect) makes possible humans' volitional and emotional abilities.<sup>106</sup> And the appetite (the appetitive aspect) makes possible humans' biological

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<sup>103</sup> Plato, *Phaedo*, ed. by E.A. Duke, W.F. Hicken, W.S.M. Nicoll, D.B. Robinson, and J.C.G. Strachan (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon, 1995), "Preliminary Arguments for Immortality." Rosalie Osmond, *Imagining the Soul: A History* (Stroud, United Kingdom: Sutton Publishing, 2003), chapter One.

Descartes' explanation was his famous division of ontological substances between the *res extensa* and the *res cogitans*. He propounded a more dichotomous view than the philosophers who preceded him. While those philosophers did see the soul and body dualistically, they also had a more general sense of the soul as animating substance that included mental and physical faculties. Descartes was also the originator of the modern use of the term mind instead of soul. When defining mind and body, he posited a stark contrast between them. The mind was the non-physical "thinking substance" (*res cogitans*) and the body was the non-mental "extended substance" (*res extensa*), without any overlap between them (although there was interaction between them because of the pineal gland). This meant that, according to Descartes, every aspect of human nature was subsumed under the mind except for the most obviously physical functions.

<sup>104</sup> Plato: Stephen Scully, trans., *Plato's Phaedrus* (Newburyport, MA: Focus Philosophical Library, 2003), 26-29; Allan Bloom, trans., *The Republic of Plato*, 2d ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1991), Chapters IV, IX. Augustine: Brian Dobell, *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion: The Journey from Platonism to Christianity* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 191, 171.

<sup>105</sup> According to Plato, the rational aspect of the soul is responsible for original and not imitated aesthetic expression. Nickolas Pappas, "Plato's Aesthetics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta, ed., <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-aesthetics/#Pha> (accessed May 21, 2015).

<sup>106</sup> That Plato believed that the spirited aspect of the soul is responsible for emotional expression is a theory. See Charles Siewert, "'Spirit' in Plato: Hearing Reason and Loving Honor," (unpublished, work in progress), <http://charlessiewert.com/attachments/article/5/thumosPDF09.pdf> (accessed October 4, 2018).

and social abilities.<sup>107</sup> If there are only two parts, the “higher” one encompasses the rational aspect and the “lower” one encompasses the appetitive aspect (and usually the will would be included with the rational aspect).

As scientific discovery of the brain has moved forward, even substance dualists have attributed more aspects of human nature to the physical and less to the mental. For example, Descartes would have attributed only obviously biological aspects of human nature to the body (*res extensa*), but now most scientists would attribute every aspect of human nature to the body (the brain). That is how current dualist philosophers like Chalmers can say that the body is the cause of the objective functions of human nature, and the mind is the cause of the subjective functions.<sup>108</sup>

### Humaniqueness

Humaniqueness is the recently coined term used to describe the “factors that make human cognition special” and unique from every other living creature.<sup>109</sup> The substance dualist view of humaniqueness holds that humans’ rational or spiritual faculties (soul) are what differentiate them from animals. Unfortunately, such a view contributed to a low

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<sup>107</sup> And perhaps also some of the “lower” manifestations of the functions that I have attributed to the rational and spirited aspects of the soul.

<sup>108</sup> “Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 2/3 (1995): 200-19. With this position, Chalmers (though still a dualist) gives the body responsibility for many more functions of human nature than did Descartes, the philosopher who shaped the issue of the mind-body problem for the modern era.

<sup>109</sup> Amy Lavoie, “Hauser Presents Theory of ‘Humaniqueness,’” *Harvard Gazette* [February 14, 2008], <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2008/02/hauser-presents-theory-of-humaniqueness/> [accessed November 13, 2014]].

view of animals that Christendom has generally held, along with a rationale that could justify humans' inhumane treatment of animals.<sup>110</sup>

However, with increasing scientific understanding of how the body works, and especially with the monumental advances in brain science over the last couple of decades, the mental capacities of the body (brain) are now generally seen to be a better explanation of human ontological phenomena (like emotion or decision-making) than the mind or soul (which are seen as undefined and nebulous notions). Even for many current dualist philosophers, whether Christian or not, what mostly differentiates humans from animals

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<sup>110</sup> Following Aquinas, the abuse of animals was not thought to be intrinsically bad, but was merely considered wrong because it hardened the perpetrator and might lead to future abuse against humans. See Robert N. Wennberg, *God, Humans, and Animals: An Invitation to Enlarge Our Moral Universe* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 121-24. Also A. Rahel Schafer, "'You, YHWH, Save Humans and Animals': God's Response to the Vocalized Needs of Non-Human Animals as Portrayed in the Old Testament," Ph.D. dissertation, Wheaton College (2015), ch. 1.

Descartes, in propounding a dualism more disjunctive than what came before, refused to attribute to animals many of the functions even of the "middle" level of the soul (spirited, sensitive, or *vivere*). To him, animals were physical even to the level of machines, pure *res extensa*; in his words "lacking any mind, reason, or true speech . . . thus essentially bodies driven by strictly mechanical impulses" (quoted in William French, "Beast-Machines and the Technocratic Reduction of Life: A Creation-Centered Perspective," in *Good News for Animals? Christian Approaches to Animal Well-Being*, ed. by Charles Pinches and Jay B. McDaniel [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993], 32). What distinguished humans from animals was their *res cogitans*, and this mind had a very large scope of functions indeed.

There were some Protestant theologians, however, who held to a high view of animals. For example, John Wesley preached about how "the whole brute creation will then, undoubtedly, be restored, not only to the vigour, strength, and swiftness which they had at their creation, but to a far higher degree of each than they ever enjoyed" (Sarah Anderson, ed., "The Sermons of John Wesley—Sermon 60: The General Deliverance," Wesley Center Online, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-60-the-general-deliverance/> [accessed May 15, 2015]). He even is said to have believed that his horse would be in heaven. However, since he never spoke of animals possessing immortal souls innately, as he believed humans did, he may have believed that God would give animals immortality when he liberated and glorified them. The fact that Wesley did not attribute to animals an immortal soul as he did to humans, shows that he probably still upheld the dualistic view and felt that there was a constitutional difference between humans and animals. In Wesley's previously quoted sermon, "The General Deliverance," he states that the difference between humans and animals is that humans can know and love God, and that when humans reject God, they lower their humanity and become like beasts. This statement may seem like he therefore would not hold to a constitutional difference between humans and animals; however, it could also be true that he believes that the immortal soul of humans makes possible this difference in capabilities between humans and animals. Ultimately, the fact that he was silent on the topic of animal souls, even though he spoke of earthly animals being in heaven, shows that he probably sought to avoid this question.

is these higher mental capacities, found in the brain.<sup>111</sup> Yet many other Christian substance dualists assert that these capacities result from an ontological and not merely functional difference between humans and animals.<sup>112</sup>

This belief is linked to substance dualism's interpretation of the biblical creation narrative, where the *imago Dei* is the most important factor that distinguishes humans as human.<sup>113</sup> The obvious question is: What is this image of God according to which humans were created? Historically, substance dualist models have held to a substantive view of the *imago Dei* in which the *imago Dei* is located in a part of the human constitution, whether the mental, spiritual, or moral part (mind or soul).<sup>114</sup> Therefore, the *imago Dei* is a constitutional similarity between God and humans, or a result of a constitutional similarity between them.<sup>115</sup> Considering the correlation that substance

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<sup>111</sup> Chalmers, the atheist dualist, goes as far as to say that some animals have self-consciousness, which is certainly a subjective mental quality. *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 27.

<sup>112</sup> Paul Waldau, "Animals," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, vol. I: A-J, ed. by Bron Taylor (London: Continuum, 2005), 66-73.

In spite of these developments, Cooper and many other Christian dualists still hold that a distinguishing feature between humans and animals is humans' immortal soul that is capable of separability from the body (see his *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, especially chapter 10).

<sup>113</sup> Genesis 1:26-28: "And God said: 'Let us אדם in our image, according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the בהמה and over all the earth and over every creeper that creeps upon the earth.' And God created אדם in his image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. And God blessed them and said to them: 'Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that creeps upon the earth'" (translation mine, as will be the case for each occurrence of a Gen 1-3 text in this dissertation).

<sup>114</sup> For Augustine, the soul alone bears the *imago Dei*. For John Calvin, the image of God resides primarily in the soul, but he also held to a two-fold understanding of the *imago Dei*. The *humanitas* is the broad sense of the image of God, the formal image which all humans possess by virtue of their being human. The *conformitas* is the narrow sense of the image of God, the material image which was lost at the fall and which may be restored through believing in Christ and following his Word. G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), 52.

<sup>115</sup> The soul is an example of (what is thought to be) a constitutional similarity between God and humans that could be the *imago Dei*. Reason or morality are examples of *results* of what may be considered constitutional similarities between God and humans, that could be called the *imago Dei*.

dualism makes between the soul and the image of God, it is unsurprising that the *imago Dei* would be seen as the most important part of human nature, and that an ontologically immaterial soul would be seen as the factor which makes humans unique.

### Physicalist Models

Physicalist models describe humans as physical or material beings (with no non-physical or immaterial substance). They aim to solve the problems of substance dualism—namely, interaction (between two substances) and unity (of the person)—and they seem to succeed. With only one substance, there is no interaction, and unity of the person is a given. The question remains, however, how the physical can account for every aspect of what it means to be human (especially consciousness and identity). Additionally, physicalism can face other problems, like how to keep open the possibility of free will and eternal destiny.

### Constitution

Physicalism identifies the human person as constitutionally being physical or material. What exactly does that mean? Jaworski offers an “open-ended” definition, one

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According to the biblical theologian J. Richard Middleton: “This notion of the rational, substantial soul mirroring its divine archetype—which is part of the pervasive influence of Platonism on Christian theology—is nuanced or supplemented in the Latin West by notions such as conscience, spirituality, immortality, freedom, and personhood and by Augustine’s famous proposal of various intrapsychic trinitarian structures (particularly memory, intellect, and will), which correspond to the triune nature of God” (*The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* [Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2005], 19). Indeed, the notion of immortality as *imago Dei* is one that has early roots, and can be found back in the Wisdom of Solomon 2:23: “For God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity” (the Wisdom of Solomon is a deuterocanonical book that likely dates to the second or first century B.C.). It certainly is not too difficult to see some connection with the Platonic forms here. Eastern Christian theology has presented the *imago Dei* in a more dynamic sense, yet still in line with the substantive view. Also influenced by Platonic tradition, it saw the *imago Dei* as “divinization” or the “progressive conformity of the soul to God.” Middleton, 20. See also David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), chapter 7.

that he states can thus weather the test of time: “the physical domain is the domain described and explained by physics. It contains whatever physics says it does, and has whatever features physics says it does.”<sup>116</sup> For physicalists, personal ontology falls under this domain. Yet especially for those physicalist models within Christian theology, there is the deeply felt need to give both the physical and mental elements of the human physical constitution their due. In many physicalist’s eyes, substance dualism can tend to elevate the mental over the physical, and scientific materialism can tend to stress the importance of the physical over the mental. Thus physicalist models seek to account for the physical and the mental in a more equal manner, while acknowledging that both are part of the human physical constitution.

### Physical Substance

Physicalists believe that everything that constitutes a human is physical or material. As Christians, however, they also hold that humans are spiritual and have some capability for divine-human interaction. How are both of these assertions compatible? The answer is that humans’ highly intelligent material brains, and no immaterial substance, make them uniquely capable of ascertaining spiritual things. But what is the cause for these intelligent human brains? Many physicalists have held that humans’ larger brains, with a capacity for more intelligence, were the result of the evolutionary process that brought humans from primates, and not a result of a direct divine creation in line with a historical reading of the Genesis narrative.<sup>117</sup> Many physicalist models also

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<sup>116</sup> Jaworski also references other definitions that talk about the “domain of space, time, and causality” (*Philosophy of Mind*, 26, 33).

<sup>117</sup> See Francisco J. Ayala, “The Difference of Being Human: Ethical Behavior as an Evolutionary



employ the principle of emergence to postulate about how a thoroughly material human constitution could give rise to the mental aspects of human nature.<sup>118</sup>

## Mental Substance

Physicalist models stress the physicality of the whole person, including the mental. By and large, they see the mental not as a substance apart from the physical, but as a function or aspect of the physical constitution. Even so, they do not diminish the reality of qualia (conscious experience that is subjective and instantiated), and seek to answer the hard problem of consciousness without resorting to a substance dualist explanation.<sup>119</sup>

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Byproduct,” in *Biology, Ethics and the Origin of Life*, ed. by Holmes Rolston III (Florence, KY: Wadsworth Publishing, 1995); Peter Van Inwagen, *The Problem of Evil* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 2006), 123; Lynn Rudder Baker, “God and Science in the Public Schools,” *Philosophic Exchange* 30/1 (2000): 51-69; Kevin Corcoran, “Consciousness and the Culture Wars,” *Holy Skin and Bone*, <http://holyskinandbone.blogspot.com/search/label/evolution> (accessed October 4, 2018).

In general, theologians who uphold creationism are more likely to uphold substance dualism and the immortality of the soul.

<sup>118</sup> Nonreductive physicalism is a physicalist model that largely employs emergentism to help account for the physical and mental of the human physical constitution. For example, the most basic level is usually seen to be physical (used here to identify what is under the domain of physics), then chemical (although some have seen the chemical level to be the most basic), then biological, then psychological, then social, then perhaps spiritual. All of these levels are physical/material (in constitution), but only the last half of them are also mental (in nature). According to nonreductive physicalism, each ascending level of complexity within the human person exhibits new characteristics, some of which are mental and exert top-down causation on the lower levels. But this increasing complexity and even these mental properties never form their own non-physical entity: they are thoroughly physical (this is ontological reductionism) although they cannot be completely explained by the physical because truly novel properties emerge at each increasingly complex level of organization (this is the antithesis of causal reductionism). See Nancey Murphy, “Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues,” in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 127-48. See also footnote 4 above.

<sup>119</sup> The word “qualia” is derived from the Latin adjective *quālis* and pertains to the quality of a specific instance, what that specific instance *is like*—literally, “of what sort” or “of what kind” (e.g., what the taste of a grapefruit is like; what the feeling of walking through fog is like). Some materialist theories outside of Christian theology deny qualia and question certain other aspects of consciousness (like pain and visual perception). See Georges Rey, “A Reason for Doubting the Existence of Consciousness, in *Consciousness and Self-Regulation*, vol. 3, ed. by Richard J. Davidson, Gary E. Schwartz, and David Shapiro (New York: Plenum Press, 1983), 1-39.

The “hard problem of consciousness” is a term popularized by David Chalmers, to draw a distinction between it and so-called easy problems of consciousness. Easy problems (like concentration) can be answered when the cognitive mechanisms for them are discovered. The hard problem, questioning

But if humans are constituted entirely of a material or physical substance, do they have any *constitutional* relation or connection to the divine? No they do not, since physicalism conceives of God as non-physical (just as Christian theology generally does). How then, according to physicalism, can the divine and human, God and his creatures, relate? To the extent that this question falls under the domain of personal ontology, the answer is that the divine and human can relate because of humans' ability to apprehend and comprehend spiritual matters.

Physicalists believe that humans have the ability to apprehend and comprehend spiritual things, they believe in the possibility of God communicating with humans, and they also believe in some form of phenomenologically theistic experience and the conscience.<sup>120</sup> Still, how is this gap between the material (human) and the immaterial (God) bridged?<sup>121</sup> The answer is not too clear, but most physicalists tend to believe that

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such enigmas as qualia and sensation, has no easy biological answer. A belief that neurobiology does not have the answer to the hard problem of consciousness led the atheist Chalmers to be a naturalistic dualist, or perhaps more accurately, a panprotopsychist. Panprotopsychism holds that all things have a certain degree of consciousness, with objects possessing a proto-consciousness that can gain complexity as it combines with other things. See Chalmers' "Panpsychism and Panprotopsychism," *The Amherst Lecture in Philosophy* 8 (2013): 1-35.

<sup>120</sup> Kevin Corcoran abbreviates phenomenologically theistic experience to "PTE", and defines it as "the claim that God can figure in the phenomenological content of experience." "Experiencing God," *Sophia* 38/2 (September 1, 1999): 116-41. See also Corcoran's "Is Theistic Experience Phenomenologically Possible?" *Religious Studies* 32/4 (December 1996): 449-61.

For many physicalists, their understanding of the conscience does not serve as an example of divine-human interaction.

<sup>121</sup> Substance dualists believe that this gap cannot be bridged, and call it "the bottleneck argument" (see Angus Menuge, "Christian Physicalism and Our Knowledge of God," in *Christian Physicalism?* ed. by R. Keith Loftin and Joshua R. Farris, 75-97): "If our divine concepts are acquired, then physicalism requires that God works through physical means to generate those concepts. . . . However, although God Himself is infinite, perfect, and eternal, all of the physical means through which, on physicalism, He must work, are finite, imperfect, and temporal. So these means do not appear able to bear the information required to form divine concepts. To use an analogy with modern digital communication, the physical links between God and the brain do not have the 'bandwidth' to transmit information about a divine being. If so, there is still an informational 'bottleneck' between God and our thoughts: brain states cannot contain the information necessary to be (or generate) divine concepts" (84).

the highly complex physical functions of the human brain are sufficient to apprehend spiritual realities and even divine revelations.<sup>122</sup>

Corcoran also allows for the possibility of humans possessing a *sensus divinitatis* (“sense of deity”), and in his view this would be an additional argument in favor of phenomenologically theistic experience.<sup>123</sup> But since the *sensus divinitatis* is often thought of as having its origin in God and its existence in the soul, it may seem surprising that this notion can find a place in the physicalist model of Christian materialism.<sup>124</sup> Indeed John Calvin even believed that this sense of the divine was proof that humans possessed immortal souls.<sup>125</sup> However Corcoran, to the contrary, sees the *sensus*

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<sup>122</sup> See Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* 121-23: “Our neurobiological complexity and the history of cultural development have together resulted in the capacity for genuine moral reasoning” and divine-human interaction (121). Other physicalists are more reductionist, and go further, saying that “*everything* about us can be explained in naturalistic terms” (ibid.). Thus each impulse of the conscience would need to have a neural correlate, meaning that something always physically changes in the brain when a person prays or thinks about God. Divine-human interaction is also facilitated by a belief, that some physicalists hold, that God is temporally everlasting while still non-physical, as opposed to the traditional view of God being atemporally eternal. With such an understanding of the nature of God, God could act causally in space-time, and thus, real divine-human interaction would be possible.

Scientific explanations of religious experience is an area that is currently burgeoning, due to the monumental advances in brain science of the last few decades. This area has also piqued public interest, and so not only are the number of professional conferences on neuroscience and spirituality increasing, but the number of popular books in this field are as well. See for example, works like that by the neuroscientist Andrew Newberg: *Principles of Neurotheology*, Ashgate Science and Religion Series (Surrey, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), or one he co-authored with Mark Robert Waldman, *How God Changes Your Brain: Breakthrough Findings from a Leading Neuroscientist* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2009).

<sup>123</sup> “Experiencing God,” 131. See footnote 120 for the definition of phenomenologically theistic experience.

<sup>124</sup> A foundational passage that describes the *sensus divinitatis* comes from John Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1: “There is within the human mind, an indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of divinity. This we take to be beyond controversy. To prevent anyone from taking refuge in the pretense of ignorance, God himself has implanted in all men a certain understanding of his divine majesty. Ever renewing its memory, he repeatedly sheds fresh drops. Since, therefore, men one and all perceive that there is a God and that he is their Maker, they are condemned by their own testimony because they have failed to honor him and to consecrate their lives to his will” (ed. by John T. McNeill [Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1960], 3.1). Furthermore, religious tradition has considered the *sensus divinitatis* to be a faculty of the soul (Dennis E. Tamburello, *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994], 39).

<sup>125</sup> *Institutes*, vol. 1, 15.2.

*divinitatis* as a wholly physical, neurological feature of the human brain. Thus explained this way, the *sensus divinitatis* can exist without contradicting the claims of physicalism.

So what about the conscience? According to physicalism, does it facilitate contact between the divine and human? Not exactly. For while Christian physicalists generally believe in a human conscience that is physical, its contents are usually seen to be decided in relation to this material world and not in relation to a supernatural God.<sup>126</sup> According to the Roman Catholic evolutionary biologist Francisco Ayala, the human conscience is the result of biological and cultural evolution. Biological evolution made possible the ascent of the human with a large and intelligent brain. This high capacity for intelligence brought about the ability for humans to make ethical choices based on these three things: “namely, the ability to anticipate the consequences of one’s own actions, to make value judgments, and to choose between alternative courses of action.”<sup>127</sup> Once the first humans developed this ethical or moral sense, it was passed down, developed, and differentiated from generation to generation through cultural evolution. So the conscience here has a naturalistic explanation, and does not provide a satisfactory answer to the question of divine-human interaction.<sup>128</sup>

Another question that confronts physicalism relates to the afterlife. If, according to physicalist models, the mental functions of the human person are made possible solely by a physical substance and if there is no mental substance *per se*, then there seems to be

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<sup>126</sup> So while physicalists believe that divine-human interaction is possible, in they do not necessarily believe that the conscience is an example of such interaction. For Corcoran, phenomenologically theistic experiences are the example of this interaction.

<sup>127</sup> “Human Nature: One Evolutionist’s View,” in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 41.

<sup>128</sup> Perhaps a more developed conception of the ontology of God in physicalism—and following this, of divine-human interaction within the context of a physicalist human ontology—would yield more possibilities for answering the questions related to interaction between the human and divine.

no room for any aspect of the human person to be immortal since physical substance is not considered capable of immortality in itself. Yet there have been a variety of theories within physicalism that seek to show how a physicalist model can in fact still allow for belief in life after death.<sup>129</sup> This allowance is crucial, as physicalism must offer a coherent explanation of a hypothetical afterlife in order to even be considered as a viable theory by a majority of Christians.

### Mental-Physical Interaction

Physicalist models have the simplest answer to the problem of interaction—namely, there is no interaction nor any need for interaction since the human person is only one substance. In fact, “viewed with the eyes of a full-bred monist that ‘problem’ must present itself as entirely a *pseudo*-problem. . . . A brain without any such mental activity [internal consciousness] is no living human brain at all.”<sup>130</sup> For the physicalist, the mental is an integral function of the material/physical, not a separate substance. The mental and physical have the same physical constitution; thus, this view preserves the unity of the human person.

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<sup>129</sup> Corcoran (whom Murphy defers to as offering ample explanations for “personal identity over time,” or after death [*In Search of the Soul*, 132]) sees the philosophical possibility of either a gappy existence (disruption in existence through time between the earthly life and the afterlife, necessitating the resurrection) or a non-gappy existence (continuation in existence through time between the earthly life and the afterlife, necessitating the fissioning of causal paths), both with immanent causal condition (in chapter 5 of his *Rethinking Human Nature*). See also Corcoran’s chapter in *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, especially 210; also John B. Cobb, *A Christian Natural Theology: Based on the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead*, 2d.ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 2007), ch. 2. These explanations are often philosophical and seem to be based more on other sources than on Scripture. Their goal is to show how belief in an afterlife can be consistent with a particular physicalist model, not to prove that it is an actual reality. Perhaps they can be said to hold the same view as Johnsen, who asserts: “The fact of the case is clearly that philosophy can neither prove nor disprove human immortality” (319).

<sup>130</sup> Johnsen, 21.

Various physicalist models emphasize different aspects of this interaction between the mental and physical. The models that lean towards reductionism subscribe to type physicalism, which states: “For every actually instantiated mental property  $F$ , there is some physical property  $G$  such that  $F=G$ .”<sup>131</sup> In other words, each mental property is identical to one physical property, each property of the mind is caused by and ontologically identical to a property of the brain. Nonreductive models put more weight on the ability not only of the physical to act causally upon the mental but also of the mental to act causally upon the physical, and do not adhere to strict type physicalism.<sup>132</sup> Physicalist models as a whole, however, see their answers to this question of interaction to be a convincing argument for physicalism.

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<sup>131</sup> Stoljar, “Physicalism.”

<sup>132</sup> According to nonreductive physicalism, “the person is a physical organism whose complex functioning, both in society and in relation to God, gives rise to ‘higher’ human capacities such as morality and spirituality” (*Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 25). So here is found causation in the direction of physical to mental (that is a given). In spite of this, nonreductive physicalism is wholly opposed to saying that the behavior of those “higher human capacities” can be *causally* reduced to the behavior of the physical organism (while it simultaneously asserts that the higher mental capacities can be *ontologically* reduced to the lower physical capacities). One of the main driving forces behind this denial of causal reductionism is the belief that if there is causal reduction, then there is determinism and the inability for humans to really be free moral agents. This is why nonreductive physicalism holds that there is not only “bottom-up” causation but also “top-down” causation (or “downward causation”) in which the “novel forms of structure and organization” present at the higher levels “exert a downward causal influence on the parts of which they are composed” (*In Search of the Soul*, 87, 88). Neuropsychologist and neurobiologist Roger W. Sperry offers another description of downward causation: “The principle of control from above downward, referred to as ‘downward causation,’ . . . says that we and the universe are more than just a swarm of ‘hurrying’ atoms, electrons, and protons, that the higher holistic properties and qualities of the world to which the brain responds, including all the macro-social phenomena of modern civilization, are just as real and causal for science as are the atoms and molecules on which they depend.” Here is found causation in the direction of mental to physical, where the mental is not a new ontological reality, but merely a higher aspect of the physical. In this way nonreductive physicalism can remain faithful to its monistic physicalist underpinnings. This wholly physicalist foundation can be called into question, however, the more nonreductive physicalism uses the emergentist theory to describe these relationships—since emergentism can lead to the assertion that a mental substance emerges from the physical substance.

## Nature

If physicalism's view of human constitution does not provide an explanation for humans' unique identity, then we must turn to its view of human nature to see if that sets forth an explanation for human uniqueness. For the most part, the physicalist models do logically solve the problems of human ontological unity and of interaction between the physical and mental aspects of a person.<sup>133</sup> However, will their commitment to a thoroughly physical constitution cause them to fall short on the problem of human identity?<sup>134</sup> This section will first look into how the physicalist models see the functions of human nature. It will then culminate with physicalism's explanations for humans' unique identity ("human uniqueness"), including whether it sees the image of God in humans, and what that image might be.

## Functions

For the physicalist, all the functions of the human person spring from their physical make-up. This belief puts emphasis on the unity of the human person. In physicalist models, there is no stark demarcation of physical versus mental functions, and this view coheres with increasing evidence from medical research about the psychosomatic and wholistic nature of humans (in which the physical affects the mental aspects of person and the mental is increasingly found to affect the physical). But how can the physical substance be a sufficient explanation for mental capabilities? Most physicalists would hold that it is because humans evolved to possess more intelligent

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<sup>133</sup> It is not so widely accepted, however, that it has solved the problem of human-divine interaction.

<sup>134</sup> A model's answer to the question of human identity or uniqueness usually also entails its answer to the questions of human consciousness, freedom, and destiny.

brains (often explained by their enlargement), and these brains enabled sophisticated cognitive function which has resulted in all the nuances and achievements that can be attributed to humans.<sup>135</sup>

Physicalists believe that all aspects of human nature—even the spiritual—can be (or will be) explained physically. Some scientists interested in studying the human capacity for spirituality seek for a certain “God gene,” or a “God spot” or module in the brain.<sup>136</sup> Other studies show that “religious, spiritual, and/or mystical experience(s)” (RSMEs) are not located in a specific gene or spot in the brain, but are made possible because of a “spatially extended neural circuit encompassing brain regions involved in attention, body representation, visual imagery, emotion (physiological and subjective aspects), and self-consciousness.”<sup>137</sup> Such explanations give physicalists hope that science will show that the brain is physically capable of apprehending God if God reveals himself in a way that can be apprehended in the material, physical world.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> This includes features of consciousness such as qualia and perception, and also the psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual facets of humans’ nature.

<sup>136</sup> See, for example: Dean Hamer, *The God Gene: How Faith is Hardwired into Our Genes* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004); Matthew Alper, *The “God” Part of the Brain: A Scientific Interpretation of Human Spirituality and God* (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2006); Jeffrey L. Saver and John Rabin, “The Neural Substrates of Religious Experience,” *Journal of Neuropsychiatry* 9 (1997): 498-510; Vilayanur S. Ramachandran, and Sandra Blakeslee, *Phantoms in the Brain: Probing the Mysteries of the Human Mind* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998).

<sup>137</sup> Mario Beauregard and Denyse O’Leary, *The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist’s Case for the Existence of the Soul* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 37. The quoted material was specifically referring to a study done on the brain activity and states of Carmelite nuns when asked to “recall and relive the *unio mystica*, the mystical union with God (the ultimate goal of the contemplative techniques practiced by Christian mystics).” It was reported that the findings were “more consistent with an actual experience than with a delusion.” Interestingly, the same brain states and activity are recorded with any sort of RSME meditation, whether Christian or otherwise.

For more on explanations of religious experience from neuroscience, see books written by neuroscientist Andrew Newberg (see bibliography).

<sup>138</sup> If, however, a physicalist holds to the traditional, atemporal (timeless) view of God, this would not seem to leave room for divine-human interaction and thus the salvation that can accompany it. Divine-human interaction needs either a human capacity to ontologically reach the divine (e.g., an immortal human



## Humaniqueness

In physicalism, humaniqueness is all about complexity and capacity—increased complexity of the brain resulting in increased mental (and as a result—spiritual and physical/bodily) capacities, relative to animals.<sup>139</sup> These properties of humaniqueness are grounded in neurobiology, but are expressed also in the society at large by the resulting accomplishments in fields such as technology, art, law, government, literature. One theory from neurobiology about what makes humans unique comes from the recent and significant finding of a region of the brain—the lateral frontal pole prefrontal cortex—

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soul) or a divine capacity to ontologically reach the human (e.g., a temporally everlasting God who works causally in space-time).

<sup>139</sup> “The human soul [soul as used here should not be taken in a literal ontological sense] is distinct from that of animals because it has so many capacities that they do not, not because it has a different nature or origin. Human consciousness includes self-awareness and a sense of identity over time because it can remember orprehend its past and project into the future as well as engage the immediate present, as the animals do. The greater complexity of the human brain provides us much higher mental and spiritual capacities than the animals. This in turn enables us to do many more complex things with our bodies” (Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 211). Even though Cooper is using this definition as an example of a panpsychist view, it and similar definitions to it also encompass the view of most physicalist theories.

This is not to deny that animals have “souls” (more highly developed mental properties), but merely that humans have higher overall mental capacities. As more research is conducted into animal behavior, it is advisable to stay open to reevaluating the view that humans have higher overall mental capacities. It is true that humans have developed culture, technology, jurisprudence, and other aspects of human society to a level that has not been observed among animals. Presumably such feats have been made possible by the capabilities of the human brain. However, this should not make humans feel that human brains are superior to animal brains in every aspect of their functioning. Especially with higher order animals (e.g., dolphins, elephants, apes), science has found that their cognition, memory, self-awareness, communication, and complex relationships exceed what might be possible simply by instinct, and sometimes rival humans’ abilities in these areas. Additionally, due to different needs that some of these animals face to survive and thrive, some of their innate mental capacities are advanced to a level that human minds do not innately approach (e.g., sonar in dolphins). For a survey of some of examples of exceptional mental capacity in animals, see Frans de Waal, *The Age of Empathy: Nature’s Lessons for a Kinder Society* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2009). Also see de Waal, *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016); Sara J. Shettleworth, *Cognition, Evolution, and Behavior*, 2d. ed. (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2010); Jennifer Ackerman, *The Genius of Birds* (New York: Penguin Press, 2016); Merlin Tuttle, *The Secret Lives of Bats: My Adventures with the World’s Most Misunderstood Mammals* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015); Bert Hölldobler and Edward O. Wilson, *The Ants* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1990); Wennberg, *God, Humans, and Animals: An Invitation to Enlarge Our Moral Universe*.

that seems to be unique to humans.<sup>140</sup> This region is associated with higher thinking processes like complex language, cognitive flexibility, planning for the future, and learning from others. Perhaps this could be the region of the human brain that accounts for humaniqueness.

Or perhaps the answer has more to do with genetics. Since the completion of the mapping of the human genome, it has been possible to begin comparing it with other genomes. Most interesting to our topic is the comparison to the primate genomes that are the most similar to human genomes. While much of the DNA is shared between these groups, some of it is different. How does that difference manifest itself? Does the answer to what makes humans unique lie there? In the last decade, human accelerated regions have been identified as regions in the human DNA sequence that seem to be uniquely human, and some of these seem to be linked with the development of larger brains in humans, a development genetically programmed to begin at gestation.<sup>141</sup> A genetic view of humaniqueness also reconciles with the answer David Kelsey gives in his theological anthropology: human DNA is what makes humans unique.<sup>142</sup>

But if humaniqueness is merely physical, how then do physicalist models in Christian theology view the *imago Dei*? Although the various theories in physicalism take different routes to arrive at an understanding of what the *imago Dei* is, the basic

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<sup>140</sup> Franz-Xaver Neubert, et al, "Comparison of Human Ventral Frontal Cortex Areas for Cognitive Control and Language with Areas in Monkey Frontal Cortex," *Neuron* 81/3 (February 2014): 700-13. And for an article on this study written for a lay audience: Tia Ghose, "Newly Discovered Brain Region Helps Make Humans Unique," *livescience* (January 28, 2014), <http://www.livescience.com/42897-unique-human-brain-region-found.html> (accessed June 23, 2015). This region of the brain not been found in other animals besides humans, not even in the brains of the primates most genetically similar to humans.

<sup>141</sup> K.S. Pollard, S.R. Salama, N. Lambert, et al, "An RNA Gene Expressed During Cortical Development Evolved Rapidly in Humans," *Nature* 443 [2006]: 167-72.

<sup>142</sup> See his recent magnum opus, *Eccentric Existence*.

consensus is that it is “the self’s existence as a personal, social, and spiritual being,” especially including the ability to relate to God.<sup>143</sup> For many physicalist theories, this capacity evolves or emerges out of the physical aspect of human ontology.<sup>144</sup>

Most physicalists do subscribe to some form of the theory of evolutionism (often evolutionary creationism) to explain the origin of humans.<sup>145</sup> And while many Christian dualists also subscribe to this theory, it is common for them to believe that a spiritual and immaterial soul (and with it, the *imago Dei*) is created immediately by God sometime between the conception and birth of each individual, or that all immaterial souls have been transmitted through natural generation from parents to children (after the first humans).<sup>146</sup> However, since physicalists do not believe in an immaterial soul, nor necessarily in God’s direct and personal creation as outlined in the Genesis narrative, but

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<sup>143</sup> *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 179.

<sup>144</sup> See Aku Visala, “Theological Anthropology and the Cognitive Sciences,” *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology*, ed. by Joshua Farris and Charles Taliaferro (Surrey, United Kingdom: Ashgate, 2015), 67, 68.

This view also correlates with the emergent materialist views developed by Nancey Murphy and Warren Brown. See especially her *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* and their *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It? Philosophical and Neurobiological Perspectives on Moral Responsibility and Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). This emergent materialist view is different than the emergent dualist view propounded by Hasker (especially in his *The Emergent Self*). When emergentism alone is referenced in this dissertation, the notion of emergentism—that higher forms emerge (evolve) from lower forms and take on novel properties that are irreducible to their substrates—is what is being referred to. However, this notion of emergentism exists in both emergent materialism and emergent dualism. So if I reference emergentism to refer to a theory, emergent dualism is what is meant, unless otherwise indicated. This is because emergent materialism coincides mostly with the theory of nonreductive physicalism. Yet emergent dualism differs from substance dualism because substance dualism has not traditionally conceived of the substance of the “soul” emerging from the physical substance.

<sup>145</sup> For a discussion of ten alternative views within Christian theology that address the question of human origins, see Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 18-26.

<sup>146</sup> This is the creationist versus traducianist debate as to the origin of the soul (see footnote 97).

do believe that every aspect of humans is physical, do they have difficulty affirming the existence of the image of God in humans?

For the most part, they seek to affirm the existence of the *imago Dei* by holding to functional or relational views of the *imago Dei*, which they believe can be correlated with an evolutionary view of human origins. The functional view holds that the *imago Dei* is the calling and equipping of humans to rule as trustees over creation. The relational view holds that the *imago Dei* is the ability of humans to form intimate and complex relationships with each other and God.<sup>147</sup> Both of these are in opposition to the substantive view of the *imago Dei*, in which there is an ontologically substantial similarity between God and humans, usually identified as the soul. Instead, for many physicalist models, there exists a functional or relational similarity between God and humans in what they are able to *do* (not an ontological similarity, in what they *are*).

For Corcoran, this functional or relational similarity can consist of the human ability to care for creation, to maintain loving relationships, and to suffer—as God has done and revealed it to humans.<sup>148</sup> For Ayala (the Christian evolutionary biologist whose explanations move within the cultural level), the *imago Dei* can signify “humans’ lofty uniqueness within the natural world.”<sup>149</sup> This uniqueness brought about “elaborate social and political institutions, codes of law, literature and art, ethics and religion,” and

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<sup>147</sup> See Randall E. Otto, “The *Imago Dei* as *Familias*,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35/4 (December 1992): 503-13. For those with dualist presuppositions, such a relationship with God would be possible because the human soul itself is able to connect with the divine. On the other hand, for some with materialist presuppositions, such a relationship can be possible because God himself (being temporally everlasting) can act in space-time in human lives.

<sup>148</sup> “Dispatches from the Physicalist Frontier, Part 1,” The BioLogos Forum, <http://biologos.org/blog/dispatches-from-the-physicalist-frontier-part-1> (accessed June 18, 2015).

<sup>149</sup> *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 31.

monumental feats of engineering and technology. All of this Ayala says resulted from cultural evolution, which was made possible by humans' enlarged brains, which developed through biological evolution.<sup>150</sup> Theologians can have the tendency to characterize the *imago Dei* as being one particular thing, and the philosopher Lynne Rudder Baker follows along this line by hypothesizing that it is humans' "robust first-person perspectives" that constitute the image of God in them.<sup>151</sup> Whatever particular answers Christian physicalists have to the question of *imago Dei*, it is clear that each will be a purely physical answer, just as physicalism's explanation of human uniqueness is entirely physical.

### Comparison

Within Christian theology, there is a debate between substance dualism and physicalism regarding the success that each claims to have in answering questions of personal ontology. For the question of constitution, substance dualism answers that humans are constituted of two substances, whereas physicalism states that humans are constituted of one substance. For the question of nature, substance dualism holds that a non-physical substance (which can survive the death of the body, according to the traditional understanding of substance dualism) is what makes humans human. For physicalism, however, the unique identity of humans comes from the complexity that results from the functioning of the brain. Table 1 summarizes the views of these two model groupings.

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<sup>150</sup> See his chapter 2 of *Whatever Happened to the Soul?*

<sup>151</sup> This first-person perspective is also Baker's main contribution to question of what accounts for humans' uniqueness. "Christian Materialism in a Scientific Age," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 70/1 (August 2011): 47-59.

**Table 1. Comparison of the categories of personal ontology between the two model groupings**

	<b>Substance Dualism</b>	<b>Physicalism</b>
<b>Constitution:</b>	physical + mental	physical
Physical	physical is 1 of 2 substances	only physical
Mental	mental is 1 of 2 substances	mental is physical
Mental-Physical Interaction	interaction (but without sufficient explanation) <sup>152</sup>	one substance (=no interaction)
<b>Nature:</b>	identity is located in mental (non-physical) substance	identity is located in complexity of physical substance
Functions	mental substance produces mental functions; physical substance produces physical functions	physical substance produces all functions
Humaniqueness ( <i>imago Dei</i> )	“soul” or “mind”	a function of highly complex brains

### Critical Evaluation of Models

It is evident that Christian tradition has been aligned with substance dualist models, and that science leans towards a more physicalist/materialist perspective.<sup>153</sup> Yet many Christian scholars would like to show how their chosen model of personal ontology might be compatible with both Christian tradition and science. Is this possible, however? We now look at a few of the main problems found in substance dualism and physicalism, in order to better understand the difficulties, strengths, and capabilities that these models contain.

<sup>152</sup> Explanation yet to be determined: Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, 213-15.

<sup>153</sup> Modern science has primarily approached reality from a materialist worldview, and generally establishes humans to be fully material. From there, some ways in which humans are unique from the rest of the physical world may be found, but this is not the focus of science as it relates to personal ontology. On the other hand, Christian tradition has always seen humans to be special (in the world and the universe) in the eyes of God. Thus, to most in this tradition, it has only seemed natural that this specialness would have its root and explanation in a human constitution that shared some ontological similarity, or possessed some point of contact, with God.

## Main Problems for Substance Dualist Models

Unity and interaction are two of the major problems ascribed to substance dualist models. If humans are constituted of two substances, how can human existence be united? And yet it seems improbable that humans could operate without such unity. Even Descartes felt the need to defend his view against those who believed it did not offer a unified view of human existence. He said, “I am not lodged in my body merely as a pilot in a ship, but so intimately conjoined, and as it were intermingled with it, that with it I form a unitary whole.”<sup>154</sup>

Yet a fundamental philosophical tenet is that “like knows like.”<sup>155</sup> So how is it possible for two fundamentally dissimilar substances to produce the unity that humans experience? Closely related to this question of unity is the question of interaction. Murphy says that this question of mind-body interaction is now “seen to be an insuperable problem for dualists”; indeed, it may be its greatest problem that has not yet been satisfactorily answered.<sup>156</sup> Substance dualists do believe that the mind/soul and the

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<sup>154</sup> *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 10; quoting Descartes’ *Meditations*, VI.

<sup>155</sup> F.M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2004), 132.

<sup>156</sup> *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* 4.

Substance dualism can argue that such explanations are unnecessary, but that argument does not convince many outside of substance dualism. See Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, 71, 72. Jaworski continues by describing how a belief in substance dualism seems to contradict the acceptance of certain laws of physics. “Because there is a fixed amount of energy involved in the movements of the automobile, and the human body, and any other physical system, it seems that a nonphysical entity could causally influence a physical one only if it violated the principle of conservation of energy. The reason is that the nonphysical entity would be bringing about physical changes not through the energy in the physical system, but through energy of a different sort, not included in the physical domain. In that case, however, the physical universe would not be an energetically closed system; it would be a system that was open to the addition of nonphysical energy. Consequently, even if substance dualists can manage to give a coherent account of how there can be nonphysical energy, the influence of that energy on the physical universe seems to require a violation of conservation laws. The foregoing considerations suggest that substance dualists can countenance causal relations between the mental and physical domains only if they reject the laws of physics. But if it is a toss-up between rejecting substance dualism and rejecting our best science, say critics, there can be no question that substance dualism has to go. After all, our reasons for accepting

body/brain are united and also interact, yet they have not given convincing explanations of how this may be.<sup>157</sup>

Do physicalist models face a similar situation in answering the problems of unity and interaction as substance dualist models do? No, for physicalism states that there is no problem of unity when there is only one substance (and the mental is simply an aspect of the physical substance). So since the mental is just an aspect of that one substance, there is no place or need for the interaction of two substances.

### Main Problems for Physicalist Models

Four of the major problems ascribed to physicalist models are these: consciousness, identity/uniqueness, freedom (libertarian free will), and persistence after bodily death. Consciousness, specifically what is called the “hard problem” of consciousness, is a legitimate problem for physicalism, especially since science has not yet been able to answer it by means of physical/biological laws.<sup>158</sup> Many philosophers, no matter what model of personal ontology they subscribe to, think that science will never be able to answer this question, because consciousness is not something that can be quantified or understood by humans.<sup>159</sup> Yet, for the most part, physicalists believe that the lack of scientific explanation is due not to the inadequacy of science but to the

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physical laws are much stronger than any reasons we have for accepting substance dualism. The existence of mental–physical causal relations together with the conservation of energy thus suggests that substance dualism is false.”

<sup>157</sup> The neurophysiologist and dualist Eccles perhaps came the closest to answering this question. However, his work, though significant, was not embraced by the scientific community, and is now relatively outdated (as we saw earlier in this Chapter).

<sup>158</sup> See footnote 119 for the “hard problem” of consciousness.

<sup>159</sup> For example, the philosopher and materialist (who is also dubbed the “new mysterian”) Colin McGinn in his book *The Problem of Consciousness* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Basil Blackwell, 1991).



inadequacy of human ability to search out or understand the answers that science certainly will discover in the future. Substance dualist models, however, do not have the same problem accounting for consciousness or the “hard problem” of consciousness, because consciousness is seen as an attribute of the soul (or of non-physical mentality).

Moving on to the problem of human identity and uniqueness, this can be a point of some difficulty in physicalist models. Whereas substance dualism can point to the soul as the cause of the differentiation between humans and animals, physicalism does not have such a clear-cut option. Thus, a general charge against physicalism is that it does not adequately account for human uniqueness.

The answer generally given by physicalism to the question of human identity and uniqueness is related to the idea of complexity—that human brains and minds are complex to an extent that certain functions are possible in humans that are not seen in the rest of the animal world. But this complexity still only shows a quantitative and not a qualitative difference between humans and animals, which some in Christian theology can see as problematic. Non-Christian materialists/physicalists often stress the continuity between humans and animals to such an extent that human uniqueness seems to be lost. And so even when Christian physicalists pinpoint certain (physical) human features that make humans unique, Christian theology can still tend to view these explanations as insufficient because the differences are not qualitative enough.

The next main problem for physicalist models is that they can seem to entail determinism and loss of libertarian free will, especially with the Christian materialist

model and others that lean towards reductionism.<sup>160</sup> For if the social aspect of a person is based on the psychological, which is based on the biological, which is based on the chemical, which is based on the physical (i.e., physics), do humans actually have freedom to make their own decisions?<sup>161</sup> Would not their decisions be determined by physical causes that do not include their own individual choice?<sup>162</sup> And if humans act as they do because of their genes, or their brain chemistry, or physics, what of human individual responsibility for actions? This is a very real problem especially the more reductive the physicalism.<sup>163</sup>

One answer that such physicalists give is that whatever characteristic makes humans unique also accounts for their ability to have undetermined, free and real choice. For example, the Christian materialist Baker sees humans' first-person perspective as what differentiates them from animals. Thus, her definition of human freedom is not surprising: "Human freedom is the unique ability, made possible by first-person perspective, to reflect on and evaluate our desires and to choose one course of action over another."<sup>164</sup> Thus, how convincing individual physicalist's answers are in regard to

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<sup>160</sup> This is not the historical debate in Christian theology regarding free will and determinism. The question here is not whether God determines a person's future, but whether physics determines a person's future. Physicalists are very keen to defend their models against a charge of determinism, for the thinking is that a model that is deemed determinist (determinist because of physics) would not be accepted in mainstream Christian theology.

<sup>161</sup> This is the most common order given, although there is some debate about what is the most fundamental level.

<sup>162</sup> One of the best defenses of nonreductive physicalism's claim to maintain libertarian free will is Murphy and Brown's book, *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?*

<sup>163</sup> See a summary of the problem in chapter 4 of Avrum Stroll's *Did My Genes Make Me Do It? And Other Philosophical Dilemmas* (Oxford, United Kingdom: OneWorld, 2006).

<sup>164</sup> See Lynne Rudder Baker, "What is Human Freedom?" Paper presented at Philosophical Workshop on Free Will, San Raffaele University, Milan (Italy), June 1, 2005, <http://people.umass.edu/lrb/files/bak05whaM.pdf> (accessed August 13, 2015).

determinism is related to how convincing their theories are in regard to humaniqueness. Yet in the end, it is still debated whether physicalist models offer sufficient explanation for free will, sufficient to ward off charges of determinism.

Substance dualism has no difficulty holding to a belief in human freedom, considering the prominence of the soul or non-physical mind in its models. In its view, the physical is not what accounts for the most important elements of what a human is, and it certainly does not determine many human actions.<sup>165</sup> Humans therefore have true moral responsibility.<sup>166</sup>

The next problem we will look at—the possibility of an afterlife—may be the one that causes the most people to choose substance dualist models over physicalist models. The reason is because this problem, more than even the others, seems to touch people at a very personal level by causing them to ponder their own faith and destiny. In general, physicalism outside of Christian theology makes no claim of life beyond this earthly existence. But physicalism within Christian theology, by virtue of it being Christian, fights to maintain the plausibility of an afterlife in its models. Some of the theories it puts forth to explain persistence or survival through death when there is no eternal soul

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This notion of the significance of the first-person perspective, although developed from a scientific perspective by Baker, did not originate with her. For example, Mehl-Koehnlein: “This possibility of confronting himself, of having his ‘me’ face to face, in order to judge it, to assume it or to lose it, ‘this possibility of being involved in a dialogue, in a choice with himself, this fact of being always engaged in a history with himself, it is this which characterizes the human personality and distinguishes it from a simple natural phenomenon, from a purely biological development’” (Zurcher, 156; quoting Herrade Mehl-Koehnlein, *L’homme selon l’apôtre Paul, Cahiers théologiques* No. 282 [Delachaux & Niestlé: Paris, 1951], 11).

<sup>165</sup> This is the answer that indeterminists give; compatibilists have no such problem.

<sup>166</sup> However, substance dualists can also believe in a different type of determinism, in which God is the one who pre-ordains human actions. Theologians who oppose such a view could say that such divine determinism takes away full human moral responsibility.

(or no autonomous mental component) can be quite complex. They also vary widely—from a simple belief that God can re-create the same person *ex nihilo* yet glorified at the resurrection, to a complicated view that involves maintaining the self while replacing the body (through such means as “sloughing off” and “fission”).<sup>167</sup>

The question of whether physicalism sufficiently accounts for the possibility of life after death remains vigorously debated. Yet it is not as problematic for physicalism as it once was, now that physicalist models offer a decent collection of varied alternatives to maintain belief in an afterlife. Of course, for substance dualism the answer to life after death is straightforward—the soul persists after the death of the body and retains the identity of the person. Substance dualists, in order to hold ideas consistent with their model, cannot believe in total cessation of personhood at death and subsequent resurrection of the whole person. To be consistent with their view of the immateriality of the soul, human personhood must persist in some form between the death and resurrection of a body.

### Conclusion

Thus far, we have seen the contributions and also the perceived inadequacies of two of the main model groupings of personal ontology in Christian theology today. The plethora of theories, and the vigorous research into their problems, illustrate that Christian theology as a whole has not united around one model of personal ontology. The scientific advances (especially in brain science) of the last few decades have highlighted these issues even more. Christian theology desires to hold to a model of

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<sup>167</sup> See *Soul, Body, and Survival*, especially section III (“Does Life after Death Require Dualism?”).

personal ontology that is faithful to Christian tradition without contradicting science, but arriving at such a model has proven to be difficult.

The models of substance dualism and physicalism appeal to tradition, science, and/or logic to vouch for the credibility of their claims. But tradition, science, and logic all can tend to be changing and inconsistent, and thus can prove to be unreliable bases upon which to found a model. Therefore, it is not surprising that such methodology could result in disparate findings and conclusions.

Perhaps there is need for a new look at personal ontology in Christian theology—one that is not founded on dualist, or idealist, or materialist presuppositions. Perhaps Christian theology should strive to uncover a model that builds upon the one foundation that is universally regarded as a source for Christian theology. What would a model that is founded wholly on the philosophical presuppositions of the biblical canon look like? Does such a model exist?<sup>168</sup> The two model groupings presented in this chapter each use the Bible to validate their claims, but they do not claim to have Scripture as the sole source of data for the foundation of their models.

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<sup>168</sup> As mentioned in the last chapter, “Christian mortalists” have existed throughout the history of Christian theology, and have claimed to base their views solely on the Bible. Many of them are highlighted in the historical survey of Froom’s *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*. In Christian theology of the more modern era, those who espouse the view that humans are innately mortal, and have immortality only conditionally tend to be called “conditionalists.” Currently, there are an increasing number of theologians and biblical scholars who hold to this view and claim its basis to be the Bible. Hans Walter Wolff (*Anthropology of the Old Testament* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974]), Oscar Cullmann (*Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?* in *Immortality and Resurrection*, ed. Krister Stendahl [New York: Macmillan, 1958], 9-53), Clark Pinnock (“The Conditionalist View,” in *Four Views on Hell*, ed. by William Crockett [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992], 135-66), John Stott (John R.W. Stott and David Edwards, *Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* [London: InterVarsity, 1989]), Carsten Johnsen (*Man—the Indivisible*), and Jean Zucher (*Nature and Destiny of Man*) are a few examples. For a brief overview, see Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Immortality or Resurrection? A Biblical Study on Human Nature and Destiny* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1997). While it is good that these scholars sought to found their views solely on the Bible, most of them focus their inquiry on only an aspect of personal ontology (e.g., innate mortality and conditional immortality, or indivisibility and wholeness), and do not go further to uncover a complete model of personal ontology. However, if biblical views are organized into a model, then that biblical model can be on the playing field with the other models of personal ontology in

It would be interesting to see what a biblically founded model might produce. Would it answer current questions in personal ontology, would it solve any problems that confront the current models, would it cohere with science or tradition (or both or neither)? Might it even provide better answers to the questions in the current debate, and present a new way forward that could unite the various factions in Christian theology in regard to this topic of personal ontology? Whatever the result, certainly a model that is founded on Scripture alone as its source deserves a place among the main models of personal ontology in Christian theology today. The remainder of this dissertation is devoted to beginning such a quest. Accordingly, the following chapter will seek to uncover Genesis 1-3's view of personal ontology, since this passage serves as the foundation of personal ontology in the biblical canon.

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Christian theology today. Then it can truly dialogue with them in an effort to arrive at answers to the questions of personal ontology currently being discussed.

## CHAPTER 3

### AN EDENIC MODEL OF PERSONAL ONTOLOGY

In Christian theology, the plethora of theories about personal ontology give evidence of a significant conflict of interpretations. Currently, two of the main divisions of models are substance dualist models and physicalist models. Substance dualist models hold faithfully to Christian tradition but are criticized as being incompatible with scientific discovery. On the other hand, physicalist models have succeeded in being more in line with scientific discovery, but at the expense of some important tenets of Christian tradition.

The hope of this dissertation is to provide a way that offers help in overcoming the present conflict. The dissertation proposes to do this through a fresh exploration and close reading of the biblical teaching on personal ontology that is centered in the Eden narrative. Although not all Christian theologians would hold the Bible to be the sole source for doctrine formation, all would certainly take it to be a valuable source.<sup>1</sup> As such, a view of personal ontology which has the Bible alone as its normative source would assuredly provide a helpful perspective. Perhaps it would offer answers to recent

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<sup>1</sup> At the very least, as valuable as other common sources, such as tradition, reason, experience, and science.

questions or guidance in navigating the conflicting positions within Christian theology.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps it would point to an existing model, or in another direction, in regard to answering the current questions of human constitution and human nature.

Theologians and biblical scholars do exegete texts that are relevant to personal ontology, but they have stopped short of developing those exegetical findings into a model.<sup>3</sup> Theologians also study an aspect of theological anthropology and seek to establish a biblical view on it, and then they or others may take those results and foist

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<sup>2</sup> Nancey Murphy acknowledged that in this area of study there is a lack of theories that are based fundamentally on the biblical canon (in her verbal response to “Engaging the Philosophical Theology of Nancey Murphy,” American Academy of Religion, November 19, 2016).

Carsten Johnsen (*Man—the Indivisible: Totality Versus Disruption in the History of Western Thought*) and Jean Zurcher (*Nature and Destiny of Man*) did much to present biblical views of personal ontology, but their focus was primarily on human nature and not human constitution. Writing nearly a half century ago, their approach was typical of the anthropological discussion of that time. Human constitution has only more recently become a highly relevant discussion as scientific discoveries have challenged traditional philosophical notions of the human soul. As such, a current model of personal ontology requires a treatment of both human constitution and human nature. LeRoy Froom (*The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers: The Conflict of the Ages over the Nature and Destiny of Man*), whose work preceded Johnsen’s and Zurcher’s, also addressed issues of personal ontology from a biblical and historical perspective. But his work likewise lacks a discussion of many of the important issues of personal ontology that are an important part of the current debate, and it is not developed into a model.

<sup>3</sup> For example: Ryan S. Peterson, who has studied the biblical texts related to the *imago Dei* and arrived at important conclusions based on that study, “The *Imago Dei* as Human Identity: A Theological Interpretation,” Ph.D. dissertation (Wheaton College, 2010), which was recently released as *The Imago Dei as Human Identity: A Theological Interpretation*, *Journal of Theological Interpretation* Supplement 14 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016); Joel B. Green, whose study has sprung from an examination of Rev 18:12, 13, “‘Bodies—That Is, Human Lives’: A Re-Examination of Human Nature in the Bible,” in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 149-73; James D.G. Dunn, whose study of Pauline theology led him to focus on anthropological terms and concepts used by Paul, and to a view that forms the basis of Murphy’s newly preferred term to describe personal ontology—multi-aspect monism, *The Theology of the Apostle Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), especially chs. 3 and 4.

In order to uncover a theological model based on biblical data, it is very helpful to have a close partnership between exegetes and theologians, where exegetes provide the data that theologians use to understand and discover biblical doctrines and models. Currently, theologians are more likely than exegetes to develop models, and these models are often developed based on multiple sources. A multi-disciplinary approach is not utilized as often as it could be because of the separation of “descriptive exegesis” from “dogmatic theology” of the last couple hundred years. Marla A. Samaan Nedelcu, “Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology: History and Outlook of Interaction,” (Paper for THST 649: Theological Method and the Future of Adventist Theology, Andrews University, 2010).



them on personal ontology, without studying personal ontology for itself from Scripture.<sup>4</sup> Thus they impose answers to the questions of personal ontology from conclusions that have already been reached outside the scope of personal ontology.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, in order to present a biblical model of personal ontology, one must seek to understand what a close reading of the biblical text says about the questions of personal ontology. The purpose of this chapter is to uncover an Edenic model of personal ontology as expressed in the foundational Eden narrative (Gen 1-3).<sup>6</sup> Chapter 1 of this dissertation showed that the Eden narrative reveals a microcosm of Scripture's position on personal ontology. Thus, it is the ideal starting point to discover the biblical view on

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<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, many (rightly or wrongly) assume that certain theologians have particular beliefs about personal ontology because of their stated biblical views on topics of theological anthropology that are outside the scope of personal ontology. For example, people have done with this with Oscar Cullmann on immortality (*Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?*) or Samuele Bacchiocchi on resurrection (*Immortality or Resurrection?*).

<sup>5</sup> John W. Cooper's *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate*, which defends "holistic dualism" (a form of substance dualism), is seen by many as a work on personal ontology that is biblically based. However, the most foundational biblical premise of this book does not come from texts that speak to the issues of personal ontology (constitution and nature). Although texts that speak to personal ontology—like Gen 2:7, Eccl 12:7, Job 19:25-27, Matt 27:50, Mark 15:37, 1 Cor 15:12-56, 2 Cor 12:1-4, 1 Thess 5:23, as well as biblical anthropological verbiage—are discussed in Cooper, his defense of "holistic dualism" is actually more rooted in his views on the intermediate state. Cooper takes the issue of the intermediate state, and claims a biblical teaching on it (based on texts like Matt 10:28; Luke 16:19-31; 20:37, 38; 23:42, 43; 2 Cor 5:1-10; Phil 1:21-24; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Pet 3:19, 20; Heb 12:23; Rev 6:9-11), although he also relies on sources from the intertestamental period and church history/tradition. From the conclusions he reaches in reference to the intermediate state, he infers certain presuppositions into the personal ontology debate. He states that the book "was written to remind thoughtful Christians that some sort of 'dualistic' anthropology is entailed by the biblical teaching of the intermediate state, a doctrine that is affirmed by the vast majority in historic Christianity" (xvii). So in fact, this book takes the teaching of the intermediate state to be biblical, then assumes that this supports dualism over monism, and then defends substance dualism. Alternatively, this dissertation will first define personal ontology, then seek biblical answers to the questions of personal ontology from the Eden narrative in order to uncover a biblical Edenic model, and then, once the model is established, it can explore implications from it that touch on other issues of theological anthropology (e.g., the intermediate state). Yes, scholars do disagree about specific teachings like the intermediate state, but if they were able to first come to a shared understanding of a biblical model of personal ontology, that would provide a better framework from which to judge contested anthropological teachings within Christian theology.

<sup>6</sup> Such an exegetical focus is necessary here in order to limit the methodological task to one that is manageable for one dissertation.

this subject.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, the sections below will (1) present the results of the exegetical research conducted from this pericope, (2) outline the Edenic model of personal ontology, and (3) summarize the results of this chapter's findings.

### **Evidence**

This section will explore the evidence from Gen 1-3, and will seek to ascertain whether (and to what extent) the Eden narrative addresses the crucial areas of conflicting interpretations between two of the prominent current models of personal ontology today. As discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, the methodology used here seeks to “bracket out” philosophical presuppositions in order to allow the intended meaning of the text itself to emerge. Accordingly, this chapter will draw largely from exegetes who share this methodology, as well as from my own close reading of the text. For the purpose of comparison (the task of the next chapter of this dissertation), the biblical data that results from this exegesis will be presented using the same framework of organization that was used in Chapter 2.

### **Constitution**

Following the methodology described above, the first answers I seek from a study of the Gen 1-3 pericope are answers to the question of constitution: “What constituted the first human persons?” Moreover, the same classifications used to study constitution in the previous chapter are used here to organize the information found in Gen 1-3 (“physical,” “mental,” and “mental-physical interaction”). Even so, the exegetical

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<sup>7</sup> Future dissertations that study the rest of Scripture's statements on personal ontology are also needed. My desire is that this dissertation would serve as a starting point and motivator for further biblical study on this crucial topic of personal ontology.

process I used here was purposely not guided by those specific classifications (e.g., “What does the text say about the physical part of human constitution?”). Instead, I undertook an exegesis of these chapters first, and then asked whether any of the exegetical findings answered those ontological questions and could be organized according to the classifications of physical, mental, and mental-physical interaction. The purpose of this procedure was to allow the text to speak for itself, and not to box its meaning in by focusing too narrowly on predetermined questions or categories.

### **Physical Substance**

The Eden narrative speaks to the physicality of human constitution through at least four themes: (1) the intimate connection between האדם and האדמה, (2) the similarity between God’s human and animal creations, (3) the creation of two physical and interdependent entities (male and female), and (4) the potential to image God in the functions of human nature.<sup>8</sup> This section will analyze what Gen 1-3 has to say about these themes.

#### The האדם - האדמה Connection

At a most basic and fundamental level, Gen 1-3 displays the physical component of human nature by revealing an intimate relationship between האדם (the human, humankind, Adam, the man) and האדמה (the ground). As can be seen, these two words

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<sup>8</sup> Some options for the translation of האדם are: humankind, humanity, humans, a human, man, mankind, Adam. I favor a translation that can refer both to the singular (“him”) and the plural (“them”), as is the case with this word in Gen 1:27. The only option that seems as though it can be rendered this way is “man,” which can refer to Adam, to the collective Adam and Eve, and to humanity in general. However, inescapably “man” also denotes “maleness,” which is not the intended meaning of האדם in the Gen 1 narrative (although that is the intent of this word in Gen 2). Therefore, due to the lack of suitable alternatives, האדם will often be referred to simply as האדם. Sometimes I use the personal pronoun “them” in conjunction with האדם. If this feels awkward linguistically, let it be remembered that this is the same grammatical usage that is found in the original text.

are etymologically related and are used together for the specific purpose of showing how connected humankind is with the ground. Adam was formed from ground—thus after him, all humans are constituted of ground as well. The strong linguistic connection between האדם and האדמה serves to highlight humans’ mortality. It would also have made it nearly impossible for Hebrew speakers to forget their own physicality, since the very name “human” speaks to this close connection to the “ground.”

This close constitutional connection between the human and the ground is most explicitly stated in Gen 2:7: “And the Lord God formed/fashioned האדם from the dust of האדמה.” The Hebrew word for “formed/fashioned” here is a form of יצר, which is used to describe a potter forming and fashioning an earthenware vessel.<sup>9</sup> As a potter fashions an earthenware vessel from the clay or the ground, so God fashions האדם from that same material. So not only does this verse describe the ingredient that was used to make the human (“dust of the ground”), the verb יצר describes the manner in which the human was designed and made. As a potter wisely designs and then forms an earthenware vessel, so God wisely designs the first human with the universal characteristics of the human entity that would then ever be reproduced in all humans.

Then, through his power, the potter/designer who is also omnipotent Creator brings his earthenware vessel to life—“and האדם became a living being/creature” (2:7). There is perhaps no more poignant biblical picture of the physical constitution of humans

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<sup>9</sup> So explains Jacques Doukhan’s commentary on Genesis (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2016), 74: “While this verb describes God’s artistic activity (Isa 44:9-10), it also emphasizes the dependence of human beings on their Creator (Isa 29:16).” See also Jer 18:2-6; Ps 139:13-15; Job 10:8, 9.

than this etymological connection between האדם and האדמה, seen through the image of the potter and the vessel.<sup>10</sup>

Genesis 3 even more powerfully reinforces this connection, once again showing the origin and physical constitution of humans. Verse 23 shows the origin of the human: “And the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to serve/cultivate the ground (האדמה) from whence he was taken (לקח).” Humans did not originate, were not “taken,” from a non-material *topos ouranios*; they originated and were “taken” from “the ground” (האדמה).<sup>11</sup>

Genesis 3:19 reinforces this truth of human origin and derivation: “By the sweat of your face you will eat bread/food until you return to the ground (האדמה) since out of it you were taken (לקח)—for dust you (are) and to dust you will return.” Dust and ground are the origin and natural destiny of the human—God explicitly states this reality, and a

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<sup>10</sup> Even biochemistry attests to the similarity in elements between what dirt is composed of and what humans are composed of—primarily carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and calcium, and to a smaller degree, potassium, phosphorus, sodium, choline, sulfur, magnesium, and trace elements (See Cecie Starr, et al., *Biology: The Unity and Diversity of Life*, 12th ed. [Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, 2009], 33 [Figure 2.15]).

<sup>11</sup> In Plato’s thought, the *topos ouranios* was a non-literal “heavenly space/place” from which humans originated. “The root of the human plant is not in the ground below its feet—since this would result in confusion with the earthly plants that etymologically connote something driven in, if not pushed into the ground, with the feet (*plantare*)—but in the sky, in the eidetic sphere, in *topos ouranios*, the source of our humanity. ‘For,’ Plato continues, ‘it is by suspending our head and root [*kephalēn kai rizan*] from whence the substance of our soul first came that the divine power keeps upright our whole body’ (90a). In light of the Platonic construction, our mobility is insubstantial in comparison to our invisible rootedness (indeed, our autochthony) in the realm of Ideas, the imperceptible filament that binds the top of the human body, the head, to the eidetic sphere, from which it receives its nourishment and without which the heavenly plants that we are would wither away. The soul’s ground—the otherworldly soil, wherein it first sprouted—is the realm of Ideas, responsible for the sustenance and continued existence of the psyche” (Michael Marder, *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2013], 56, 57).

chiasmus in this text even highlights this point.<sup>12</sup>

Instead of stating that humans are essentially spirit, or immaterial, as Plato did, here God unequivocally states that humans are dust—material, physical dust. Thus, the human reality is constituted by dust and ground, and the human entity is “dusty,” material, physical. The word “dust,” עפר, in the Eden narrative is only used in two verses, compared with the profuse use of the word “ground,” אדמה, in the same pericope. Those two verses are Gen 2:7 and Gen 3:19, which speak pointedly of the origin and death of human beings. While אדמה also can relate to the origin and death of humans, it is used in a broader sense in the Eden narrative to speak also of the land and the agricultural bounty and toil that accompany it. On the other hand, עפר is reserved specifically to speak of humans coming from the dust, returning to the dust, and having dust as their identity. “Dust is related to death,” and additionally, עפר highlights the ephemerality, frailty, and even the low estate of human constitution and its dependence upon God for life.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Matthews, 256, 257:

- A you return
- B to the ground
- C since (*kī*) from it you were taken
- C' for (*kī*) dust you are
- B' and to dust
- A' you will return

Dust and ground is the natural destiny of humans apart from divine intervention. However, with the divine intervention of salvation, dust and ground is not the ultimate destiny for believers in God—eternal life is.

<sup>13</sup> Jiří Moskala, “The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals of Leviticus 11: their Nature, Theology, and Rationale (an Intertextual Study)” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1998).

“עָפָר,” Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, unabridged, electronic database (BibleSoft, Inc., 2006), quoted on <http://biblehub.com/hebrew/6083.htm> (accessed June 28, 2019).

Thus the Eden narrative presents evidence that humans are physical by virtue of their being taken from the dust of the ground.<sup>14</sup> This is especially evident from the etymological connection between האדם and האדמה (including the even more explicit verses that refer to עפר), from the account of God's fashioning האדם from the dust of האדמה (2:7), from the statement that האדם was taken from האדמה (3:23), and from the narrative's most explicit statement (spoken by God himself) that humans will return to האדמה at death because "out of it you were taken, for dust you are and unto dust you shall return" (3:19). With the Eden narrative so clearly asserting the physicality of humans, it is natural to wonder what the difference between humans and animals might be. Animals are also wholly physical creatures; so is there then any constitutional difference between them and humans? This is the question to which we now turn.

#### The Similar Constitution of Humans and Animals

Humans are not the only ones who are constituted by and originate from the ground. "And the Lord God formed/fashioned (יצר) from the ground (האדמה) every living (thing) of the field and every bird of the heavens" (Gen 2:19). In addition to יצר and האדמה being used here to refer to animal creation and in 2:7 to speak of human creation, the syntax of these two passages is very similar. So according to Scripture, God created the substance of humans (2:7) and the substance of animals (2:19) from the same material and following a similar procedure.

Nevertheless, is there any textual evidence from Gen 1-3 of a constitutional difference between humans and animals? It is generally agreed that animals' constitution

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<sup>14</sup> Doukhan, 144, 145.

is thoroughly physical.<sup>15</sup> So comparing human and animal constitution in the Eden narrative is helpful because it shows whether this text records human constitution as having anything above or beyond that which constitutes animals.

The most significant finding in the comparison of human and animal constitutions in the Eden narrative is that of the term נפש חיה, “living being/creature” (but often translated “living soul”). The etymology of the word נפש does not indicate anything other than a purely physical state of living; in fact, it is probably even etymologically related to “breathing.”<sup>16</sup> Actually, even in all 754 occurrences of the term נפש חיה in the Old Testament, it “is never given the meaning of an indestructible core of being, in contradistinction to the physical life.”<sup>17</sup> Yet this meaning exists in Christian thinking partly because of the translation of נפש חיה (“living being/creature”) as “living soul.”

How did the translation “living soul” come to be prevalent? “Living soul” is the translation that the King James Version utilizes. It is based on the LXX; unfortunately, the Greek words in the LXX which are used to translate the Hebrew words may not be the best or clearest translation of them, and may have been influenced by the translators’ own preunderstanding of concepts related to “soul.” In the LXX, נפש חיה is translated to the Greek as ψυχη ζῶσα, “living soul.” Here ζῶσα (“living”) is a good translation of the Hebrew חיה. But ψυχη (“soul”) is not the clearest or most accurate translation of the Hebrew נפש, which is better translated “creature,” “being,” or “person.” Thus the KJV

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<sup>15</sup> The main exceptions here would be idealists, panpsychists, and any who lean towards these philosophies.

<sup>16</sup> Doukhan, 74.

<sup>17</sup> Wolff, 20.



translates ψυχη ζῶσα to English correctly from the LXX Greek, but not having been translated directly from the Hebrew, the suboptimal translation of נפש חיה (“living soul”) is retained.<sup>18</sup>

Certainly in both Greek and English, the connotation that “soul” carries is different than the more accurately translated “creature,” “being,” or “person.” Such a translation in Greek and English contributed to (and was possibly instigated by) the common classical understanding of the soul standing in dualistic contrast to the body. But this is only because of the dualistic assumptions people bring to the word “soul” or ψυχη, not because those dualistic assumptions are associated with the Hebrew word נפש.<sup>19</sup> In fact נפש, in addition to being used to describe animals as well as humans, is translated in the Old Testament in these variety of ways: to “express the seat of desire for physical food or drink,” to “refer to an individual or group of individuals,” in “reference to [physical] life,” in place of a pronoun, in association with an emotion, “in connection with the heart,” in reference to a corpse or dead body, to refer to physical breath or the throat.<sup>20</sup>

Actually in the Eden narrative, “living beings/creatures” is first mentioned not in reference to humans, but in day five of the creation narrative, where God creates “swarms

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<sup>18</sup> See Thomas W. Toews, “Biblical Sources in the Development of the Concept of the Soul in the Writings of the Fathers of the Early Christian Church, 100-325 C.E.” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 2011), 15-22.

<sup>19</sup> Norman R. Gulley explains that “many biblical and theological scholars fail to grasp the Hebrew meaning of *psychē*, so the Greek meaning supersedes the Hebrew meaning, and as a result, a pagan interpretation replaces the biblical interpretation” (*Systematic Theology: Creation, Christ, Salvation*, vol. 3 [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2012], 110).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. See also H. Seebass, “*Nephesh*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 9:503-04 (Excursus: “The Translation ‘Soul’” [9:508-10]). For the varieties of Old Testament translations of נפש, see also Ellis R. Brotzman, “Man and the Meaning of *Nephesh*,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145/580 (1988): 401-7.

of living creatures” in the waters (Gen 1:20, 21). Next, נפש חיה is found in Gen 1:24: “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kind.” A few verses later, God then gives “every green plant for food” to every creature that has נפש חיה (1:30). The very next occurrence of נפש חיה regards the creation of Adam: “And the Lord God formed האדם of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and האדם became נפש חיה” (Gen 2:7). The last occurrence of נפש חיה in the creation narrative speaks to Adam’s naming of every living creature (Gen 2:19). Here Adam, himself חיה נפש, names every other נפש חיה in God’s creation.

It may seem surprising that after God’s one-of-a-kind creation of האדם, האדם is given the same designation as animals (נפש חיה), also that the text does not appear to indicate a constitutional difference between animals and humans. If a biblical text uses the same constitutional term (נפש חיה) for humans as well as animals, then it certainly infers that humans like animals are physical in their constitution.<sup>21</sup> Indeed the Eden narrative presents humans and animals as being constituted of the same physical stuff (נפש חיה and האדמה), with no evidence to the contrary.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Another alternative which also takes seriously the fact that humans and animals are both given the same designation would be the view that both animals and humans are constituted of an immaterial part. But this is not a common view in Christian theology, nor does it find support in the Eden narrative.

<sup>22</sup> Because of this, throughout the dissertation I often refer to their physical substance as a “unitary” substance. Other terms, like “wholistic” and “indivisible” could refer to plural substances that are united or undivided, or to one substance with plural functions. In order to avoid the misunderstanding that the former meaning is intended, I have chosen not to use those terms. The term “simple” could also have been used, in the sense of the philosophical distinction between simple and composite substances. However, in philosophy, simple substances are spiritual, timeless, spaceless—because the presupposition is that anything material (anything in space and time) also entails parts and thus cannot be simple. “Monistic” is also a term that I could have used, but it generally refers either to idealist monism or materialist monism, and I preferred to use a term that would not automatically cause the reader think of a particular philosophical model and its presuppositions (whether idealism or materialism). Thus, the adjective “unitary” was used, to point to a one-substance, plural-function human being.

In addition to both human and animal creation being called *נפש חיה*, analysis of this text shows at least a couple other constitutional similarities between humans and animals. Both are nourished by plant food, and both are blessed and commissioned by God to reproduce.<sup>23</sup> In Gen 1:29 and 30, God states that he has given the humans and the animals plants to eat for food.<sup>24</sup>

Besides this shared alimentary provision, the narrative reveals that another aspect of humans' and animals' physicality is similar: both receive the same charge to reproduce (1:22, 28).<sup>25</sup> In the account of Adam naming the animals, the implication is that he saw that the animals were male and female, and yet he also saw that a suitable female partner was not found for him (2:18-25). Thus the Eden narrative shows that the drives to feed and to reproduce, two basic urges, are not only shared by animals and humans, but that their fulfillment is provided for by God.

The designation *נפש חיה*, given to both humans and animals, provides textual evidence of their constitutional likeness. Additionally, these words indicate that such constitution is physical. This physical constitution of humans and animals means that their lives are nourished by the same physical food, and that they are both blessed and

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<sup>23</sup> Throughout the Old Testament, the same words are used to describe God speaking to animals and to humans (Jon 2:10; Joel 2:22; Isa 34:13-17; 1 Kgs 17:4); even gives examples of animals' vocalized communication are given (Job 41:1-4; Ps 104:21; 147:9; Job 12:7-10; Num 22:21-38). Although many still hold that language is a feature that distinguishes humans from animals, there may not be enough biblical or scientific evidence to continue supporting this claim.

<sup>24</sup> The alimentary provision in verses 29 and 30 was given to both humans and animals. See Schafer, 228 (especially footnote 78); also Doukhan, 66. Some may hold that humans are given the alimentary provision of verse 29 ("every plant bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth and every tree which has in it the fruit of the tree bearing seed") and animals that of verse 30 ("every green plant"). If this is the case, let it be noted that in 3:18, after sin, Adam is told: "you will eat the plants of the field." The word for "plant" in 1:30 and the word for "plant" in 3:18 is the same Hebrew word: *עֵשֶׂב*.

<sup>25</sup> This charge is syntactically nearly identical in these two occurrences, including having the three same imperatives in the same order: be fruitful (*פָּרֵר*), multiply/become many (*רָבֹו*), fill (*מִלֵּא*).

commissioned by God to reproduce and fill the earth.<sup>26</sup> Finally, land animals and humans are both created on day six of the creation narrative. In spite of humans' unique honor in creation (of being created in God's image, according to his likeness), this still does not warrant a separate creation day for האדם. Instead, humans and land animals share the same birth date (perhaps this is because of their similarity or shared geographical domain—land). So far in the Eden narrative, no evidence of a difference in constitutional make-up between humans and animals has been found. In the section below, however, we will explore how in one aspect of humans' constitution, humans are designed for a unique relationship made possible by virtue of humans being created in the image of God.

#### The Creation of Two Interdependent Entities

As indicated earlier, both humans and animals in the Eden narrative are created male and female. In the first creation account of האדם, they are created זכר ונקבה—precisely a physical “male and female,” not perhaps the more psychological איש and אישה, “man and woman” (1:27).<sup>27</sup> These same terms (“male and female,” זכר ונקבה) are not used of animals in the creation narrative. But the blessing and commission to “be fruitful and become many” (1:22), and the implication that Adam realizes he is missing a partner

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<sup>26</sup> Perhaps even some land animals, the בהמה, are also blessed and commissioned by God to help rule other animals. Compare the listing of animals (preferably in Hebrew) in Gen 1:26 and 28 and see also footnote 29.

<sup>27</sup> This speaks to the sexual and social natures of humans being rooted in their constitution. “Sexuality . . . necessitates being-with . . . The constitution of each of us is a summons to community” (Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1984], 97).

after his naming of the animals (2:20) assumes that they too are created male and female.<sup>28</sup>

Once God created male and female (1:27), he gave them the commission to procreate and rule the earth (1:28).<sup>29</sup> This was a joint commission; it necessitated a true partnership, a partnership that included every function of their human nature. The commission to rule together and not merely procreate together points to the importance of the unique marital partnership—best described by the term used in 2:18, explaining how the woman was to be an עוזר כנגדו (“helper comparable”) to the man. The meaning of this term will be explored more in a section below on functions of human nature.

So far in this section on human’s physical constitutional substance, we have seen how there is an intimate link between האדמה and האדם (the ground) and how humans and animals are both designated נפש חיה (living creatures/beings). We have seen how humans and animals are created by God as male and female, and we will see (in a section below) how God made the human עוזר כנגדו relationship unique, even on a constitution level.

Next, we turn to another unique aspect of humans’ constitution. This is the potential (on

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<sup>28</sup> In verse 22, “be fruitful and become many” speaks of the water animals and winged animals; in verse 28, it is directed towards האדם, but likely includes land animals as well. It is also possible that the blessing and the mandate to “be fruitful . . . and rule” applies not only to האדם but also to some land animals. Verse 22 includes a blessing and a mandate for the water animals and winged animals to “be fruitful and become many and fill”; therefore, it seems reasonable that land animals would also receive some sort of divine blessing and mandate. Based on this and the difference between the listing of animals in verses 26 and 28, it is plausible that verse 26 applies specifically to האדם and verse 28 applies to האדם and some land animals. (These possibilities were brought to my attention in discussions with Schafer [now Wells].)

<sup>29</sup> After sin, the necessity and blessing of procreation (along with the pain of childbirth, 3:16) is even more poignant—for hope, life, and salvation come through a Seed (3:15, 20). The bearing of children offers spiritual hope (for the hope of eternal life is tied to the birth of Messiah), and it also offers physical hope (for it makes possible the survival and flourishing of the human line) and emotional/relational/social hope (for by populating the earth, it ensures the hope of these human needs always being met).

the level of constitution) to reflect God’s image, made possible by God creating humans in his image.

### The Potential to Image God

That humans are created in the image of God is the uniquely defining characteristic of who they are, according to the Eden narrative.<sup>30</sup> This ability to image God is possible in every function of human nature—and it is manifest in each function, to a greater or lesser extent, based on the individual’s openness to following God and to being changed into his image.<sup>31</sup> However, this ability to image God in every function of human nature does not arise out of nowhere. It is based upon a God-created potential or capacity in the human constitution that enables humans to image God, as they were created to do. Thus, the potential to image God will be discussed here in the section about human constitution, but the precise realization of the *imago Dei* in the life of human person will be discussed later below in the section about human nature.

We find evidence in the Eden narrative of this constitutional potential or capacity which God created humans to have. God, *qua* God, has complete power and freedom to be, to do, and to create. We can also observe that humans, being created in his image,

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<sup>30</sup> The word “image” (צֶלֶם) is used three times in Gen 1:26, 27 (“in our image,” “in his own image,” and “in the image of God”). Each time it is used with the ׀ preposition. Its most usual translation is “in,” and this is also the traditional translation of ׀ in these verses. It is also the translation I have chosen to follow because it is the one that seemed preferable from my exegetical study. However, it is possible to translate the ׀ as “as” here, if this preposition is viewed as a *beth essentiae* (David J.A. Clines, “The Image of God in Man,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 [1968]: 53-103). If that interpretation is followed, it may be even more accurate to use “*to be* the image of God” instead of “*as* the image of God.” Nonetheless, after comparing the usage in this passage with parallel passages, I do not think that this is the most preferable translation of the ׀ preposition here. Having said this, it does seem to express the intent of the narrative in regards to the image of God, by putting emphasis on the whole person undividedly being the image of God from creation, in contrast to how Christian theology has often seen the *imago Dei* as being located in *part* of the human constitution or nature.

<sup>31</sup> This will be shown from the Eden narrative in sections below (on human uniqueness and the *imago Dei*).

have a capacity for self-determination, freedom, responsibility, and creativity to an extraordinary level that we do not see in the rest of God's earthly creation. And while God certainly created humans for community, he also sees them individually. He created them individually, speaks to them individually, judges them individually, and saves them individually (2:7, 22; 3:9, 13, 15-21). Genesis 3 especially shows that God desires communion with humans as individuals, and he holds them individually responsible for their moral choices (as we will see in a section below). He created them with the capacity to think and act for themselves, to determine their own course of action and destiny. In this, in a small way, humans reflect God and his abilities.

Such human inborn capacity for individuality of thought and freedom of action is clearly demonstrated in the Eden narrative. Before humans' rebellion (Gen 3), it is most markedly demonstrated by God giving the first humans the mandate to rule the earth (1:26-28). In asking them to fulfill this specific mandate, he knew that he was calling them to live out the capacities with which he had created them. He knew that they together were capable of ruling the earth—and this is because he had created them in his image and likeness (1:26) and endowed them with the capacity to fulfill this mandate. In his first task of this role, Adam was given the responsibility to name the animals that God had created (2:19, 20). In this, Adam exercised the power, responsibility, freedom, and creativity God had made him with, as he led and ruled the animals with wisdom.

Probably the greatest evidence of the human capacity for individuality and self-determination in the Eden narrative, however, comes in the narrative of the Fall. Here Adam and Eve both make their choice to sin individually (even though each of them sinned because they were influenced by another). Adam and Eve each alone control their

own destiny as they choose to rebel against God. God has created them with the power and freedom to make these monumental decisions. That they are exercising their God-given capabilities in making such decisions is evidenced both by the fact that God respects their terrible decisions and that he holds them each individually responsible for their decisions. God allows them to speak and explain for themselves their choices (3:8-13), and he enacts judgments against them individually, judgments that are specifically suited to the nature of their individual transgressions (3:16-19). Both Adam and Eve individually and collectively are also a part of the promise of salvation (3:15, 20, 21).

These are some of the evidences from the Eden narrative that demonstrate that humans have a constitutional capacity for an individuality that gives them immense power to think and act for themselves. This is a capability that God has to a much grander extent, and humans simply have the ability to mirror it to a smaller extent. When humans choose to use this God-given capacity for good, when they choose to follow God's word and his example in expressing such God-created endowments, then they are able to image him to a much greater degree than otherwise.

However, humans who choose to rebel against God still have the capacity, the power and freedom to express their individuality for better or worse. Humans do rule the earth, they do make life-altering moral choices every day, whether or not they are followers of God.<sup>32</sup> Humans who follow their own way (led by the serpent) in acting out their God-given individuality are still able to do so because of that God-given capacity which is the image of God in their constitution. However, in order to image God

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<sup>32</sup> According to C. John Collins, "Once they fall into sin, they do not lose their position as head of creation, but they have lost the perfect purity, sensitivity, and good sense that they need to carry it out well" (*Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2006], ch. 4, C.8.).



accurately, they must submit their wills to him and follow his commands. As they do this, they refine the image of God in their nature, something that is only possible by choosing to follow God and his ways.

Besides this God-made constitutional potential to image God in human nature, it is textually possible that there may be some type of physical resemblance between God and humans.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore in the Eden narrative it is not stated but assumed that God, although he is not physical in the same manner as his physical creatures, is able to relate to his creatures' physicality, which necessitates some sort of constitutional capacity on his part that would enable him to do so. Furthermore, humans being created male and female—"one flesh" but two persons—can relate to God's plurality and unity, and thus this aspect of human constitution is also one that mirrors God.<sup>34</sup>

We have seen here how the potential to image God resides in the human constitution and is realized in human nature. We have also seen how the image of God itself can be found on the constitutional level in humans' creation as "one-flesh" male and female (and perhaps even in an outward physical likeness to God). So far, the evidence we have looked at from the Eden narrative points towards these features being

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<sup>33</sup> The Eden narrative seems to favor an interpretation of the *imago Dei* that would include humans' physical likeness to God but not be limited to it. While this is not a particularly popular theological view, there is abundant linguistic evidence for it when studying the biblical usage of the word "image," צלם. The usage of צלם in the beginning chapters of Genesis is discussed more in the section on "Sonship" below. For more exploration of the "physical likeness" interpretation of the *imago Dei*, see the following: John Goldingay, *Israel's Gospel*, vol. 1 of *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 102, 103; David M. Carr, *The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Bible* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2003), 17-26; Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 215; Ilona N. Rashkow, *Taboo or Not Taboo: Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2000), 61; Richard M. Davidson, "The Nature of the Human Being from the Beginning: Genesis 1-11," in "What Are Human Beings that You Remember Them?" 14, 21, 22. According to Davidson, this view did not gain popularity because it did not fit into the framework of traditionally held dualistic and timeless presuppositions.

<sup>34</sup> This too will be unpacked below in the sections on the *imago Dei*.

based in a constitutional substance of humans that is physical. However, it is common in Christian theology to assume that there is also a constitutional substance of humans that is mental. So let us now look for any additional evidence in the Eden narrative of a human mental constitutional substance, and what its role might be.

## **Mental Substance**

From what we have studied thus far, the evidence from the Eden narrative points to humans having a physical constitution.<sup>35</sup> Yet there is a term used in this narrative that some have pointed to as evidence that human constitution also has a mental substance. It is found in Gen 2:7: “And the Lord God formed/fashioned האדם from the dust of the ground (מִן־הָאֲדָמָה) and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים) and האדם became a living being/creature (נִפְשׁ חַיָּה).”

Which term is it? Granted some translations have rendered נִפְשׁ חַיָּה as “living soul,” and such a translation has led some to assume that the Bible says humans are non-physical souls. However, contrary to that interpretation, most Hebrew and Old Testament scholars concur that נִפְשׁ חַיָּה clearly specifies a physical constitution.<sup>36</sup> Because of this, even if נִפְשׁ חַיָּה is translated “living soul,” such a designation describes

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<sup>35</sup> Even Cooper, one of the most prominent current advocates of substance dualism in Christian theology, concurs that Genesis (and in fact, the whole Old Testament) does not support a dualistic anthropology. “There are no texts in which soul or spirit or person must be interpreted as an immaterial substance which functions independent of the body. . . . Soul and spirit, *nephesh* and *ruach*, seem either to refer to the whole psychophysical person or otherwise to the energizing life force given by God. Neither use refers to an immaterial entity” (37). However, Cooper sees the Jewish apocalyptic literature of the intertestamental period and the New Testament pointing in another direction.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Matthews, 199-201; R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 587-91 (“נִפְשׁ” [*nāpash*]); Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967), 131-42; Wolff, ch. 2.

the whole person, living and vitalized—for **נפש חיה האדם** does not possess **נפש חיה**, he *is* **נפש חיה**.<sup>37</sup> This is reinforced by the narrative’s usage of **נפש חיה** to refer to animals.<sup>38</sup> Thus **נפש חיה** is not the term from 2:7 that is most often used to support human constitution being partly mental (non-physical).

That term instead is “breath of life”—**נשמת חיים**. Does Gen 2:7 indicate that the human entity is constituted of two components—the “dust of the ground” and the “breath of life”? If so, it might seem natural to assume that “dust of the ground” would infer a physical constitution and that “breath of life” would describe a mental constitution. After all, the breath of life was breathed by none other than God, whom most take to be a non-physical entity. Nevertheless, when these words are studied in the Old Testament, it is found that they do not denote anything non-physical, and are in fact also used in connection with animals.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See Wolff, 10, and von Rad, 77. Also Ellis R. Brotzman, who states: “The emphasis of the text [Gen 2:7] is on man as **נפש**, a creature, a unity. The idea of this text, indeed of the entire Old Testament, is decidedly opposed to the common Greek idea of a ‘soul’ imprisoned in a body” (“The Plurality of ‘Soul’ in the Old Testament with Special Attention Given to the Use of **נפש**,” [Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1987], 222). Along this line, Seebass states: “According to Gen 2:7 a person does not *have* a vital self but *is* a vital self. It is therefore not a good idea to assume that any of the meanings of *nepesh* involve ‘having’, since such an interpretation would lead to a misunderstanding of the anthropological nature of *nepesh*” (*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. IX, 511, 12).

<sup>38</sup> See the section above on “The Similar Constitution of Humans and Animals.”

<sup>39</sup> And of course, animals are not generally viewed as having a mental substance distinct from a physical substance, at least not in Christian theology. The most significant usage of it in relation to animals is Gen 7:22 (the immediate literary context of the Eden narrative)—“All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life (**נשמת-רוח חיים**), of all that was on the dry land, died.” The exact term **נשמת חיים**, found in Gen 2:7, is not found anywhere else in the Old Testament. Thus this occurrence in Gen 7:22 of “the breath of the spirit of life” contains the most similar term to Gen 2:7’s “the breath of life.” For a quick overview of Old Testament usages of the related terms **נשמה** and **רוח**, see Davidson, “The Nature of the Human Being from the Beginning,” 24. And for more on **רוח**, a word likely equivalent to **נשמה**, but that we do not study more here because it is not used in reference to our subject in the Eden narrative (the two references in this narrative are “the spirit of God” in 1:2 and “the cool of the day” in 3:8)—see Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 227, 406, 407; see also S. Tengström, “*rûah*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, et al. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004], 13:365-96).

Indeed at least 20 of the 23 Old Testament occurrences of נשמה refer simply to breath and to the act of breathing that makes living possible.<sup>40</sup> In Doukhan’s words, “The Hebrew word *neshamah* does not refer to any spiritual entity, but simply denotes breath. The word *neshamah* is derived from the verb *nasham*, which means ‘to breathe’ (Isa 42:14). . . . So that is to say, ‘man became a living being,’ would mean that he became a living, breathing being.”<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, this “breath” is not described as something that is an inherent part of human constitution; it is still God’s breath giving life (and breath) to the creature.<sup>42</sup> Thus neither the Eden narrative nor the Old Testament point to נשמת חיים (“breath of life”) to indicate any sort of non-physical human constitution. Rather, they point to God’s breath being the cause that animates life through the proper functioning of the physically constituted human bodies that God created.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> The other three occurrences are found in the wisdom literature—Prov 20:27, Job 26:4 and 32:8. The Job references remind humans of how dependent on and in line with God they should be, by virtue of his breath giving them life and all that is associated with that life. The Proverbs reference speaks to human self-reflection in relation to God.

<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, “the etymology of the word *nepesh* [also in Gen 2:7] also conveys the basic meaning of ‘breathing’ . . . There may even be a play on words between *neshamah* and *nepesh*, suggesting the common meaning of ‘breathing’ is intended” (Doukhan, 74). See also Matthews, 199-201.

<sup>42</sup> And “precisely because God is the source of this *rûah* [breath], it returns to God at death” (S.Tengström, 13:386; Eccl 12:7).

<sup>43</sup> In Gen 2:7, the word that indisputably means breath/breathing (נשמת) is used instead of another common word for breath/spirit (רוח) whose meaning can be more ambiguous. Could it be that the word in 2:7 was specifically chosen so that there would not be ambiguity about this term? For again, the word for “breath” in 2:7 (נשמת) simply defines the breathing that makes living possible. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, the more imprecise word (רוח) is used in regard to human living and dying (see especially Eccl 12:7 and Job 34:14, 15), so certainly it is an important word to study when seeking to understand the whole biblical canon’s view on personal ontology. Nevertheless, our pericope of the Eden narrative does not employ רוח and it is thus outside the scope of this dissertation to explore it further exegetically. However, since the Eden narrative provides the foundation of the whole biblical canon’s treatment of personal ontology, such further exegesis would be expected to harmonize with the evidence given in Gen 1-3, and deepen our understanding of it.

The focus of Gen 2:7 is actually on two verbs used to describe God’s activity—“formed/fashioned” (יצר) and “breathed” (נפח). In fact, the primary position of these verbs in this verse reveal that these two actions of God are even more significant textually than the materials from which האדם was created. Thus this verse highlights that האדם is the result of these two divine actions (both of the physical domain), and that these divine actions hold even more importance than the components God used—dust and his animating breath.<sup>44</sup> According to that text, humans are more a creation of God’s hands than a formula of components he used.

Related to this topic is the question of mortality/immortality, since traditionally human immortality has been linked with a mental or non-physical substance.<sup>45</sup> However, the Eden narrative shows the unitary human entity to be physical and to be mortal.<sup>46</sup> The reality of human mortality was true before the Fall, but poignantly felt by Adam and Eve after the Fall especially. Immediately after God cursed the ground, he uttered the words that most pointedly described the link between humanity and the ground and that signified humans’ mortality—“for dust you [are] and to dust you will return” (3:19).

And immediately after hearing this assertion, Adam names his wife (אשה) Eve (חיה), meaning life—“because she was the mother of all living” (3:20). Why is this

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<sup>44</sup> Doukhan, 74.

<sup>45</sup> For example, the words of Pope Benedict XVI: “God chose to endow [humans] with an immortal soul” (*Caritas in Veritate*, segment 29; quoted in Gulley, 113).

<sup>46</sup> If part of the human entity (an immaterial substance) were to survive past the destruction of another part (a material substance), then the human entity would not truly be unitary. This is the case with the alternative model—“conditional unity” or “unitary compound”—that Millard Erickson propounds. He states: “We might think of a human as a unitary compound of a material and an immaterial element. The spiritual and the physical elements are not always distinguishable, for the the human is a unitary subject; there is no conflict between the material and immaterial nature. The unity is dissolvable, however; dissolution takes place at death. At the resurrection a compound will again be formed, with the soul (if we choose to call it that) once more becoming inseparably attached to a body” (492).

Adam’s first utterance upon hearing the judgment of the curse? It is his acknowledgment of the hopelessness of the curse and the hope of life. He understands that human disobedience brought immediate dying, but that through אִשָּׁה would come not only temporal life by way of offspring, but also eternal salvation because of her Seed, the one who would vanquish the serpent (3:15, 16).<sup>47</sup> As he realizes his own name אָדָם is intimately connected to the ground and death, he names Eve a name of hope, literally “life”! God then makes the promise of salvation more concrete by his immediate clothing of Adam and Eve’s nakedness with garments of skin that he made for them (3:21). This symbolized again the death that brought life—here, the death of animals that pre-figured Christ’s sacrifice, and the covering that represented the Savior’s robe of righteousness given to believers.<sup>48</sup>

The intimate connection between אָדָם and אֶדְמָה points towards humans being constitutionally ground, dust, thoroughly mortal creatures who do not have life (existence) in themselves. Like with the animals, humans do have the ability to bear children, and this capability is given by God. And yet for humans (and through them), that physical capability became the means through which the Messiah was born, the curse lost its power, and salvation and restoration were extended to all creation. Through the line of humanity came Jesus, who is humanity’s hope and life. And through the birth of new physical life came the promise of renewed spiritual life—not because of any innate spiritual constitutional element in humans but through God’s act of sending a Savior to

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<sup>47</sup> See Afolarin O. Ojewole, “The Seed in Genesis 3:15: An Exegetical and Intertextual Study” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 2002).

<sup>48</sup> Matthews, 257, 258; Francis A. Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975), 105, 106.

earth. The Eden narrative shows that eternal life was made possible through a Savior who would come from the Seed of the woman (3:15, 16, 19, 20), and that such immortality was mediated by the tree of life (2:9, 16; 3:22-24).

In Gen 3:22, God said: “Behold אָדָם has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, and now lest he reach out his hand and take also [in addition to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] from the tree of life and eat and live forever”—God had to act. So “the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to serve/cultivate הָאֲדָמָה from which he was taken” (3:23).<sup>49</sup> What solemn and striking verses. Before the Fall, Adam and Eve were able to live forever—conditional on their eating from the tree of life and not eating of the forbidden tree. Their disobedience did bring God’s promised judgment that they should “surely die” (2:17).<sup>50</sup> But still, if they were to access and eat from the tree of life post-Fall, eternal life would have been theirs again and sin would have been immortalized by their continual eating from the tree. Even so, it is strikingly clear from the text that mortality, not immortality, is what innately belonged to humans. Humans *are* dust, according to Gen 3:19, and to dust they in totality will return.<sup>51</sup> The Eden narrative shows that immortality is always conditional, not innate.

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<sup>49</sup> It is interesting to note there is a play on words in these two verses. The verb “reach out” (verse 22: “lest he reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever”) and the verb “sent out” (verse 23: “the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to serve/cultivate הָאֲדָמָה from which he was taken”) both come from the same verb שָׁלַח (its usage the second time is in the intensive form). This “underlines the causal connection between human sin and divine judgment” (Doukhan, 113).

<sup>50</sup> A promise of judgment just as sure and emphatic as (and grammatically parallel to) God’s provision for אָדָם to “surely eat” from the trees he had given them (2:16). Matthews, 210; Doukhan, 79.

<sup>51</sup> The biblical evidence on human mortality and immortality is strikingly clear, especially when compared to the views of philosophy, which many believe “can neither prove nor disprove human immortality” (Johnsen, 319).

To summarize, while the Eden narrative does show the mental functioning of humans, nothing in the Hebrew indicates that this mental functioning has any root in an ontologically mental substance that is different from the ontologically physical substance.<sup>52</sup> On the contrary, human creation is described as a physical creation made possible by two actions of God the artisan Creator, who designed/formed and breathed אדם into existence. God’s breath, “the breath of life,” certainly gives life to the lifeless human form that God designed. But in the Eden narrative, we do not see evidence of it becoming a non-physical substance within the person.<sup>53</sup> It is the spark of life that sets in motion the human entity—an entity that, according to what we see in the Eden narrative, is a single, unified, and innately mortal organism constituted of a physical substance. When God breathed into the corpse of אדם the breath of life, אדם became a living and breathing creature (נפש חיה).

Christian scholars have increasingly been embracing the unitary and mortal terms that the Eden narrative uses in portraying humans.<sup>54</sup> Certainly some still believe in an

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<sup>52</sup> Even in the Old Testament’s usage of “flesh” and “heart,” which speak to the respective physical and spiritual functions of human nature, such instances “have in mind the whole man with his twofold, psychosomatic nature” (N.P. Bratsiotis, “*basar*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 2:317-32).

<sup>53</sup> See for example, Psalm 104:29, 30 (which speaks mostly of animals): “You take away their breath/spirit (רוח), they expire and return to their dust. You send forth your breath/spirit (רוח), they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.” Also Job 34:14, 15: “If he [God] should determine to do so, if he should gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man (אדם) would return to dust.” In these and other Old Testament texts, the implication is that God’s breath is what gives life to earthly creatures—but it is always still his breath, and if he withdraws it, life ceases. It does not become a unique ontological substance in the human entity. It is the spark that causes the human entity, which he designed, to live and breathe. God is responsible for sustaining life on earth, and if he were to withdraw his breath from the earth, all life would perish.

<sup>54</sup> Zurcher states that “it is convenient to distinguish the activities of man as psychological, mental, and spiritual. But these are in reality only ‘views taken of the same object by different methods, abstractions obtained by our reason from the concrete unity of our being’” (138; quoting Alexis Carrel, *L’homme, cet inconnu* [Paris: Plon, 1935], 99-101). Also, “Even if it is possible to distinguish the different constitutive elements of the human being, these must never be considered as substances in themselves,



innately immortal, non-physical soul. But even substance dualists are not as likely to claim support for their view from Gen 1-3 anymore.<sup>55</sup> In the following section, we will see how holding to the view of the physical and the mental found in the Eden narrative diffuses the problem of mental-physical interaction.

### **Mental-Physical Interaction**

If one holds that humans are constituted of two substances (the physical and the mental) as substance dualism does, then there is certainly the need to explain how these two disparate things are able to interact with each other. On the other hand, if one holds that humans are constituted of a physical substance, but one that necessarily includes mental functions, then there is no longer the complicated problem of explaining how the disparate substances can interact. This view is the one to which the Eden narrative points.

In the Bible, as has been shown above, the unitary “living creature” or “living being” is the best translation of נפש חיה—and not “living soul.”<sup>56</sup> Even if it were to be translated “living soul,” the context and Old Testament usage of that term dictate that it

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separable from the whole, but rather as manners of being essential to the human personality in its totality” (Zurcher, 155).

<sup>55</sup> See again footnote 36.

<sup>56</sup> The classical understanding was that the soul possessed certain attributes which made humans unique—capacities such as personal relatedness, superior intellect, moral and spiritual awareness. Yet increasingly, as neuroscience (especially neuroanatomy with its brain-mapping, and neurophysiology which studies the functions of the various brain regions) has come to understand more about the brain and its functions, what used to be termed “attributes of the soul” are being correlated with specific brain regions or systems. Thus what were formerly seen as attributes of the soul are coming to be seen as attributes of a wholistic human person, made possible by the human brain. Murphy, in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 13.

should be interpreted unitarily, as “self” or “person” or “life.”<sup>57</sup> Essentially, the Gen 2:7 usage of “dust of the ground” and “breath of life” serves to focus attention on God’s creative power in breathing life and breath into the ground that he sculpted.

Humans are living, breathing, unitary creatures.<sup>58</sup> Other than the physical constitution, the Eden narrative reveals no other human ontological constitution that might be responsible for the functioning of humans’ mental and spiritual abilities. It never hints at a dualistic understanding of the physical and mental, either when describing human constitution or when illustrating the functions of human nature.<sup>59</sup> With such an understanding, there is no problem of interaction between the physical and mental—for that interaction takes place naturally and automatically, since every function of the human entity is a part of the same physical substance. In the next section, we

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<sup>57</sup> This interpretation falls in line with the trajectory of modern biblical scholarship on this subject, deviating from the traditional classical conception of a non-physical soul. “In the last two centuries, biblical scholars have increasingly moved toward a consensus that both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament provide a holistic model of the human person” (F. LeRon Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology: After the Philosophical Turn to Relationality* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003], 175).

<sup>58</sup> “A person is a ‘single unity of life and consciousness in bodily form’” (Angel M. Rodriguez, “Health and Healing in the Pentateuch,” in *Health 2000 and Beyond: A Study Conference of Adventist Theology, Philosophy, and Practice of Health and Healing* [Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Health and Temperance Department, 1994], 18; quoted in Moskala, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals*, 297). “God created each human being as an inseparable entity, as a unit. The Greek dichotomy, that the nature of humans is divided between body and spirit, is completely foreign to the Hebrew Bible. Humans are presented as a whole, in their complexity and totality. The wholistic view of humankind is a fundamental issue for biblical anthropology” (Moskala, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals*, 225; see also his quoting Isidor Grunfeld about the “inseparable entity” of the “human personality,” 226).

<sup>59</sup> In the Eden narrative, human constitution is spoken of unitarily, and the various aspects of human nature function together wholistically. Even John Cooper, in summing up the section “C. Preliminary Results for the Holism-Dualism Debate” in his book *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, states: “So the claim that Hebrew anthropology is holistic seems well established and Platonic-Cartesian dualism appears excluded” (38). Old Testament anthropology, and more broadly, Semitic thinking, has increasingly been seen as wholistic and even anti-dualistic, stressing the totality of the human entity. “Semitic thought saw human beings predominantly as indivisible unities. It imagined them as it saw them, as bodies. Anachronistically, one could call this Semitic view of the human being monistic” (Anton van der Walle, *From Darkness to the Dawn* [Mystic, CT: Twenty-third Publications, 1985], 152).

return to the Eden narrative—now to study human nature and to discover what the basic elements of this human essence are.

### Nature

In addition to the question of constitution (“What is a human? Of what is a human constituted?”) is the question of nature (“What is a human by definition? What does a human do, what makes a human unique?”). Both constitution and nature are indispensable questions in the quest to understand personal ontology. And especially with the Eden narrative showing no evidence of human constitution being anything other than physical, the question of human nature becomes all the more crucial. Traditionally, Christians have viewed human constitution (with the dualistic element of the non-material soul) as a satisfactory explanation to the question of what makes humans unique. But if, according to the Eden narrative, constitution is not the factor that is presented as giving humans their unique identity, can such uniqueness be found in human nature?

Some of the important questions we can ask as we study the Eden narrative’s account of human nature, are these: “What defined the first human entity as a human entity?” How does the Eden narrative define אדם, and what are the factors that differentiate אדם from fellow creatures? To seek answers to these questions in an orderly way and to facilitate comparison and evaluation, this chapter utilizes the same organizing classifications (“functions” and “humaniqueness”) that were used in the previous chapter to study models of personal ontology.

The evidence from the Eden narrative was found to pin humaniqueness specifically on humans being created with personal care by God and in his image. At creation, this *imago Dei* is present in every function of the physical human substance and makes

possible the mandates God gives to the human substantial person. My expectation for this section is that the information presented here will yield an Edenic portrait of human nature that, along with the Edenic view of human constitution uncovered in the previous section, will help to uncover an Edenic model of personal ontology.

## **Functions**

According to the biblical Eden narrative, there is no evidence of God creating human beings with anything other than a physical constitution. The physical constitution includes various characteristics designed by God that determine the essence and functioning of human beings in the world. We have seen how the Eden narrative shows humans to have a physical constitution made of the ground like the animals, how humans are created as interdependent male and female, and how their bodies were created in analogy to the Being of God. The analogical relation between God and his creatures is present on the level of constitution. Thus, humans might bear some physical resemblance to God, and they are created with a similar need and ability to have close relationships, as God has.

Now however, this section will look at the various functions of human nature that the Eden narrative reveals, and later we will see how these functions relate to the image of God in humans. Keep in mind that the descriptions of functions below always refer to the activity of a physical human constitution (entity) and never reference any sort of non-physical human constitution (entity).<sup>60</sup> There is some natural overlap between the

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<sup>60</sup> Confusion about this can sometimes arise because the term “physical” can be rightly used in two senses to describe humans in accordance with the Eden narrative. The first sense of “physical” refers to human constitution that is wholly physical, but the second sense of “physical” speaks to physical functions of human nature that are differentiated from mental, spiritual, or other functions. Because of this, this second sense of the term “physical” will be denoted as “physical/biological” instead, to specify a

various functions listed below, but that is expected with a unitary constitution, and these functions are made to work harmoniously together.<sup>61</sup> These functions of human nature are also expressed through relationship—of the individual with him or herself, with fellow humans, with the natural world, and with the supernatural.

### Biological/Physical Function

One function of human nature as described in the Eden narrative is the biological/physical function. This is shown through God's giving plant food to humans (and to animals) for their bodies' nourishment and growth (Gen 1:29, 30). Physical appetite comes along with this physical need for food, and it is one of the factors that led Eve to eat the forbidden fruit.<sup>62</sup> As a result of the Fall, the plant food that God had provided humans (and which was one catalyst of their fall) was now linked to toil and pain (3:18).<sup>63</sup>

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physical/biological process that seems to be able to operate independently from other functions of human nature (such as spiritual or emotional). For while all functions of human nature (even mental or spiritual functions) are physical because they result from a wholly physical constitution, there is also a specifically physical/biological function of human nature that is not obviously or innately linked to other functions.

<sup>61</sup> I have chosen the names of the functions listed below, but it is not my point to claim or prove that these exact designations are the best or only ones that should be used when discussing the functions of human nature. I believe that naming these functions will yield inexact results, because the human thoughts and actions that make up these functions are fluid and influenced by many (inner) factors. However, this is not problematic because this dissertation looks at these specific functions for the purpose of understanding the whole, unitary person, and not primarily to understand the functions in distinction from each other.

<sup>62</sup> The "fruit" looked "good for food" (3:6) and yet, as God promised, it surely brought death (2:17). By eating from the tree of life, Adam and Eve received life for as long as they ate from it (3:22). But by eating from the forbidden tree, mortality was all that God allowed them to know for their earthly life, contrary to the assertions of the serpent (3:3, 4).

<sup>63</sup> And even to death itself, as is brought out in Moskala's *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals*, 218, 219.

Thus also, humans' God-ordained work of agriculture became linked to toil and pain.<sup>64</sup> Such physical work was a necessary activity of humans' biological/physical function, integral to its health and development. It invigorated the human physical substance, but it also reminded humans of their mortality and their dependence upon God for life—that they as האדם had this physical, האדמה constitution. Initially, this agricultural work was not meant so much to remind humans of their mortality but to remind them of their absolute dependence upon God as their Creator, since this vocation was given to האדם before sin.<sup>65</sup>

The first humans survived and thrived because of God's provision of physical nourishment for them. Their daily activity was also wrapped up in the physical work necessary to cultivate that nourishment. The Eden narrative presents as good the physical

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<sup>64</sup> Not only did working with האדמה remind האדם of his origin and dependence on God the Creator, but the work itself was a high and holy calling, given before sin (2:5, 8-15), and continued after sin with the addition of toil and pain. The honorable nature of this work is emphasized by the two verbs that are used to describe how האדם should care for the garden (עבד and שמר, serve/cultivate and keep/preserve). These two verbs are the very same ones that are used to describe the work of the priests and Levites in caring for the sanctuary tent (Num. 3:7, 8; 18:3-7; Richard M. Davidson, "Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millennium," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 11 [2000]: 102-119; and especially see the expanded explanation by the same author in "Earth's First Sanctuary: Genesis 1-3 and Parallel Creation Accounts," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 53/1 [2015]: 65-89). Also, as these ministers of the temple dealt with issues of death and life as part of their holy vocation, so did האדם in working with האדמה. (By saying this, I do not by any means wish to downplay the unique and invaluable work of the priest in sacrificing animals before the Lord.)

Interestingly, the "painful labor" that is the lot of Adam as he cultivates the thorny ground (3:17) is also the lot of Eve as she experiences post-Fall childbirth (3:16). The same root word—עצב—is used for both in consecutive verses to refer to Eve first and then Adam. Adam also realized that even though Eve was deceived and ate the fruit of death, she, through her painful labor, would bear forth life to humanity—thus he calls her הנה, the "mother of all living" (3:20). So Adam and Eve, through their painful labor, both participate in and are reminded of the mortal cycle of life and death. This solemn reality was even reinforced after the Fall by God's gracious provision of tunics for their physical bodies—the dead animals' skins touching their own living (and dying) skin.

<sup>65</sup> This is seen when, before the introduction of any temptation to sin, "the Lord God took the man (האדם) and placed him in the garden of Eden to serve/cultivate (עבד) it and to keep/preserve (שמר) it" (Gen 2:15). Even before האדם was created, there was "not yet every shrub of the field on the earth and not yet every plant of the field" (2:5; see also Moskala, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals*, 217, 218). The verse continues by connecting this "not-yet" in part to the fact that "there was not אדם to serve/cultivate האדמה," which reinforces the close connection of האדם and האדמה.

nourishment and activity that are both intrinsic to human life. As such, it never denigrates but instead honors the biological/physical function of human nature. The mortality that is more apparent in this function of human nature serves to remind persons that their temporal life is dependent on God, and that eternal life is God's gift and not something that is inherently theirs.

### Relational Function

The Eden narrative presents a sexual function of human nature that is often grouped under the biological/physical function. However, as this narrative presents it, there is much more to this interdependent union of man and woman than the sexual union alone. The model found here is truly relational; it is for a heterosexual physical union that is combined with an emotional, mental, and spiritual union—the solidarity of two *selves* united, not just two bodies.<sup>66</sup> This is part of the essence of what it means to “cleave,” *דבק*, as one flesh (2:24). The woman indeed was made from the man's own body, bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh (2:21-23), so this whole-person cleaving and the desire for it is only natural (and good in its intended context).<sup>67</sup> It is a vital part of human nature, and even God himself said “it is not good for *האדם* to be alone” (2:18).<sup>68</sup> With this wholistic understanding of the marital relationship in mind, it is fitting for this

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<sup>66</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 37, 47.

<sup>67</sup> This is the context to which Eph 5:28, 29 refers: “So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it.”

<sup>68</sup> This is quite significant because up to this point in the narrative, God has only called his creation “good” (*טוב*); this is the first time he describes any aspect of it as “not good” (*לא-טוב*). This creation narrative shows that animals are created male and female for each other. It is also not unlikely that they would also cleave to each other according to what their natures would allow. So if animals are given partners for companionship, help, and procreation, how much more would humans need such a blessed relationship (2:20).

function of human nature to be termed relational instead of being subsumed under the biological/physical function, for it encompasses the marital union of all aspects of one person to all aspects of another person.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, God’s commission to the first human team was not only to fill the earth but to rule the earth (1:28). This joint commission was made possible because of the unique partnership that God had created the human couple to have. In this united partnership, God created the woman to be a עֹזֵר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ, a “helper corresponding to,” the man. In the Old Testament, the term “helper” (עֹזֵר) is an honorable term that often describes how God helps, shields, and even saves human beings.<sup>69</sup> “Corresponding to” is an intriguing conjunctive term, combining prepositions that denote similarity (כְּ) and dissimilarity (כְּנֶגְדְּ).<sup>70</sup> Certainly this references Adam and Eve’s similarity to each other as humans, while also referencing their dissimilarity to each other as male and female and also man and woman. This unique word also suggests the importance of personal identity and difference that together make up similarity in the relationship of a model marital union.<sup>71</sup>

When the serpent tempts Eve, he not only seeks through sin to disrupt הָאָדָם’s relationship with God, he also seeks to bring disunion to the earthly relationship that is a

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<sup>69</sup> “עֹזֵר,” Brown-Driver-Briggs, quoted on <http://biblehub.com/hebrew/5828.htm> (accessed March 28, 2017). Matthews, 213. Perhaps this term may even hint forward to the woman’s future role in the plan of salvation, where life and a Savior are born from her (3:15, 20).

<sup>70</sup> “כְּנֶגְדְּ,” Brown-Driver-Briggs, quoted on <http://biblehub.com/hebrew/5048.htm> (accessed March 28, 2017).

<sup>71</sup> Doukhan, 81.



type of humans' relationship with God, to “un-cleave” the marital relationship.<sup>72</sup> Indeed he was crafty, subtle, and shrewd (ערום), and sought to achieve his purpose by dividing and conquering the first human couple (3:1). By allowing him to succeed, the first couple did not fulfill its commission to rule creation, to create and maintain order among the animals God had given them to govern (1:26, 28). The serpent stood against God and he also usurped his position in God's created order by refusing to be under human authority (2:19, 20).

Thus the serpent tempted Eve, Eve tempted Adam (3:6), and God held Adam in large part responsible for their fall (3:9, 17). Resultingly, the marital relationship was necessarily changed by God in order to maintain harmony after sin; now for the first time in the Eden narrative, God states the new reality—that the husband would rule over the wife, the one who had been deceived (3:13, 16).<sup>73</sup> A certain element of vulnerability, shame, or fear also affected the marriage, as evidenced by Adam and Eve being naked and unashamed before the Fall (2:25) yet ashamed of their nakedness after the Fall (3:7, 10, 11, 21). And yet even after the Fall, marriage—this oldest of human institutions, made possible by the creation of a physical constitution that produces two interdependent entities—still remains. Instituted by God, it has potential to meet an array of human

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<sup>72</sup> If this “un-cleaving” is successful, it is a serious disruption to every function of human nature. It breaks the very ontological nature of humanity in its functionality since God ontologically joins together such unions.

<sup>73</sup> Indeed, all of God's pronouncements in Gen 3:14-19 describe new realities in the post-Fall world. This is not to say that humans should not strive for the pre-Fall ideal. In fact, look what is shown in Song of Songs 7:10, the only other Old Testament occurrence of תשוקה (Gen 3:16—“and unto your husband תשוקתך and he shall rule over you”) that relates to the marital relationship: here it is the man who has תשוקה for his woman (“I am my beloved's and toward me is תשוקתו), reversing the order of Gen 3:16. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 576, 577, 72-76; Ariel and Chana Bloch, *The Song of Songs: A New Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Random House, 1995), 207.

needs and make possible great work on earth; and when in Christ, it is the best human reflection of God's relationship with his people (Eph 5:22-33).

Furthermore, although the Eden narrative includes only two humans and thus no other human-human relationship besides the marital one is presented, such relationship lays the groundwork for all other human relationships in society. The social component inherent in this first marriage points to a general need and ability that humans as social creatures have—social companionship and relationship. Adam longed for one comparable to him (2:20, 23), Eve was eager to share even her fruit with Adam (3:6), and human nature still craves an array of social relationships that enable life to be lived and shared in community. Besides the human-human relationship of Adam and Eve, these first humans had a relationship with the rest of God's creation and with God himself.<sup>74</sup> And once more people were added to the population of earth (1:28), this relational function extended to an array of human relationships—between individuals, family groups, interest groups, people groups, and nations..

#### Emotional/Psychological Function

The Eden narrative includes the emotional/psychological function as part of the human physical substance. This is evidenced in Genesis 2 before the Fall, and in chapter

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<sup>74</sup> For "humans are created for community with God, one another, and with other creatures" (Bradley C. Hanson, *Introduction to Christian Theology* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997], 83; quoted in Moskala, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals*, 296). Furthermore, "health in Hebrew thinking is the well-being and complete harmony of the whole person including the social dimensions" (Moskala, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals*, 227).

3 after the Fall.<sup>75</sup> Before the Fall, Adam's joy over God's creation of his wife is palpable and expressed through poetic utterance (2:23). The first couple's emotional/psychological oneness and peace with each other is also illustrated at that time (2:24, 25). Even as Adam considered whether he should eat the fruit Eve offered him, his heart was drawn towards her and he ate (3:6, 17).

After the Fall, Adam and Eve's eyes were opened for them to know good and evil, and this new state took an emotional and psychological toll on them (3:5, 7). Before, they had only experienced the good. Now knowing good and evil, they experienced shame, guilt, and fear, were subjects of blame and deception, and suffered from a loss of innocence—all of which negatively alter the core of humans' emotional/psychological states and expression (3:7-13). Even the solution that God promised for humans' sin predicament brought Eve the emotional experience of enmity to the serpent (3:15). After sin, she also experienced a specific sort of deep-seated psychological longing or desire for her husband that she had not possessed before sin (3:16).

### Mental Function

Human nature, according to the picture shown in the Eden narrative, also has a mental function. This is manifested not only in rationality and intellect, but also in aesthetic appreciation.<sup>76</sup> We are able to see this displayed especially through Adam and

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<sup>75</sup> Perhaps also in chapter 1, where  $\text{אדם}$  is created in God's own image (1:26, 27). Scripture presents God as emotional/psychological, and certainly able to understand human emotions and psychology (Heb 4:15, among many others).

<sup>76</sup> There is overlap between these different functions and this is part of God's wholistic design for humans. For example, this aesthetic appreciation can also manifest itself in an emotional/psychological feeling.

Eve’s using their language capabilities to express their thoughts and feelings (2:20, 22; 3:2, 3, 10, 12, 13, 20). And we know too that God and the serpent knew that this first couple was capable of high-level mental processing, for the language they used to speak to them assumes such (1:28-30; 2:16, 17; 3:1, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 16-19).<sup>77</sup>

Human beings were created in the image of God (1:27), and thus God chose and entrusted precisely humans with the governance of his creation (1:28; 2:19, 20). This God-given responsibility is evidence of God’s belief that humans’ mental function was commensurate with such an awesome task.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, God as Creator is also an artist, and so it is only natural that humans are able to perceive and appreciate beauty.<sup>79</sup> God created the trees of Eden to be “pleasant to the sight” (2:9), and Eve perceived that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a “delight to the eyes” (3:6). As evidence of Adam’s artistic and creative abilities, he was able to speak in poetry on the day of the creation of האדם (2:23).

The mental function of humans’ nature also craved growth and was capable of imagining the future. This is evidenced by Eve’s wanting to eat the forbidden fruit that

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<sup>77</sup> Some hold that the ability to communicate through language is a key differentiator in what makes humans unique among the animals. For a nuanced discussion of this view, see Härle, 366.

<sup>78</sup> Certainly other functions, such as the spiritual, are necessary for successful rulership of creation. But even when humans are selfish and immoral, their mental functions still enable a rulership (although sometimes misguided and brutal) of creation that may not have been possible with any other species as rulers. Even with the rulership that people have over each other, the mental function of human nature makes possible a strictly authoritarian and efficient rulership (e.g., Sparta model) or a democratic and self-determining rulership (e.g., Athens model). Animals also are very capable of creating effective systems of rulership for themselves, but while they may excel in organization or cooperation, their systems do not promote individual self-actualization. Human’s mental function is what in large part accounts for this difference.

<sup>79</sup> For more on this topic of aesthetics, see Jo Ann Davidson, *Toward a Theology of Beauty: A Biblical Perspective* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008).

offered the tantalizing promise of more wisdom and knowledge (3:6).<sup>80</sup> Fatefully, humans' Fall did deliver on that promise—for the mental function of human nature now was able to absorb a knowledge of evil and not just good (3:5, 7, 22).

### Volitional Function

The Eden narrative also reveals that Adam and Eve's human nature had a volitional function. This is shown through God speaking to humans the first five imperatives (1:28) and giving Adam instructions as to which trees he could freely eat from and which tree was forbidden (2:16, 17).<sup>81</sup> How the first humans responded to these instructions presented a moral issue, for they had both the freedom and capability of saying either "yes" or "no" to God's commands.

Once the temptation of the serpent entered into the picture, Adam and Eve's volitional functions (with moral implications) were put to their greatest test yet. Who would they trust and obey—their God or their own desires sparked by the serpent? Eve chose to trust her own self in making this moral choice. She relied on the evidence before her—she saw that the tree produced fruit that was physically good for food and that was aesthetically delightful (3:6). And, believing the words of the seemingly wise serpent who was capable of speaking, she yielded to temptation and coveted the fruit that he said would make her wise and open her eyes to new realities (3:5-7). Adam's moral

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<sup>80</sup> Of course, Eve's desire for wisdom (3:6) may have also been mixed with prideful motives (originating from the emotional/psychological function of human nature), since the serpent's pitch to her was dripping with enticements to pride (3:5), which was Lucifer's original sin (Isa 14:12-14). It is interesting to notice that even before the Fall, with a nature that was not sinful, there was the capability for pride to arise in the human heart (as it did for Lucifer, before he sinned by acting on his prideful thoughts through rebellion).

<sup>81</sup> The word צוה (used here for the first time in the Bible) here is derived from מצוה, "commandment," the same term famously used for God's moral law. Doukhan, 79. See also Matthews, 209, 210.

choice came in following Eve, his own flesh, instead of his God, the Maker of all flesh (3:6).

God gave Adam and Eve the ability to make this free moral choice, and allowed them to experience the consequences of their choice (3:7, 16-19). They also experienced part of what the serpent had promised them, the ability to know good and evil (3:5, 22). This knowledge, contrary to what they had hoped, turned out to be a devastating knowledge. It also resulted in the volitional function of their human nature receiving more constant and rigorous moral exercise—for with this new knowledge, temptations would become more severe, and right choices would become even more difficult to make. This knowledge would also constantly tempt them to make themselves, instead of God's word, the arbiter of their moral choices (a temptation that Adam and Eve yielded to in their very first sin).<sup>82</sup> Yet even here, God graciously imparted the blessing of enmity (3:15) to aid in the making of right moral choices, inasmuch as a distaste for evil would help to counteract the draw of evil.

### Spiritual Function

Last but not least, Adam and Eve's human nature, as portrayed in the Eden narrative, reveals a spiritual function. Before the Fall, אָדָם had the ability and capacity to see and speak and have a relationship with God (1:27-31; 2:15-24), to a far greater extent than any interaction chronicled between God and his other earthly creatures. The Garden of Eden itself was indeed the first earthly sanctuary where God dwelt with his

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<sup>82</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15* (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 63.

people.<sup>83</sup> However, the first divine-human interaction that is recorded after the Fall initially speaks only of **הָאֱלֹהִים** hearing the voice/sound of God walking in the garden, not actually seeing him. In the immediate context of Adam and Eve experiencing the serpent-tree-fruit through sight-touch-taste, the new limiting of their divine interaction to merely the auditory realm implies a distancing of their relationship with God, even as their connection to the world of sin had advanced.<sup>84</sup>

Yet God still walked—and the (*hitpa'el*) participle used for “walking” in 3:8 denotes a deliberate, repetitious, and relaxed walk, as if God continued his custom regardless of the actions of **הָאֱדָמָה**.<sup>85</sup> Divine “walking” (or perhaps “walking around”), especially in Genesis and the Pentateuch, speaks to divine-human communion—even the presence of God in the camp of Israel and the sanctuary.<sup>86</sup> So after the Fall, God still “walked” with humans, but this divine-human communion now had limitations that were not experienced before the Fall.

The Eden narrative shows that Adam and Eve felt shame and fear as a result of their disobedience to God’s command. Whereas before the Fall, both of them were naked and not ashamed of their nakedness (2:25), after the Fall both of them were naked and

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<sup>83</sup> See Davidson, “Earth’s First Sanctuary,” for more than forty lines of biblical evidence pointing to the Garden of Eden’s status as the first sanctuary on earth. See also Moshe Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord—the Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1:1-2:3,” in *Mélanges Bibliques et Orientaux en l’honneur de M. Henri Gazelles*, ed. A. Caquot and M. Delcor, *Alter Orient and Altes Testament* 212 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1981). Also Gordon J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9 (1986): 19-25.

<sup>84</sup> See Doukhan, 94.

<sup>85</sup> Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006), 160.

<sup>86</sup> Matthews, 238, 239. See, for example, Gen 5:22 and 24, 6:9, 17:1, 24:40, 48:15; also Lev 26:12, Deut 23:14, 2 Sam 7:6, 7.

quickly tried to cover themselves up by sewing fig leaves together (3:7) and hiding (3:8, 10). The switch from nakedness without shame to nakedness with shame is punctuated by the deception of the serpent. He was cunning, crafty, subtle, shrewd—and the Hebrew word used here for this (עָרֹם) sounds almost identical to the word used for nakedness in 2:25 (עָרֹמִים) and 3:7 (עִירָמָם), thus denoting the role of the serpent in this switch between the security of no shame to the vulnerability and uncoveredness of shame.<sup>87</sup>

Before and after the Fall Adam and Eve were naked, but only after the Fall—after their eyes were opened to both good and evil—did they know that they were naked (3:7). What changed here? There is a slight difference between the forms of the word “naked” used in 2:25 (pre-Fall) and 3:7 (post-Fall). The form used in 2:25 is often used to describe not being “fully clothed” or not being clothed “in the normal manner.”<sup>88</sup> The form used in 3:7, on the other hand, refers to “total (and usually shameful) exposure,” being utterly “bare.”<sup>89</sup> Some have suggested that this leaves open the possibility that Adam and Eve, before sin, were clothed with garments of light and glory.<sup>90</sup>

If garments of light were indeed taken away as a result of Adam and Eve’s first sin, their new and total nakedness would be a sign of their new disconnection from God, spiritual and otherwise.<sup>91</sup> Claus Westermann refers to this new nakedness as “being

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<sup>87</sup> Doukhan, 93, 94.

<sup>88</sup> Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 56.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 56, 57.

<sup>90</sup> As God is described to be clothed in Ps 104:1, 2. See Davidson, “The Nature of the Human Being from the Beginning,” 26, 27. This is the tradition found also in the Targum of Jerusalem’s commentary on Gen 3:7 (quoted in Doukhan, 94): “His [Adam’s] skin was a bright garment, shining like his nails; when he sinned this brightness vanished, and he appeared naked.”

<sup>91</sup> Doukhan, 94.



unmasked.”<sup>92</sup> Since the functions of human nature work together wholistically, it is not surprising that there is found outward, physical evidence of Adam and Eve’s inward, spiritually/morally fallen state (the evidence being both the shame shown by the need for clothing after sin [3:7], and the innocence revealed in nakedness before sin [2:25]). Thus physical nakedness here is a sign, a symptom, of a now-sinful human nature. This is the type of nakedness (עִרְוָה) that was the intended goal of the cunning (עָרִים) serpent. This is ultimately the type of nakedness Adam and Eve wanted to cover up by clothing, and the sin that they wanted to hide by hiding behind perhaps the same tree that got them into trouble in the first place.<sup>93</sup> But they themselves could not cover up their nakedness; for even with their fig-leaf coverings on, Adam told God that he was afraid because he was naked (Gen 3:10).

Yet still as God arrives at the scene in Eden, he affirms that humans—even sinful humans—are valuable and worthy of respect. He does this by treating them more than fairly, even though their human nature is now sinful. He could have easily and lawfully cast immediate and unilateral judgment upon Adam and Eve. But his interrogatives to them, and the process of judgment he uses, follow that of covenant lawsuits. Hence he respectfully allows them to relate their testimony to him and, by so doing, incriminate themselves.<sup>94</sup> Thus he imbues even fallen human nature with dignity.

God extends this much further by his decision to offer salvation to humans by making himself their sacrifice. In Gen 3:14, he even proclaims the protoevangelium

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<sup>92</sup> *Creation* (London: SPCK, 1974), 95.

<sup>93</sup> Doukhan, 95. Compare Gen 2:9, 3:3, and 3:8.

<sup>94</sup> See Richard M. Davidson, “The Divine Covenant Lawsuit Motif in Canonical Perspective,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 21/1-2 (2010): 45-84.

before pronouncing the consequences of Adam's and Eve's sins to them (3:16, 19). How kind to the first sinners he was, in declaring rescue before declaring judgment. Because of his great love, sinful human nature has the promise of redemption and restoration to the Edenic ideal. Yet Adam and Eve learn that this restoration, in its fullest measure, will be future. For although they hold that promise (3:15) and forgiveness (God covers their nakedness through the shedding of blood—3:21) in their hearts, they are physically exiled from the Garden of Eden (3:24) and live in an earth that is now marred by sin (3:17-19).

Even as the Eden narrative reveals various functions of human nature, all these functions are shown to work together in concert. Consequently, none of the functions are isolated from the others. But the question still remains, What specifically is it that makes humans unique in creation? To this question our study now turns.

### **Humaniqueness**

Categories of ontology, such as constitution and nature, serve to describe and differentiate things from each other. For substance dualism or those leaning towards substance dualism, the immortal soul is very often the factor given to describe what makes humans unique in comparison to animals. For those adopting a more materialist philosophy of origins, there is only a quantitative difference, not a qualitative one,

between humans and animals.<sup>95</sup> Recently a term—humaniqueness—has been used to describe what makes human cognition unique or special from that of any other species.<sup>96</sup>

This dissertation has already established that the Eden narrative shows both humans and animals to have a physical constitution. But what of their nature? Is human nature unique from animals' nature in any way? If humans are unique at all, but are constitutionally physical like the animals, then there should be some difference found in their nature.<sup>97</sup> But what is this difference in nature between humans and animals? Examining what these differences might be is one way that can help to illuminate what humans are by nature, and what makes them humanique.

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<sup>95</sup> The most current and comprehensive theological anthropology (Kelsey's *Eccentric Existence*) gives DNA as the answer to this question. This certainly is a fascinating answer to pursue, and one in which science is currently unfolding answers. For example, chimpanzees and bonobos are the species that share the most DNA with humans. But since there are definite DNA differences between these species and humans, it would be fascinating to know what precisely these genetic differences are. However, "scientists do not yet know how most of the DNA that is uniquely ours affects gene function" (Kate Wong, "Tiny Genetic Differences between Humans and Other Primates Pervade the Genome," *Scientific American* 311/3 [August 19, 2014], <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/tiny-genetic-differences-between-humans-and-other-primates-pervade-the-genome/> [accessed October 15, 2018]). While study of this field has only recently begun (because the human genome first needed to be mapped out), human accelerated regions have been identified as regions in the human DNA sequence that seem to be uniquely human, and some of these seem to be linked with the development of larger brains in humans (K.S. Pollard, S.R. Salama, N. Lambert, et al, "An RNA Gene Expressed During Cortical Development Evolved Rapidly in Humans," *Nature* 443 [2006]: 167-72).

<sup>96</sup> It was first used in this context in the last decade by the evolutionary biologist Marc Hauser.

<sup>97</sup> Human "nature," as I use it here, has at least two main meanings in philosophy. One is that of Aristotle, and the other is that of Heidegger. In this chapter, I describe human nature by speaking of it in terms of functions *and* in terms of humaniqueness. However, philosophy has generally spoken of it in terms of functions *or* humaniqueness, depending on the philosophical perspective. If one follows Aristotle, human nature is seen in terms of identity or what distinguishes humans from non-human things. In this chapter, we call this humaniqueness. Aristotle saw the essence of a human (the humaniqueness of human nature) as being the rational soul (see Charlotte Witt, *Substance and Essence in Aristotle: An Interpretation of Metaphysics VII-IX* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989], 143, 144). Heidegger turned away from this interpretation, and saw human nature as the essence of the functioning of the human physical substance. This functional focus of Heidegger in regard to human nature can be summed up by his notion of *Dasein*, a "being-there" which includes "being-within-the-world" and "being-with-others." This, to Heidegger, is the essence of being human (Palmer, 361, 362). Interestingly, while philosophy is generally divided between these two approaches, the Eden narrative describes both humaniqueness and the functions of the human physical system—and both of these together point to what the essence of human nature is.

There are many answers to this question, but this study turns to the Eden narrative to look for possible answers there. Do these biblical chapters suggest that there are differences between humans and animals, that humans are truly unique? They certainly do show that humans hold the exalted position in God’s creation, even while bringing out the interrelationships within God’s created ecosystem.<sup>98</sup>

A structural and linguistic study of Genesis’ first chapter shows that day six of creation week receives more attention and importance than days one to five, and that the creation of humans is the chiasmic apex of day six.<sup>99</sup> This is further illustrated by how the creation of humans is described as opposed to the creation of land animals, the other creation of Gen 1’s day six. Of land animals, God’s intention to create is stated thus: “Let the *earth* bring forth living creatures according to their kind” (verse 24). Of אדם, God’s intention is stated this way: “Let *us* make אדם in our image, according to our

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<sup>98</sup> A reference to Psalm 8:5 reinforces the fact of humans’ special place in creation: “You have made him [אדם] a little lower מאלהים [“than God”; or, less likely—“than the angels”] and have crowned him with glory and honor.” Marsha M. Wilfong asserts that “humankind is, in fact the lynchpin that holds creation together” (“Human Creation in Canonical Context: Genesis 1:26-31 and Beyond,” in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of Sibley Towner*, 47).

<sup>99</sup> See Samaan Nedelcu, “What Makes Humans Human? Personal Ontology in the Creation Narrative of Day Six (Gen 1:24-31),” in *Scripture and Philosophy: Essays Honoring the Work and Vision of Fernando Luis Canale* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Lithotech, 2016), 382-407; see also von Rad, 57. This is evidenced by the literary intensity that builds as the narrative continues through the days of creation and into day six, by the amount of space the narrative devotes to אדם, likely by the poetry that breaks out of prose in verse 27 (the creation of אדם), and by how God proclaims the completion of his creation “behold!—very good” after אדם, the capstone of his creation, comes into being. (It is interesting to note that another instance of poetry used in either creation account is found in Gen 2:23 and is an exclamation of Man’s joy at the creation of Woman. Thus in Gen 1 and 2, the device of poetry is employed for the glory that was a part of the creation of human beings, both man and woman.) As to the amount of space the Gen 1 narrative devotes to אדם, the narrative of the sixth day is significantly longer than any of the other days’ narratives, providing a clue as to its high importance. Days 1 and 2 are three verses each (31 and 38 words, respectively); days 3 and 4 are five verses each (69 words each); day 5 is four verses (57 words); day 6 is eight verses long (149 words). David A. Dorsey notes that “this structuring technique [in which the words count of days 1 and 2 is roughly doubled in days 3-5, then roughly doubled again in day 6] conveys the impression of ever-increasing variety and profusion” (*The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis—Malachi* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1999], 49).

likeness” (verse 26).<sup>100</sup> Genesis 2 reinforces even more the uniqueness of God’s creation of humans as it describes the very personal creative acts accomplished by God in fashioning Adam and Eve.<sup>101</sup>

Now when studying the actual reports of the creation of animals and humans (and not statements of divine intent to create), we find that the reports of the creation of animals and humans are in parallel form with each other. This parallelism further reinforces a singularly significant difference between the creation of animals and humans.<sup>102</sup> “And God made [וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים] . . . [all the categories of land animals] according to their kind” (verse 25); “And God created [וַיַּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים] in his image”

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<sup>100</sup> Genesis 1 specifies that the plants and animals are all created “according to their kind” (verses 11, 12, 21, 24, and 25). Yet humans are said to be created “in his image, according to his likeness” (verse 27).

Additionally, the use of the “cohortative of resolve” (verse 26: “Let us אָדָם) as opposed to the “impersonal jussive” (verse 24: “Let the earth bring forth living creatures”) also makes manifest God’s special attention to the creation of האָדָם, and likely even reveals the creative activity of the entire Godhead by its use of the plural pronoun (see also footnote 129). This usage can also indicate a more intimate involvement of God in the creation of האָדָם than in the rest of creation. It does not indicate a constitutional difference between animals and humans, for האָדָם is still made מִן־הָאֲדָמָה, from the same ground or earth as the animals (2:7; 3:19). It does not indicate a difference in origin between animals and humans, for both originate from the creative power of God (Ps 104:30: “You send forth Your breath/spirit [רוּחְךָ], they [the animals] are created [וַיַּבְרָאֵן]”). What it does convey, however, is that God invested a special and personal care in creating האָדָם, muddying at least his hands and lips in the process.

<sup>101</sup> Of Adam, God formed/fashioned (יָצַר) him of the dust of the ground as a potter would a vessel. The choice of this verb highlights not only the artistic work of God, but the total dependence of the created on the Creator (see footnote 9). This verb is also used in 1:25 in reference to the creation of the land animals, and so it is the second action of God in the creation of the first human which is the most unique. The second action of God here is to breathe (נָפַח). This is probably the most personal and intimate of any of God’s creative acts, as it involves God’s mouth breathing into Adam’s nostrils. “*Breathed* is warmly personal, with the face-to-face intimacy of a kiss and the significance that this was giving as well as making, and self-giving at that” (Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1967], 60). Of Eve, God built/constructed (בָּנָה) her of Adam’s rib (צִלְעַת), as an architect and builder constructs an edifice. This is actually the only time in the Eden narrative that the verb בָּנָה is used, indicating the special and personal importance of the creation of the woman here by God. Doukhan speaks to this importance by pointing out that these two words—בָּנָה and צִלְעַת—are linked to the building of the sanctuary. Exploring this connection, he states that “this parallel of the rib-woman with the sanctuary is interesting as it suggests that the creation of the woman means more than the comfort of companionship to man; it may, in fact, have bearings on the salvation of humankind” (83).

<sup>102</sup> Doukhan, 65.

(verse 27).<sup>103</sup> Doukhan comments on this distinction by stating that “animals are defined within the natural domain, according [*sic*] their ‘kinds’ and are described as derived from the earth (1:24), while humans are defined in terms of a special and direct reference to God.”<sup>104</sup> Above all, the usage of the *imago Dei* here is the greatest differentiator between humans and animals in regard to their nature.

Certainly the narrative of humans’ creation in the first two chapters of Genesis points to a close and personal connection between God and humans, one in which his special care is demonstrated as he personally and intimately fashions, builds, and breathes. This in turn also points to the unique relationship that humans have with God.<sup>105</sup> This unique relationship between God and humans crystallizes in God’s words recorded in Genesis 3. In response to the Fall, God chooses to bring salvation to the human race through a human instrumentality—the woman’s seed (3:15).<sup>106</sup>

So according to the Eden narrative, and in addition to the *imago Dei*, in which ways do humans differ from animals? Humans receive special and personal care from God in the process of creation, in a way his animal creation does not. Far more space is

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<sup>103</sup> The difference between the verbs עשה and ברא here can seem significant as an identifier of human ontology; however, it seems less significant when one notices that the verb used for God’s creation of the water animals and winged animals is also ברא. While the usage of both עשה and ברא could be stylistic, the difference can also be explained by saying that ברא is a hyponym to עשה (Collins, ch. 4, C.7.); it is also true that ברא does convey a much more personal element in creation by God than does עשה. What perhaps is the most significant here is that in verse 27, the verb ברא is repeated three times, highlighting the importance of the human creation, when this repetition occurs nowhere else in the narrative, for any other verb.

<sup>104</sup> Doukhan, 61.

<sup>105</sup> Matthews, 199, 200.

<sup>106</sup> If there is any kind of “salvation” for animals (as part of the whole creation), a glimpse of it might be seen in Rom. 8:19-23. They seem to share in the fate of humans; they are subjected to death and to hope because of their human rulers.

spent describing their creation, and the highest linguistic grandeur of the creation account is reserved for the account of their creation.<sup>107</sup> Additionally, God’s breath is here shown to take a uniquely active role in animating humans. And as his last, crowning work of his six-day creation is completed, God sees all he has made and finally exclaims “behold!—very good” (verse 31). This unique place that God gives humans in creation is reinforced by his spoken call to them (להם) to be rulers of creation (1:28).<sup>108</sup> After the Fall, even God’s fallen human creatures are reminded of their special significance to God as they receive the protoevangelium—a promise not only that God would save them, but that he would use a human woman’s seed to bring about his salvific purposes (3:15). But how specifically does humans’ creation in the image of God make them unique? This is the question the next section seeks to answer.

### Unique Significance of the *Imago Dei*

These examples highlight the differences between how God views humans in comparison to the rest of his creation. Humans truly are dust, עפר, and have a physical constitution.<sup>109</sup> Thus such a unique portrayal of humans in the creation narrative is crucially related to and explained by humans’ singular distinction of being created in the image of God, according to his likeness (1:26), as his children.<sup>110</sup> He takes personal care

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<sup>107</sup> Including the “cohortative of resolve” (1:26), which shows God’s intimate involvement in humans’ creation, and introduces the first occurrence of *imago Dei* in the Bible.

<sup>108</sup> See Bent Mogensen, *Kommentarhæfte til Den bibelske Urhistorie Genesis 1-11* (Copenhagen, Denmark: Gad, 1972), 15.

<sup>109</sup> The exalted *imago Dei* statements about human beings in the Bible are balanced and juxtaposed with the truth that humans are truly dust, ephemeral in themselves, dependent on God for their first breath and each that follows. For more on the word עפר, see page 95.

<sup>110</sup> Luke 3:38.

in crafting those who are in his image. He imparts his own life directly to them through his breath. He appoints them as his vice-regents because they are in his image; and they are capable of ruling because they are made in his image.<sup>111</sup> He loves his whole creation, but he describes humans in more detail and he exults in their creation in a unique way because they are in his image.

Truly it is remarkable that the Creator would create a creature in his image. Because of this, humans are endowed with a special worth, to an even greater extent than the rest of God's creation. This is seen in Gen 9:6—"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God he made man." Life created in God's image is of utmost value, and also may help explain why a loving Creator would later put aside heaven, put humanity upon himself, and come to save those created in his image.

Going back to the text, analysis shows that verse 27 is the apex of the Gen 1:26-28 passage describing the creation of האדם.<sup>112</sup> And within verse 27 itself, the inverted repetition in 27a-b reveals the chiasm which has at its heart the *imago Dei*—humans

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<sup>111</sup> According to Collins, "To appeal to the sentence in Genesis 1:26, 'and let them have dominion,' as defining the image is to mistake the grammatical function of that sentence; as Delitzsch [Franz Delitzsch, *A New Commentary on Genesis* {Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1888}, 100] put it, 'the *dominium terrae* . . . is not . . . its content but its consequence" (ch. 4, C.6.). Furthermore, J. van Genderen and W.H. Velema state: "We believe that the image includes dominion among other aspects. One cannot view dominion as incidental to the image. Conversely, the mandate to have dominion cannot be properly explained if it is not implied by being God's image" (*Concise Reformed Dogmatics* [Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing Company, 2008], 322).

<sup>112</sup> See Samaan Nedelcu, "What Makes Humans Human?" Collins: "All of these features of Genesis 1:27 indicate that it is the zone of maximum turbulence, the peak of the account" (ch. 4, D.).



being created in the image of God.<sup>113</sup> Such textual evidence shows that the *imago Dei* provides the Eden narrative’s best answer to why humans hold such a unique and special place in creation, in spite of such great constitutional similarities to animals.

For a model of personal ontology based on the Eden narrative, the *imago Dei* indeed is the best answer to the question of humaniqueness. It is creation’s “boldest affirmation of the remarkably unique relationship between humans and God—humans resemble God.”<sup>114</sup> Genesis 1’s *imago Dei* pronouncement has been called “the outstanding feature of the conception of man in the Old Testament.”<sup>115</sup> Indeed, as the linguistic and thematic climax of Gen 1’s whole creation narrative, it receives special attention, space, and even its own literary genre.<sup>116</sup> Because of the importance the text affords this concept, and because the text presents the *imago Dei* as a key factor in understanding what makes humans a special and unique creation of God, it is essential to study this concept and to explore how it relates to human ontology.

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113	A	And God created	הָאֱלֹהִים	A	וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם
	B	in his image	בְּצַלְמוֹ	B	בְּצַלְמוֹ
	B`	in the image of God	בְּצַלְמוֹ אֱלֹהִים	B`	בְּצַלְמוֹ אֱלֹהִים
	A`	he created him	בְּרָא אֹתוֹ	A`	בְּרָא אֹתוֹ

The first half of verse 27a (A above) uses proper nouns (“God” and “הָאֱלֹהִים”), and the second half of 27a (B) uses a personal (possessive) pronoun to refer to a proper noun (“his” refers to “God” found in the clauses after and before it); the first half of 27b (B`) uses a proper noun (“God”), and the second half of 27b (A`) uses personal pronouns to refer to proper nouns (both referents are in the first half of 27a, where “he” refers to “God” and “him” refers to “הָאֱלֹהִים”). Matthews, 175; Peter Mercer, *An Initiatory Catechism of Hebrew Grammar* (Melbourne: Walker, May & Co., 1876), 28.

Verse 27c follows in synthetic parallelism to this structure, and explains how הָאֱלֹהִים can be both “him” of verse 27b and “them” of verse 27c (Phyllis A. Bird, “Male and Female He Created Them: Gen 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation,” *Harvard Theological Review* 74/2 [April 1, 1981], 149, 150). See also Davidson, “Biblical Anthropology,” 12; Samaan Nedelcu, “What Makes Humans Human?”; and for an alternate view, Judy Klitsner, *Subversive Sequels in the Bible: How Biblical Stories Mine and Undermine Each Other* (New Milford, CT: Maggid Books, 2011), 112-14.

<sup>114</sup> Doukhan, 62.

<sup>115</sup> Vriezen, 144.

<sup>116</sup> See Marla A. Samaan Nedelcu, “What Makes Humans Human?”

Indeed, according to the Eden narrative, the *imago Dei* is the greatest underlying distinction between humans and animals. But how exactly does the *imago Dei* make humans' nature different from that of animals? The Eden narrative does not give a precise definition of the *imago Dei*. But it does suggest that because of it, humans are endowed with the potential to be like God (in contrast to the rest of creation), and to resemble him more, in every aspect of who they are as humans.<sup>117</sup> Human nature is intimately tied to God's creation of humans in his image; humaniqueness cannot be separated from that reality. As every aspect of human nature grows to image God, it becomes more distinct from that of animals and more akin to that of the Creator—God's children begin to resemble their father.

Theologians through the ages have offered scores of answers to the question of what the *imago Dei* is. The quest to identify the *imago Dei*, and the debate surrounding that quest, has been nearly unceasing in the history of Christian theology. Perhaps a sole point of agreement may be summed up in the words of a Genesis commentator:

“Although it is difficult to ascertain the meaning of the ‘image,’ it is closely associated with the uniqueness and distinctiveness of humans.”<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, here are some of the answers that have been offered: physical likeness, possession of mental and rational abilities, free will, emotional life, personhood and individuality, moral nature or a desire for holiness, spiritual nature or an openness to God, social and sexual natures which

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<sup>117</sup> Gulley, 86: “Herman Bavinck is right that the image of God in humans is not something they bear or have, but what they are. It is ‘not *something in man* but *man himself*.’ (I would add the image is not a soul, for the soul is the very person.)” Quote from Herman Bavinck, *God and Creation*, vol. 2, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 555, emphasis in original.

<sup>118</sup> James McKeown, *Genesis*, The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 27.

include marriage and family, the call to rule or care for creation, adoption and sonship, self-consciousness and identity, an innate sense of eternity, an immortal soul, or a combination of these.<sup>119</sup>

Aside from the immortal soul alternative, none of the above options for the identification of the *imago Dei* are explicitly contradicted by the Eden narrative, although some do not appear obvious from the text.<sup>120</sup> Yet most of these options do not present answers that show how humans are truly unique. For while they speak to characteristics that humans certainly possess, humans generally do not possess these characteristics uniquely, but simply to a higher degree than do animals. Therefore they are not truly human characteristics, since animals possess most of them to some degree as well.<sup>121</sup>

If, however, we are to follow the methodology outlined in this dissertation, the answers to such questions as the *imago Dei* must arise from the biblical text itself, and the task of this dissertation is to simply uncover the meaning already in that text. This differs from the alternative of looking at already existing theological answers (which may

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<sup>119</sup> For a good survey of numerous answers, see Gunnlaugur A. Jónsson, *The Image of God: Genesis 1:26-28 in a Century of Old Testament Research*, *Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series* 26, trans. Lorraine Svendsen (Lund, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1988). See also Collins, ch. 4, C.6.; Frank M. Hasel, 207-34; Moskala, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals*, 213, 214.

<sup>120</sup> Those who believe that the image of God is an immortal soul would identify the immortal soul textually as נפש חיה (“living being/creature”) or נשמת חיים (“breath of life”). But as was discussed above, these terms in the Bible do not refer to an immortal soul or even to a part of the person identified as a soul; instead they refer to a unitary living, breathing human.

<sup>121</sup> I say “most” because we do not know enough about animals (from science or the Bible) to know exactly which of these characteristics they do possess, but we presume, for example, that they would not possess an innate sense of eternity or some of the other characteristics mentioned in the previous paragraph. However, evidence from science (and even from lay observation) now abundantly demonstrates how animals share many functions that were traditionally thought to be uniquely human qualities. There are even numerous biblical texts that point towards higher-order cognitive processing (for good or evil) in animals: Gen 9:5; Exod 21:28; Num 22:28-30; Job 38:41; Ps 103:22; 147:9; 150:6; Prov 6:6-8; 30:30; Jon 4:11; 2 Pet 2:16; Rev 5:13. Every year, increasingly more is discovered and published on animal behavior that reveals great similarities between humans and animals. For more on the relationship between God and animals, see Schafer.

not necessarily be based solely on the biblical canon), and then studying whether those answers have support in the Eden narrative. This dissertation seeks to ascertain what the Eden narrative might mean by the *imago Dei*.<sup>122</sup> And once this is uncovered, there will be a better basis for evaluating the answers on the *imago Dei* that are found in Christian theology.

When first turning to the Eden narrative to identify the image of God, we must ask ourselves not only what this pericope reveals the *image* to be, but who *God* is revealed to be from this text.<sup>123</sup> In fact, this should be the starting point of our study, for how can we really understand what the image is, without understanding who the text reveals the original of that image to be?<sup>124</sup> If we start by studying the image, and then

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<sup>122</sup> It must be stated that a more complete answer to the question of the *imago Dei* would be found in a study of the entire biblical canon, especially in looking at the life of Christ (Col 1:15; see Marc Cortez's *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective: Ancient and Contemporary Approaches to Theological Anthropology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016] for more on how Christ being incarnate helps us to know what it is to be human). Inopportunately however, that task could warrant multiple dissertations, and falls outside of the scope and delimitations of this dissertation. That is why this dissertation will focus merely on seeing what clues Gen 1-3 itself might have for understanding the *imago Dei* concept. Although this pericope is small, the insights found in it are expected to be valuable, considering that these chapters are foundational to the entire canon's teaching on personal ontology.

<sup>123</sup> Along this line, Collins mentions that: "In this pericope and the next, God displays features of his character: he shows intelligence in designing the world as a place for man to live; he uses language when he says things; he appreciates what is 'good' (morally and aesthetically); and he works and rests. He is also relational, in the way he establishes a connection with man that is governed by love and commitment (Gen. 2:15-17). In all of this God is a pattern for man" (ch. 4, C.6.).

<sup>124</sup> God's transcendence and dissimilarity from earthly humans makes it nearly impossible for us to understand his essence or constitution. Thus the Eden narrative clearly reveals who God is on the level of nature, but not on the level of constitution. However, it is logical to assume some sort of *analogia entis* between God and humans, for how would a creation of a physical earth and physical humans take place if God were not able to relate to the physical realm? Additionally, the Eden narrative speaks of humans being created in the image of God, and shows this image to be on the level of nature. But in order for this image to be possible on the level of nature, there also should be some analogy between God and humans on the level of constitution—some image/likeness on the level of constitution that enables the potential for the image/likeness of God on the level of human nature. Yet, a careful exegesis of Genesis' human creation narrative reveals that humans are entirely physical on the level of constitution. So an *analogia entis* between God and humans on the level of constitution could then entail God's capacity to relate to human constitutional physicality as opposed to humans' capacity to relate to any divine constitutional non-physicality. Perhaps such ability of God to relate to human constitutional physicality is his ability to relate on the level of the basic characteristics of such physicality—space and time (see Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, 349-387).

work backwards to understand who the original is, we are in danger of seeing God as a grander version of who we are, of making him into our human image. But if we begin with who the text reveals him to be, then we are on track to really understanding what it means for humans to be created in *his* image.

So who is God revealed to be in the Eden narrative? Does this pericope which introduces the *imago Dei* also reveal or define God? One of the first things noticed, when reading the passage with this question in mind, is that two different names for God are used. The creation narrative in Gen 1:1-2:4a uses *Elohim* (God, אֱלֹהִים). And the creation narrative in Gen 2:4b-3:24 uses *YHWH Elohim* (Lord God, יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים), with the exception of when the serpent and Eve are speaking about God in 3:1-5 (here they use only *Elohim*, אֱלֹהִים). What is the difference in meaning between these two appellations, and who do they reveal God to be in the Eden narrative?<sup>125</sup>

### The Image of *Elohim*

Genesis' first creation narrative uses *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים), which signifies the text's focus on the "strength and preeminence" of God, "the great God who transcends the universe."<sup>126</sup> Fittingly, the immediate pericope in which it is found focuses on these aspects of God in creation. This first creation narrative highlights the grandeur of God and his creation, offering a large-scale portrayal of creation. In this narrative, the first image painted is of God as the maker of "the heavens and the earth"—everything that

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<sup>125</sup> With the biblical exposition that follows, I have made the assumption that Gen 1-3 is able to inform our understanding of who God is in himself. This is possible if God can operate in space and time, and thus the description of him in this text can be taken as a direct description of his acts (which speak to his essence). This view of God arises from biblical evidence, as shown in Canale's *A Criticism of Theological Reason*.

<sup>126</sup> Doukhan, 49.

exists (Gen 1:1). He is “in the beginning,” and nothing had its origin apart from his creating. His spirit is pervasive, and hovered over the chaotic void of this earth, incubating it or nurturing it before his words brought immediate order and plentitude to the earth (1:2; “and God said” is used at least once in each of Gen 1’s six days of creation). What power is in the words of *Elohim* that monumental things come into immediate being at the sound of his command—inanimate nature itself obeys him (e.g., 1:11, 12)!

But not only does this narrative highlight the power of *Elohim*, it highlights the order, wisdom, and strategy that are a part of his ability to design magnificently. God is strategic and methodical, he loves clarity, order, and organization, and he takes pleasure in evaluating the goodness of the created work that follows his design (e.g., 1:4, 5, 13, 18).<sup>127</sup> He knows how to design and make an ideal environment for life and living, even out of a void wasteland, and he executes his perfect plan one step upon another, each one building on what came before with increasing complexity (e.g., 1:2, 6, 7, 9, 19). He expertly manages his creation—calling, identifying, naming it, giving it its appointed place (1:8-10).

God is the ruler of his creation—and he is a good ruler who is intimately involved with it, speaking to and with it, caring for its welfare and prosperity, its nourishment, rest, and balance (e.g., 1:6, 22, 11, 29, 30, 8, 15; 2:2, 3). He puts rhythm and cycles in his creation, which display not only his wisdom in science, but also his artistic and even

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<sup>127</sup> “And God saw . . . that it was good” [or “very good”] is recorded at least once in each of the six days of creation [except for day 2]. God, who is a God of order, even introduces the first taxonomic system (especially evident with land animals—1:24, 25). In Moskala’s words: “God sets the limits and gives boundaries, such as evenings and mornings (day one, two, three, etc.), reproduction by its kind, two special trees in the garden of Eden, time”—all this shows God as a God of order in the Genesis creation account (*The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals*, 284).

musical nature (1:14). God loves life and activity, he creates his creatures to be and to do, and he designs his creation to be free and profuse within an ordered structure (e.g., 1:19-22).

He is not a creator God who hoards authority, although it is rightfully his alone. In the Godhead itself, there is a sharing of responsibilities and close relationship among the members (e.g., 1:1, 2, 26, 2:4).<sup>128</sup> So with his human creation, he follows this pattern and desires to share a close relationship and the delegation of authority with them—and he even delegates some authority to his inanimate creation (1:16-18, 26-28). God appoints his human creation to be his vice-regents over all that he created on earth. They are to represent him, to care for and lead and rule and reign as he does (1:26, 28, 29). Equipping them for this grand responsibility is the astonishing reality that God created humans in his image and likeness (1:26). That the God of all creation would craft creatures in his own image and likeness is a testament to his own humility and graciousness. Humans are dust (3:19), but are yet empowered by their Creator to rule over his own creation, even in its untainted pre-Fall perfection.

And at the end of creation week, in order to care for the wholistic health of his entire creation, God graciously rests on the Sabbath, blessing it and making it holy.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> For more on the plurality of God in Gen 1, see Gerhard Hasel, “The Meaning of ‘Let Us’ in Gen 1:26,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 13 (1975): 58-66; also Collins, ch. 4, C.5. (see also footnote 101 above and 133 below).

<sup>129</sup> Wholistic health is important to God, and certainly includes the spiritual. Here Moskala explains it in an insightful way: “In Hebrew thinking health expresses the totality of wellness of the human being. The physical, mental, spiritual, and social aspects are included. The psychosomatic approach can be discerned from the Hebrew Bible. In the words of Hasel: ‘Health in the biblical view is not one particular quality among many that pertain to the human being; it is the wholeness and completeness of being in itself, and in relation to God, to fellow humans, and to the world.’ Biblically speaking health is total well-being, a comprehensive wholeness” (*The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals*, 233; quote is from Gerhard F. Hasel, “Health and Healing in the Old Testament,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21 [1983]: 191-202).

This blessed day highlights the importance God places on the relationship he desires to have with his creatures, and it also provides an example to Adam and Eve of God's way of rulership and creation care (1:28, 31; 2:1-3).<sup>130</sup> Yet God's strong desire for relationships is brought out even more in the narrative which uses his name *YHWH Elohim*.

#### The Image of *YHWH Elohim*

The second creation narrative (2:4b-24) provides a more detailed and personal account of creation than does the first creation narrative (1:1-2:4a), and also one that focuses primarily on the creation of human beings. In it, God's name *YHWH Elohim* (the Lord God, יהוה אלהים) is employed. *YHWH* is the personal, covenant name of God, and highlights the caring and intimate aspects of his nature.<sup>131</sup> *YHWH* and *Elohim* together provide to human understanding one of the fullest pictures of who God is, in his nature. The Lord God is at the same time infinite and intimate, powerful and caring. Just as the first creation narrative brought out the nature of *Elohim* as powerful Creator and masterful Designer, so the second creation narrative counterbalances that with the *YHWH* nature that connotes tenderness, loyalty, love, and a desire for deep relationship.

So with whom does God have such relationships? With the members of the Godhead, with his human creation, and with the rest of his creation. The closest relationship of these is that of the Godhead, which can be characterized as oneness and

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<sup>130</sup> Leon R. Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis* (New York: Free Press, 2003), quotes Umberto Cassuto: "Every seventh day, without intermission since the days of Creation, serves as a memorial to the idea of creation of the world by the word of God, and we must refrain from work thereon so that we may follow the Creator's example and cleave to his ways. Scripture wishes to emphasize that the sanctity of the Sabbath is older than Israel, and rests upon all mankind" (52, 53).

<sup>131</sup> Davidson, "Back to the Beginning," 12



unity (John 10:30).<sup>132</sup> It is interesting to note that the only place in the Eden narrative where a plural pronoun is used to reference God is in the keynote verse describing the creation of אדם in the image of God (1:26).<sup>133</sup> Perhaps this points to the potential that humans have to image God in the oneness that can exist within the plurality of their own relationships with God and with others. This feature of the image of God will be discussed more in a section below.

In Genesis 2, *YHWH Elohim* is used most pointedly to highlight the unique relationship God has with his human creation. No verse in the Eden narrative brings this out more clearly than 2:7: “And *YHWH Elohim* formed/fashioned אדם from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and אדם became a living being/creature.” The all-powerful Creator, the genius Designer, is also the masterful Artist and Lover of humans. This divine Artist with his own hands sculpts Adam from the ground, because he loves his creation and desires to be intimately a part of this process, especially with his human creation. This personal God then breathes his own life-giving breath into this sculpture of a human. So the first human’s first breath is

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<sup>132</sup> Even within the fullness or plurality of the Godhead, there is a oneness and unity, so much so that the singular and the plural are both used to reference God, in neighboring verses. Although the Godhead took on different functions in creation (and later, salvation), they seemingly conferred together for their decision on the creation of אדם: “Let us make אדם in our image, according to our likeness” (Gen 1:26). These three plural usages in reference to God here are grammatically unambiguous in the Hebrew. However, it is noteworthy that when the author’s narration resumes in verse 27, the singular for God is once again employed: “God created אדם in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Here are the grammatical specifics: In Gen 1:26, “let us make” is the first-person plural conjugation of the verb “make”; “in our image” is the first-person plural pronominal suffix attached to the noun “image”; and “according to our likeness” is the first-person plural pronominal suffix attached to the noun “likeness.” In Gen 1:27, “in his own image” is the third-person singular pronominal suffix attached to the noun “image,” and the next two references to God are identical—“he created” is the third-person singular conjugation of the verb “create.” See also footnotes 101 and 129 above.

<sup>133</sup> See footnote 141.

God's breath, and *YHWH Elohim*, the God of intimate relationship, never turns away from pursuing this relationship with those he so deeply loves.

For his human creation, the creation which he gave his most intimate attention to, *YHWH Elohim* plants a garden (2:8). As the Creator of beauty, he makes the gift of this garden as marvelous as he can for his beloved creatures (2:9). It is a place of abundant life, with rivers, glorious vegetation, and treasures of gold and precious stones (2:9-14). God gives each of the five senses exquisite stimulation and fulfillment through the delights of this garden of Eden. He does not hold back good things from his human creatures, even sharing an ultimate gift for joy with them—access to eternal life through eating from the tree of life.

Into this environment, God put **הָאָדָם**—not for humans to selfishly enjoy or exploit it, not to tyrannically dominate it, but to serve/cultivate (**עָבַד**) it and to keep/guard/preserve (**שָׁמַר**) it (2:15).<sup>134</sup> These God-given mandates bring a deeper understanding to Gen 1:26 and 28's similar mandates for **הָאָדָם** to rule over creation. All together, the mandates reflect the type of leadership God himself displays.<sup>135</sup> Along with such servant (**עָבַד**) leadership there is no lack of authority, for God does not hesitate to give **הָאָדָם** commands with severe consequences for disobedience (2:16, 17). The sight of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil itself was a perpetual reminder of God's authority and commands, and of **הָאָדָם**'s position of being accountable and subject to him

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<sup>134</sup> Philosophically speaking, this is the human as *Dasein*, being-in-the-world.

<sup>135</sup> Moskala perceptively elaborates on this further: "The Creation story is about the nurture of life, which is reflected in the Mosaic dietary laws, and is further recognized in the task of humans to rule and to govern the animal world, and to guard and preserve the creation order (compare Gen 1:28 with Gen 2:15). These two texts are not in contrast, but related to each other. Rolf Rendtorff put it this way: 'Thus we learn that 'master' in Gen 1:28 does not mean 'subdue,' as is often rendered in English translations, but to work carefully and guard'" (*The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals*, 296; also quoted here is Rolf Rendtorff, "What We Miss by Taking the Bible Apart," *Bible Review* 14:1 (1998): 44).

(2:9). Yet God also always maintains and respects the free will of האדם (2:17); even the risk of האדם's rebellion does not prevent God from sharing his power and authority with האדם, his vice-regent on earth (2:19).

We also see that when God first speaks of the creation of האדם in his image (1:26-28), this האדם is explicitly stated to be male *and* female. Thus the text shows that both male and female together are created to image God and to make up the team that God designs to populate and rule the earth. Genesis 2, with its usage of *YHWH Elohim* revealing a God who desires intimate relationships, additionally gives a more detailed portrayal of this most intimate human relationship than what had been given previously.<sup>136</sup>

In the above section on the functions of human nature, we discussed how the use of the term עוזר פנגדו brings to light the honorable role of Adam's partner in the relationship, and how who she is is a God-designed match for him, both in her similarity and dissimilarity to him. The nature of this relationship is not unlike that of the male/female partnerships that Adam observed the animals to have (an implication of 2:20 could be that animals also have their own עוזר פנגדו relationship). However, the reality that humans are created in the image of God makes possible a greater communion and

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<sup>136</sup> As God plans to create Eve and thus complete the human team he designed to image him (which includes populating the earth and ruling his creation), he first allows Adam to miss the absence of a human partner in his life. Surrounded by a perfect world, with God conferring rulership on him through his naming of the animals (2:19, 20), Adam notices that he does not have a partner as the animals do. God wisely allows Adam to feel this need and longing before giving him this most-treasured gift. The Eden narrative does not say why this is. Perhaps it was so Adam would not take Eve for granted, that he would appreciate his life with her, remembering what it felt like not to have her in it. "Then *YHWH Elohim* said, 'It is not good for האדם to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for/comparable to (עוזר פנגדו) him'" (2:18).

oneness, and thus, a greater team than might be possible with any other of God's earthly creatures.

This special relationship began in a unique way, with God the Architect personally building (בנה) Adam's partner out of Adam's sleeping body (2:21, 22). When God brought her to him, in delight Adam exclaimed the miracle of her coming from his own flesh and bones. He then called her Woman (or recognized that as her name), the feminine version of his own designation, because she was taken out of Man (2:23).<sup>137</sup> Now Adam was lacking nothing. The partner he had longed for stood by him, as his second self—a miraculous creation that he had no part in, although she came out of his own body. This relationship was to be so close, reflecting the closeness of God's relationships, that even other human relationships must be loosened to accommodate the closeness of this one (2:24).

The perfect union, harmony, peace, security, love, intimacy, and devotion that God designed this marital relationship to have (2:25) mirrors the way God is in relationships, shown here through this narrative that utilizes his *YHWH Elohim* name. It is significant then that *YHWH Elohim* is also the name that is used in Chapter 3's narrative of the Fall. The God who administers consequences for disobedience and offers hope to sinners is still the God of intimate relationship.<sup>138</sup> After the woman chooses to

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<sup>137</sup> See Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 32, 33, to explore the idea that in Gen 2:23, the man merely recognized the name that God had given her.

<sup>138</sup> However, there is an occasion in chapter 3 where *Elohim* instead of *YHWH Elohim* is used, and that is when the serpent speaks to the woman and she responds. How significant that the serpent chooses to use God's name that signifies his power and rulership, and specifically excludes his name that connotes his loving and intimate relationship with humans. And how interesting that the woman also follows suit, calling God *Elohim* in response to the serpent, even when in the rest of the chapter 3 pericope the narrator consistently uses the appellation *YHWH Elohim*. The serpent's disregard for *YHWH Elohim* in his references to God is strategic, for his purpose is to portray God as a jealous and mighty God who wants to keep all the power to himself. The Eden narrative reveals the opposite to be true, however. God shares his

follow the serpent's deceptions and the man chooses to follow her, the narrative continues by pointing out the true character of *YHWH Elohim*. He is God of justice and faithfulness, who keeps his word and implements immediate consequences for the first humans' rebellion (3:7). Yet he is not only faithful to his word, he is faithful to his relationship with them: he comes back to the garden and walks where he had habitually walked with them, tenderly calling out for them. He walks towards them in their sin, not away from them (3:8). He cares for their hearts as a kind and gentle parent, even patiently listening to their pointless blame games (3:9, 11, 13).

In grace and sympathy, he first offers the promise of his own sacrifice before he utters any judgments to the man and woman (3:15). And through it all, he is infinitely fair—dealing with the serpent first, the root of the problem (3:14), tailoring judgments to the specific sins of each of the players in this fall (3:16), and offering explanations for his judgments (3:17). *YHWH Elohim* met Adam and Eve where they were and offered help and salvific grace for their felt and real needs, clothing their shame and nakedness with animal skins (3:21). Previously, God had blessed Adam and Eve with the exalted position of ruling the world. While that commission still remained, now it wisely also involved pain, sweat, and toil (3:19), helping them to become better and more sympathetic leaders of a sinful world. God's infinite wisdom in dealing with this fall was also manifested as he banished Adam and Eve from the garden as a consequence for their sin and as a realistic safeguard against eternal sin and misery (3:22-24).

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power with his human creation, entrusting them with the perfect world he created, allowing them to rule it and taking the risk that they would rule it badly. He is *YHWH Elohim* who created humans in his own image, who molded them with his own hands, and who longs to share a deep relationship with them. And he is even a God who allowed the serpent free speech, when that speech was used to assassinate God's own character (3:1).

The God of tender love and exquisite care, *YHWH Elohim* not only manifests such character with his relationships within the Godhead and with humans, but also with the rest of the created world. We have seen that the garden of Eden was planted by God to be the idyllic environment for Adam and Eve. However, even outside of the garden, he designed the land and its natural components to be organized and beautiful (2:11). There was nothing harsh to be found in this perfect world that God had made, and even the water that sustained earthly life arose as a gentle mist from the earth, not a stout rainstorm or a chilly snowstorm (2:6).

God's character was also neither harsh nor coercive. He allowed a serpent to defy his authority and libel his name, granting free choice and free speech even to his animal creation (3:1). And he provided for the nourishment and proliferation of all his creatures great and small (1:24, 25, 30; 2:19, 20). The marvelous characteristics of God that are associated with his name *YHWH Elohim* are just as important as the characteristics associated with his name *Elohim*. Humans imaging God will manifest the attributes that are connected to *Elohim* and the attributes that are connected to *YHWH Elohim*. We will see in this next section how both *Elohim* and *YHWH Elohim* are used purposefully in the Eden narrative to reveal a fuller picture of who God is.

#### The Image of *Elohim* and *YHWH Elohim*

This is the God who is revealed through the Eden narrative. The usage of the title *Elohim* in Gen 1 shows God as Ruler of all, omnipotent Creator, and masterful Designer. The usage of *YHWH Elohim* in Gen 2 and 3 reveals God as a relational God who leads by tender love, detailed care, and through his example. Both *Elohim* and *YHWH Elohim* are integral to who God is—one is not more important than the other. God clearly states that

אדם is created in the image of God (1:26, 27), and the previous pages have laid out who the Eden narrative described God to be. So it is in this image of *Elohim* and *YHWH Elohim* that human are created to be, and it is his design that this very image should characterize human nature.

When God planned on creating humans in the image of God as אדם, he first envisioned Adam and Eve functioning as rulers over his newly created world (1:26-28). He gave them this responsibility because they were best equipped for this task since they were created in his image. Following his example, they were to rule in a way that exhibited both the *Elohim* and the *YHWH Elohim* aspects of who God is. This meant that the power and authority they would have as rulers must always be mixed with wisdom and loving care.<sup>139</sup> God's example of rulership consisted of power and authority, wisdom and strategic planning, purposeful design and love for beauty, tender care and sympathetic regard, and a sharing of power and a loving sacrifice of self for those over whom he ruled. This is the example that God's vice-regents on earth, his image-bearers, were to emulate.

Moreover, just as the Eden narrative revealed God to be the God of relationships, humans created in his image were also made with the capacity and need for such relationships. In their relationships with God, with each other, and with the rest of the created world, they image God. That this relational aspect is tied to their being created in

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<sup>139</sup> One example: אדם should not be concerned merely with demonstrating authority over the animals through his naming of them (2:19, 20), but should also care for the alimentary provision of these animals as did God (1:30). Another example: the woman should have remembered her rightful place as ruler over the created world and should not have allowed an animal, the serpent, to usurp authority over her and beguile her into rupturing her intimate relationship with God and her husband (3:6, 7). But this rightful authority over the animals was not to be abused, and God never even gave provision for the animals to be used for food, providing for humans only plants as their alimentary provision (1:29).

the image of God is evident from the Eden narrative’s statement on the image of God: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness’ . . . . God created **הָאָדָם** in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule’” (1:26-28).<sup>140</sup>

Here also, more than anywhere else, Genesis brings to view both the oneness and the plurality that is inherent in the Godhead and in the human husband-wife relationship. It is of vital importance that this description about divine relationship and human relationship is brought out in verses that neighbor each other, and centered around the sole declaration of the *imago Dei* in the Eden narrative. It reveals that at least part of the image of God in humans has to do with their capacity to have intimate relationships (where oneness and plurality are both evident), mirroring the divine relationship within the Godhead.<sup>141</sup>

Obviously, this capacity for oneness and plurality in human-to-human relationships is clearly shown in the Eden narrative when describing the “one flesh” relationship of the first man and woman (2:23, 24). Although the first humans were similar enough to be called the same name (**הָאָדָם**—1:26, 27), they were at the same time dissimilar enough for the woman to be called and designed as **עֹזֵר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ**, a helper

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<sup>140</sup> Verse 26 here in the Eden narrative is the only place where a plural pronoun is used (three times) to refer to God. In verse 27, the singular pronoun for God again becomes the one that is habitually used. Significantly however, in verse 26, where **הָאָדָם** is introduced for the first time, a plural pronoun is also used to reference **הָאָדָם**. This is followed in verse 27 by one usage of a singular pronoun to refer to **הָאָדָם**, followed by one usage of a plural pronoun to refer to **הָאָדָם**. In verses 28 and 29, multiple usages of a plural pronoun refer to **הָאָדָם**.

<sup>141</sup> See Jiří Moskala, “Toward Trinitarian Thinking in the Hebrew Scriptures,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 21/1-2 (2010): 255, 56. Hugh Ross speaks of these verses pointing towards “the uniplural God” (*The Genesis Question: Scientific Advances and the Accuracy of Genesis* [Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2001], 54).



comparable to—or more literally, in front of, or even opposite to, the man (2:20).<sup>142</sup> Even the oneness and interdependence of the Godhead is in a small way mirrored in the creation of two such humans in the beginning. The interdependent maleness and femaleness that is described at the creation of Adam and Eve is deeper and more complex than what is found in the animal kingdom, and it is an important factor in what it means to be created in God’s image. “So God created אָדָם in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27).<sup>143</sup>

The creation in the beginning of an interdependent male and female also provides the basis for the social/relational function in human nature. The Eden narrative shows how humans are created for close relationships; this correlates with their being created in God’s image.<sup>144</sup> Even God’s relationships are not limited to the Godhead, but in the Eden narrative extend especially to humans (as those created in his image), and also to the rest of his created world. So likewise, human relationships in this narrative are not limited to the male-female relationship, but extend also to a relationship with God, any other human, and the created world (animals and environment). The relationship with God especially helps humans to reach their full potential in life and in every other relationship.

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<sup>142</sup> Leon Kass uses the word “counterpart” (73).

<sup>143</sup> That the man cherished this woman who was miraculously built from his own body is evidenced by the fact that he sadly chose loyalty to her over loyalty to God (3:6, 12). Although their relationship with each other changed after they rebelled against God (3:16), God still offered them salvation and restoration, and Adam recognized that God would use Eve as the “mother of all living” from which a savior would be born (3:15, 20). The level of closeness in this human relationship is made possible by the God of relationships creating אָדָם in his image.

<sup>144</sup> To be human is to be in relationships—with God, with fellow humans (personal, community, society), and with the environment around—where the closeness possible in these relationships is related to how much the relationships honor and mirror God.

The closeness of the relationship between God and humans is remarkable and unique in this world.<sup>145</sup> A main reason for the unique closeness of this particular relationship is the fact that God did create humans in his image. They are certainly not divine, and do not possess any divine traits inherently. But God designed them to image him and to be closer to him than any earthly creature ever could be.<sup>146</sup> Even his whole self is involved in designing and fashioning man and woman, and this offers a glimpse of the hope he must have had for an ongoing intimate relationship with them (2:7, 20-22).<sup>147</sup>

In addition to humans' relationship with God and with each other, God also calls humans into relationship with his whole creation. Adam and Eve's relationship with the animals was meant to be one of blessing: they were to rule the animals as benevolently as God did, to preserve food for them, to respect their worth, and to not allow them to usurp their authority (1:20-25, 28-30; 3:4-6). The beautiful world that God created, with all its abundance, Adam and Eve (and humans today) are called to preserve and

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<sup>145</sup> See John 17:21.

<sup>146</sup> God created humans with the capacity for this intimate relationship, and he commissioned them to rule the world he created, and to procreate in their own image. The Eden narrative records God habitually speaking to and with his human creation (1:28-31; 2:16, 17; 3:8-19), an honor not accorded to his other earthly creatures. (The exception to this may be in Gen 3:14, 15, where God addresses the serpent, telling him of his curse and future demise at the foot of the woman's seed. It can be argued that God here is addressing more directly the devil who worked through the serpent [Ezek 28:13-17; Rev 12:7-17] than the actual serpent itself.)

<sup>147</sup> God also gives humans every gift so that nothing is lacking for their enjoyment or fulfillment. Especially for them, he designed a perfect garden home (the first earthly sanctuary where his presence dwelt with humans), and he blessed them with a unique one-flesh partnership (2:8, 9, 21-25). For more on this first earthly sanctuary, see again, Davidson, "Earth's First Sanctuary," for over forty lines of evidence pointing to the Garden of Eden's status as the first sanctuary on earth.

Even after the first humans' rebellion, God still treats his relationship with them with care, honor, and respect. He comes to them gently, allowing them to state their own case, offering them the hope of salvation before ever pronouncing judgment on them, not berating them but offering them fair judgments that were consistent with his original command, and setting up safeguards that would make possible an eventual return to perfection (Gen 3). Certainly in treating humans the unique way he did, God saw that humans were capable of an unprecedentedly close relationship with him, made possible by their being created in his own image.

develop.<sup>148</sup> As humans today fulfill this calling, they should ever remember that they as אדמה are intimately tied to the ground, etymologically and constitutionally—the ground from which all earthly creation is constituted.<sup>149</sup> In summary, humans are fit for, and called to, this relational task of rulership because they are created in the very image of God. Thus they are also expected to demonstrate the same characteristics of rulership that God did during his creation of the world.<sup>150</sup>

Humans image God—as his representatives and rulers on this earth, and in relationship with him, each other, and the whole creation. In fact it is because they are created in the image of God that they have the capacity to reflect his character, to be his representatives, and to sustain such spiritually, emotionally, and physically intimate relationships. In living the life that God created them for, humans in their small way resemble God. And when imaging God, they are also the most human (in the sense of how God originally created human nature to be) and they make it obvious that they indeed are God’s children.

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<sup>148</sup> This includes both plants and animals (see Davidson, “Earth’s First Sanctuary,” 70, 71).

<sup>149</sup> Such intimate relationship with the ground brings pain and death but also growth and life. Through this, they remember their own mortality and at the same time the life-giving blessings of God. And as they toil to serve and preserve the land with care (2:15; 3:17-19), it blesses them reciprocally with abundant harvest and beauty.

<sup>150</sup> These characteristics have been related above.

Sonship<sup>151</sup>

This resembling God is similar to the way that children often resemble their parents, both in outward appearance and in inner characteristics.<sup>152</sup> Textual evidence for connecting the *imago Dei* with the notion of sonship comes most clearly from the very next occurrence of “image” (צלם) after Gen 1:26 and 27. It is found in Gen 5:3: “And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years and begat a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and called his name Seth.” This text connects image and likeness with sonship, as is only implied in the Gen 1 creation narrative.<sup>153</sup> For Adam was created “in the image of God, according to his likeness” (1:26), and now he fathers a son “in his own likeness, according to his image” (5:3).

This notion of sonship could be a helpful addition to an interpretation of the *imago Dei* because it is more all-encompassing than the traditional alternatives.<sup>154</sup> It avoids the compartmentalization of “outward” (physical likeness) and “inward” (rational

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<sup>151</sup> Note: I use “sonship” because I was unable to find a gender-inclusive alternative. In using it, I mean both son and daughter, and do not wish to prefer or exclude one gender. Possible alternatives of “childrenhood” and “begotten-ness”/“begotten-hood” were suggested by Paul Petersen and Richard M. Davidson, respectively.

<sup>152</sup> After all, it is האדם of all creation that the Bible calls a son of God (Luke 3:38). Adoption and how it relates to sonship is a theme brought up in the New Testament, so it will not receive focus here. But certainly adoption is a theological topic that has seeds in the creation and sonship of האדם in Gen 1. “This [Ps 8:5’s] ‘glory’ (*kābôd*) bestowed exclusively upon human life, is distinguished in the Old Testament as the attribute of the Lord God. It is creation’s ‘glory,’ indicating mankind’s appointment as the Lord’s ruling sonship, that is diminished through sin. Humanity’s future ‘glory’ will be fully gained as adopted heirs through Christ his Son, who will ‘bring many sons to glory’ (Heb 2:10)” (Matthews, 168, 169).

<sup>153</sup> “Image” and “likeness” are used in connection with each other, both in Gen 1:26 and 5:3. The connection between these terms and “sonship” is obvious in 5:3, and is implied in God’s fashioning of האדם in chapter one’s narrative. However, the solid confirmation of this “sonship” link to the Gen 1 creation narrative is found in Luke 3:38.

<sup>154</sup> van Genderen and Velema also concur that sonship is an important element of the *imago Dei*: “We are of the opinion that God’s image implies the relationship between Father and child. We posit this because we are obliged to do so on the basis of Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10” (321).

mind, spiritual soul, etc.) characteristics, and fits with a unitary view of humans, a view that is faithful to the Eden narrative that identifies humans as “living creatures” (or “living beings”) not “souls” in bodies. Unfortunately, “most commentators have anatomized the individual person into material and spiritual properties, thus identifying the *imago Dei* as either physical or spiritual. This dichotomy, however, is at odds with Hebrew anthropology [where] . . . a person is viewed as a unified whole.”<sup>155</sup>

Throughout the Bible, humans are described with a variety of different anthropological terms. As a whole, the biblical usage of anthropological terms is more explanatory of the various expressions of what it means to be human, than it is a partitioning of specific anthropological parts over and against each other. This first chapter of the Bible reinforces such a view by referring to man, man and woman, and humankind simply as אדם, a general term that includes every aspect of who and what humans are.

Everything that God gives humans to do in the Eden narrative is a function of אדם as a whole. Describing these functions of human nature—biological/physical, relational, emotional/psychological, mental, volitional, spiritual—as has been done in an

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<sup>155</sup> Matthews, 167. As Gerhard von Rad explains in his commentary on Genesis, “One will do well to split the physical from the spiritual as little as possible: the whole man is created in God’s image” (*Genesis: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Marks [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961], 58). Also Collins brings out that “Genesis 5:1 looks back to Genesis 1:26-27, but it says that God made man in the *likeness* of God—suggesting, as noted above, that the two terms ‘in the image’ and ‘after the likeness’ refer to the same thing” (ch. 4, C.6.).

Based on semantic evidence, some commentators do see “image” as referring to humans’ “outward resemblance” to God (“physical/material domain”), and “likeness” as referring to an “inward resemblance” to God (“spiritual/functional domain”). See Doukhan, 63. However, such differentiation between “image” and “likeness” does not divide human nature or favor one domain over the other, it simply reinforces the notion of human unity by recognizing that the aspects of human nature are together meant to resemble God. Moreover, the Bible’s first usage of these terms seems to indicate that no great technical distinction is meant between them. For even though Gen 1:26 uses both the terms “image” and “likeness” when describing God’s intention to make אדם, Gen 1:27 uses only “image” in its account of God’s creation of אדם. For a brief history of the distinction that has been understood between “image” and “likeness,” see Lewis and Demarest, 125-26.

above section, is beneficial for the sake of analysis, to better understand the human unitary entity. But if the example given in the Eden narrative is to be taken seriously, such analysis should always view these functions of human nature as functions of the one single human substance or physical body. The idea of sonship, as an explanatory complement to the *imago Dei*, does enforce the oneness of the human person. For to be a son, one generally has both some inward and outward characteristics of the parent—and these characteristics make up a whole person, not one divided into parts.

But how does this image and sonship make humans unique? On a most basic level, it is self-evident that the use of the word “image” in *imago Dei* shows that God originally created humans with analogy, a similarity, a likeness, to himself, and with the potential to resemble him in some way. The same is the case with “sonship.” It points not only to a special bond between parent and child, but also to a certain similarity between them.<sup>156</sup> Because humans are created in God’s image and endowed with God’s sonship, they are endowed with a capacity to be similar to God in a way that animals cannot be, especially for those persons who choose to love and follow God.<sup>157</sup>

In what ways can humans, created in the image of God as his children, be similar to God? We have already seen how humans are called to model themselves after the *Elohim* and *YHWH Elohim* dimensions of God by ruling creation with wisdom and care and by being joined into close relationship with God, each other, and the rest of creation.

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<sup>156</sup> In the New Testament, God’s children, created in his image, become even more transformed into his image as they behold him, and when he returns they will be like him, for they will see him as he is (2 Cor 3:12-18; 1 John 3:1-3).

<sup>157</sup> This is not to downplay the intelligence or relationship to God that animals can possess (see, for example, Num 22 or Ps 148). Some animals may sometimes even surpass some (evil) humans in these ways. However, because humans are created in the image of God, according to his likeness, they have the potential to be more like God than the rest of creation, provided they walk according to God’s ways.

In fact, rulership and relationship (of the depth that is revealed in this narrative) are the two mandates given to Adam and Eve in the key passage that introduces their existence as humans created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-28). All humans, even after sin, and as a divine definition of being human, are still created in God's image and have the capacity and responsibility for rulership and relationship. But in order to fulfill their divine mandates in a manner that truly reflects God's purpose, they must image God in every dimension of who they are as humans. This is faithful to a unitary view of personal ontology and to the depiction of human creation in the Eden narrative.

So how can and how do humans image God in every function of their human nature? In humans' biological/physical function, we know that God is not mortal or dependent upon alimentary provision as humans are.<sup>158</sup> Yet humans' biological/physical function is what makes possible their capacity for work, especially the highly physical work given to them in the garden of Eden. In doing well the work God gave them to do, Adam and Eve could image God in serving and keeping the creation he had created. Even in the "painful labor" (עֲצֹב) of birth, humans can in a small way understand the connection between self-giving sacrifice and the joy of new life—a truth that the life of the woman's Seed emulated. In all of the God-given work that humans have to do, they are to reflect the way in which God worked—wisely, mightily, tenderly, strategically, sacrificially, lovingly. In so doing, they can experience the blessing of work that God made an indispensable part of their human nature.

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<sup>158</sup> This paragraph speaks of how humans can reflect God in the biological/physical functions of their human nature. On the level of constitution, however, there is most likely a limited physical resemblance between God and humans. See, for example, Davidson, "The Nature of the Human Being from the Beginning," 17-19, 21, 22.

In regards to the relational function of human nature, we have already seen in the sections above how the oneness and plurality inherent in the marriage relationship reflects in a small way the oneness and plurality that is found in the relationship of the Godhead. This capacity and desire for intimate relationships is something that identifies God and also something that marks humans as made in his image (Gen 1:26-28). Since human creation began with just two humans who were joined in a marital relationship, this first human-to-human relationship had a sexual function (2:24, 25; 1:27, 28). However, this relationship also exemplified the human capacity to be engaged in a myriad of other social and societal relationships once more people lived on earth. All of these relationships image God, to the extent that they mirror the way he operates in relationships (especially seen through the depiction of him as *YHWH Elohim* in Gen 2 and 3).

We have also seen the emotional/psychological function of Adam and Eve's human nature on display before the Fall (in joy, peace, love, and openness) and after the Fall (in shame, blame, guilt, fear, deception, and subjection).<sup>159</sup> That God the Creator also experiences emotions and various psychological states is evident in Scripture, and is also seen in the Eden narrative. Much of this was brought out in the section above which spoke of God as *YHWH Elohim*. But even with a cursory glance at Gen 1-3, it is evident that God feels and displays a variety of emotions—a few of them being nurture and satisfaction in Gen 1, kindness, tenderness, love, care, and fairness in Gen 2, and

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<sup>159</sup> See the section above on “Emotional/Psychological Function” for the texts in the Eden narrative that reveal these emotions and psychological states of Adam and Eve.



gentleness, patience, severity, love, care, fairness, and kindness in Gen 3.<sup>160</sup> While it is true that because of God's perfect nature he does not experience certain human emotions like shame, or does not demonstrate other ones like revengeful blame, this does not negate the fact that he has the capacity to feel positive and negative emotions, as shown in the Eden narrative.<sup>161</sup> It follows, then, that part of his creating humans in his image was creating them to be emotional/psychological creatures.

Additionally, even though God has given animals mental, volitional, and spiritual capabilities, humans' expression of these functions is the most akin to God's expression of them, and in this way they image him. Take, for example, that while some animals have intelligence (including emotional intelligence) that might rival that of humans, humans are able to express such intelligence through writing or in self-reflection, like God and unlike animals.<sup>162</sup> Or that while animals can trust and praise God, and even speak when he allows them to, there is no evidence showing that they understand deeper spiritual realities like justification and sanctification, or can choose salvation in the way that humans can.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Some of the verses that show these: Gen 1:2; 2:7-9, 16-18; the majority of chapter 3, especially verses 9-15, 20, and 24; also every occurrence of "it was good" in Gen 1 shows God's feeling of satisfaction over his created work.

<sup>161</sup> Admittedly, these statements about the emotions of God do not fit in with the classical Christian notion of the impassibility of God. However, this dissertation is based on a view of God that arises strictly from Scripture, in which God is seen to be capable of operating in the realm of physicality. See footnotes 125 and 126. Once this is established, it is possible to recognize God as having the emotions that the Bible shows him to have.

<sup>162</sup> There are a number of animal species that can rival or surpass humans in certain aspects of intelligence. See, for example, a study that shows that some chimpanzees have better numeric recall than humans: Sana Inoue and Tetsuro Matsuzawa, "Working Memory of Numerals in Chimpanzees," *Current Biology* 17/23 (December 4, 2007): R1004, R1005. For more examples of high mental capacity in animals, see footnote 138 in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>163</sup> See, for example, Ps 104:27, 28; 150:6; 148:7; and Num. 22:28-33. Again, for more on animals' relationship to God in the Old Testament, see Schafer.

Furthermore, in light of humans' natures being created with such a potential to image God, God gives humans mandates that he expects them to fulfill in a manner that reflects him and his character. Not only (like animals) are humans to be fruitful, but they (unlike animals) are to teach their offspring to be image-bearers of God. Not only are humans to rule over the fish and the birds and the creeping things (1:28), but over the *בהמה* and over "all the earth" as well (1:26).<sup>164</sup> In this rulership, they are to reflect God's wise, compassionate, and salvific rulership, as exemplified in the Eden narrative, and thus image him. Their ruling (*הרה*—1:26, 28) and subduing (*כבש*—1:28) must never be separated from the context of their serving (*עבד*—2:5, 15) and keeping (*שמר*—2:15) the entire estate with which God had entrusted them.<sup>165</sup> Such rulership, modeled by God, is intrinsically tied to a high capacity for relationships; and both the mandate for rulership and for human multiplication entail the harmonious development of every function of human nature in order to be most effective. In this, humans reflect the image and glory of God to the world.

This is what makes humans unique—this capability to be like God in every function of their human nature, to represent him as his vice-regents and in relationship, imaging him in a way that no other creature can, for *האדם* alone are his children created in his image. So far, in this section on humaniqueness, we have studied how the Eden narrative clearly points to the unique and exalted place of humans in creation.

Furthermore, according to that text, the greatest cause for humaniqueness is the reality of

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<sup>164</sup> See footnotes 27 and 29.

<sup>165</sup> God called his human image-bearers to the noble task of "shaping the creation into a higher order of beauty and usefulness" (Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman, III, *Intimate Allies: Rediscovering God's Design for Marriage and Becoming Soul Mates for Life* [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1995], 80).

humans being created in the image of God. We asked what this image was, and we were able to see from the Eden narrative what God is like so that we might be able to understand how his image is manifested. In Gen 1-3, God is named as *Elohim* and *YHWH Elohim*, and we saw how characteristics of both those names are found in humans who are imaging God. We also explored the notion of sonship and saw how humans being created as God's children relates to them being created in God's image, and how this enables them to fulfill their mandates of ruling and relating after his example.

So the Eden narrative does affirm the physicality of human constitution, while at the same time affirming humaniqueness by virtue of the *imago Dei*. It is time to now focus on putting together all these aspects of personal ontology that we have studied from the Eden narrative. As we do this, we will observe what views of personal ontology emerge from that text.

### **Uncovering an Edenic Model of Personal Ontology**

Although this may not be the most popular view in Christian theology, the Eden narrative presents a view of personal ontology in which humans are essentially related to the rest of creation, with no evidence of them being anything other than unitary living beings.<sup>166</sup> They have a constitution (or substance) that is physical, with the creation narrative revealing no differences between their general ontological constitutional make-

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<sup>166</sup> For example, see Culver's *Systematic Theology*, 270: "Monism is essentially an unbiblical and un-Christian teaching. Even as explained by some early Anabaptist and presently by Seventh Day [*sic*] Adventist believers, it must be labeled error. H. C. Thiessen says, 'All are agreed that man has both a material and an immaterial nature. His material nature is body; his immaterial nature is his soul and spirit'" (quoted in H. C. Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949], 225).

up and that of the animals.<sup>167</sup> Yet by virtue of the *imago Dei* (which is integral in every function of humans' physical constitution) and all that is connected with it, the text shows that humans, God's children, have a likeness to him in their nature—a likeness that encompasses every characteristic of who they are and what they are called to do.<sup>168</sup>

This chapter has helped to uncover an Edenic model of personal ontology that is able to interact with current models of personal ontology in Christian theology. In studying the Eden narrative, the same rubric was used to analyze and organize the resulting data as was used in the Chapter 2's study of two current models. Specifically, the question of personal ontology was divided into two categories: constitution (What are humans made of?) and nature (What are humans by definition, or most fundamentally?). The category of constitution was studied by delving into three components that make it up: physical, mental, and mental-physical interaction. Likewise, the category of nature was studied by exploring the following two components: functions and humaniqueness. The next chapter will compare these three views (substance dualist and physicalist models and the Edenic model) with each other.

But first, here is a summary of the model found in the Eden narrative, as analyzed in this chapter. The study of the Eden narrative has shown that human constitution is physical and made of earth, like the animals' constitution. This connection with the dust of the ground is a recurring element in these chapters, even contributing to the choice of the name Adam, and it poignantly reminds the reader of the innate mortality of humans.

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<sup>167</sup> Humans do have a constitutional similarity to God in that they are made for a level of relational depth and interdependence that is unique among creatures. Human constitution also has in it the capacity which enables the image of God to be revealed in human nature, although this constitutional capacity does not make the human constitution any less physical.

<sup>168</sup> Of course, this similarity to God is much more of a struggle to obtain after the Fall.

This physical constitution of humans accounts for every function of human nature, even mental functions. What first animated Adam's physical constitution is the breath of God, and each human now has breath in their nostrils and the breathing which makes life possible (Job 27:3).<sup>169</sup> In the Edenic model, there is no problem of interaction between a physical and a mental substance, for both the physical and mental aspects of the human person arise from the same physical substance.

Human nature has various functions—all of which arise from the human physical substance. This dissertation categorizes them into biological/physical, relational, emotional/psychological, mental, volitional, and spiritual functions. In each of these functions, humans have the potential of imaging God; and in each, there is a quantitative if not qualitative difference between these functions in human and animals.<sup>170</sup> Even though the Eden narrative shows human constitution to be thoroughly physical, just as animals' constitution, it also shows a marked difference between humans and animals. This difference is found in the functions of their nature (essential characteristics of the constitution/substance). However, what makes humans most unique, according to the Eden narrative, is that they are created personally by God in his image and according to his likeness. Because of this, their relationship with God is unique. He fashioned them with exquisite care and animated them with the breath of his mouth. In fulfilling his calling for them to relate and rule after his model, humans continue to reflect his image and are able to do so because they are created in his image.

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<sup>169</sup> For more on the breath of God, see the section above on "Mental Substance."

<sup>170</sup> See, again, the section above on "Sonship."

Even the choice of the name Eve (“life”) was to the first humans a poignant reminder of God’s gracious gift of creation and procreation, and pointed their thoughts to the future restoration of the gift of life eternal. Adam and Eve were God’s supreme creative delight, and he commissioned them to be vice-regents of his creation. When they fell, he gave them the promise of his life for their salvation; and through God becoming human, a Savior came back to the world he had made. Humans are indeed made to be God’s image-bearers, in every and any function of their human nature—biological/physical, relational, emotional/psychological, mental, volitional, and spiritual.<sup>171</sup> The image of God is truly about who God is, and thus the first humans were made to imitate who God revealed himself to be. In the Eden narrative, we see ample evidence of who God is, and this helps to reveal how humans are meant to image him in all their functions, including how they relate and rule and thus represent God.

From a study of the Eden narrative, a model of personal ontology emerges that concretely presents God designing humans as physical in constitution (substance), but having the *imago Dei* in the characteristics of all their functioning (essence)—biological/physical, relational, emotional/psychological, mental, volitional, and spiritual. Humans are God’s personal and crowning creation, made in his image with the capability of imaging him in every aspect of who they are. They are innately mortal, but receive eternal life as a conditional gift from God. They truly are God’s representatives on earth, called to image him in their interaction with the rest of his creation.

According to the Eden narrative, humans are physically constituted—not because an infinite God removed himself from the details of their formation and allowed an

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<sup>171</sup> “It follow that if we are to live to the glory of God we must do so in all dimensions of life—physical, emotional, spiritual, and social” (Moskala, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals*, 226).

evolutionary process to unfold, but because a creator God personally and literally fashioned them from the dust of the ground. They are unique and special not because they have a soul that is non-physical or different from any other creature's, but because they alone are created in the image of God, an image that marks every aspect and function of who they are and makes them truly human. Humans are temporal creatures created by God, of a physical constitution as the animals, but truly God's children, his image-bearers on earth, called to represent his nature and character while living and ruling in his created world, called to be transformed into who he created them to be as they relate to those around them. This is the Edenic model of personal ontology that emerges from the Eden narrative.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to uncover an Edenic model of personal ontology. It began by explaining the importance to Christian theology of a model based on the one source of the Bible. It spoke of how Gen 1-3 is programmatic of and foundational to the whole scripture's portrayal of personal ontology.

Next, it commenced on a close reading of the Eden narrative to find answers to the questions of personal ontology—namely, human constitution and nature. In this study, there was found no evidence to show that humans are anything other than wholly physical in their constitutional make-up. Key points to this finding were the intimate connection between humans and the earth, the shared type of constitution between humans and animals, the interrelatedness of male and female, and the innate mortality of humans. Besides the physical constitution, there is no evidence in this narrative of any other type of constitution for humans or any of God's other earthly creation. Thus with

this model uncovered from the Eden narrative, the traditional philosophical problem of physical-mental interaction seems to find an answer, since all human attributes (including physical and mental) fall under the domain of the physical constitution. Even though this physical constitution contains within it the potential for humans to image God, such a constitution which is physical cannot—because of its physicality—have innate immortality. Immortality is always conditional and never innate—conditional on the tree of life, on receiving God’s gift of salvation.

Following these findings about human constitution, the study moved on to human nature. Human nature was found to connect to the functions of the human physically constituted substance and to be marked by the *imago Dei*. This *imago Dei* applied to all the varied functions of human nature, and made possible God’s calling of humans to represent him in their relating and ruling. Thus, human uniqueness is attested to in the Eden narrative, and is apparent in human nature. While ontologically, humans have a physical constitution as do animals, their uniqueness comes from an important aspect of their human nature (which is still physical in constitution). They are created with special care and endowments, and a special calling, relative to their being personally created by God in his image.

Humans are called to image God in every aspect of their human nature. In the biological/physical function of their human nature, they can image him outwardly by caring for their bodies which he declared to be “good” and which likely bear some limited resemblance to him. They can use their physical strength to work honorably. In the relational function of human nature, they can image God by forming deep relational bonds with individuals and by connecting on a larger social scale with communities, all



for the blessing of each other and the glory of God. In the emotional/psychological function of human nature, humans can image God by manifesting his attributes of goodness, love, faithfulness, kindness, righteousness, peace, and joy in and through their lives.

In the mental function of human nature, humans may image God by exploring deeply the wonders of his creation—whether exploring a tiny particle or the vast universe, whether studying human nature and history or divine revelations. In doing so, humans’ mental capabilities grow and their work glorifies their Maker. Humans can also reflect God in the volitional function of human nature by choosing to walk in accordance with his will. Such choices will ennoble their characters and will reflect God in a sinful world. Finally, humans can image God in the spiritual function of their natures by communing with him on a deep level and following his ways and his leading of their lives. The *imago Dei* is realized most fully when humans receive God’s promised salvation and faithfully fulfill the mandates he has given them—to rule and serve creation (and all that involves) as an interdependent team and as his image-bearers.

Finally, this chapter concluded by summarizing the model of personal ontology that emerged from the Eden narrative. This Edenic model emphasizes a physically constituted human ontology created personally by God and in his image. In fundamental constitution, Gen 1-3 gives no evidence of humans being unlike any other of God’s earthly creatures. But in nature, humans were made to uniquely image God. Ultimately, God is what makes humans unique—his image in their nature, and not anything that is inherently a part of their constitutional make-up.

The following chapter will compare the now three models of personal ontology that this dissertation has studied. First, their views of human constitution will be compared, and then their views of human nature. After that, points of convergence and divergence will be explored. Finally, we will evaluate how the Edenic model compares to the other two models of personal ontology studied here, and what contribution it might bring to the current discussion.

## CHAPTER 4

### COMPARISON OF MODELS

This dissertation now turns to a comparison of two main model groupings of personal ontology in Christian theology (substance dualist models and physicalist models) in addition to the Edenic model. This will be done by recapping the two categories of personal ontology—constitution and nature—from the perspective of these three model groupings that were discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. After this, points of convergence and divergence between these three groupings will be pinpointed. This discussion hopes to answer the question of whether the Edenic model can provide a way forward in navigating the current conflict of interpretations over personal ontology in Christian theology, and whether it might point in the direction of substance dualism or physicalism. Finally, a summary of findings and conclusion will be offered.

#### **Constitution**

The constitution aspect of personal ontology delves into what humans are constituted of, what their fundamental substance is. The answers fall somewhere in the physical to mental/spiritual spectrum. It is apparent that these various answers are at the base of the divergent models of personal ontology that are being considered here. This section will present the views of constitution of the three model groupings so that they can be compared later in this Chapter.

## Substance Dualist Models of Personal Ontology

Contrary to monism (whether idealist monism or materialist monism), substance dualism presents a human constitution that is dualistic. The mental part of the constitution controls the mental functions, and the physical part of the constitution controls the physical functions. Perhaps the most famous statement of this view is that the human being is a “rational animal.” Physical like an animal, yes. But rational because of its mentality and even its spirituality.<sup>1</sup> According to these models, the mental part of the constitution may be more important than the physical part, for the identity of the human resides there, along with humans’ ability to transcend the physical. There is, however, no widely accepted explanation for how the mental and physical parts of the human constitution interact.

## Physicalist Models of Personal Ontology

Physicalist models posit a wholly physical human constitution, thus solving the problems of mental-physical interaction and human unity. Here, the physical constitution is responsible for every aspect of human nature. The spiritual and higher-order reasoning capabilities of the human are attributed to a large and highly developed brain. Unlike substance dualist models, these models do not claim a constitutional connection between the human and the divine. However, they may hold that humans do possess a naturally derived conscience and perhaps even a *sensus divinitatis*.<sup>2</sup> Physicalist models are the

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<sup>1</sup> This statement originated in Aristotle’s *De Anima*, was appropriated by Aquinas and became standard Roman Catholic theology, influencing even Protestant theology. The assumption that still undergirds it is that humans are unique in possessing rationality, an assumption that has been contested if not debunked by science. See this dissertation’s Chapter 2, footnotes 83-86.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Corcoran, “Experiencing God.”

models that are the most easily reconciled with biological naturalism and an evolutionary view of human origins. But they tend to struggle to explain such Christian concepts as human uniqueness, free will, and eternal destiny, even if they have an easier time answering the questions of human unity and mental-physical interaction.<sup>3</sup>

### Edenic Model of Personal Ontology

In the last chapter we saw how the Edenic model presents a human constitution that is physical (and that is the basis for every function of human nature), with no evidence pointing to human constitution being anything other than physical. Humans are created out of dust of the ground (Gen 2:7), and are called a name that links them to the ground—האדם (Gen 1:27). Furthermore, humans are mortal and at death return to dust for they are dust (Gen 3:19). When the narrative of human creation states that “the Lord God formed/fashioned האדם from the dust of the ground (מִן־הָאֲדָמָה) and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים) and האדם became a living being/creature (נִפְשׁ חַיָּה),” the term for the result of this creation—living being/creature (נִפְשׁ חַיָּה)—is the same as is used for the animals (Gen 2:7, 19; 1:20, 21). Even the term “the breath of life” (חַיִּים נִשְׁמַת, used in Gen 2:7) and the related “the breath of the spirit of life” (נִשְׁמַת־רוּחַ חַיִּים, used in Gen 7:22) are not used to distinguish humans from animals, but are used for both humans and animals. What these terms refer to is the basic act of breathing that makes living possible.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, David Chalmers speaks of the difficulty physicalism has in explaining human uniqueness, in “Arguments for panpsychistic identism,” in *Mind and Nature*, ed. by John B. Cobb and David Ray Griffin (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1977), 188: With the rise of the evolutionary theory of origins, “it became evident that all life shared a common ancestry, and that conscious humans had no claim to ontological uniqueness.”

Thus, the mental and spiritual aspects of human nature do not result from a dualistic constitution. The Eden narrative seems to indicate that a physical constitution is responsible for all these facets of human nature. However, there is uniqueness in this: humans are unique in that they are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27). They hold a special place in creation, and are fashioned personally by God in a way that no other earthly creation is. Being made in God's image gives humans the ability to image God to a far greater degree than any other creature can. It makes possible the high intellectual and spiritual functions of human nature. Thus, human uniqueness comes not from human constitution but from being created personally by God and in his image.

### **Nature**

Personal ontology has two parts—constitution and nature. While constitution describes the elements that make up humans, nature describes what makes them uniquely human. Human nature is about human identity, it is the definition of what it means to be human. Moreover, one's views of human nature are linked closely to one's views of human constitution. For those in Christian theology who hold that human constitution is dualistic, the soul is what is seen to be the essence of human nature, the definition of what it means to be human. Those who believe that human constitution is monistic or wholistic usually point to the high level of complexity in humans as the factor that defines what it means to be human.<sup>4</sup> This section reviews the specific stances on human

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<sup>4</sup> Both wholism and holism are correct spellings, with holism being the more popular usage. I prefer wholism because when I use it I seek to reference simply the “whole” of something. Holism, when it was first coined as a word, had the meaning of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts, which is not the nuance that I am seeking to convey (J.C. Smuts, *Holism and Evolution* [New York: Macmillan, 1926], ch. V).

nature that our three model groupings of personal ontology take, in order to prepare for the comparison between the models that will follow.

### Substance Dualist Models of Personal Ontology

Holding to a dualistic understanding of human constitution, substance dualists take the soul to be the most important factor in what makes humans human and defines human nature. The soul is often understood in a non-physical way, and it is the image of God in humans and the point of contact between humans and God. It is responsible for at least the spiritual aspects of human nature, while the physical body is generally responsible for the other aspects.<sup>5</sup> This has been the traditional view in Christian theology. However, it is now being challenged more than ever before. Christian theology is increasingly looking for alternatives that can account for the findings of science, and substance dualism has been faulted for not doing this.

### Physicalist Models of Personal Ontology

Physicalist models forsake the traditional view of substance dualism in favor of a more science-friendly view. Holding to a human constitution that is wholly physical, they state that every function of human nature can be attributed to that physical realm. What makes humans unique is their highly developed and complex mental capacities. Humans are seen to have these capabilities to a level that animals do not. So for those who hold to evolutionary theory, humans are simply further along on the continuum of mental development and evolution. Thus, physicalist's conception of the *imago Dei* often fits with one or another aspects of this belief, especially that humans have evolved

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<sup>5</sup> For more on the functions of the constitutional parts of human nature (and for more on any of the topics overviewed in this chapter), see Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

to make moral choices.<sup>6</sup> Physicalists are also more likely to adopt a functional or relational interpretation of the *imago Dei*, or a more novel interpretation along the lines of Baker’s “robust first-person perspective.”<sup>7</sup>

In Christian theology, in comparison with substance dualism, physicalism is most closely aligned with the views of science. In fact, with some physicalist theories, their views of human ontology seem to be identical to what science might present. Nevertheless, Christian physicalists still hold to the reality of God and a non-physical realm (even if humans are wholly physical), something that those with strictly naturalistic mindsets cannot do.

#### Edenic Model of Personal Ontology

The Eden narrative presents a model of personal ontology in which human constitution is physical. So with humans possessing a physical constitution as animals possess a physical constitution (a physical constitution that is the basis for every function of human nature), what makes humans unique from animals, and what defines human nature? The answer given in the Eden narrative is that humans are created personally by God and in his image.

What is God’s image? While Christian theology offers many answers to that question, and while the Eden narrative does not outrightly contradict many of those answers, it reveals more of a multi-faceted answer to the question of the *imago Dei* than

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<sup>6</sup> See Ayala, *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 31.

<sup>7</sup> See her “Christian Materialism in a Scientific Age.” She states that humans are unique in their ability to be self-referential in a way that is evidenced through their mastery of first-personal language. For more on her “robust first-person perspective,” see her *Naturalism and the First-Person Perspective* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2013), 30-39.



what is often presented. That humans are uniquely created by God and in his image means that they have more capacity to image him in every aspect of their natures than any other created beings do. Because humans are created in God's image as his children, they are more like him than are the animals. Even with sin marring this likeness, humans still have more of a capacity to be more like him than do their fellow non-human creatures. As was discussed in the previous chapter, this capacity encompasses every aspect of human nature—biological/physical, relational, emotional/psychological, mental, volitional, and spiritual.

Being created in the image of God also explains the fact that it is to humans that God gives the commission to rule creation well. Humans can fulfill this mandate because they are created in his image, and they exemplify the image of God as they rule creation in a manner that he would. Additionally, being created in God's image explains why humans are the creatures to which the protoevangelium is given and fulfilled. The rest of creation, while sustained by God, falls under human authority and is influenced by their decisions and destiny, for good or ill. Humans thus have a responsibility, as bearers of God's image in this world, to be like him and consequently to bring blessing to themselves, their families, and their world.

### **Comparison: Substance Dualist and Physicalist Models of Personal Ontology**

In the current conflict of interpretations over personal ontology in Christian theology, there are points of convergence and divergence between the two model groupings discussed in this dissertation. This dissertation endeavors to see whether an Edenic model of personal ontology offers a way forward to help navigate the current

conflict of interpretations—answering questions that the current models raise and providing a way of understanding that is not encumbered by their weaknesses. To this end, points of convergence and divergence, and strengths and weaknesses of the two model groupings will be assessed (employing the categories of constitution and nature as tools for this analysis). These conclusions will then be compared to the Edenic model uncovered in Chapter 3 to see whether the Edenic model might offer a better way to navigate the conflict of interpretations, or whether it might point in the direction of substance dualism, physicalism, or another view.

### Constitution

Substance dualist models maintain that there is a part of human constitution (“soul” or mind) that is not wholly physical—and this is often the part where human uniqueness is said to lie. This view correlates the most closely with the traditional, classical view that has predominated through history. Physicalist models, on the other hand, hold to a thoroughly physical human constitution—and thus, it is more difficult to say what it is that makes humans unique. Physicalist models correlate the most closely with a scientific worldview, and especially with the most recent discoveries in brain science and related fields. Accordingly, substance dualism is generally opposed by science, and physicalism is generally inconsistent with the classical view of religious tradition.

However, there are some physicalist models that strive to bring together the views of tradition and of science on personal ontology. The most recognized one is probably nonreductive physicalism. It states that whatever soul (or mind) is a part of human constitution is completely physical yet not reducible to the physical (nor able to be

explained wholly by the physical). Are there enough points of convergence between nonreductive physicalism and the traditional view for it to be accepted by substance dualists? It is unlikely, for to substance dualists the soul (or mind) is not wholly physical as nonreductive physicalism claims.

So then are there enough points of convergence between nonreductive physicalism and science for most scientists to accept this view? Not really, for science is generally reductive and believes that humans are the sum of their parts, whereas nonreductive physicalism holds that humans are greater than the sum of their parts. So it seems that in valiantly trying to bridge the gap between the views of tradition and science, nonreductive physicalism is not able to maintain the complete materiality yet uniqueness of the human soul in a way that is widely convincing to either side of the spectrum in this debate.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, we turn now in more detail to two of the most important questions in the study of human constitution—unity and interaction. It is apparent that these are the questions to which physicalism has the simplest and most coherent answers. Why is this so? It is because the question of unity (on its most fundamental level) only remains a question when there are two substances; it fades when there is simply one substance.<sup>9</sup> Physicalism views human ontological constitution as being of only one substance—the physical. Thus physicalism does not struggle with the question of human unity in the

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<sup>8</sup> But since nonreductive physicalism claims that human constitution is only physical (although it cannot be reduced to the physical), we still categorize it as a physicalist model.

<sup>9</sup> There are still questions left about how the physical substance can generate mental states and activities (in addition to the “binding problem” mentioned in the footnote below). However, it is generally held that if there is truly only one human substance, everything within it is a unit and can interact—even if it is not known exactly how this takes place.

same way substance dualism does. That there is one physical substance that constitutes humans guarantees that there is human unity. There also is no problem of interaction with this view, because with only one substance (the physical), there is no interaction between physical and non-physical substances. Hence on the issues of unity and interaction, physicalist models share a point of convergence with science, and a point of divergence with tradition.<sup>10</sup>

The view of tradition, summed up in substance dualist models, has a significant problem answering the questions of unity and interaction in personal ontology. This is to be expected, for unity and interaction between two substances of different sorts is a difficult thing to find and describe—especially when the physical substance can be studied by science and the non-physical substance cannot. Tradition has grappled with such questions for centuries. Aquinas was one of the first major Christian philosophers who sought to emphasize human unity by identifying every aspect of the human as part of the soul.<sup>11</sup> A few centuries later, the development of science led in some ways to a hardening of substance dualism. This is especially seen through the framework that Descartes set up, in which the proper study of science was the *res extensa* (the physical) but not the *res cogitans* (the mental). However, to help explain the unity of conscious

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<sup>10</sup> Having said this, science has still not yet fully answered the “binding problem”: “The binding problem originates with first-person experience and the unity of our conscious lives. Neurobiologists wonder about how this unity relates to the workings of the complex brain. For example, scientists are aware that the visual system has cells and regions of the brain that are especially responsive to stimuli originating from properties (e.g., color, lines, angles, shape and movement) of physical objects. When we see a physical object, however, we have a unified experience of a single object. The neurobiologist is interested in discovering where in the brain all of the effects of these diverse stimuli are bound together into a single, unified visual experience of an object” (Stewart Goetz, *In Search of the Soul*, 140, 141).

<sup>11</sup> Aquinas expanded upon Aristotle’s hylomorphic conception of personal ontology, where matter is the body and form is the soul. Like Aristotle, he also held to three levels of soul—vegetative, sensitive, and rational—of which the rational soul is possessed by humans alone. Aquinas’ theories naturally gave prominence to the unity of the person (favoring science); however, it was more complicated and challenging for them to maintain the immortality of the soul (favoring religious tradition).

experience that humans have (between their physical and mental aspects), he did posit the locus of interaction between the physical and mental substance to be the pineal gland.

Yet, as science developed even more, the scientific explanations that substance dualism used to support unity and interaction had to become ever more complex and sophisticated. As much of society shifted their sense of authority from tradition to science, many turned away from substance dualism because it did not seem to offer a scientific explanation to such questions as unity and interaction. Sir John Eccles, a substance dualist and respected neurophysiologist, sought to counter this trend and proposed a scientific explanation to these questions. His theory was that the apical dendrites of cortical neurons were the sensors that served as the connection between the soul/self and the brain. His conclusions, however, were not embraced by the scientific community, and as brain science has exponentially advanced in the last few decades, new discoveries in neuroscience have arisen that have contradicted the assertions Eccles made.<sup>12</sup> Thus, substance dualism still faces the significant problem of not offering an explanation for human unity and interaction that seems satisfactory to very many.

Perhaps substance dualism's greatest answer to this question may be more of a rejoinder. It states that physicalists do not yet offer a widely convincing explanation of how the physical accounts for the mental. Thus the mental seems to be in a realm that is beyond physical explanation, and thus (by default) substance dualism may even now be a relevant alternative.<sup>13</sup> Actually, this lack of a clear and detailed explanation of how all

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<sup>12</sup> Hobson, "Neuroscience and the Soul: The Dualism of John Carew Eccles."

<sup>13</sup> Some of this line of reasoning can be found in the works of James Moreland and William Craig. For example, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003).

mental states and functions are identical to their own physical states and functions has led even some scientists to look for alternatives to physicalism.<sup>14</sup>

Nonreductive physicalism (the most prominent physicalist model in Christian theology) does not see itself as being dependent upon whether a scientific explanation is discovered or not.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless without a scientific explanation, it is only arguments of logic that convince people to believe that there is no problem of unity and interaction when all is constituted of the physical. Such arguments of logic are what nonreductive physicalism depends on: it does not look for a scientific explanation for the mental, but instead states that the mental (though constituted of the physical) cannot be understood by breaking it down and studying its constituent physical parts, for the mental is a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. This sole reliance on logical explanation, however, allows substance dualists to argue that their models also provide logical explanations that are superior to nonreductive physicalism's. Even so, it does seem likely that a more wholistic view rather than a dualistic one would come closer to answering the ontological questions of unity and interaction.

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<sup>14</sup> For example, cognitive scientist and philosopher Chalmers has looked for answers within substance dualism, but has now seemed to have found answers in another model—panprotopsychism. What is panprotopsychism? Chalmers defines the difference between panpsychism and panprotopsychism as being that panpsychism attributes consciousness to some fundamental physical entities, whereas panprotopsychism attributes protophenomenal properties to fundamental physical entities. “Panpsychism and Panprotopsychism,” 7-16. These models do not face the problem of unity and interaction that substance dualism does—namely, how do the mental and physical form the unified whole that is personal experienced existence? Nor do they face the problem found in physicalism—namely, how exactly does the physical account for every mental state and function? They simply assert that the physical and mental are always together as a whole—unified and interacting.

<sup>15</sup> Murphy, *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* chapter 6.

## Nature

Differing views of human constitution have significant ramifications for views of human nature. Theories of personal ontology that line up with a substance dualist worldview hold to the reality of a soul or mental substance, and those that align with a physicalist worldview hold that there is only a physical substance. This makes it easier for those aligned with tradition to put forth an explanation for human uniqueness than it is for those aligned with science. Substance dualist views also have an easier time offering an explanation for consciousness, free will, and human destiny. The reason is straightforward: belief in a soul or a highly developed mental substance with “soul-like” qualities provides a logically plausible explanation for these things. It is thought that if there is a constitutional part of a human that is not physical, that part can have jurisdiction over the parts of human experience that have not been explained physically (and that are often assumed not to be physical).

On the other hand, we have seen that views that lean towards the traditional, substance dualist understanding have more difficulty explaining human unity and mental-physical interaction than do physicalist views. This is because with science-leaning views, human constitution is thought to be only physical, and thus there is no division and no need for interaction between two fundamental substances. Presently, this section will focus more on points of convergence and divergence between the various models specifically in regard to how they view human nature.

Human nature (the definition of what it means to be human) has traditionally been explained by belief in a non-physical soul. This is the view of most models of substance

dualism which have dominated religious and philosophical tradition.<sup>16</sup> It is not difficult to attribute human identity to the soul (or any non-physical substance), for to do so one does not need to empirically prove that these attributes are actually produced by the soul. On the other hand, proponents of a non-physical soul would also argue that science and physicalism do not offer generally accepted explanations that anchor human identity in the physical substance. So, aside from undisputed evidence tying human identity to the mental (non-physical) or the physical, individuals are influenced to form their opinions based more on the philosophical leanings they already have (whether leaning more towards tradition or science).

Science mostly attributes human identity and uniqueness to the complexities of a highly developed brain, which physicalist models also seek to do. Along with this, scientists typically identify a human (at its most basic level) by its having human DNA.<sup>17</sup> Since the human genome (as well as other genomes) have now been mapped out, it is possible to see the differences between them and to begin to identify what may be genetically unique about human beings. Called human accelerated regions, these regions of DNA sequence that seem to be uniquely human are responsible for a variety of effects and functions, including the development of larger brains in humans (genetically programmed to begin at gestation).<sup>18</sup> Perhaps as this area of study moves onward, it will

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<sup>16</sup> In some dualist views, the word soul is not utilized, but instead “mind.” These views are still dualist as long as “mind” is understood to be non-physical.

<sup>17</sup> Although there are genetic differences between humans, the DNA differences between humans and their closest genetic relatives are profound enough to render humans their own species.

<sup>18</sup> See K.S. Pollard, S.R. Salama, N. Lambert, et al, referenced in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. See also this summary of human accelerated regions, from a 2014 article by Melissa J. Hubisz and Katherine S. Pollard: “Human accelerated regions (HARs) are DNA sequences that changed very little throughout mammalian evolution, but then experienced a burst of changes in humans since divergence from chimpanzees. This unexpected evolutionary signature is suggestive of deeply conserved function that



provide physicalism with scientific answers to the questions of human identity and uniqueness.

So with the question of human identity (which underlies human uniqueness), both substance dualism and physicalism seek to provide answers. It can be a more challenging task for physicalist models, however, since higher mental functions can be difficult to explain from the mere physical (especially when the traditionally accepted understanding of human identity has relied on a non-physical explanation).<sup>19</sup> Yet of course the problem with that traditional understanding is that the existence of a non-physical explanation of human identity has never been proven or scientifically demonstrated.

Having looked at the question of identity in human nature, the focus now turns to consciousness, another question in the broad topic of human nature. This is a difficult question to answer—especially the “hard problem of consciousness,” and especially in physicalism, where there are no widely accepted explanations to be found.<sup>20</sup> The substance dualist models attribute consciousness to the soul or non-physical mind. The argument is that since science has not been able to satisfactorily explain consciousness merely from the physical, then there must be a non-physical reality that would explain

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was lost or changed on the human lineage. Since their discovery, the actual roles of human accelerated regions in human evolution have remained somewhat elusive, due to their being almost exclusively non-coding sequences with no annotation. Ongoing research is beginning to crack this problem by leveraging new genome sequences, functional genomics data, computational approaches, and genetic assays to reveal that many human accelerated regions are developmental gene regulatory elements and RNA genes, most of which evolved their uniquely human mutations through positive selection before divergence of archaic hominins and diversification of modern humans” (“Exploring the Genesis and Functions of Human Accelerated Regions Sheds Light on their Role in Human Evolution,” *Current Opinion in Genetics and Development* 29 [2014]: 15-21; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.gde.2014.07.005> [accessed March 17, 2016]).

<sup>19</sup> The Christian materialist Baker provides a good example of such an attempt. She sees human identity to be the possession of “robust first-person perspectives,” something she believes should be able to be explained from natural causes, by science. See her “Christian Materialism in a Scientific Age.”

<sup>20</sup> The “hard problem of consciousness” was first called this by Chalmers to describe aspects of consciousness that are hard to figure out, such as qualia.

consciousness. Such explanation may be logically sound from a philosophical way of thinking, but lacking from a scientific point of view, because there is no generally accepted empirical evidence to support this hypothesis.

Physicalist models hold that all is physical, so thus there must be a physical explanation for consciousness. However, since science has not yet found this explanation, the difference between that assertion and what has actually been demonstrated scientifically is called the explanatory gap.<sup>21</sup> Substance dualists believe that the explanatory gap will never be bridged, because consciousness cannot be understood physically. Physicalists believe that one day science, when it is more fully developed, will likely be able to explain consciousness. Then there are even some atheist philosophers, like Thomas Nagel, who believe that science as it is now will never be able to explain consciousness, but that the scientific study needs to be broadened to include non-materialist yet still naturalistic alternatives. According to him and others, as science opens up to different ways of study, scientific answers to the problem of consciousness will be possible.<sup>22</sup>

Human consciousness (especially the “harder” aspects of it) makes possible other human capabilities. One of these is free will, although to the strictest materialist (outside of Christian theology), human free will is merely an illusion since the present and future are determined far from human conscious decision—by genetics and the even more fundamental level of physics. Overall, most philosophers and theologians who study

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<sup>21</sup> This term was first used in this way by Joseph Levine, in “Materialism and Qualia: The Explanatory Gap,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 64 (1983): 354-61.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, his *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2012). Here is one area in which panpsychist and panentheist ideas may in the future enter science.

personal ontology avoid a view of free will that is so highly deterministic; and even Christian materialists maintain that humans can be fully material without relinquishing free will.

In contrast to determinism, indeterminism “maintains that mental events are exempt from causality and natural laws.”<sup>23</sup> Physicalists are not locked into a specific view, but for the most part they reject determinism and seek to defend physicalism from the charge that it entails a deterministic view of physics.<sup>24</sup> Substance dualists are also not locked into a specific view. Their dualistic presuppositions allow them to affirm indeterminism, since in their view mental events need not be necessarily impacted by physical laws. For the substance dualists that are not indeterminists, this is generally because they believe that God, and not science, in some way determines human choice.<sup>25</sup>

Moving on to the question of human destiny, what opinion do the models have on this issue of an afterlife? Physicalist models would be the most likely to follow science and affirm that the death of a human is a total ontological death, with nothing that survives it. Contrary to science, however, and because of a belief in God, physicalism for

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<sup>23</sup> Stroll’s *Did My Genes Make Me Do It?* 131.

<sup>24</sup> For more discussion on this, see Nancey Murphy and Warren S. Brown, *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It? Philosophical and Neurobiological Perspectives on Moral Responsibility and Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially chapter 7.

<sup>25</sup> The “science” spoken of here is the science in each individual body that can determine human action, whether on the level of physics, chemistry, biology, or a combination of these (e.g., genes, chemical balance).

the most part keeps open the possibility of resurrection and eternal life for humans.<sup>26</sup>

And yet, there is much speculation about *what* of humans must endure in order to ensure perseverance of individual human identity over time, and whether in order to maintain such perseverance there must be some sort of intermediate state between this life and the resurrection of the body.<sup>27</sup>

One of the most cited and comprehensive recent Christian defenses of substance dualism comes from Cooper's *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate*. In the preface to the second printing, Cooper states that the purpose of his book is "to remind thoughtful Christians that some sort of 'dualistic' anthropology is entailed by the biblical teaching of the intermediate state, a doctrine that is affirmed by the vast majority in historic Christianity."<sup>28</sup> It can thus be seen that the intermediate state (that believers who have died "continue to exist 'with the Lord' until the resurrection" of the body) is important in a substance dualist understanding of personal ontology.

Cooper's assertion that the "biblical teaching of the intermediate" state entails "some sort of 'dualistic' anthropology" is very interesting, for it shows that substance dualism's views on human destiny are used as justification for substance dualism itself. So if, according to Christian substance dualism, believers continue to "exist with the Lord" before the resurrection of the body, what does this entail for personal ontology? It

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<sup>26</sup> See Bacchiocchi's book, *Immortality or Resurrection?*

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, chapter 4 of Murphy's *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* See also Corcoran on the "gappy" and "non-gappy" accounts of survival that are available to Christian materialists (*Rethinking Human Nature: A Christian Materialist Alternative to the Soul* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006], especially chapters 5 and 3).

<sup>28</sup> Cooper, Preface, xvii.

generally entails some sort of non-physical soul in the human constitution that is able to survive physical death. So according to Cooper, belief in the intermediate state entails a dualist anthropology, and he is confident that most Christians would not want to give up the intermediate state for the sake of a physicalist anthropology.<sup>29</sup>

Indeed substance dualism does provide a logical explanation for human destiny—and that is that humans are able to survive death because they are partly constituted of a non-physical component that transcends the physical strictures of death. But Cooper goes beyond this, believing that the issue of human destiny and the intermediate state is so vital to the justification of a dualist anthropology, that a “strong, fully elaborated historical-exegetical-theological case” against the intermediate state could challenge the need for a dualistic view of personal ontology.<sup>30</sup> It is evident that belief in an afterlife is a linchpin of Christian substance dualism. This can help to explain why the first charge against physicalism is often that it is incapable of sustaining such a belief, and why physicalist theories are so quick to affirm the afterlife when explaining their schema.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> It is interesting that the notion of the intermediate state is not required by substance dualism, but instead is motivated by classical Christian tradition. But once a belief in the intermediate state is held, such belief entails an adherence to substance dualism, according to Cooper.

<sup>30</sup> Precisely: “to challenge the soundness of the book’s [*Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*] conclusion about the constitution of human nature would require a strong, fully elaborated historical-exegetical-theological case against the claim that the Bible envisions an intermediate state between humans’ death and their bodily resurrection” (xvii, xviii).

<sup>31</sup> Although the substance dualist model may seem to have a ready answer to the question of human destiny, there are other problems that accompany its adherence to a belief in an immortal soul. As Gulley explains: “Many Christians believe the soul survives death, but apparently haven’t thought through the consequences of such belief, for the soul would necessarily not be subject to the wages of sin (i.e., death, Rom. 6:23) and therefore not be in need of the Savior. And if the soul is the real person, this means the plan of salvation is only for the resurrection of the body. However, if the soul can live in heaven detached from the body, and if heaven is a spiritual experience (being in the presence of God who is Spirit, which many refer to as the Beatific Vision), then why bother to resurrect the body at the second advent of Christ? And if the resurrection of the body isn’t necessary for the soul to keep on existing by itself, then Christ’s death on Calvary was an unnecessary waste of suffering” (114).

## **Edenic Model of Personal Ontology: A Way Forward?**

As we have seen, substance dualism and physicalism have their advantages and disadvantages, solutions and limitations. They have points of convergence and divergence with each other, science, and classical tradition. It is also natural that the answers these models present appear the most logical when the philosophical presuppositions of those models have already been accepted.

How then does the Edenic model compare with the two model groupings of personal ontology in Christian theology that are discussed above? How are its presuppositions and solutions similar or different? What points of convergence or divergence does it have with the other models? Might the Edenic model offer a way forward to help navigate the current questions of personal ontology, and to help bridge the divide in the current conflict of interpretations that Christian theology faces in this matter? In order to answer these questions, this section (while focusing on the Edenic model) will compare the models according to the categories of human constitution and human nature. It will then compare their responses to the major questions of personal ontology, while looking at points of convergence and divergence between them. Finally, it will seek to ascertain whether the Edenic model might provide a way forward to better navigate the conflict of interpretations over personal ontology in Christian theology today.

### Constitution and Nature

To begin, the table from Chapter 2 will be reprised here, now with a column added for the Edenic model (Table 2).

A look at the table below reveals that the Edenic model is most closely aligned with physicalism (which states that there is only one anthropological substance—the physical). But even here, the Edenic model does differ from most physicalist models because it emphasizes taking Gen 1-3 historically, as it reads. It is possible for physicalist models to hold to the implications of a historical reading of Gen 1-3. However, for the most part, they have assumed the philosophical presupposition of an evolutionary theory of origins. The Edenic model seeks to draw its philosophical

**Table 2. Comparison of the categories of personal ontology between two model groupings and the Edenic model**

	<b>Substance Dualism</b>	<b>Physicalism</b>	<b>Edenic Model</b>
<b>Constitution:</b>	physical + mental	physical	physical (brought to life directly by God the Creator—Gen 1, 2)
Physical	physical is 1 of 2 substances	only physical	evidence only shows physical
Mental	mental is 1 of 2 substances	mental is physical	mental is a function of physical
Mental-Physical Interaction	interaction (but without sufficient explanation) <sup>32</sup>	one substance (=no interaction necessary)	one substance (=no interaction necessary)
<b>Nature:</b>	identity is located in mental substance	identity is located in complexity of physical substance	identity is all aspects of physical substance being created in the image of God
Functions	mental functions are manifested through the mental substance; physical functions are manifested through the physical substance	all functions of human nature are manifested through the physical substance	all functions of human nature are manifested through the physical substance
Humaniqueness ( <i>imago Dei</i> )	“soul” or “mind”	a function of highly complex brains	intimately created by God in his image

presuppositions strictly from the Bible, and this necessitates adhering to the view of origins laid out in the Eden narrative.

<sup>32</sup> Explanation yet to be determined: Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, 213-215.

The Edenic model sees the first humans as being created directly, personally, and intimately by God the Creator—made by him in his image and animated by his breath alone.<sup>33</sup> None of this is incongruent with humans’ having a wholly physical constitution. God’s breath is still his breath, and the Eden narrative does not show it to originate with or be innate to humans.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, being created in God’s image means that humans have a capacity to be more like God than any other creature, in every aspect of who they are as humans—biological/physical, relational, emotional/psychological, mental, volitional, spiritual. This *imago Dei*, which is capable of being expressed in all aspects of human nature, is still consistent with a physical view of human constitution. For God made the physical human “very good” (Gen 1:27, 31) and with the capability of imaging him in every aspect of human living and being.

According to the Edenic model, the evidence of the Eden narrative points to humans being physically constituted and also having God as the direct and immediate cause of their living. This historical reading of the Genesis creation account is an important philosophical presupposition of the Edenic model. And yet, even with that special emphasis, there is nothing in the Edenic model that would make it incompatible with the basic tenets of physicalism. Therefore, from the evidence we have seen from Gen 1-3, the Edenic model can be viewed as a physicalist model—one that has a unique perspective because of its reliance on the Eden narrative as its source. But the loyalty of the Edenic model is more to the Bible than it is any other particular model. So if additional study of the Bible seemed to disagree with certain tenets of physicalism, then

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<sup>33</sup> Also, sustained by his breath, according to Old Testament texts outside of the Eden narrative.

<sup>34</sup> Moreover, when God withdraws his breath, life ceases (Job 34:14; Psalm 104:29).



we would see how the Edenic model might reconcile itself with the new biblical data rather than seeking to retain a commonality with physicalism that may compromise the Edenic model's commitment to Scripture as the source for theology.

To summarize then, the Edenic model emphasizes God's role in human creation and sees the *imago Dei* as an essential, defining characteristic of humans. Moreover, the Edenic model sees no evidence in the Eden narrative of human constitution being anything other than physical, and this is why it points towards being a kind of physicalist model.<sup>35</sup> As a result, certain advantages that are tied to special creation in the image of God provide the Edenic model's unique contributions to physicalism and to the study of personal ontology at large. Because substance dualism holds to a view of human constitution that is not wholly physical, there is more room in these models for an explanation of questions such as human identity. On the other hand, physicalist models have a more difficult time explaining these questions within the purely physicalist framework to which they adhere. Currently sharing with physicalism a belief in a wholly physical human constitution, the Edenic model may seem to also share physicalism's difficulty with explaining such issues as human identity. However, with its fundamental presupposition of God's direct creatorship of humans, the Edenic model is able to maintain the wholly physical human constitution shown in the Eden narrative while also offering substantial answers to questions of human uniqueness.

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<sup>35</sup> Insofar as the data for the Edenic model is limited to Gen 1-3, the evidence suggests that the Edenic model is a physicalist model. However, it would be well to uncover evidence from the larger biblical canon and compare it with the Edenic model, to see whether that would nuance or refine any of the conclusions that have been drawn from the Eden narrative. Such an assignment is of course outside the scope of this dissertation.

On this issue of human constitution, the Edenic model is able to maintain the wholly physical constitution of humans (which coheres with science) without sacrificing issues of human identity or the activity of God in human life (which are important to Christian tradition). This is an important feat of which physicalist models as well as substance dualist models would do well to take note. Of course, this balancing view of the Edenic model does involve the view of human origins presented in the Eden narrative, a view which many find difficult to accept.

Now in regard to human nature, we see that the Edenic model also has a view of human nature that seems to cohere more with physicalist models than with substance dualist models. While there is certainly uniqueness in the human mind compared to that of other creatures, for the Edenic model (and some other physicalist models), that alone does not mark human identity. With the Christian materialist model, human identity can be as straightforward as having human DNA with whatever that entails. But for the Edenic model, every aspect and every function of human nature is made in the image of God—biological/physical, relational, emotional/psychological, mental, volitional, and spiritual. And humans live out their God-given identity when they image God in every aspect of who they are, in every function of their nature.

This Edenic view correlates with the assertion that “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31). God created a whole material world, and there was nothing about that materiality that was not “very good” at creation. Thus one does not need to search for which aspects in a human are less material in order to identify those parts as being uniquely human. Contrary to substance dualist models (and even some physicalist models), humans are not human merely because one aspect or

function of their nature (whether mind or soul) is uniquely human. Humans are human because they are crafted specially by God and made in his image, in every aspect of who they are. Furthermore, the more humans image God, the more truly human they are.

For many Christians, the assertion that humans are wholly physical makes it seem as if God is being left out of a description of personal ontology. This is their thought process: If the material part of humans is what is correlated to this earth, and the immaterial part is what is correlated to the world beyond space and time (which includes God), then it is logical to think that an assertion of humans' complete physicality would leave God out of the equation. However, the opposite is the case: If every aspect of human nature, even as it is grounded in the wholly physical constitution of humans, is made to image God, then God becomes an even greater part of personal ontology than he is under those models which merely link him with non-physical elements or functions of humans.<sup>36</sup>

### Current Questions of Personal Ontology

Earlier in this chapter, various questions that are frequently brought up in this discussion of personal ontology were explored. How do substance dualism and physicalism deal with questions of unity, interaction, consciousness, identity, free will, and destiny? Now, brief summaries answering these questions will be placed in Table 3 below, from the positions of the three model groupings we have discussed. Following this, the answers to these questions, as described in the table, will be looked at more

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<sup>36</sup> Although the scope of this dissertation deals with human constitution and nature, not divine constitution and nature, the Edenic model of personal ontology does correlate well with a view of God that allows him to relate on the level of the basic characteristics of physicality—space and time (see footnote 125 of Chapter 3).

closely to see if the Edenic model indeed does provide answers that show that it would be a helpful addition to the current discussion over personal ontology in Christian theology.

**Table 3. Comparison of important questions of personal ontology between two model groupings and the Edenic model**

	<b>Substance Dualism</b>	<b>Physicalism</b>	<b>Edenic Model</b>
<b>Unity</b>	stated but not explained	one substance	one substance
<b>Interaction</b>	yet to be determined <sup>37</sup>	one substance	one substance
<b>Consciousness</b>	function of an immaterial substance (whether mind or soul)	physical explanation yet to be determined	function of mental component of physical constitution, exact explanation yet to be determined
<b>Identity</b>	located in “mind” or “soul”	result of highly complex (physical) brains	located in all aspects of physical substance being created in the image of God
<b>Free will</b>	physics does not determine human will	physics influences but does not determine human will; but physicalism still must defend itself against the accusation that it entails determinism	physics influences but does not determine human will; also needs to defend itself against the accusation that physicalism entails determinism
<b>Destiny</b>	afterlife possible because of immaterial part of human constitution	afterlife possible—many theories, none of which resort to non-physical explanations	afterlife possible because of God’s creative power

Once again, it can be seen that the Edenic model has the most similarity to physicalist models. Like them, the Edenic model has the advantage of a simple answer to the questions of unity and interaction, as was discussed earlier. But while holding to a physicalist monism in personal ontology helps to logically solve some of these problems, it can seem to make other problems more difficult to explain. The questions of consciousness, identity, free will, and destiny may not be explained in scientific detail by those who hold dualistic presuppositions, but it generally has been accepted as logical to see the “soul” as the answer to such questions of personal ontology.

<sup>37</sup> Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, 213-215.

Such a belief in the soul goes along with the traditional view of God which sets him forth as one who is above space and time. Thus, the existence of an immaterial or immortal soul that can serve as the point of contact between God and each individual is a very important tenet, for this becomes the standard way that humans can experience God in their lives. If physicalist models take such a soul out of the equation, then it can seem that in harmonizing themselves with science, these models have lost the one human feature that connects humans with God and that offers a logical explanation of human identity and uniqueness.<sup>38</sup>

While the Edenic model presents human constitution as being physical, its rejection of an immaterial or immortal soul does not mean that there is little space for God in it. Instead, taking the Eden narrative at face value, the Edenic model sees God as the Creator who intimately and directly fashioned the first humans, creating them in his image and imparting life to them. This view differentiates the Edenic model from many of the views of personal ontology in Christian theology, which favor an evolutionary view of origins (where God is involved in that evolutionary process).

The Edenic model is thus able to retain many advantages of physicalism, and also to gain the advantages that come from the Edenic view of human origins. The Edenic model has God as its center and its answer, for it shows God coming down to the level of humans on earth, fashioning and creating them, making them in his image and interacting with them. The Bible shows that even after sin, God still animates humans with his

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<sup>38</sup> However, contrary to most Christian tradition, some physicalists do hold to a view of God being temporally everlasting instead of atemporally eternal, which allows God to act causally in space-time, facilitating real divine-human interaction. Yet still, most physicalist models do not adopt the Genesis view of human origins. But because the Edenic model holds to a historical reading of the Genesis creation account, however, it is able to offer more possible solutions to certain important questions of human nature like human uniqueness, questions to which most physicalist models struggle to give convincing answers.

breath and still interacts with humans—not because they have a soul that imitates his immateriality, but because through his love and freedom he condescends to the level of their materiality and calls them to still image him. This connection that humans can have with God is deeper than any other creature can have with him. It is possible because humans alone are created in his image, with the capacity of imaging him in every aspect of who they are, to a greater degree than any other creature can (who are all loved by God but not created in his image).

So because the Edenic model holds to a physical human constitution, it is able to affirm the reality of the unity between the physical and mental aspects of a person. Such unity is possible because the physical and mental aspects each come from the same physical substance. The problem of mental-physical interaction that substance dualist models have is resolved in the Edenic model, because there is no need to explain interaction between two substances when there exists only one substance.

We now move on to the question of consciousness. While scientists have not yet discovered how exactly consciousness is possible and how it works, this does not inevitably mean that models that hold to a “soul” for an explanation of consciousness fare any better in describing exactly how such a soul indeed accounts for consciousness. Their explanation is simply this: that since consciousness is something non-physical, it can only find its source in something non-physical—thus, the soul. What is lacking is a description of how the soul produces consciousness, and also, evidence supporting the assumption that consciousness is something truly non-physical (as opposed to something that merely has not yet been explained physically).

Some scientists, on the other hand, claim to have identified the neurological substrates of consciousness (although they have not yet put forth a convincing explanation of how those substrates produce consciousness). Furthermore, scientists are also coming more and more to agree that some animals have consciousness as well, or at least all the neurological substrates of such consciousness.<sup>39</sup> This could indicate that if a more conclusive answer to the question of consciousness should come in the future, it would come from a better understanding of the physical (not non-physical) means that produce consciousness. This would correlate with the Edenic model, which holds that the human mind (and every aspect of human nature) is constitutionally physical and created in the image of God with the capacity to be more like God than any other creature. Perhaps this may account for the more highly developed consciousness that is generally seen in humans as opposed to animals.<sup>40</sup>

Regarding the question of identity or humaniqueness, the Edenic model arising from the Eden narrative reveals that humans' unique identity comes from the first humans' special creation by God in his image. They were made with the capacity to be more like God than any other creature, in every aspect of their human nature—biological/physical, relational, emotional/psychological, mental, volitional, spiritual. This is what the Eden narrative presents as the indicator of humaniqueness: special

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<sup>39</sup> See, for example, “The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness” (July 7, 2012), produced by cognitive scientists, neuropharmacologists, neurophysiologists, neuroanatomists, and computational neuroscientists attending the Francis Crick Memorial Conference on Consciousness in Human and non-Human Animals. <http://fcmconference.org/img/CambridgeDeclarationOnConsciousness.pdf> (accessed August 23, 2016). Such a finding would not be too surprising for one who holds to the Edenic model, considering that the Eden narrative does not use any words to describe human constitution that it does not also use relative to animals.

<sup>40</sup> Aspects of this high level of consciousness may be such things as qualia and self-awareness.

*imago Dei* creation by God. This *imago Dei* manifested in every function of human nature can encompass a variety of characteristics or capabilities which other models may point to as marks of human identity. The Edenic model can accept any of these if they are genuinely unique to humans and if they are manifested through the human physical constitution.

Now we turn to the question of free will: the Eden narrative, and especially Genesis 3, indicates that human free will was operating in Eden both before and after the presence of human sin. But some reductive forms of materialism in science would hold that any event (even a moral choice) is “completely determined by previously existing causes.”<sup>41</sup> The physicalist worldview often faces the objection that physicalism must entail such determinism, since physicalism is based on physical explanations to human ontology, and physical explanations are often (rightly or wrongly) seen to be deterministic.

So, can physicalism reasonably hold that some events are truly free, not caused or determined by a previously existing cause? Nonreductive physicalists would say yes, since they reject reductionism, and so would Christian materialists, since they do not believe that materialism necessitates determinism.<sup>42</sup> However, in a world of mechanistic

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<sup>41</sup> Individual free choice is not considered free if it is deterministic, or “completely determined by previously existing causes” (“Determinism,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/determinism#ref133020> [accessed August 24, 2016]). In some Christian theological traditions, this “previously existing cause” is God, but in the context of the current debate, the “cause” that is referred to is physics. In order for individual free choice to be considered free, there has to be the potential that individual choices can be made without being “completely determined by previously existing causes.” The potential for indeterminate random and chance events to occur can account for the possibility of an individual making a random or chance choice, a choice that is not pre-determined. If such indeterministic choice is possible, then individual free will truly be possible.

<sup>42</sup> For more on this debate, see O’Connor, *Persons and Causes: The Metaphysics of Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). For a nonreductive physicalist view, see Murphy and Brown’s *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?* For a Christian materialist’s view, see Peter van Inwagen, *An Essay on Free Will* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon, 1983).



physics, the notion of strict determinism may have seemed to be the only legitimate option. But in the last century, with mechanistic physics giving way to quantum physics, the basic indeterminacy of nature on the level of physics has been revealed and points towards a probabilistic and holistic physics over against a deterministic and reductionistic one.<sup>43</sup> Thus the human free will shown through the Eden narrative is not necessarily in contradiction to a wholly physical constitution. This is because reality is likely somewhat indeterminate from the level of physics on up, which thus invalidates the assumption that physicalism necessitates determinism.<sup>44</sup>

Additionally, the Edenic model has the advantage of this belief in a special creation of humans in the image of God. Because of this, every aspect of human beings, including the mental, may be capable of more than what animals are capable of, and sometimes in ways that are difficult to dissect. For example, humans, in their physical constitution, may be capable of exercising a more profound form of free will than animals. And if we would want to understand, simply from the Eden narrative, why they might be capable of this, the answer would have to be that it is because humans are a special creation of God in his image. The Eden narrative does not give an answer other than this, but in my view it does champion these twin realities: that there is no evidence

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<sup>43</sup> See Albert Ferrer, "From Newtonian Physics to Quantum Theory; From New Science to Spiritual Philosophy and Wisdom: The Crucial Question of Consciousness," *Ars Brevis* 21 (2015): 92-126.

<sup>44</sup> The phrase "from the level of physics on up" refers to the idea that physics is the most fundamental way to scientifically study reality. The next level up from physics would be chemistry, then biology (then perhaps psychology and then sociology). See *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 128. Whether or not this is the best hierarchical structure to use is debatable and I am not necessarily endorsing it here. The point, however, is that physics displays a certain indeterminacy which also could logically manifest itself in any other area that is in some way related to physics (and most everything, if not everything, is related to physics).

for anything other than humans being created with a wholly physical constitution, and that humans were endowed (for better or worse) with free will.

Finally, on the question of human destiny, if one holds that “in the beginning” (Gen 1:1) God created without pre-existing matter, it is also possible to conceive of a resurrection in which there would be no pre-existing (human) matter. No substantial perseverance of human identity after death and through time is needed for God to be able to resurrect and recreate while retaining that personal identity. His memory of each individual is sufficient for that. Nevertheless, how exactly God resurrects is still a mystery, and how he would maintain the perseverance of individual humans’ identity after their death is also a mystery to which the Bible does not provide details. Thus, while we can hypothesize on the mechanism for the persistence of human identity through time, we must acknowledge that these answers will probably remain speculative. What is sure, however, is that God the Creator is able to miraculously create and re-create. And if he was able to create out of nothing in the beginning, we can trust that he has a way to re-create and preserve the identity of each faithful individual at the future resurrection.

#### The Edenic Model’s Contribution

Does the Edenic model provide coherent answers to the questions of personal ontology currently being asked? Can it bridge the gap in the conflict of interpretations found in this field? Substance dualist models have been the ones that predominated over the longest period of time; in fact, substance dualism was assumed through most of Western philosophical and religious history. The internal coherence of these models also helped to support such dominance. Nevertheless, the philosophical presupposition of

dualism that is required is a substantial one. And for those seeking to espouse a worldview that arises from the biblical canon, this presupposition and others of substance dualist models are suspect. Even so, substance dualism has succeeded in becoming the most dominant and long-lasting view of personal ontology in Christian theology.

Nonetheless, in spite of the fact that it does offer many satisfactory answers to the questions of personal ontology (if its presuppositions are accepted), there are significant questions to which it has not succeeded in offering satisfactory answers. Generally (again, if its presuppositions are accepted), it offers logically satisfactory answers to questions that deal with human nature but not as much for questions that deal with human constitution (namely, unity and mental-physical interaction). If a human is constituted of two different ontological substances, it is natural that the puzzle of these substances' interaction and unity persists. Of course there have been attempts to explain unity and interaction in substance dualist models, but no answer has endured over time and proved itself to be convincing to those outside substance dualism (or sometimes even to those within it). This shortcoming is a great weakness of substance dualist models of personal ontology.

Physicalist models seem to be strong where substance dualists models are weak, and weak where they are strong. With physicalism's doctrine of a completely physical human constitution, it does not find the questions of mental-physical interaction and unity nearly as problematic as does substance dualism. For with a human constitution made up of only one substance, the questions of interaction and unity do not pose such a conundrum, since by definition the constitution is a unity and capable of interaction with itself.

But physicalism does have a difficult time answering the same questions that seem to be advantages of substance dualist models. These are the questions of consciousness, identity, free will, and destiny. Physicalists will admit that their models do not provide satisfactory answers to the question of consciousness—yet.<sup>45</sup> However, instead of turning to substance dualism for answers, physicalists remain faithful to their physicalist presuppositions, and hope that as science continues to develop, a naturalist explanation for consciousness will be discovered.

Regarding human identity, physicalists assert that human brains are highly developed and complex to such a degree as to produce such works of technology and culture that have not been found in any other species. In this way, humans rise to the top of an evolutionary continuum of increasing brain complexity, but have no intangible or nonmaterial foundation for human identity. So is this a sufficient explanation of human identity? Apparently the answer can depend on how committed one is to a materialist worldview.

Turning to the question of free will in physicalism, the point is made (by substance dualists) that physicalism entails determinism, leaving no space for the seemingly essential human component of free will.<sup>46</sup> However, many physicalists adamantly deny that physicalism necessitates determinism. Additionally, the change in

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<sup>45</sup> In the Christian materialist Corcoran's words: "For starters, it's no secret, no new revelation to any of us—hard core dualists, atheistic materialists or even Christian materialists like myself—that consciousness has so far escaped the materialist-naturalist net of explanation" (Consciousness and the Culture Wars" [Oct. 23, 2008], "Holy Skin and Bone," <http://holyskinandbone.blogspot.com/2008/10/consciousness-and-culture-wars.html> [accessed August 31, 2016]). In Eccles' view, this "not yet" makes materialists what he calls "promissory materialists," holding to their materialist presuppositions and promising a materialist answer later to such things as consciousness.

<sup>46</sup> Some physicalist scientists also seem to lean towards this position. See the Introduction of Murphy and Brown's *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?*

the world of physics from a more determinate to a more indeterminate understanding of reality (the space-time continuum) has brought more credence to the view that even a materialist, physicalist explanation of reality does not entail determinism.<sup>47</sup> So it seems the argument that physicalism necessitates a denial of free will is not solid enough to stand as a reason to reject physicalism.

How about the question of human destiny in physicalist models? For atheistic physicalists, belief in life after death is a very difficult proposition to logically hold.<sup>48</sup> For Christian physicalists, it is not as difficult. Even though physicalist models generally hold to a monistic understanding of personal ontology and a naturalistic explanation of how life on earth originated and developed, they do not deny the supernatural. Thus it is possible for God to recreate human individuals at the resurrection. Physicalists can also argue that some sort of intermediate state might facilitate human life after death—just with the caveat that this intermediate state does not necessitate an immortal, immaterial soul.<sup>49</sup>

So although the subjects of human free will and destiny are employed to assert that physicalism does not provide a viable Christian alternative to the question of personal ontology, we see that physicalism can indeed be compatible with a belief in both free will and life after death. What is more uncertain is whether physicalism provides a satisfactory answer to the questions of human consciousness and identity. Of all the six questions of personal ontology we have explored, it seems that consciousness and

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<sup>47</sup> See Ferrer.

<sup>48</sup> Perhaps some of Corcoran's speculations could provide some guidance to those seeking to maintain belief in an afterlife without belief in God ("Physical Persons and Postmortem Survival without Temporal Gaps," in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, 201-17).

<sup>49</sup> See *Soul, Body, and Survival*, section III ("Does Life after Death Require Dualism?"), 183-248.

identity are the weakest points of physicalist models, and that unity and interaction are the weakest points of substance dualist models. Is there a view that has fewer weak points, that perhaps combines some of the strong points of the substance dualist and physicalist models while minimizing their weak points?

Is the Edenic model able to navigate a way forward—one that satisfactorily answers the questions of personal ontology, that is coherent within itself, and that might bridge the gap between science and tradition in the current conflict of interpretations? Turning first to the questions related to human constitution—unity and interaction—the Edenic model fares well in this regard. Because of its commitment to a human constitution that is wholly physical, there is no problem of unity or interaction between the mental and physical aspects of a human. In this, the Edenic model avoids a significant disadvantage of substance dualism and corresponds with an important advantage of physicalism.

But how does the Edenic model fare with the questions of human nature that we have explored—consciousness, identity, free will, and destiny? Might it have satisfactory answers to these questions as well, might it hold on to the advantages that substance dualism has here while steering clear of the disadvantages that physicalism usually carries along with it? In answering the question of consciousness, the Edenic model starts from the same point as physicalism. Of necessity within these models, the explanation of how human consciousness operates must come from humans' physical constitution (since in these models there is no non-physical constitution). These models admit also, however, that science has not yet satisfactorily been able to explain in detail the process of how consciousness happens.

The Edenic model could add to this answer because of its emphasis on how humans originated. According to the Eden narrative, not only were humans made of dust and thoroughly physical, but they were personally created by God in the image of God. This *imago Dei* in the constitution which is physical may refer to a few different things, but certainly it entails the capacity and mandate that God gave humans to be able to imitate, reflect, and yes, image him in every aspect of who they are as humans. This by all means includes the mental aspect. Thus for the Edenic model, the high level of consciousness in humans is naturally possible because their physical brains and minds are created specially by God in the image of God and after his likeness (Gen 1:26, 27).

Therefore, with science the Edenic model can agree that there is nothing non-physical that accounts for consciousness; and to tradition it can offer indications for how a high level of consciousness is capable of occurring within a physical creature. The Edenic model relies upon the creation narrative in the Eden narrative to arrive at these answers—especially the Eden narrative’s emphasis on the *imago Dei*. It is possible for this reliance on the Eden narrative and its insights to be a part of physicalism as a whole, as long as physicalist models are willing to accept the authority of the Eden narrative as a source. In this way, the Edenic model would serve to bring a renewed emphasis on the biblical creation narrative, and thus help to strengthen physicalism’s ability to respond to certain arguments that are leveled against it.

But how does the Edenic model tackle the question of identity? Along with physicalist models, the Edenic model asserts that the uniqueness of human identity does not come from a non-physical part of human constitution, as opposed to substance dualism which would attribute human uniqueness to an immaterial human soul. Physicalism

attributes human identity to a highly developed and complex human brain. The Edenic model does not disagree with this, but it adds an important and perhaps forgotten facet to this discussion. According to the Eden narrative, human beings were specially created by God in his image. This image of God affects every aspect of what humans are, every part of their human nature. Although Genesis presents all creatures as being wholly physical, humans are the only ones that are said to be created in God's image. This stamp of God on every aspect of their nature certainly makes them unique from any other part of God's creation.

So yes, humans are physical creatures, and their highly complex brains do contribute to their unique identity. But even more than that, they are created in the image of God, and this resemblance to God in every aspect of their nature is an all-important factor in their humaniqueness. For those who are able to accept the evidence given in the Eden narrative of creation, this picture of human identity expressed by the Edenic model should answer questions both for substance dualists and for physicalists.

A belief that humans were created by God in his image also makes it easier to understand how wholly physical creatures can have free will. Substance dualists claim that the explanation for true human freedom has to be an immaterial soul, since they believe that anything physical would be physically determined, not leaving room for freedom. Since the Edenic model holds that human constitution is physical, what can it add to physicalist arguments seeking to show how physicalism is not incompatible with free will?

The perspective of the Eden narrative once again brings us to the *imago Dei*. While a physicalist view of human constitution has not been shown to negate free will,



remembering that the human mind was created in God's image may make it easier for some to see how even a wholly physical human could exercise free will. Human freedom is very important to God, and he created humans with the ability and freedom to make real choices. The Eden narrative (and especially Gen 3) illustrates how humans really do have such choice. The choice for Eve and for Adam to fall was their own individual choice, and the choice to receive the promised salvation is also each human's individual choice. This is the picture the Eden narrative presents, while also giving no evidence of anything other than a wholly physical constitution for the first humans. So according to these chapters of Genesis, a physical human constitution is compatible with the ability of human minds to exercise their God-given free will.

Finally, how does the Edenic model answer the question of human destiny, and does it have any advantages over the other models in how it does this? The Edenic model is consistent with a belief in life after death; it is even hinted at in the third chapter of Genesis, with the protoevangelium and possibly the subsequent naming of Eve. Generally, models of personal ontology that hold to the existence of an immaterial soul are seen to have the simplest time explaining their belief in the possibility of an afterlife. However, the Edenic model puts more weight on the Genesis narrative account than any other model of personal ontology does, and as such, the personal creation of human beings by God plays a central role in the explanations it gives.

Many Christian scholars, who hold to various models of personal ontology, do not believe that God personally created human beings in the manner described in the Eden narrative. But because the Edenic model presents God as the Creator who brought all creation including humans into being, it is not difficult for those who believe this to hold

that God is also able to miraculously resurrect and give eternal life to the humans who had accepted his promised salvation while they lived on earth. For the Edenic model, all that is needed to assert belief in resurrected life is the presence of God the Creator.

So does the Edenic model satisfactorily answer the most pressing questions of personal ontology? For the questions of unity and interaction it does, offering similar answers here as do physicalist models, due to these models' mutual adherence to a physicalist understanding of the constitution of human. Thus science is able to support these explanations of human unity and interaction.

For the questions of consciousness, identity, and free will, the Edenic model gives answers that are dependent on the Eden narrative's account of humans being created by God and in his image. In the Edenic model, both consciousness and free will would be functions of the mental aspects of humans' physical constitutions. But understanding that the human mind (and the whole human person) is created in the image of God can make it easier to hold that such things as consciousness and free will are features of the mental function of a physical constitution, considering that science has not yet conclusively shown exactly how such features operate.

Obviously, being created by God and in his image is a very significant factor in human identity, for the Eden narrative shows that because of this, humans have the capability to uniquely show God's image in every function of their human nature. In addition to humans' highly developed physical constitutions (including highly complex brains), the *imago Dei* is a special mark of identification that is not shared by any other created thing, and it enables humans to be capable of more than other creatures are.

It is possible for all Christians to believe in special creation of humans by God in the image of God. However, substance dualism appeals to a non-physical substance in humans to answer various questions of personal ontology (like humaniqueness). But physicalism cannot appeal to such a non-physical substance to answer questions brought against it, and because of this, many Christians feel that its answers are lacking. Physicalism does not tend to hold to the Eden narrative's account of creation, nor to emphasize personal creation of humans by God in his image. But if physicalism were to place more emphasis on the Edenic roots of physicalism, such an emphasis on the Eden narrative would in turn help to provide answers to the questions that are most frequently brought up against physicalism.

Finally, the Edenic model's indication of an afterlife is grounded in the Eden narrative's account of God's first creation of humans and in the promise of the protoevangelium. If God was able to create out of nothing in the beginning (for even humans were made out of the dust that would not have existed without him), he would also be able to resurrect humans, without the need for any immaterial soul to continue human identity after death. *How* he will do this, and retain each human's identity after death, is a mystery to us and something that the Eden narrative does not address. However, *that* he will do it is sure—if we trust that the God who miraculously created once is able to miraculously re-create once again.

These four questions related to human nature—consciousness, identity, free will, and destiny—find answers in the Edenic model. Of these four, it seems that the clearest answers are to the questions of human identity and destiny. In regard to human consciousness and freedom, the answers are satisfactory. But since science has not yet

shown how a physical brain is capable of these functions, the answers are still somewhat promissory while nonetheless logically reasonable.

The Edenic model seems to bring a valuable contribution to the conflict of interpretations that exists in Christian theology today over personal ontology. The answers it offers are coherent within its model, and they seem to bridge a gap between other main interpretations. The Edenic model can appeal to science in its affirmation of the wholly physical constitution of human beings, and thus in its disuse of a non-physical explanation (within the human person) for any aspect of human nature. The Edenic model can also appeal to Christian tradition in its upholding of human uniqueness, human freedom and consciousness, and the reality of an afterlife. So here, Christian tradition has the opportunity to adopt a view that is not so contradictory to what science has found, while still upholding the uniqueness of human nature and especially God's role in it, as described in the Eden narrative. But in order for the Edenic model to be widely accepted, science and tradition would both have to make a change in their presuppositions. Many scientists would have to be open to a non-evolutionary, biblical explanation for human origins. And Christian tradition would have to be open to basing its views of human ontology wholly on the Eden narrative.

Considering that Christian theology's one undisputed source for doctrine is Scripture, would it not make sense for it to adopt a view that seeks to derive its presuppositions solely from Scripture rather than a view that does not claim to have arisen solely from Scripture? Perhaps at the present crossroads in Christian theology over the issue of personal ontology, when varied interpretations are coming from all sides, Christian theology should make the most of this theological commotion to embrace

a model that is grounded in Scripture alone, a model which does provide answers to the current questions of personal ontology without sacrificing the special place that humans have in the sight of God.

On the other hand, while Christian physicalists take seriously biblical texts that speak to humans' wholly physical constitution and seek to advance a correct understanding of Scripture's true teaching on personal ontology, it may prove difficult for them to deviate from science's presentation of human origins.<sup>50</sup> It would be well for physicalists to consider being guided by the whole of biblical teaching on personal ontology, especially the first chapters of the biblical canon that encapsulate Scripture's teaching on the origin, constitution, and nature of human beings. They would find there that the Edenic model is able to answer even objections that are raised against some physicalist models. In fact, adopting an Edenic model would allow physicalists to uphold their fundamental tenet of a wholly physical human constitution while at the same time more strongly affirm human consciousness, identity, free will, and destiny.

All in all, it appears as if the Edenic model provides a valuable contribution to the current debate over the conflict of interpretations regarding personal ontology in Christian theology. It does not leave unanswered some of the main questions of personal ontology, as some other models do. It affirms human physicality while still valuing human mentality. It provides answers that surprisingly can bridge the gap between divergent views because it affirms full constitutional physicalism while at the same time emphasizing the divine role in human creation. Even though some of its answers may be considered "promissory" (while waiting for more scientific evidence), even these answers

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<sup>50</sup> For example, see Corcoran's *Rethinking Human Nature*.

have more lines of logical reasoning backing them up than the pure promissory answers that Christian materialism, for example, can provide. And finally, the model is internally coherent, as it follows the evidence that arises from its source, the Eden narrative.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The goal of this chapter is to take all the information that has been presented in this dissertation and organize it in such a way that a comparison between models is possible. Towards this end, the chapter begins by summarizing the views of the models—substance dualism, physicalism, and the Edenic model—on the rubrics that compose the topic of personal ontology, namely human constitution and human nature. After this summary of the model’s main features, the chapter turns to comparing them with each other by means of those rubrics of constitution and nature. Here were found points of convergence and divergence between the models, and these were studied, with a mind to beginning the task of evaluating the models’ merits in comparison to each other.

Next, in an attempt to determine the contribution of the Edenic model to the current conflict of interpretations over personal ontology, tables were developed. One compared substance dualism, physicalism, and the Edenic model with the rubrics of constitution and nature, and one compared the models on some of the most pressing current questions of personal ontology (unity, interaction, consciousness, identity, free will, and destiny). The tables guided an analysis of these issues within the various models.

The merits of the Edenic model were found to be significant. Its ability to affirm a scientific view of human constitution (that it is wholly physical) while at the same time elevating the uniqueness of the human person is unprecedented. Most views can

highlight well the importance of one of these aspects, but not both at the same time. The Edenic model, in adopting the Eden narrative as its source, is able to bridge the gap between what science has found to be true about the human person (physical constitution) and what observation and common sense show to be true about the human person (consciousness, free will, etc.). With the Edenic model, there is no compromise on either side of these issues, and yet the model holds both together harmoniously and not disjointedly. This is truly unique.

The Edenic model seems to be able to maintain points that are important to both science and tradition, possibly helping to bridge the divide between them. This can be possible, however, only if certain presuppositions in tradition and science are replaced. For example, in order for the Edenic model to be widely accepted, its current premise of physicalist monism in regard to human constitution would have to be accepted, as well as its adherence to the biblical account of human origins.

Christian theology should consider replacing presuppositions it has that are not drawn directly from the biblical canon. For within Christian theology, the one source that is considered to be undisputed as a source for doctrine is indeed Scripture. The Bible, as a main source for Christian theology, does present a model of personal ontology, and this model deserves to be evaluated and accepted based on its merits. The Edenic model, which would form a part of that larger biblical model, provides guidance in answering the main questions about personal ontology, and will continue to offer such guidance even as these questions change, because the Eden narrative upon which it is based is the narrative of the very genesis of humanity.

The Eden narrative reveals a harmonious model of human constitution and human nature. It presents a picture of human ontology in which humans are created by God as wholly physical creatures in his image. Thus, human life and hope do not come from a soul, they come to humans externally from God. Yes, humans are wholly physical—“dust you are!” (Gen 3:19). But with the Creator, who is himself life, they have life. And created in his image, they have a capacity and a mandate for likeness to him that is unprecedented in all creation. This is what makes humans human—nothing inside of them, but God’s giving them the ability to image him in every aspect of who they are as human creatures.

This opposes many substance dualist models, in which humans are similar to God in constitution and nature, by virtue of a timeless, immortal soul. It opposes a number of physicalist models, in which humans are merely animals (though highly developed ones), sharing the same constitution and nature as them. In general, it supports physicalism, but significantly stresses the importance of biblical evidence that presents personal creation by God in his image as a defining feature of humans—a feature which helps to explain how humans can be solely physical yet manifest a nature that is not reducible to mere physical components. Certainly this biblical Edenic model, which answers many questions and bridges seemingly unbridgeable gaps, deserves a place in the current discussion of personal ontology in Christian theology.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The question “What am I?” is one of the most basic and fundamental questions that humans can ask.<sup>1</sup> In fact, it is one of the main questions tackled in even the earliest philosophical traditions. The Bible itself addresses, in a fair amount of detail, the question of personal ontology in its very first narratives, the Creation and the Fall. However, in Christian theology today, there exists a serious conflict of interpretations over personal ontology. This dissertation looks at two main model groupings of personal ontology current in Christian theology, and then seeks to uncover the view found in the Eden narrative of the biblical canon. This pericope of Genesis 1-3 was chosen because it speaks the most extensively to the various aspects of personal ontology, presenting the origin of humankind and illustrating human nature before and after sin. The dissertation then compares this Edenic model with the two previously studied to see which offers the higher powers of explanation to the questions of personal ontology, and which may be able to best bridge the divide in Christian theology today over this issue.

Chapter 1 delineates the problem addressed in this dissertation, along with its background, as well as the purpose and delimitations of the study. It describes the final-form canonical approach and phenomenological-exegetical analysis, as part of the overall

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<sup>1</sup> This foundational question of personal ontology—What am I?—can be divided into two areas, constitution and nature, with their respective questions, “What am I composed of?” and “What does ‘I’ refer to?” (Eric T. Olson, *What Are We?*), Chapter 1.

methodology employed in the dissertation. Chapter 2 identifies two of the main model groupings of personal ontology that are current in Christian theology, and traces some of their historical development. It also offers a preliminary comparison between them and suggests that a model based on a close reading of part of the biblical canon might prove to be beneficial in the current debate. Chapter 3 seeks to build upon this suggestion, and uses phenomenological-exegetical analysis to find answers to the main questions of personal ontology (constitution and nature) in the pericope of the Eden narrative. From such study, an Edenic model of personal ontology is uncovered.

The goal of Chapter 4 is to compare this Edenic model with the two model groupings discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 4 seeks to determine which model might have the highest explanatory powers in dealing with current questions of personal ontology. Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes the work of this dissertation and presents some implications of it.

### **Introduction and Methodology of Study**

Chapter 1 is the chapter that introduces the topic and methodology of this dissertation. This chapter familiarizes the reader with the notion of ontology and describes its early historical prominence on the philosophical scene. Chapter 1 also defines personal ontology, identifying its two main components—constitution and nature. These two questions form the template for the discussion and analysis in the following chapters of the dissertation. The chapter then cursorily traces the development of views of personal ontology, especially in Christian theology. Finally, it reveals why there is a need for this particular study that seeks to discover a biblical, Edenic model of personal ontology. With Christian theology facing the problem of conflicting interpretations over

this issue, the purpose of this study is to uncover a model that has as its source the biblical canon, and more specifically, the Eden narrative. The goal is to compare this model with some current models in Christian theology to determine whether it can answer the questions of personal ontology in a way that could be beneficial to the current debate.

With this goal of uncovering a view of personal ontology that arises from the Eden narrative, the issue of methodology is crucial. In this dissertation, the methodology chosen utilizes the final-form canonical approach along with phenomenological-exegetical analysis. The final-form canonical approach accepts the legitimacy of the sixty-six books of the biblical canon in their extant form. This becomes the source that is studied, with a goal to uncovering what the biblical text has to say on the topic of study. In this dissertation, the biblical pericope is narrowed to the Eden narrative.

The method that is used toward this end is phenomenological-exegetical analysis. In this analysis, methods of hermeneutical exegesis are utilized. However, a point is made to bracket *a priori* presuppositions as much as possible, and instead to mine the text of the Eden narrative for its understanding on the subject. It is expected that the operative presuppositions in the Eden narrative will be internally coherent and congruent with those found in the rest of the canon and may thus shed light on the rest of Scripture, while the rest of Scripture would also shed light on how to understand the operative presuppositions in the Eden narrative. The conclusions the interpreter draws from the biblical text must always be brought back to Scripture to confront the exegetical evidence and determine whether the conclusions are truly based on the Bible and not the interpreter's personal preunderstanding of it. Even once the final conclusions are reached

for the purpose of this dissertation, the Eden narrative as a source is always open to bring correction and refinement to the Edenic model based on a better understanding of the text.

Finally, because this topic is such an expansive one, strict delimitations were necessary in order to ensure that this dissertation's task would not become unwieldy. The first major delimitation towards that end was to confine the models of personal ontology discussed to two main model groupings that are current and prominent in Christian theology since the last decades of the twentieth century. Thus, not every interpretation of personal ontology was examined. Such a delimitation made the topic more manageable, for if all the major models through history had been studied, or if all the current philosophical or religious models had been studied, this would have necessitated a work of several volumes. Instead, two main model groupings were explored that are being discussed in Christian theology today and that have been prominent for the last few decades.

Once these two model groupings were identified and described in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 sought to uncover a biblical model of personal ontology to compare with these models. However, the task of isolating and exegeting each biblical occurrence that was related to the broad topic of personal ontology also proved to exceed the limits of a typical dissertation. Once this was acknowledged, the desire remained to choose a smaller section of Scripture that would still provide a biblical view of personal ontology, and not just a view of a specific biblical book or author. Was there a biblical passage that might be foundational to the rest of the biblical evidence on this topic?

After extensive biblical study, the pericope of Genesis 1-3, the Eden narrative, was chosen. As the original account of human creation and fall, Genesis 1-3 addresses both the questions of human constitution and human nature. Likewise biblical and theological scholars increasingly view this pericope as a microcosm of the canon's teaching on issues related to personal ontology.<sup>2</sup> Thus the Eden narrative was chosen as the pericope for study. The hope was that from it a biblical view of personal ontology would be uncovered, one that could be compared with models of personal ontology in Christian theology today.

### **Survey of Historical Background of Models of Personal Ontology in Christian Theology**

Chapter 2 of this dissertation begins by surveying the historical background of some models of personal ontology in Christian theology before moving on to discuss the particulars of these models as they relate to the current debate. The most historically dominant model of personal ontology in Christian theology has been substance dualism. Substance dualism is also the earliest dominant model that developed in the Western philosophical tradition, which was the most influential philosophical tradition in reference to Christian theology. Plato is generally regarded as the main figure who established the notion of substance dualism as the traditional view of personal ontology.<sup>3</sup> There were certainly precursors to his view, both in Western and Eastern philosophy, and he was undoubtedly shaped by them, but he still is the one who made substance dualism an inextricable part of the Western philosophical tradition.

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<sup>2</sup> For more on this, see the section on "Methodology" in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

<sup>3</sup> Wolfson, in *Immortality and Resurrection*, 79: "The conception of the soul common to all the [Church] Fathers is essentially Platonic."

Plato held to a dualist view of reality, including of the human person. He believed that an immortal soul was imprisoned in a mortal body.<sup>4</sup> A few centuries later, the Christian theologian and philosopher Origen was instrumental in meshing Plato's substance dualist ideas of personal ontology with standard Christian theology. Following him, Augustine was the theological giant who demonstrated how a presupposition of substance dualism in personal ontology could influence the conception of a host of other Christian doctrines. Over a millennium later, Descartes, the father of modern Western philosophy, strengthened the tradition of substance dualism in personal ontology even more, positing a strict dichotomy between the *res extensa* (the physical) and *res cogitans* (the mental), with the pineal gland as the supposed locus of interaction between the two.

Descartes and his substance dualism were opposed by his contemporary, the materialist philosopher Hobbes. Hobbes' insistence that human ontology was only material was a shocking proposition at its time, especially when Hobbes applied this monist materialism to all things and therefore also asserted that there was no God. Although physicalist models in Christian theology today relate strictly to personal ontology, and assert that the non-material can exist outside of the human person (e.g., God), their modern roots certainly do originate in the Enlightenment and with philosophers like Hobbes. Of course, glimpses of views of personal ontology that have a materialistic bent are seen throughout history—as early as the pre-Socratic philosophers Leucippus and Democritus, and probably also with Empedocles, Anaxagoras, and Aristotle. Bacon, a precursor to the Scientific Revolution, and Galileo, one of the most

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<sup>4</sup> This view is not held by all substance dualists today, and certainly some of Plato's other anthropological views are not currently held by most substance dualists. However, Plato's influence is still great, in that it promoted the dualistic view of personal ontology that early on became the standard view within classical Christian theology.

famous scientists of the Scientific Revolution, also both contributed to a physicalist view of the world and of personal ontology.

But how did such physicalist/materialist views enter Christian theology?

Originally, such views were espoused by early modern scientists who were devoutly religious (such as Roger Bacon and Galileo). For scientists like these, understanding and exploring the material constitution of reality did not cause them to lose faith in a supernatural God. In fact, they saw the new scientific methods they employed as tools to help them probe God's creation. However, in time it would become evident that an atomist or materialist understanding of the human person was philosophically opposed to the classical notion of an immortal, non-material soul.

As science continued to progress, the desire to explain all reality by means of naturalism increased. Finally, in the mid-nineteenth century, Charles Darwin introduced a theory of the origin of species, and later, of the descent of man, that presented naturalistic explanations for the development of life on earth.<sup>5</sup> His theories led many to reject the Genesis account of Creation, and to adopt a more fully naturalistic view of the universe which no longer found a place for the supernatural. That naturalistic worldview had an impact on diverse fields of study, including biblical studies.

The divergence between religious tradition and developments in scientific theory spurred the formation of new theories of personal ontology, and the revival of some old theories as well. Prior to Descartes, there actually existed more rapprochement between religion and science on the issue of personal ontology. However, with his strict

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<sup>5</sup> *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection: The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle of Life* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), first published in 1859 (based on an 1844 essay of Darwin's). *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: John Murray, 1871), first published in 1871.

disjunction between the “thinking substance” and the “extended substance,” it seemed like the only options available in personal ontology were substance dualism or an increasingly reductive physicalism. This departed from the more moderately dualistic view that Aquinas had developed, that of hylomorphic dualism, in which the soul is the form of the body and inseparable from it (at least until death). Thus, in the two or three centuries that followed Descartes’ influential teachings, scholars seemed to be driven to either uphold substance dualism at the expense of scientific discoveries, or materialism/physicalism at the expense of religious tradition.

Then in the late twentieth century, nonreductive physicalism came on the scene as reductive physicalism was increasingly being doubted.<sup>6</sup> Nonreductive physicalism maintains that personal ontology is thoroughly physical, but claims that the human person is greater than the sum of those physical parts. This is because a person is “a physical organism whose complex functioning, both in society and in relation to God, gives rise to ‘higher’ human capacities such as morality and spirituality.”<sup>7</sup>

Some of these first philosophers to espouse physicalism but reject reductionism were Donald Davidson, whose “anomalous monism” stated that not all mental events were ordered by strict physical laws (as reductive theories claim), and Hilary Putnam, whose “multiple realizability” stated that one mental event can be implemented by

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<sup>6</sup> It was being doubted largely because of its vagueness related to the inability to demonstrate specific neural correlates for specific mental events. See Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, Introduction. To review, reductive physicalism or materialism claims that every aspect of personal ontology can be reduced to thoroughly physical causes.

<sup>7</sup> *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 25.



different physical events.<sup>8</sup> Later Nancey Murphy, among others, sought to show how nonreductive physicalism provides a bridge between substance dualism and reductive materialism that Christians can follow. Various models of physicalism have developed largely because otherwise “Christians would face a major intellectual crisis” in choosing between the two seemingly untenable extremes of substance dualism and reductive physicalism/materialism.<sup>9</sup>

### **Conflicting Models of Personal Ontology in Christian Theology**

After tracing some of the history of two of the main model groupings of personal ontology current in Christian theology (substance dualism and physicalism), Chapter 2 of this dissertation moves on to describing them in more detail. This is done by looking at how they answer the questions of constitution and nature, the two rubrics that organize models of personal ontology. Understanding these model groupings based on their answers to these two questions enables a more efficient and in-depth analysis of them later, when this dissertation compares them against each other.

Substance dualism is the traditional, classical view that has predominated over the course of the history of Christian theology. Highly influenced by extra-biblical dualist philosophies, it has maintained the spirituality and uniqueness of the human person by means of a belief in a non-physical soul (or mind, as it was often referred to after Descartes). These models faced little challenge until the paradigm shift that came with

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<sup>8</sup> Davidson, “Mental Events,” first published in 1970. Putnam, “Psychological Predicates” in *Art, Mind and Religion*, ed. by William H. Capitan and Daniel Davy Merrill (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967).

<sup>9</sup> *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 24. This intellectual crisis results from the fact that some feel that substance dualism discounts science, and that reductive physicalism/materialism discounts the spiritual.

the Enlightenment and scientific revolutions. In contrast to an increasingly materialist worldview, a belief in a non-physical soul came to be seen as unscientific.

In regard to the rubrics of constitution and nature, substance dualism holds that human constitution is made of both a physical and a mental substance. This raises the problems of unity and mental-physical interaction for substance dualist models. Now in regard to human nature, substance dualist models locate human identity and uniqueness in the mental substance (whether soul or mind). That mental substance is thought to be the cause for mental functions, whereas the physical substance is thought to be the cause for physical functions.

Physicalism was the view that gained its strength during the age of momentous scientific discovery.<sup>10</sup> It asserts that the human person is thoroughly physical, and that there is no need and no evidence to believe in a non-physical soul or mind, for the mental and “higher” properties are a function of the physical substance.<sup>11</sup> While this model in Christian theology correlates the most easily with science, it correspondingly draws the most opposition from tradition, for it is difficult for many to conceive of humans being in relation to God or having a special place in this world without also believing in a non-physical soul (or mind) as a cause for that. What then makes humans unique, according to physicalist models? They usually attribute human uniqueness to the highly evolved and

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<sup>10</sup> Reductive physicalism developed first, and later came nonreductive physicalism. I speak above of physicalism as a unit here, without dividing it into models of reductive physicalism, nonreductive physicalism, and other varieties of physicalism. I do this to discuss, on a broader scale, themes that unite all models of physicalism in personal ontology.

<sup>11</sup> With reductive physicalism, these mental properties are reducible to strictly physical causes. With nonreductive physicalism, they are not reducible to strictly physical causes, but it is still held that the human substance is thoroughly physical.

complex human brain, which is capable of producing any unique function of human nature.

This dissertation also looked at six questions that are frequently brought up in the personal ontology debate, to compare the answers that the various models give. It was found that for the questions of unity and interaction, physicalism is generally thought to have the most coherent explanations, and substance dualism to have the least defensible ones. For the questions of consciousness, identity, free will, and destiny, however, it is generally thought that substance dualism provides the most logical (though unproven) explanations, while physicalism tends to struggle more with explaining these notions.

Might a view that arises from the Eden narrative of human creation and fall offer any solutions to the shortcomings of these current, major views? Might it affirm human uniqueness and identity while not discounting scientific evidence? Might it answer all these questions of personal ontology in a more satisfactory way than do substance dualism and physicalism? Furthermore, since the current models are based on a plurality of sources (of which not all are accepted as legitimate sources by all Christian theologians), it seems logical to look for a model whose source is one which all Christian theologians can accept to be a legitimate source. Thus the dissertation in Chapter 3 turns to Scripture, the one source for Christian theology that all can agree on as a source. The goal is to ascertain whether Scripture presents a view of personal ontology that might help overcome current divisions and offer an alternative to the current conflict of interpretations in Christian theology over personal ontology.

## **Investigation of Personal Ontology in the Eden Narrative**

The goal of Chapter 3 is to uncover the Eden narrative's view of personal ontology, a view that arises from the text itself, unencumbered as much as possible by extra-biblical presuppositions. The exegesis conducted seeks to discover the text's answers to the two main questions of personal ontology that will define what the Edenic model is. Under the first of these questions—constitution—both the physical and the mental are examined (along with mental-physical interaction), to see what evidence Genesis 1-3 might provide for each. Specifically in the section about the physical, the dissertation highlights four aspects connected to that topic that the text presents as important. These are (1) the connection between האדם and האדמה, (2) the similar constitution of humans and animals, (3) the creation of two interdependent human entities, and (4) the human potential to image God.

After this, the discussion moves on to the second main question of personal ontology—nature—and here two components of it are explored in more depth. The first is that of functions: Human nature is capable of performing what functions? The second of these is that of humaniqueness: What are the specific attributes that make human nature unique?

Once the text of the Eden narrative was mined to see what answers might exist there to the questions of constitution and nature, all the evidence found from the text was laid out to ascertain whether it may point toward a model of personal ontology. Indeed, exegesis of the Eden narrative did reveal answers to the questions of constitution and nature, and also revealed a view of personal ontology that can interact with the main

models of Christian theology today. I called this view the Edenic model, and below, its characteristics are summarized.

### Constitution

The Eden narrative is clear in presenting human constitution as physical constitution. The vital etymological connection between the human (אָדָם) and the ground (הָאָדָמָה) is perhaps the first indication of human's ontological constitution being physical ("ground," "dust"). With God's first declaration of his intent to make a human—"Let *us* make אָדָם in our image" (Gen 1:26)—it is unmistakably revealed that humans are to be linked to the ground in the very definition of who they are, their name. In addition, the actual manner of the creation of אָדָם links him even more explicitly to the ground. For "the Lord God formed/fashioned אָדָם from the dust of הָאָדָמָה" (Gen 2:7), in the same manner as a potter forms/fashions an earthenware vessel.<sup>12</sup> The reality of humans being constituted by "ground" is strengthened even more by this unequivocal statement: "for dust you (are) and to dust you will return" (Gen 3:19).

Humans' constitutional make-up of "ground" is even linked to their lifework. Speaking of the time before the creation of the first human, Gen 2:5 records that "there was not אָדָם to serve/cultivate הָאָדָמָה." And after sin, God told Adam: "by the sweat of your face you will eat bread/food until you return to the ground (הָאָדָמָה) *since out of it you were taken*" (3:19; italics supplied). This work was a meaningful and divine calling: it reminded humans of their origin and dependence upon God, it pointed forward to the holy work of the priests, and it instilled hope in the human heart—for even as the curse

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<sup>12</sup> See footnote 9 of Chapter 3.

upon the ground symbolized death, the food that grew from it made life and living possible.<sup>13</sup>

And yet, there is nothing about this physical (“ground”) constitution of humans that made them unique. Mirroring the wording and syntax of the account of human creation (Gen 2:7), Gen 2:19 states: “And the Lord God formed/fashioned (יצר) from the ground (האדמה) every living (thing) of the field and every bird of the heavens.” Not only are both humans and animals formed/fashioned from the ground (Gen 2:7, 19), they are both designated by God as נפש חיה (“living being/creature”; Gen 1:20, 21, 24, 30; 2:7, 19).

Besides the fact that this designation by God reveals an unmistakable correlation between humans and animals on the level of their constitution, the term נפש חיה itself is significant because it denotes the physical aspect of “living” (which is even linked etymologically to words for “breathing”).<sup>14</sup> Additional evidence of humans’ physical constitution is that God gives both humans and animals plants as their alimentary provision, he creates both humans and animals to have mates, and he commissions both humans and animals to “be fruitful and become many.”<sup>15</sup> All these are features that point to a similarity in physical constitution between humans and animals, as God saw and declared it.

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<sup>13</sup> See footnote 65 of Chapter 3.

<sup>14</sup> See Doukhan, 74. In fact, of the 754 occurrences of נפש in the Old Testament (including with the term נפש חיה), there “is never given the meaning of an indestructible core of being, in contradistinction to the physical life (Wolff, 20).”

<sup>15</sup> Gen 1:29, 30 (plants as alimentary provision); 1:27 and 2:18-25 (male and female); 1:22, 28 (mandate to reproduce).

The next feature of the physical substance is God's creation of two interdependent entities. Together they are **האדם** made in the image of God ("And God created **האדם** in his own image, in the image of God he created *them*, male and female he created *them*" [1:27; italics mine for emphasis]). In this oneness they are also male and female (1:27—**זכר ונקבה**). Their subsequent designations in Gen 2:23 are etymologically linked (**אשה** being the feminine form of **איש**). The woman is flesh of the man's flesh and bone of his bone, built by God using the man's own rib (2:21-23). The man is to cleave to his woman, and the two are to become one flesh (2:24). And still, in the midst of all this oneness, there is the plan for woman and man to be similar and dissimilar, for she is his **עזר כנגדו** (2:18-20). This was God's perfect design, and he stated that it was not good for **האדם** to be alone (2:18). This oneness and plurality in a small way can also mirror the oneness and plurality that is found in the Godhead.

Additionally, God commissioned this pair **האדם** to together procreate and rule the earth (1:28). Created in his image, they were designed to fulfill together this calling to be his vice-regents on earth. Although we find cases of true loyalty and devotion between animal couples, this does not compare to the level of intimate interdependence on a constitutional level that God designed for human couples, according to the Eden narrative.

Also in the Eden narrative, we see that special creation of humans by God in his image accounts for human uniqueness. The image of God is realized in human nature, but human constitution is where the God-created potential or capacity to image God is found. This capacity to image God is what makes possible personal individuality,

responsibility, and freedom—to a greater extent than is seen in the rest of God’s earthly creation.

Because of this capacity, humans can exert their wills and choose to follow God or not. If they follow him, his image in them becomes clearer, more accurate, more beautiful. If they do not, his image in them becomes sullied and marred. But each human, no matter how evil, is still created in God’s image and will still have the capacity for freedom of thought and self-determination that in a small way mirrors God’s complete power and freedom to be, to do, and to create. Although the Eden narrative makes it clear that God created humans for social interaction and fulfillment, it also very clear that God sees each human as an individual—creating them to be dissimilar yet similar to each other, allowing them to speak for themselves, make their own decisions, and receive their own judgments and blessings from him.

As part of this God-designed constitutional potential to image God in human nature, there is also a possibility (from the text) that there may be some physical resemblance between God and humans.<sup>16</sup> The Eden narrative certainly shows God being able to relate to the physicality of his human creation, and to relate within the physicality of his created world. This is not to say that God is physical, like his human creation, but simply that he himself has some constitutional capacity that allows him to relate to his physical creation.

But aside from all the textual evidence of humans’ physical constitution, could there still be an indication from the Eden narrative that humans possess any sort of non-physical or mental constitution? Biblical scholars may increasingly concur that the term

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<sup>16</sup> See footnote 31 of Chapter 2.



נפש חיה (“living being/creature”) specifies a physical constitution, but what about the term נשמת חיים (“breath of life”)?<sup>17</sup> Genesis 2:7: “And the Lord God formed/fashioned האדם from the dust of the ground (מִן־הָאֲדָמָה) and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים) and האדם became a living being/creature (נִפְשׁ חַיָּה).” Could such a “breath of life” from God infill humans with a constitutional element that is non-physical, or mental? With no evidence in the Eden narrative pointing to that, this dissertation looked at all other occurrences of this term in the Old Testament and found that it never refers to anything that would indicate a constitution that is not fully physical.<sup>18</sup> Similarly to חיה נפש, נשמת חיים refers to the physical act of living—and specifically with the word נשמת, to the act of breathing that makes living possible.

Furthermore, the breath of life in the Old Testament is described as God’s breath—it gives life to his creatures and he can withdraw it at will. In addition, as with נפש חיה, נשמת חיים is also used in relation to animals.<sup>19</sup> Thus, in the Eden narrative itself there is no evidence of anything other than a physical constitution for humans, similar to what the rest of God’s earthly creatures possess. This naturally simplifies the issue of mental-physical interaction that is such a dilemma in certain models of personal ontology. In the Eden narrative, we do not find the typical problem of interaction between the physical and mental, for that interaction takes place naturally and automatically since the narrative seems to show that every attribute is a part of the same physical substance. Here the whole human person is called a “living being/creature.”

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<sup>17</sup> For more on the meaning of נפש חיה, see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>18</sup> For more on this study of נשמת חיים, see also Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>19</sup> See especially Gen 7:22 and footnote 40 of Chapter 3.

Sometimes “living being/creature” (נפש חיה) is translated as “living soul,” but it is clear from the Bible that this term indicates a unitary “self,” “person,” or “life,” one that is breathing and living and indivisible.<sup>20</sup>

Another important point highlighted in the Eden narrative is that this unitary human entity is innately mortal. We have glimpsed this through the etymological connection between האדם and האדמה. But texts such as Gen 3:19—“for dust you [are] and to dust you will return”—reinforce the biblical reality of mortality in humans. In fact, when Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden after the Fall, the reason God gave was that now, in addition to becoming sinners by eating of the forbidden tree, the first humans might also eat from the tree of life “and live forever” (3:22). Here it is shown that the cause for Adam and Eve’s “living forever” was eating from the tree of life. A reasonable inference from the text is that the tree did not have any magical properties of itself and the life it conferred was a gift from God.<sup>21</sup> Thus “living forever” was not something that was possible for the first humans innately.

Graciously, God did not leave Adam and Eve without hope of that life. For even before God declared his judgments upon them for their sin, he declared to them the promise of that life they longed for (3:15) through the death of the Messianic Seed. The first couple understood clearly that such a promise would come through the seed of the woman, for immediately after God proclaimed his judgments on them, Adam names his wife “Eve, because she was the mother of all living” (3:20). So the Eden narrative shows

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<sup>20</sup> The trajectory of modern biblical scholarship on this subject agrees with this, deviating from the traditional classical conception of a non-physical soul. “In the last two centuries, biblical scholars have increasingly moved toward a consensus that both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament provide a holistic model of the human person” (Shults, 175). See the section on “Mental-Physical Interaction” in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>21</sup> See the last couple pages of the section “Mental-Physical Interaction” in Chapter 3.

that living forever is not an intrinsic attribute of humans, but an external gift of God. There is no innate human immortality; this correlates with the Eden narrative's description of human constitution as physical, with no indication of any non-physical constitutional element that would account for any innate human immortality.

## Nature

If the Eden narrative shows a constitution that is physical, as is the animals', then what makes humans unique? What is responsible for their high mental and spiritual capabilities? These questions are answered through a study of what that narrative has to say about human nature. As we proceed to review this dissertation's findings on that subject, we must keep in mind that since the Eden narrative shows humans to have a physical constitution, every function of their human nature is thus located in that physical constitution.

## Functions

What are the functions of human nature that are revealed in the Eden narrative? There are several: the biological/physical, the relational, the emotional/psychological, the mental, the volitional, the spiritual. They encompass every aspect of what it means to be a human being, they are part of what it means to be created in God's image (Gen 1:26), and they are rooted in the physical constitution of the human person. This summary now turns to briefly look at the capabilities of each of these God-given functions of human nature.

The biological/physical function is shown in the Eden narrative as it relates to God's provision of food for humans (Gen 1:29, 30), their appetite for it (3:6), Adam and

Eve's painful physical labor (3:16-20), and their constant experience with death in the world around them (3:19, 21). Thankfully, Adam and Eve also live with evidences of life and hope, even after they are cast out of Eden (3:15, 20, 21, 23). They find solace in a hope of salvation that is not merely a spiritual hope, but a future physical reality that will bring an end to pain and death and will restore the Edenic bliss they once knew.

The relational function of human nature is created and instituted by God, and shown very clearly in the Eden narrative. God created humans male and female (1:27), he instituted the cleaving and oneness of marriage (2:18-24), and he blessed and commissioned Adam and Eve jointly ("them") to procreate and to rule over his creation as his representatives (1:28). God also created animals male and female and gave them the same commission to "be fruitful and become many" (1:22, 28; 2:18-20), but there are major differences in how God describes their union compared with that of Adam and Eve. God first created Adam alone, allowed him to experience that aloneness and wish for a mate like the animals had, and then he created Eve from Adam's very body (2:18-22). This intimate constitutional connection between Adam and Eve is mirrored in God's plan for them to cleave to each other and become "one flesh" in marriage (2:23-25). Furthermore, this "cleaving" indicates a joining that is beyond constitutional; it is a joining of their natures as well—physical, emotional, spiritual, and in every aspect of who they are as humans.

In this first human relationship, Eve was to be עֹזֵר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ in relation to Adam, a "helper comparable" to him. "Helper" is an honorable term in the Old Testament, often describing how God "helps" humans. "Comparable" is an intriguing conjunctive term, linking prepositions that denote similarity and dissimilarity. This shows that God's plan

of bringing into union two different genders is part of what makes marriage capable of being an institution that supports husband and wife (2:18, 24, 25), is procreative (1:29; 2:24), and is of blessing to the world (1:28).

Adam and Eve were the first humans to live on earth, but once the human population increased, many other relationships formed. The Eden narrative reveals that the first humans desired social relationships (2:20, 23; 3:6, 8, 9; 1:28). And truly, one aspect of human nature is the social nature (seen more clearly once human population grew), which extends beyond the marriage relationship, and can extend to all people as well as to God (3:8, 9). Even in the Eden narrative, we see a foretaste of that element of human nature that was soon to develop more.

Another function of human nature that is evidenced in the Eden narrative is the emotional/psychological function. Before the Fall, the expression of this function was only joy, peace, oneness, longing, and positive feelings (2:19, 23-25; 3:6, 17). After the Fall, the first couple's eyes were opened to good and evil (3:5, 22), and they also experienced good and evil emotionally and psychologically. The first recorded negative feelings and acts were shame, guilt, fear, blame, deception, and a loss of innocence (3:7-13). Even God's solution to the sin problem involved enmity, a strong emotion that would never have been experienced before the Fall (3:15).

The Eden narrative displays also the mental function of human nature—manifested not only in rationality and intellect, but in aesthetic appreciation as well. Why was it that God chose humans, of all his creation, to serve as his vice-regents over his newly created world? They were the ones who were most like him, created in his own

image. That mandate to rule was given to humans partly because he knew that they possessed the mental function necessary to rule well.

Furthermore Adam and Eve are also shown, in this narrative, to express their wonder and appreciation at the aesthetic beauty and magnificence of God's creation, an appreciation that would help them in ruling his creation with care and grace (2:9, 23; 3:6). We are able to witness Adam and Eve's high mental functioning in part because of their ability to express their thoughts eloquently through language, an outstanding feature of the human mental function. The mental function also craved growth and was curious, for better or worse. Unfortunately, this attribute contributed to the human fall as Eve chose to have the knowledge of both good and evil, a choice which did broaden the knowledge contained in human minds while simultaneously degrading those minds.

In addition to the functions above, the Eden narrative reveals that God created Adam and Eve with a volitional function to their human nature. Before sin, God spoke to humans the first five imperatives (1:28) and his command regarding the trees, including the warning about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:16, 17).<sup>22</sup> After sin, Adam and Eve both, and in different ways, had the opportunity to exercise the volitional function of their nature in response to their first serious temptation. They both failed in this test. Eve trusted her own mind and the sensory evidence before her (fruit that was good for food and aesthetically delightful; a seemingly wise serpent that spoke) over trusting and obeying the word of God. Adam made the moral choice to follow Eve, his own flesh, instead of his God, the Maker of all flesh.

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<sup>22</sup> "The Lord commanded the man" regarding his permission to eat from any tree of the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The word for "commanded" here is related to מצוה, "commandment," the same term used for God's moral law.

Although God sufficiently warned them about this temptation, he gave them the freedom to make their own choices and to experience the consequences of whatever choices they made. Now, possessing the knowledge of both good and evil, humans had more opportunities to confront sin and temptation. But they also possessed the new gift of enmity, which would aid their wills in the work of avoiding and resisting temptation (3:15).

Lastly, one of the most important functions of human nature that God designed humans to have is the spiritual function, to communicate and be in tune with him. Before the Fall, אדם had the ability and capacity to see and speak and have a relationship with God (1:27-31; 2:15-24), to a far greater extent than any interaction chronicled between God and the rest of his creatures. After the Fall, God did not change, but humans experienced sin and shame and fear, which put limitations on their communion with God which were not there before the Fall (3:7, 8). Now their moral innocence was gone, they felt vulnerable in their shame and guilt, and they worked to get flimsy coverings to conceal their nakedness.

God comes to them in fairness and love during their time of desperation. He dignifies humanity by treating Adam and Eve still as ones created in his image, even though they are now sinners. He asks them questions, following the manner of a covenant lawsuit, and allows them to incriminate themselves through their answers (3:8-13). He then curses the serpent, and presents Adam and Eve with the protoevangelium—all before moving on to issue them the judgments for their sin. So, because of God's kindness, even while the first humans are being exiled from their Edenic home, they have the promise of restoration on which to set their hope. And even while they experience

the tragic realities of living in a world of sin, they hold on to the promise of salvation that is theirs through faith in their Creator and Redeemer.

Through the spiritual function of human nature, they are able to understand and experience such spiritual truths to a far greater degree than any of God's other earthly creatures. But alas, because of their position of rulership over the world, the earth itself is now enslaved to sin, and the death that results from human sin. And yet it is also subject in hope because of the promise of full redemption and freedom to come (Rom 8:19-24).

Although all these functions of human nature are capable of being discussed individually, as they were here, they all nevertheless form an indivisible unit of human nature. And even as the Eden narrative provides glimpses of all these different functions of human nature, it also presents these functions as working seamlessly together, making up what it means to be a whole human. Furthermore, based on the lack of evidence in the Eden narrative of any constitutional substance other than the physical substance, we conclude from the text that all these functions of human nature are produced by that one constitution, which is the physical constitution. So what is it that makes humans unique from the rest of God's earthly creation?

### **Humaniqueness**

Humaniqueness is a term that has recently been used to describe what makes human cognition unique or special from that of any other species.<sup>23</sup> A goal of this dissertation is to determine what accounts for humaniqueness according to the Eden

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<sup>23</sup> This term, used in this context, was first attributed to the evolutionary biologist Marc Hauser.



narrative. That narrative certainly shows that humans hold the exalted position in God's earthly creation, even while it brings out the interrelationships within God's created ecosystem.<sup>24</sup> The Eden narrative also describes God creating humans with a special and intimate care, a care that is unique when compared to his manner of creating anything else in creation week. From the beginning of the creation of human beings, there was a divine council that planned their creation (Gen 1:26). And here, even the grammar of that verse points towards God's special attention to the creation of **הָאָדָם**, an intimate involvement he had in this specific creation.<sup>25</sup>

Genesis 2 reinforces even more the uniqueness of God's creation of humans as it describes the very personal creative acts accomplished by God in making Adam and Eve. First, the verb "formed/fashioned" (**יָצַר**) is used to describe how God made Adam from the ground as a potter would make a vessel (2:7). Then, God breathed into Adam's nostrils his own breath, an especially personal act that showcases God's special attention to the creation of **הָאָדָם**.<sup>26</sup> When God created Eve, the verb used for her creation is built/constructed (**בָּנָה**), the same verb used of an architect and builder who constructs an edifice (2:22). This occurrence is the only time in the Eden narrative that the verb **בָּנָה** is used, indicating the special and personal importance of the creation of the woman here by God. In summary, there is no parallel in the Eden narrative between the manner in which

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<sup>24</sup> Textual evidence pointing to how humans do hold that exalted place in creation (according to the Eden narrative) can be reviewed by looking at chapter 3 of this dissertation or at Samaan Nedelcu's "What Makes Humans Human?" (including the sources found in those footnotes, which also offer evidence of humans' special place in creation according to the biblical account of creation).

<sup>25</sup> In this verse, the "cohortative of resolve" is used, as opposed to the "impersonal jussive" that is used in connection to the creation of land animals. See Sarna, 11.

<sup>26</sup> "*Breathed* is warmly personal, with the face-to-face intimacy of a kiss and the significance that this was giving as well as making, and self-giving at that" (Kidner, 60).

the creation of humans is described and the manner in which any other creation is described.

Additionally humans, of all the earthly creatures, were given the commission to rule over the entire creation. And even more, in Genesis 3 when the first humans sin, God promises the hope of salvation to them—a promise that would be realized through God becoming a human, a baby born from the line of Adam and Eve. God chooses humans, though unworthy, to be the recipients of infinite honor. Their place in creation is unique, and their place in God’s eyes is unprecedented within creation. God chose humans to be unique and special in creation, even though this does not diminish his love and care for the rest of his creatures. But why did God choose humans?

Of all creation, God chose humans alone to bear his image. Along with this exquisite honor of being created in the image of God comes special responsibilities and capacities given to humans alone.<sup>27</sup> It is because **האדם** is made in the image of God that God places such honor and worth upon **האדם**: “Whoever sheds the blood of **האדם**, **באדם** his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God he made **האדם**” (Gen 9:6). It is to humans that God declares the protoevangelium. And because they bear God’s image, God at creation commissions **האדם** to be his vice-regents (1:28).<sup>28</sup> Being created in God’s image gives humans the capacity to rule his creation. And the more humans behold and imitate

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<sup>27</sup> Expounding on Genesis’ creation narrative, Psalm 8:5 reinforces the honor and preeminence given to humans in all creation: “You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings [or, “than God”!] and crowned him with glory and honor.” For more on the translational ambiguity here, see Radu Gheorgita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 44-46.

<sup>28</sup> Psalm 8’s exposition of Genesis’ creation narrative continues: “You make him to rule over the works of your hands; You have put all things under his feet” (8:6).

God, the more clearly they bear his image in every function of their nature, causing them to truly rule well as his representatives.

The *imago Dei* chiasm given in Gen 1:27 is the linguistic and thematic climax of the Gen 1 creation narrative. Thus the text affords the *imago Dei* supreme importance in its first description of humans, what they are, where they came from, and who they were made to be. In the Eden narrative, the *imago Dei* is also the key differentiator between humans and the rest of God's earthly creatures. Thus the *imago Dei* is intrinsically linked to human uniqueness and identity. But what is the *imago Dei* exactly? The history of Christian thought has offered a myriad of answers to this question.<sup>29</sup> One of the goals of this dissertation, however, is to uncover answers to such questions directly from the biblical text. In this way, it will be possible to judge current answers on the basis of exegetical study. Thus the question was asked: If we seek to understand the image of God from the Eden narrative, would it not be crucial to study who the Eden narrative portrays God to be? For how can we understand his image without understanding what the image is of—him!

Thus our study turned to look at God in the Eden narrative, and in doing so we first noticed that here God has two appellations— *Elohim* and *YHWH Elohim*. We then asked, What is the image of *Elohim*? And what is the image of *YHWH Elohim*? *Elohim* depicts a God who is the all-powerful Creator, Designer, and Ruler of everything we know—thus speaking to the transcendent greatness of God. *YHWH Elohim* adds *YHWH*, God's covenant name, and highlights the relational intimacy he desires to have with his creatures. Using *YHWH* and *Elohim* together balances the intimacy of *YHWH* with the authority and transcendence of *Elohim*. Thus the God of the Eden narrative is the

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<sup>29</sup> See the section “Unique Significance of the *Imago Dei*” in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, especially around page 131.

masterful Creator, intelligent Designer, omnipotent Ruler, and he is the God of relationships who compassionately and fairly leads through tender care and loving loyalty.

Created in his image, humans are meant to live their lives to image both of these aspects of God. How are they to do this? The best answer comes in the verse where God blesses Adam and Eve and gives them their commissions, the verse immediately after the all-important *imago Dei* verse (1:27, 28). Here God tells humans what it means to live out the *imago Dei* life for which they were created. God commissions the first human couple with these five imperatives: “be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it and rule over [the animals]” (1:28). In the words immediately preceding this commission and blessing, God states that he created “male and female” as **הָאָדָם** in his image. This male-female partnership (2:18’s **עֶזְרָא כְּגִבּוֹר**, where both together are **הָאָדָם**) is God’s design that enables humans to fulfill the commission he gives them at their creation.

God’s commission to the first humans brings out two important ways by which they are to live out the *imago Dei*. First, they are created to thrive in intimate relationships.<sup>30</sup> And second, in and through such relationships they are to rule the earth as God’s vice-regents. It is through relationship that they are able to fully experience the life for which God made them. It is through relationship that they realize their power—to procreate and to rule well. As the members of the Godhead rule the universe through the

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<sup>30</sup> These relationships can in a small way, in their oneness and plurality, reflect the relationships within the Godhead. See Jiří Moskala, “Toward Trinitarian Thinking in the Hebrew Scriptures.”

internal richness of their partnership with each other, so humans can also rule the earth better because of their partnership with each other.

To truly bear God's image in their role of vice-regency, humans are to rule in a way that exhibits both the *Elohim* and *YHWH Elohim* aspects of who God is. Their power and authority are to be mixed with wisdom and intelligent strategy, along with a love for the world and all its inhabitants that manifests itself in tender care, sympathetic regard, power-sharing, and self-sacrifice. As humans live this life of intimate relationship that gives rise to active rulership and service, as they live out their commission and in their sphere reflect both the *Elohim* and *YHWH Elohim* aspects of God, then humans truly live as God's children and representatives, bearing his image here on earth.

In addition, the notion of sonship can shed light on the meaning of the *imago Dei*, because it is brought up in the very next occurrence of צלם after the Eden narrative. In the record of the birth of Seth, Gen 5:3 states that "Adam lived a hundred and thirty years and begat a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and called his name Seth." This usage mirrors 1:26, which states that האדם was created "in the image of God, according to his likeness." As children are similar to their parents and capable of having a special bond with them, so humans are similar to God, their Creator and Father, and are capable of having a special bond with him.<sup>31</sup> As this unique father-son similarity and bond can encompass every aspect of the child's life (similarity in outward appearance

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<sup>31</sup> The New Testament is the most clear in its calling God the Father of humans. Especially clear is Luke's genealogy (3:38) in connecting God as both Creator and Father of Adam—"the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God" (it must be noted that "son" does not actually occur in the Greek of this text, but is implied from the Greek usage in verse 23, where "son" is used in the first statement of the list of ancestors).

and inner characteristics, often in vocation and life course as well), so humans' similarity to God their Father can encompass every aspect of their life and nature as well. This reinforces an interpretation of the *imago Dei* that relates it to the whole person, and not simply to one aspect of the person.<sup>32</sup>

Now how exactly can the *imago Dei* be realized in the whole person, in every aspect of human life and nature? First, with the full vigor of the biological/physical function of their human nature, Adam and Eve and all humans are to pattern their working after God's working. They are to work wisely and strategically, with strength and authority, with tender service and sacrificial love. They are to eat the food that God has provided for them, and exercise their health and vitality. Next, in respect to the relational function of human nature, the Eden narrative reveals a oneness and plurality in the relationship of marriage. This can reflect the oneness and plurality that is found in the relationship of the Godhead. It also shows that humans have the capacity for a range of close relationships; indeed, they are made in the image of a relational God.

Furthermore, the Eden narrative reveals a God who experiences emotion and who created humans with an emotional/psychological function of their human nature. Before the Fall, humans only experienced positive emotions, but after sin, negative ones came as well. God designed humans to be able to experience life emotionally, and Gen 3 shows how he is able to tenderly lead humans through negative emotional and psychological states to arrive at peace, hope, and joy again. Now with humans' mental function, we see even more the effects of the *imago Dei* in humans. Humans, more than any other earthly creatures, come the closest to imitating God's mental function (although there is

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<sup>32</sup> Kenneth A. Matthews, 167-69.

obviously a vast difference between God's mental capabilities and humans'). Not only are humans able to explore their world, analyze information and process it intellectually, but they are able to create complex technologies, artistic masterpieces, and intricate philosophical and societal systems. This is facilitated by their usage of oral and written language to transmit information to each other and to their posterity.

Additionally, humans have a volitional function that is unparalleled when compared with the rest of God's earthly creation. The choices open to them involve their own wellbeing and eternal destiny, and often that of their posterity as well. With this God-given capability, humans can choose to emulate the types of choices that God, and especially the incarnate Christ, made—choices that epitomize the qualities of justice and mercy, goodness, humble service, and self-sacrificing love. Finally, because of the spiritual function of their nature, humans have an unprecedented capability to know God, to communicate with him, and to understand the grand themes of salvation. Through the revealed word of God, they are able to see beyond what is seen, to study the ways of God in the cosmic conflict brought about by the devil's rebellion. God himself desires to be known by humans, and desires to reside within them through his Spirit. As they live out this close relationship, humans are best enabled to fulfill God's commissions to bear offspring and rule the world, and to do both in ways that exemplify God's character and kingdom.

This is what makes humans unique: they are created personally by God and bear his image—an image that allows them to be more like him than any other earthly creature, in every function of their nature. Because of this, God calls them his children

and calls them to be his vice-regents, to perpetuate his kingdom of love on earth, as they develop and utilize all the functions of their nature wholistically for his glory.

### Edenic Model of Personal Ontology

The Eden narrative presents a view of personal ontology in which there is no evidence for humans having anything other than a physical constitution. Yet in spite of the similarity of their constitution to that of animals, the Eden narrative exalts the place of humans in creation. According to the text, this is because of the uniqueness of humans—being created personally and intimately by God, and being created in God’s image. These factors mean that humans are created with the capacity and the responsibility to image God in every function of their human nature—biological/physical, relational, emotional/psychological, mental, volitional, and spiritual. As they produce offspring and rule the world as a team and according to God’s commission, they represent him as they bear his image.

That humans come from this ground and will return to it is a dominant theme in the Eden narrative—evidenced by the name, and even the work, given to humans (אדמה). This physical make-up accounts for every aspect of human nature (even the mental and spiritual), and because of this there is no problem of mental-physical interaction, a problem that is found in several other models of personal ontology.<sup>33</sup> Humans have life (temporal and eternal) as a gift from God and not because of anything intrinsic to their constitution or nature. God supremely values humans, sacrificing himself to offer redemption even when they exercised their God-given volitional function to rebel against

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<sup>33</sup> Some still find it difficult, however, to understand how mental properties can come from a physical substance.



him. Humans are the crowning work of God’s earthly creation, his own children. He chooses them to be his vice-regents, to rule for him, to exemplify his character in every function of their nature, to represent who he is to the world. This is the model of personal ontology that emerges from the Eden narrative. How does it compare with prominent models of personal ontology in Christian theology today?

### **Comparison of Models**

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to compare the models that have been discussed in this dissertation. It first reviews how substance dualist models, physicalist models, and the Edenic model conceive of human constitution and human nature. It then compares specifically the substance dualist and the physicalist model groupings to see how their positions on constitution and nature align. Finally, the question is taken up: “Does the Edenic model provide a way forward in the current debate?” The answer comes by revisiting the Edenic model’s views on constitution and nature, by looking at some of the questions of personal ontology that form the current debate, and by assessing whether the Edenic model contributes beneficial answers to some of these questions.

In regard to human constitution, substance dualist models are united in holding that the human person is constituted of two substances—the physical and the mental (or spiritual, or “soul”). Physicalist models are united in believing that the human person is constituted of one substance—the physical. These model groupings have much variation within them, but do agree on this basic framework.

According to the Edenic model, what is the Eden narrative’s perspective on human constitution? This narrative is the crucial source to study because it is the narrative of the very creation of the human constitution. The Eden narrative gives no

evidence that there is anything more than one substance, the physical. In fact, it stresses humans' intimate connection with the ground (1:27; 2:7; 3:19). Significantly, the term "living being/creature" (and even "breath of life") is not used exclusively of humans, but is used in relation to animals too (1:20, 21; 2:7, 19; 7:22). The importance of these terms seems to be in conveying that humans and animals are alive, living, breathing, animated.

What then of human nature? According to substance dualism, the non-physical substance of humans is where their nature resides. This substance is what makes humans unique and what accounts for at least all of their spiritual functions (perhaps even all their "higher functions"). Opposite this is physicalism, where human nature resides in the physical substance because that is the only substance that is. Human physical constitution then accounts for every function of human nature, including the spiritual and "higher" functions. All these functions are generally seen in a wholistic, interrelated manner. But according to physicalism, what is it that makes humans unique? While the answers may vary between different physicalist models, in general human uniqueness, according to physicalism, has to do with a high level of human complexity manifested in human nature, usually centering around the brain and its mental capacities. Whichever thing accounts for this human uniqueness is also usually the factor that is identified as the *imago Dei* in humans, for that model.

The Eden narrative does reveal a constitutional similarity between humans and animals, but it also highlights the human uniqueness of human nature. What accounts for this human uniqueness? According to that narrative, the greatest differentiator between humans and animals is humans' special creation by God in his own image. This capacity to bear God's image—to be more like God than any other creature can—has an effect on

every function of human nature. So human nature and all its functions are still rooted in the physical constitution (since we find no evidence of any non-physical human constitution in the Eden narrative). But human nature bears the image of God, and this is the mark of its uniqueness. Because humans are the bearers of God's image, they are commissioned to be his vice-regents in the world, and to cultivate deep partnerships, including a saving relationship with God. As they follow him, the *imago Dei* in them becomes more accurate and distinct.

### Comparing Substance Dualist and Physicalist Models of Personal Ontology

Historically, substance dualist models have been predominant in classical Christian theology. This may have remained true if it were not for the rise of science, which tended to promote a naturalistic worldview alongside it. As a result of this, Christian theology increasingly found itself at odds with this new worldview and reacted in a variety of ways. One of these ways was to develop models that sought to bridge the gap between classical theology and science. In the domain of personal ontology, physicalist models often have this as their purpose. But how well are they able to accomplish this purpose?

Both substance dualist and physicalist models have largely adopted views of human origins that are influenced by theories of evolutionism. So in stepping away from interpreting the Edenic creation account as historical, physicalist models are not unique. However, there are a few other ways in which physicalist models are more compatible (than substance dualist models would be) with conventional scientific views.

One such way involves the issues of unity and interaction, which are roadblocks that keep many from adopting substance dualist models. If, according to substance dualism, there are two fundamental substances that make up the human constitution, can these two different substances relate to each other, can they interact? If so, how would they interact, and can they form the unified whole of the human person? Substance dualism has sought to offer various solutions, but for the most part, those have not succeeded in convincing non-dualists. Physicalism's explanation has a real advantage here, however. If one holds that there is only one fundamental substance, then there is no problem of unity or interaction. Furthermore, human persons are then essentially unified, because they are constituted of only one basic substance. Moreover, there is also no problem of interaction because all functions of human nature share a common ground—their physical constitution—that makes possible such interaction.

Physicalism may have the advantage in these two questions of unity and interaction, but substance dualism is often thought to have better explanatory power in addressing four additional questions of personal ontology—human identity, consciousness, free will, and destiny. This is because substance dualism takes the soul or mental substance to be the cause of human identity, the seat of consciousness, and the explanation for free will. Additionally, such non-physical substance is often considered to be immortal, which in turn is the basis for a belief in an immortal human destiny after death. While such a view of an immortal “soul” cannot be demonstrated through scientific evidence (and it is ardently debated whether it can be demonstrated through

biblical evidence), it can be demonstrated through philosophical reason. In fact, even Nancey Murphy states “dualism cannot be *proven* false.”<sup>34</sup>

How then do physicalists answer the questions above? Because of the advances of science, they believe that there are now physical explanations (in human constitution and nature) to things which were once considered to be attributes of the soul (non-physical substance). As an example they might say that the soul would no longer be necessary as an explanation for human uniqueness, for now science can answer this question by looking at the features of the human genome that are unique to humans. Moreover, physicalists believe that if answers to questions of personal ontology can be found from scientific evidence, it is preferable to hold to such explanations instead of ones that do not have scientific backing.

Furthermore, because of the incredible advances in brain science and genetics in the last few decades, physicalists assume that in the future science will be able to offer insight to even more questions of personal ontology, since it has already offered insight to some. This gap between what science has already demonstrated and what is believed that it will demonstrate in the future can be called the explanatory gap.<sup>35</sup> Understandably, it is a point of criticism against physicalism.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> This is because “a dualist can always appeal to correlations or functional relations between soul and brain/body.” Murphy believes, however, that advances in science take away the necessity of such a non-physical explanation. *Bodies and Souls*, 112.

<sup>35</sup> This term is most often used in the discussion over consciousness. See Levine, “Materialism and Qualia.”

<sup>36</sup> Eccles calls them “promissory materialists.” See his *How the Self Controls Its Brain*, 7: “Promissory materialism is simply a superstition held by dogmatic materialists. It has all the features of a Messianic prophecy, with the promise of a future freed of all problems—a kind of Nirvana for our unfortunate successors. In contrast the true scientific attitude is that scientific problems are unending in providing challenges to attain an even wider and deeper understanding of nature and man.”

Turning back to the four questions of personal ontology raised above (human identity, consciousness, free will, and destiny), we look more closely now at human identity or humaniqueness. Physicalists hold that there is a physical basis for humaniqueness. Perhaps it could be brain regions that account for unique human functions, or human accelerated regions that are regions of DNA sequence that are unique to humans. With any such physical explanations for humaniqueness, there is generally seen to be a continuum between animals and humans with no qualitative difference between them. The human organism is simply more complexly structured, or capable of more complex mental functions. Substance dualists, on the other hand, are reticent to accept such quantitative differences as a sufficient explanation for humaniqueness—especially given the high station the Bible and Christian tradition affords humans, and given substance dualist’s belief that the “soul” provides a better answer to this question.

Moving on to the question of consciousness, scientists have been able to discover neural correlates to some aspects of consciousness. But such discoveries have still not delivered answers to the “hard problem of consciousness,” which includes such facets as qualia (or, “the way things *seem* to us”).<sup>37</sup> Physicalists, however, can state that substance dualists have not done any better in explaining the details of consciousness or qualia.

However, the fact still remains that physicalism is based on a scientific (often naturalistic) explanation of the world, and substance dualism is not. So whereas substance dualism does not rely on scientific evidence for its tenets, the bar is higher for physicalism’s use of science. Substance dualism can provide a philosophically plausible

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<sup>37</sup> Daniel C. Dennett, “Quining Qualia,” in William G. Lycan, ed., *Mind and Cognition: A Reader* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell, 1990), 519-48. Some examples of qualia could be the taste of tea or the feeling of rain.

argument and that can be sufficient within its own framework. But if physicalism does the same, it should also be prepared to then argue its position philosophically, without appealing to the findings of science. Substance dualists would argue that physicalism should not appeal to science when helpful, and then be able to hold their position unchanged when an important finding from science is absent or promissory. Physicalists should not assume that science will provide the answers they need, or that once those answers come they will always support physicalism.

Now regarding the question of free will, physicalism often faces criticism. The argument is this: if the physical accounts for every aspect of the human person, then the physical should also necessarily determine every aspect of the human person. So if my brain controls me, and my neurons control my brain, and my atoms control my neurons—all guided by my DNA—then do I really have free will, or are my choices merely the product of the physics, chemistry, and biology in my body? Physicalists generally deny such a level of determinism and point to the indeterminism of quantum physics, among other things, to support their defense.<sup>38</sup> For its part, substance dualism claims that having a non-physical substance (like the “soul”) be responsible for many human actions takes away the problem of determinism that confronts physicalism.

The last question we will take up here is that of human destiny. For most substance dualists, the non-physical substance of the human person is able to survive physical death, and can thus account for the belief in an afterlife that Christianity (and almost every other religion) holds. But for physicalists, how is a human destiny that

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<sup>38</sup> Robert John Russell, Nancey Murphy, and C.J. Isham, eds. *Quantum Cosmology and the Laws of Nature*. Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action. Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory and Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 1993.

persists after physical death possible? By and large, physicalists would say that death entails the death of the whole person. Yet for the most part, they still also hold on to a belief in the afterlife. Most affirm the biblical teaching of the resurrection, that God is able to resurrect even a human that is wholly dead. But some also think it is plausible to hold on to a belief in the intermediate state. They admit that many of the lines of reasoning around this topic are speculative and quite complex.<sup>39</sup> And so rather than committing to one specific theory, they generally investigate a variety of theories that describe how an afterlife could logically be possible.

#### Edenic Model of Personal Ontology

Both substance dualism and physicalism seek to offer answers to current questions of personal ontology, and both have advantages and disadvantages in answering such questions. For example, the physicalist worldview, by its very nature, has ready answers to the questions of unity and interaction, where substance dualism can be perceived to be at a disadvantage here because of its dualistic suppositions. On the other hand, the questions of human identity, consciousness, free will, and destiny are sometimes seen as having inadequate answers from physicalism when compared with substance dualism.

Basically, both of these model groupings seek to answer current questions of personal ontology in a way that aligns with their (substance dualist or physicalist) presuppositions. This is understandable, for it is difficult to study or to truly know personal ontology of itself. Studying one's own constitution and nature can be an

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<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Kevin J. Corcoran, "Dualism, Materialism and the Problem of Post Mortem Survival," *Philosophia Christi* 4 (2002).



abstruse and mysterious thing. And even the more recent discoveries in science may not always answer our questions, but merely serve to whet our appetites for more discoveries, as they themselves trigger new questions and new possibilities for answers. Indeed it is difficult to arrive at an objective source of truth for personal ontology. The strong presuppositions inherent in substance dualism and in physicalism can sometimes color one's ability to arrive at true answers if they do not align with the presuppositions one holds. And even if there was an objectively true answer that did not align with any of these presuppositions, how would we be able to know that?

The biblical canon comes the closest to providing a source for Christian theology that all Christians could acknowledge. The interpretation of this source, however, is often also influenced by presuppositions, whether or not those presuppositions are derived from Scripture. Thus the aim of this dissertation has been to study the portion of the Bible that was deemed to be the best and most comprehensive representation of the biblical view of personal ontology. To this end, the Eden narrative was studied using phenomenological-exegetical analysis, which seeks to allow the text to speak for itself without basing its interpretation on *a priori* beliefs. The hope was that a view of personal ontology would emerge that would provide a new, helpful, or unifying perspective, one that could meaningfully contribute to the discussion regarding current questions of personal ontology. Was this hope realized? Let us review the evidence.

Analysis of the Eden narrative revealed that human beings, God's greatest and most personal creation, were physically constituted in their substance. Furthermore, the narrative gives no evidence that they would have had any constitutional element that would not also have been had by the animals. This means that in the Edenic model's

conclusions in regard to constitution, it, by definition, aligns with physicalist models. As such, it shares the benefits of physicalism's ready answers to the questions of unity and interaction.

But does this mean that the Edenic model would also share the weaknesses of physicalism when it comes to answering questions that relate to human nature?

According to the Eden narrative, that answer is no—and also that physicalist models need not have those weaknesses if they follow the example of the Edenic model. How so?

While the Eden narrative presents humans as having a physical constitution, it also presents them as having a unique identity, with consciousness, self-determination, and the capacity to receive eternal life. While all functions of human nature and all capabilities of the human person are rooted in their physical constitution, this narrative highly emphasizes one aspect of humans' creation that is of utmost significance.

Humans are created in the image of God by his own hand; as such, they fill an exalted place in his creation as his own children and viceregents. According to Gen 1, all six of the active days of creation lead up to the glory of the creation of humans on day six. And within this sixth day, the climax of the narrative is reserved for these words: “So God created  $\text{האדם}$  in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27; actually, these following words specifically are the greatest climax of that phrase: “in his own image, in the image of God”).

How do these insights from the Eden narrative make the Edenic model unique? After all, discussion about the *imago Dei* can be found in any of the models this dissertation has examined. The Edenic model, however, makes a unique contribution

because it shows how insights from the Eden narrative provide possible answers to some of the perceived weaknesses of current physicalist models.

For example, many Christians feel that since physicalism does not believe that humans are constituted in part by a non-physical substance, this takes away their ability to assert the special place of humans in creation and to give sufficient explanation for human consciousness, free will, and destiny. But, according to the Eden narrative, the *imago Dei* is the cause of and reason for humaniqueness. This capacity to bear God's image in every function of human nature is, more than anything else, what distinguishes humans from animals. There is nothing about this specific Edenic view that contradicts physicalism of itself, and physicalist models could be strengthened by incorporating it as a possible answer to certain shortcomings that physicalism is perceived to have.

Moving on to the question of consciousness, science has shown that animals also have consciousness to lesser or greater degrees. Perhaps there are some aspects of consciousness that are unique to humans, or perhaps the mental function of human nature is capable of a consciousness that is more complex than that of animals. This does not take away from human uniqueness, for that is based on the *imago Dei*. What then might account for certain unique features of human consciousness? If in our physicality, we as humans are created in God's image, would it not be possible for him to create us with an ability for a high level of consciousness that surpasses that which we can see of animal consciousness?

Now to the question of free will: it is obvious, from the Eden narrative, that human free will is crucially important to God. He allowed his perfect creation to be marred in order to uphold the principle of free will. While the Eden narrative does not

delve into the exact mechanisms that underlie how such free will might be possible, it does unequivocally affirm human free will while at the same time presenting no evidence of human constitution being anything more than physical. So while the text does not speak to the current questions of free will that are mostly based on modern scientific beliefs, it does uphold the reality of both human physicality and human free will. This should encourage Christian physicalists to continue to study how holding on to both of these is possible, for the biblical evidence is clear that it indeed is possible.

Finally, the Eden narrative presents humans as mortal creatures, dependent upon the tree of life and the gift of God for eternal life. If one abandons the traditional view of the immortal soul (or non-physical element), one is able to more fully grasp this testimony of the Eden narrative. Eternal life is something that is God's: to attain it, we do not need a special substance in ourselves, instead we need to know him, believe in him, follow him, and receive eternal life from him. The Eden narrative puts together human mortality and human eternal life, shows that they are not mutually exclusive, and reveals that this is how God created humans before sin and how humans remained after sin.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, the Eden narrative assures us that if God was mighty enough to create humans once, he is mighty enough to resurrect humans again at the end.

In conclusion, substance dualism has appealed to the soul (or a non-physical entity) to explain human uniqueness and the capacity for human consciousness, free will, and afterlife. What the Eden narrative shows is that it is not necessary to hold to a substance dualist view of human constitution in order to assert these things. The narrative of the human creation and fall holds together the reality of human physicality

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<sup>40</sup> The difference after sin is that some humans choose not to have eternal life because they choose not to walk with God. This was always a possibility before sin, but it was not realized until after sin.

and mortality along with human uniqueness and every human capacity and potential. In addition, the Edenic model's physical view of human constitution incorporates the advantages that physicalism has in answering the questions of human unity and interaction. And for the Edenic model, this is all possible because humans are created personally by God in his own image.

While this understanding does not answer in detail all the questions that science has raised in this current debate over personal ontology, it does affirm certain parameters for future study. For those who would value a biblical perspective that comes from the Eden narrative, the Edenic model asserts the reasonableness of affirming both human physicality and human uniqueness in all its manifestations. It encourages Christian theology to explore further the new questions about personal ontology that are being raised, but to do so within these twin parameters of human physicality and human uniqueness. Now, what are some implications of holding to the various models of personal ontology?

### **Implications**

The theological and ethical implications of personal ontology are abundant and significant, and extend to numerous aspects of human life on earth. On one side, some substance dualist models can elevate spiritual realities so much that they might even divorce them from physical realities. On another side, some physicalist models involve holding to an evolutionary view of human origins that downplays God's activity in the formation of human ontology, and can even undermine the biblical portrayal of God's character. The Edenic model avoids these hazards; it affirms every function of the physical constitution of the human entity, while adhering to the Genesis narrative of

creation in which God the Creator is presented as the active designer and builder of the human entity.

Substance dualism is often credited with promoting the ethical treatment of human beings, and some even choose substance dualist views over other alternatives because this implication is so significant. The reasoning states that if all humans possess a non-physical element of their entity which makes them uniquely human (whether that is called “soul” or something else), such an element endows all humans with a dignity that should be honored. This innate dignity that all humans possess by virtue of that “soul” then drives humankind to value each individual, regardless of ability or status.

Thus, substance dualists believe that the lives of people suffering from severe mental or physical handicaps should be valued and aided, because they still possess a soul (or a non-physical component of their constitutional entity) even though it may be obscured by their disabilities. Substance dualists also often uphold the sanctity of human life against such practices as abortion and euthanasia. Many of them believe that God miraculously implants a soul in each human embryo at the moment of conception.<sup>41</sup> Thus, life is sacred and should be protected for the duration of the soul’s presence in the body—from conception to death. Premature ending of that life by killing the body, whether by abortion or euthanasia, does not respect the sanctity of life, and really, the sanctity of the soul. Therefore, it is claimed that the sanctity of all human life is an

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<sup>41</sup> This is the Roman Catholic position, articulated by Pius XII and John Paul II. For more discussion, see Owen Flanagan, *The Problem of Soul: Two Visions of Mind and How to Reconcile Them* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 48-50.

“eminently Christian idea,” based on belief in an immortal human soul, which imparts a certain sacredness to every human being.<sup>42</sup>

However, if the “Christian idea” of the sanctity of human life is based on belief in the immortality of the soul, we also find non-Christian systems of thought that embrace the immortality of the soul. For example, ancient Greek culture and norms (that continued into the first centuries of the Christian church) were steeped in belief in the immortality of the soul. Yet this did not result in a high view of human life.<sup>43</sup> Abortion and infanticide (especially in cases of deformity) were not only accepted but expected.<sup>44</sup> The belief that all humans possessed an immortal soul also did not result in treating living humans with a dignity that would outlaw their enslavement or oppression. Thus history makes clear that belief in an immortal soul is not a sufficient cause to protect the sanctity and dignity of human life.

What element of Christian belief then correlates with a high view of human life? The Bible answers this question clearly: “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man” (Gen 9:6). Indeed the biblical assertion that humans are created in the image of God is sufficient to endow humans with this high value. Moreover, those who accept the biblical account of creation believe that humans originated from the very hand of God the Creator; and Christians in general believe that the Son of God died in order to offer salvation to the human race. Certainly such awesome realities of the divine creation and salvation of humans would infuse

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<sup>42</sup> William E.H. Lecky, *The History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*, vol. 2 (New York: George Braziller, 1955), 18; quoted in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 198.

<sup>43</sup> See *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 198, 199.

<sup>44</sup> See Stephanie Lynn Budin, *The Ancient Greeks: New Perspectives* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2004), 122, 123.

humanity with a value that comes from God alone. This gives Christians sufficient philosophical underpinnings to take a stand for the high valuation of human life, regardless of age, race, gender, status, or ability. Thus it is unnecessary to hold to an immortal soul as the element which makes possible a high view of human life, for the personal creation and salvation of humans by God is more than sufficient to suffuse human life with infinite value.

In comparison with substance dualism, the Edenic model is able to uphold human dignity while at the same time maintaining humankind's rootedness to this earth, which is a central notion in the Eden narrative. Substance dualist models, on the other hand, can tend to uphold human dignity by emphasizing human spirituality and de-emphasizing human physicality. This disproportionality can have some drawbacks, for it can disconnect humans from the important physical realities of life on earth.

An extreme example of such disproportionality would be asceticism.<sup>45</sup> For much of Christian history, the ascetic life was seen to be the pinnacle of spirituality. Of what did it consist? It consisted of a cultivation of the "soul" which entailed a mortification of the body, wherein the natural physical appetites were suppressed. In fact, it was believed that only when the body was suppressed could the soul fly free in its ascent to God.<sup>46</sup> This view is in opposition to the biblical affirmation that God created the body, that he deemed all his creation "very good," and that he gave all creatures the commission to "be

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<sup>45</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi discusses many implications of substance dualism, including this one, in Chapter 1 of his book.

<sup>46</sup> Augustine, both in his life's story and in his theology, serves as an exemplar of this view. For more on his denial of the pleasure principle, see *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 205, 206. Augustine's views on spirituality can also be classified as Christian anamnesis and divinization, views which differ from biblical conceptions of spirituality as exemplified in the lives of Bible heroes.



fruitful” even before sin entered the world. Therefore there is not anything unholy or sinful in all the materiality of what God originally created, nor is there any reason to eschew God-ordained pleasures that are a part of that creation (as long as they follow his design).<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, there is also no cause to physically separate oneself from material realities in order to develop one’s spirituality. Instead, followers of God should seek to reflect his image accurately in every function of their human nature, and to live out such a life as a witness to the world. Following the example of Christ, Christians should not just focus on “saving souls” but on bringing healing to the whole person as together we strive to restore the Edenic ideal.

In addition, adhering to an Edenic model of personal ontology will emphasize aspects of human living that God emphasized in the Eden narrative. For example, God saw his whole, completed creation and declared it to be “very good” (Gen 1:31). And those who hold the Edenic model will also have this view of creation—seeing it as God’s literal handiwork, affirming its goodness in its physicality, and working in the ecological sphere to preserve and care for it as the Creator himself would. Realizing that every Edenic human and animal was created as נפש חיה (“living being/creature”) will also impel those who hold the Edenic model to seek for the humane and kind treatment of animals. Furthermore, hope in God’s promise that one day he will create a new earth (Isa 65:17) also validates even more the goodness of creation. For the physical earth is not a second-

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<sup>47</sup> A book by Warren S. Brown and Brad D. Strawn, *The Physical Nature of Christian Life: Neuroscience, Psychology, and the Church* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2012), argues that substance dualism leads to a Gnostic view of spirituality. Brandon Rickabaugh and C. Stephen Evans defend substance dualism against this claim in their chapter “Neuroscience, Spiritual Formation, and Bodily Souls” in *Christian Physicalism?* ed. by R. Keith Loftin and Joshua R. Farris, 231-56.

best accommodation to house earthy bodies, the physical earth is indeed God's ideal plan and it will be recreated in perfection to be an eternal home for humans who will have glorified bodies (1 Cor 15:42-44, 50-53).<sup>48</sup>

The Edenic model will also cause Christians to champion the beauty and holiness of marriage and family as God in Eden designed it to be. In that plan, every aspect of it is lovely (the physical, the spiritual, etc.), it helps the image of God to be more fully revealed (Gen 1:27), and it provides a haven for the development of children who grow to also be the Creator's vice-regents on earth. In seeing both man and woman as created in the image of God (Gen 1:27), it also rejects the historical roots of sexual alienation in which men are viewed to be superior to women because they are rational creatures whereas women are irrational and driven by forces of the body.<sup>49</sup> It accepts the biblical account of creation that affirms both the full equality and the complementary distinctiveness of man and woman that was designed by God.

The Eden narrative also highlights the importance of work, even before the Fall. The work God ordained for the first humans was manual work—to serve/cultivate the ground.<sup>50</sup> This runs counter to any dualistic notion that elevates the cultivation of the spirit or mind over the exercise of the body. In actuality, physical exertion increases blood flow and oxygen intake, which quickens the mind and uplifts the spirit. The Creator gave work to humans as a blessing for their character and development, and the

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<sup>48</sup> Bacchiocchi, 31: "The Biblical view of the world to come is not a *spiritual heavenly retreat* inhabited by glorified souls, but this *physical earthly planet* populated by resurrected saints (Isa 66:22; Rev 21:1)."

<sup>49</sup> See *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* 205, 206.

<sup>50</sup> See Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Eden narrative demonstrates that honest work is always honorable, no matter how menial it may seem. Along with the gift of work (for the first six days of the week), the Eden narrative also shows the Creator giving the gift of the Sabbath (the seventh day). As an example to humanity, he himself rested from his completed work of creation on the Sabbath. On this day that God blessed and sanctified, he graciously calls humans to rest from their labor and commune with him (Gen 2:2, 3).

Of course, in holding to the Edenic model, one is accepting the Edenic account of creation at face value and assuming that it intends to express historical truth.<sup>51</sup> This agrees with the presuppositions of the final-form canonical approach and phenomenological-exegetical analysis, as stated in Chapter 1. This methodology allows one to understand and study what the Bible itself is meaning to convey, which is certainly a useful enterprise within biblical and even theological studies. Such presuppositions also have implications for many other doctrines whose roots can be found in these first three chapters of Genesis. For whereas the Edenic model is based on an interpretation of the Eden narrative that takes the text as it reads, this same interpretation of this same

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<sup>51</sup> This disagrees with an allegorical method of interpreting the Eden narrative, a method which was conceived as a way to spiritualize the parts of the Bible which were assumed to be too physical, earthy, or fleshy for their literal meaning to be their true meaning. But this dissertation's way of interpreting the Eden narrative also disagrees with critical methods of interpreting Scripture, methods that are influenced by a naturalistic worldview and thus look for alternate explanations for parts of the Bible that describe happenings that are not seen to naturally occur today.

While some scholars contend that taking the Edenic creation account at face value leads to a non-literal reading, the majority of scholars (both critical and conservative) now hold that the author(s) of the Eden narrative intended to convey a literal meaning, although they still wonder whether the author's intent is the correct meaning of the text. See Richard M. Davidson, "The Genesis Account of Origins" in *The Genesis Account of Creation and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015), 59-129. Davidson here gives several lines of evidence that support a literal interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2: literary genre, literary structure, specific temporal terms, biblical references outside of Genesis 1 and 2, and presuppositions and the witness of biblical scholars (73-87). In an interesting twist, John H. Walton has affirmed the literal six days of Gen 1, but holds that the creation therein described is a functional creation, not a material creation (*The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009]).

pericope can be followed in order to apprehend other doctrines that can be found in these chapters.

For example, it reveals a great controversy between God and the serpent. Then it also reveals the promise of salvation, the answer to the Fall. It showcases the character of God—*Elohim* (“the Mightiest one”) and *YHWH Elohim* (the personal God of the covenant)—who created the world with wisdom, power, love, and tenderness. Such a God did not create a world with predation, harmful mutations, and violence as we see now; all this commenced only after the first humans’ sin. The Edenic model accurately magnifies the character of God and validates his sacrifice as truly salvific. It also affirms the ability of God to habitually relate within space and time.

Additionally, it casts doubt on doctrines and past practices that have at their foundation a belief in the immortality of the soul (e.g., eternally burning hell, purgatory, indulgences, the communion of the saints, limbo, infant baptism). Such doctrines and practices need to be revisited in light of further study that would investigate the implications of an Edenic model of personal ontology on all the beliefs within Christendom that resulted from a belief in the immortality of the soul. In place of the innate immortality of the soul, the Edenic model points towards the innate mortality and the conditional immortality of humans, for which eternal life is given only as a gift of God.

The analysis in this dissertation has shown that when the Bible is studied, it can disrupt previously held assumptions. For example, it shows that one need not accept the classical Christian conception of substance dualism in order to affirm the special identity and place of humans in the world and in God’s eyes. It demonstrates that one can affirm

that the human constitution is physical, without following evolutionary explanations of human origins. It illustrates that choosing the biblical canon as the source for theological data can helpfully disrupt ingrained assumptions and associations. Such biblical research can allow old issues to be seen with new eyes. And even though the Eden narrative was written long before the advances in modern science that provoked the more recent debate over personal ontology, this dissertation shows how it still is able to provide insights that relate to the questions being asked today.

My hope is that this dissertation might encourage more scholars to turn to Scripture as a sole source and, with close study, uncover insights that pertain to the many new and old questions that are a part of the debate over personal ontology. Once the source of Scripture is mined, its conclusions may be compared with models that draw from multiple sources, in order to arrive at conclusions. What would delight me the most would be to see more extensive work on personal ontology done, with the rest of Scripture (outside of Gen 1-3) as the source.

Accordingly, I believe that the Eden narrative forms the foundation and encapsulation of the whole Bible's view on personal ontology. But this belief needs to be demonstrated through more biblical studies on personal ontology (not just studies of specific words or verses, although those are important too). What is lacking is the uncovering of biblical views of personal ontology from pertinent sections of Scripture, and then the synthesis of that data into one overarching biblical model of personal ontology. This entire work should be done, as much as possible, having laid aside *a priori* assumptions and views, for what is needed here is to let the biblical canon speak

for itself on this issue.<sup>52</sup> This is how Scripture can surprise us with its contributions and how we can find insights that might disrupt our previous patterns of understanding, thus providing a way forward to truth.

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<sup>52</sup> And even though thus far it has seemed as though the Edenic model agrees with physicalism (by the definition of physicalism), if a model of personal ontology drawn from the entire Bible is to be uncovered, we should once again re-evaluate the Edenic model to see if all of its presuppositions are founded completely on Scripture, and re-evaluate even the conclusions of this dissertation to ensure that we are truly allowing the whole of Scripture the chance to speak for itself on this important topic of personal ontology.

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