

ARTICLE

A Healthier Anthropology with a Richer View of the Soul: Responding to the Theological Anthropology of N.T. Wright and M.B. Thompson

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Abstract

Two influential Anglican scholars, N.T. Wright and M.B. Thompson, have concurrently sought to challenge the Church and the Academy to reconsider their long-held belief in the immaterial soul, and to encourage them to think more biblically about their theological anthropology. Identifying the reasons for, and recognizing the implications of, the challenge, this article responds by addressing the contentions of both scholars and the alternative anthropology they propose, and advances in rejoinder a healthier, dualistic, anthropology. Specifically, the article presents a richer view of the soul, one that is conceptually stronger, and more biblically rooted, than the views Wright and Thompson espouse (as indeed also the views they renounce).

Keywords: anthropology, body, dualism, holistic, M.B. Thompson, monism, N.T. Wright, soul

Over the past decade, a curious theological parallel has occurred in the UK to that which occurred in the decade preceding in the United States of America. There, in the US, Wesleyan New Testament scholar Joel B. Green spearheaded a move to encourage the Academy and the Church to reconsider their theological anthropology and to distance themselves from belief in an immaterial soul. Here in Great Britain, a similar move has been made by Anglican New Testament scholars N.T. Wright and M.B. Thompson, seeking to challenge both Church and Academy on their long-held belief in the immaterial soul and to encourage them to think more biblically about their anthropology. In some ways, this is not new; in the previous century, scholars of the Biblical Theology Movement, the liberal tradition, those influenced by materialist and late modern ideology, sought to do likewise. They proposed alternative anthropology to the long-held dualistic tradition, seeking to free the Church from such thought as humans having (or essentially *being*) a soul. But, for the first time in more evangelical circles, two exegetes with

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a renowned commitment to the (final) authority of Scripture, and a strong commitment to the tradition of the historic Church, have proposed that the tradition is wrong-headed and that actually Scripture teaches the embodied nature of human beings with little or no place for an immaterial soul.

This proposal of both UK scholars is made all the more prominent by the credentials they hold and the influence they emanate across the theological world. N.T. Wright is former Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at St Andrews University, having previously served as Anglican Bishop of Durham, and is now based at Wycliffe Hall Anglican training college in Oxford – a centre from which he continues to develop his research and writing and continues to receive numerous invitations to speak to audiences worldwide. In effect, he needs no further introduction; his work is widely known, not just in his own Anglican tradition but in many strata of the Academy and Church, and his influence is felt across the theological spectrum. M.B. Thompson is Associate Principal and Lecturer of New Testament at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, and though not known to the extent of Wright, his influence among biblical scholars (as well as now [in a growing sense] among the neuroscientific community²) is also significant and bringing effects in the next generation, particularly of Anglican thinkers.

For neither Wright nor Thompson is philosophical theology their principal discipline, nor philosophy their primary passion; rather their areas of expertise lie in biblical studies – specifically the gospels and the letters of Paul. But both see the question of theological anthropology as a doctrine that needs to be addressed due to the findings their New Testament studies have revealed. The biblical research of both has therefore led to their addressing the subject in oral form as conference lectures, but lectures which are having worldwide impact due to their online accessibility in video or transcript form.³

While recognizing the field of their specialism, the implications of Wright and Thompson's (W+T's) ideas – and the subject of theological anthropology generally – are wide ranging and cross into further disciplines, affecting related discussions of particular pertinence to today. For example, one's views of personhood, eschatology, mind-body relation and ethics are all impacted by one's thoughts on theological anthropology.⁴ So though the views W+T advance are focused in the discipline of biblical studies, they have wide-ranging implications for other key areas of thought and hence praxis.

With this combination of two evangelical biblical scholars, with wide influence, seeking to challenge the Church's tradition, in an inter-disciplinary arena of theological anthropology, the attention drawn has been significant. Indeed, many in both Academy and Church have shown an interest in such discussion and the ideas W+T expound.⁵ Being a topic of such attention and live interest, the ponderings of

²This latter influence being due considerably to his collegiality with prominent neuroscientist and Anglican Priest, Professor Alasdair Coles.

³And as has been highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic, material online is now just as influential for the proliferation of ideas as writing in physical print (if not *more* influential).

⁴Of course, the reverse is also true, that one's views of personhood, eschatology, mind-body relation and ethics mutually affect one's position on theological anthropology.

⁵As well as the traffic to their (now) online lectures (lectures to be examined in the main text below), the lecture of Wright in particular has drawn the attention of scholarly journals such as *Philosophia Christi* and

these thinkers merit considered and critical reflection, recognizing the ensuing implications the topic has for the related areas of discussion. In what follows, therefore, the article seeks to address the theological anthropology of W+T, to then bring a response. It proceeds by articulating the key anthropological contentions both thinkers want to affirm, before elucidating these further through locating them in their historical heritage of biblical studies. This enables analysis of W+T's ideas to ensue at a deeper level of critique, facilitating a critical response to their anthropology as a whole. Through implementing this procedure, the limitations of the anthropology they refute and that which they suggest are identified, and a fuller anthropology instead is proposed. With particular focus on the soul in W+T's thought, a healthier, dualistic, anthropology is promoted, and a richer view of the soul advanced. Through showing itself to be conceptually stronger and more biblically rooted, this view of the soul commends itself as being richer and preferable to the views W+T espouse (as it does also to the views they deplore and renounce).

Wright and Thompson's Key Anthropological Contentions

The anthropological thinking of W+T arose and was presented in differing contexts, so they naturally had slightly different audiences and intentions in mind when addressing the issue. Wright was asked to bring a biblical contribution to the mind-body discussion at a conference of philosophers,⁶ while Thompson was asked to give a couple of shorter lectures on the 'Soul in the New Testament' at the Faraday Institute's Centre of Science and Religion.⁷ Yet, while bearing in mind those slightly differing contexts, they share much in common anthropologically, and in particular promote two key contentions, to which they both zealously hold.

First, they are resolute about the value of the human body, and the resurrection body of the age to come. In contrast to Platonic dualism,⁸ with its devaluing of the

the *Heythrop Journal*. Cf. S. Goetz, 'Is N.T. Wright Right about Substance Dualism?', *Philosophia Christi* 14.1 (2012), pp. 183-92 and B.L. Rickabaugh, 'Responding to N.T. Wright's Rejection of the Soul', *Heythrop Journal* 59.2 (2018), pp. 201-20. In addition, it has attracted the interest of 'ClosetoTruth' – a highly respected broadcast and digital media that proliferates the ideas of world-renowned scholars to academic and popular audiences alike (see specifically the recently broadcasted interview with Wright entitled 'Theological Anthropology: What Is Human Mind?' Available at: <https://www.closetotruth.com/series/theological-anthropology-what-human-mind#video-58154> [accessed 8 July 2021] – an interview in which Wright reiterates much of what he originally expressed in his lecture on theological anthropology [to be expounded and analysed below]).

⁶N.T. Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body: All for One and One for All, Reflections on Paul's Anthropology in his Complex Contexts', paper given at the Society of Christian Philosophers' Regional Meeting, Fordham University, 18 March 2011, available at: http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright_SCP_MindSpiritSoulBody.htm (accessed 13 December 2018).

⁷M.B. Thompson, original (solo) lecture given as 'The "Soul" in the New Testament', 29 November 2015 (available at: <http://downloads.sms.cam.ac.uk/2166546/2166551.m4v>) but developed more fully, and then given in partnership with A. Coles, as 'Neuroscience, the Bible and Soul', 29 April 2017, available at: <http://downloads.sms.cam.ac.uk/2477706/2477711.m4v> (accessed 13 December 2018), lectures given at the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, University of Cambridge.

⁸Anthropologically, Plato argued that a man (Plato using the term in the gender-inclusive sense) is a material being, governed by his 'soul' (a term having no religious connotations in Plato, it simply meaning a being's 'principle of life'). In contrast to the souls of other living beings, Plato viewed a man's soul as different because of its rational capacity and ability to understand the world of the 'Forms' – a world

body – locating the value of a human in the soul (to which the body functions as a prison), W+T are unyielding in their commitment to the value of the human body as being a part of God's good creation. Additionally, the value of the body is affirmed by the nature of the incarnation, and indeed the new creation; and within that doctrinal framework, they further passionately argue that salvation in biblical thought is something applied to the whole of the person, not just to a special immaterial soul, as demonstrated by the doctrine of resurrection.⁹

This aversion for views which overly emphasize the soul's importance is also turned towards (Classic) Cartesian dualism, a view that likewise devalues the body by separating the soul's higher, 'spiritual' and moral functions from the body's physical and appetitive ones.¹⁰ Furthermore, they are convinced that such dualism is countered by neuroscience as it steadily maps the specific neural correlates involved in human functioning, specifically those previously attributed to the soul; this leaves W+T persuaded of the perception that such neuroscience is eliminating any (hiding) place for a 'soul-of-the (neuroscientific)-gaps' type of dualism, leaving no credibility for such belief in an immaterial soul.¹¹

man really understands *before* having been taught them (needing only a guiding teacher to help him realize them). He deduced from this the soul's having known the Forms *before* human (bodily) birth (*Meno*, 82b-86b), hence concluding a soul's being pre-existent and being one of the (eternal) Forms (*Phaedo*, 81c-d). Being one of these pre-existent Forms, the soul functions at its best and fullest when not confined by its body. The material body contains, restricts, and indeed stifles the soul, which functions at its best when *freed from* (the prison of) its body.

⁹As Wright is so keen to affirm, '... the central message of the New Testament ... isn't that we [have a "soul" which needs "saving", and] are to escape the world and go to heaven, but rather that God's sovereign saving rule would come to birth "on earth as it is in heaven"' (Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', p. 2). Wright's crusade against Christian Platonic soteriology and anthropology is particularly prominent in his book *Surprised by Hope* (London: SPCK, 2007), but is a message he has been preaching throughout his career. While not being quite such a theological motto for Thompson, he brings a different colour to the emphasis in stating that 'saving souls' (e.g. as used in the book of James) can simply mean 'to make you well'; and 'salvation' in the Old Testament means not 'going to heaven' but rather 'being saved from death' – salvation being closely connected with the concept of shalom/real prosperity (M.B. Thompson, 'Neuroscience, the Bible, and the Soul', mins 18.55-19.58).

¹⁰Descartes' view (or the view classically associated with his name [whether he actually believed the 'Classic Cartesian' view is a question for elsewhere]) arose from his rationalist conviction and first principles of knowledge, viewing rational knowledge as the purest way of knowing, with knowledge gained through *empirical* perception being a secondary and less certain basis of knowledge (in reliance on the use of the body for acquiring such knowledge). In light of this conviction, and famous 'I think therefore I am' dictum, it was not a far step for him then to consider the mind as a 'thinking substance' and a substance distinct from, and separate to, the body. In Descartes' view, this thinking substance (the immaterial mind/soul) did the work of pure rational thought (such as doubting, affirming, understanding, willing, denying, imagining) but for secondary and less pure modes of knowledge (such as memory and sense-perception), the soul needed the body. He thought that interaction between this soul/mind and its body occurred in the pineal gland, a tiny gland in the brain which he viewed as significant in playing a role in bodily causation (as well as in the secondary modes of knowing). While this pineal gland of 'interaction' was later shown to be a fundamental mistake of biology (science revealing it in fact to be an endocrine organ – one producing the hormone melatonin), it gained his position the title: a (substance) dualist 'interactionist' view – the soul/mind *interacting* with its body. But while affirming such *interaction*, in the Cartesian view, the highest mental functions are carried out purely by the soul, whereas lesser mental functions and more physical functions are carried out by the body.

¹¹It is easy to see why such thinking appeals to the Christian Cambridge neuroscientist, Professor A. Coles. He and Thompson in fact joined together for the second of Thompson's lectures at the

In W+T's minds, anthropological dualism (in its varieties), while elevating the place of an immaterial soul, denigrates the place of the human body; a view they find entirely incompatible with Scripture, which gladly emphasizes the value of the body.

Secondly, they are firm in their contention that the term 'soul' in Scripture means something different to the connotations it has taken on in both philosophical circles and popular culture today. They admonish that, rather than reading the contemporary understandings the term has gained *into* Scripture, the careful thinker should be exegeting the biblical authors' understanding(s) *out* of Scripture. Current views that are commonly read into the scriptural term 'soul' are often those that view it as (something like) an immaterial entity – the essential spirit of a person. This is something different to what both scholars argue the term means in its intended *scriptural* sense(s).

Drawing upon his previous Old Testament (OT) studies, before his New Testament (NT) specialization, Thompson identifies that the Hebrew word *nephesh* (translated traditionally as 'soul' in English) is used in a number of ways in the OT: initially it referred to a person's throat or their neck, but it came, as the OT progressed, to be seen as a term referring to a human as a whole, as a living/needy/longing/desiring/striving/yearning/relational being.¹² He then traces the Greek equivalent – *psuche* – through the NT to reveal its sometimes being accurately translated as 'soul', but more often translated as 'life' or 'living being',¹³ or, as Wright prefers, 'living being/creature'.¹⁴ Both W+T see these understandings as particularly prevalent in the gospels and in Paul, bringing a different understanding to what Scripture is referring to when it talks about the 'soul' to the (mis)conceptions that are read into 'the Bible's' anthropology in popular and (some) philosophical thought. Indeed, Thompson's main aim is to show how the term 'soul' has been given more careful attention by Bible translators recently, and how the idea of its being an immaterial entity is an eisegetical mistake, coloured by modern understandings of the word, as opposed to the biblical authors' use of the term.

The Biblical Studies Heritage of Wright and Thompson

The theology of W+T, and specifically their theological anthropology, receives fuller elucidation through a knowledge of their disciplinary heritage. Their discipline of biblical studies, with its twentieth-century shaping, casts light on their ideas and illumines their anthropology.

Within that disciplinary heritage, a claim of particular significance recurred throughout the twentieth century: that traditional exegesis and theology has been polluted by Greek (non-biblical) thought. This claim of biblical scholars, heard throughout the twentieth century, was that the theology of the (Church) Fathers had been influenced by (Middle) Platonism; the scholars then further contending

Cambridge Faraday Institute's forum, mutually affirming one another's insights into their respective disciplines of neuroscience and biblical studies while rejecting what they regard as the standard conception of an immaterial soul.

¹²Thompson, 'Neuroscience, the Bible and the Soul' (mins 7.30-8.25).

¹³Thompson, 'Neuroscience, the Bible and the Soul' (mins 16.05-20).

¹⁴Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', p.6.

that that influence was later bequeathed by the Fathers to their theological descendants – the subsequent generations of the Church so inheriting this Platonic colour. In illustration of the former, the early Augustine is cited, in particular his anthropological thought;¹⁵ in depicting a soul and body as like a ‘captain steering a ship’ Augustine portrayed a human person as primarily being a soul, who operates within the world by means of her physical body.¹⁶ The biblical scholars claimed that such thinking was derived from Platonism, which Augustine had imbibed and read back into the pages of Scripture.¹⁷ This error was also traced in Augustine’s theological descendants, with subsequent thinkers like Calvin identified as similarly Platonic-coloured.¹⁸ From here the argument progressed that traditions descending from Calvin additionally

¹⁵Specifically, the *early* Augustine is pointed to as having been influenced in this way (Augustine’s theology developing in his subsequent years where such thought was modified and honed).

¹⁶The pronoun ‘her’ has been used here to convey a clearer meaning in the sentence’s grammar. In accordance with traditional anthropological terminology, Augustine would have commonly used the pronoun ‘his’ – in the inclusive sense of the term – to denote a ‘man’ (in the singular sense of ‘mankind’). While a long-held practice throughout history, current anthropology tends to prefer the term ‘humanity’ instead of ‘mankind’ but leaving scholars with the problem of having no associated pronoun to employ. To avoid, therefore, the cumbersome use of ‘his/her’ or ‘their’ throughout the article, when speaking of ‘a human’, ‘humanity’ or ‘a (human) person’, in the instances where it arises, the pronoun ‘her’ will continue to be used – while recognizing that ‘his’ in such instances would be likewise entirely appropriate.

¹⁷A fuller understanding of Plato’s anthropology is beneficial for understanding why biblical scholars are averse to its influence. Plato actually viewed the human soul as being tripartite, the top part being the *logistikón* – the reasoning part of the soul, the bottom part being the *epithumetikon* – the part responsible for the bodily desires, and the middle part being the *thumoeides* – what Plato calls the ‘spirit’ part (i.e. the part representing the passions, such as anger, shame, ambition). For him, the rational aspect of the human soul is always trying to control the ‘spirit’ and bodily desires parts. The example commonly given to illustrate Plato’s view is the instance of seeing a beautiful person; when doing so, the reasoning part of a human soul is filled with wonder at the person’s beauty, the bodily aspect wants to move forward to suggest the pleasures of sex to that person, but the spirit part recognizes the shame that would bring (so the spirit, though not as dignified as the reason, helps it keep the bodily desires in check) (*Phaedrus*, 253d-257b). A human being needs all three, but reason must dominate, and when this happens, then well-being results for the person. Although all three aspects are part of the soul, (what contemporary theologians and philosophers would call) the ‘soul’ of this soul is really the *logistikón*. This, while in a material body, is hindered from fully searching for truth – Plato being famous for describing the soul as imprisoned in the body. So, on this view, the reasonable soul is seeking freedom from the confines of the body, in order to return to the forms (but being eternal, will then end up being reincarnated in another earthly form, until it has led a suitably philosophic life, at which point it is able to fully jettison *thumoeides* and *epithumetikon*, and never come back to earth – remaining with the forms forever). Although the mature Plato moved beyond this position outlined, this is the view entailed in the legacy of Platonism. As is clear, this view is very stark in its denigrating of the body, viewing it as part of the evil material world, and so such a view puts forward an unhelpful dualism that sees the soul at odds with the body in the human. It is additionally unhelpful for Christian theology because of its ‘eschatology’, being in discord with Scripture’s emphasis on personal (as part of the corporate) resurrection at the eschaton.

¹⁸Passages such as the following are cited as examples of Calvin’s imbibing this Platonic import: ‘Indeed, from Scripture we have already taught that the soul is an incorporeal substance; now we must add that, although properly it is not spatially limited, still, set in the body, it dwells there as in a house; not only that it may animate all its parts and render its organs fit and useful for their actions, but also that it may hold the first place in ruling man’s life, not alone with respect to the duties of his earthly life, but at the same time to arouse him to honour God.’ J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (trans. F.L. Battles; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), Lxv.6, p. 192.

inherited this influence, and so traditions such as Anglicanism – with its dualistic anthropology¹⁹ – received a dualism from its forebears that was Platonic in essence. By contrast to what they perceived, the desire of these biblical scholars was to renounce this Platonic eisegesis and affirm *exegesis* instead. And for applying the method correctly, they stressed the *Hebraic* horizon of Scripture as the appropriate worldview and backdrop for carrying out this exegetical work. This aversion to Greek-coloured theology, and contending the Hebraic instead, brought much potential for change – in multiple strands of the theology – not least in the area of theological anthropology.

While illuminating W+T's thought to a degree, additional light is added through focus on certain key thinkers, who particularly shaped W+T's heritage of twentieth-century biblical studies.

At the outset of the century, H. Wheeler Robinson is particularly significant, with the shift he brought to biblical studies in its anthropological thought. Contending that Scripture's anthropology is different to what Platonic (and Cartesian) dualism(s) had advocated, he exposed the view's functional bifurcation and claimed it was scripturally mistaken. Such previous dualism(s) had espoused a separate division of labour – the soul having one set of functions (e.g. thinking/deciding/acting) and the body having another (e.g. eating/excreting/reproducing). In contrast, Wheeler Robinson highlighted the *functional holism* of Scripture – its depiction of a human as being a *holistically functioning unity*. Through close(r) examination of terms (such as *leb*, *basar*, *nephesh*), he proposed this functional unity and argued a scriptural case for a united body and soul.²⁰

Ensuing Wheeler Robinson's work, Rudolf Bultmann progressed this biblical holism – in the anthropological section of his *Theology of the New Testament*. In a passage of particular renown, through lexical study of his own, he responded to Augustine's theology, advancing a new and distinctive anthropology. Discontent with the traditional understanding of the biblical term *soma* (body) and appealing to what he saw as the NT's *actual* meaning of the word, Bultmann famously stated: 'Man does not *have* a *soma*, he *is soma*.'²¹ What lay behind the dictum was his alternative understanding of *soma*, conceiving the 'body' not just as physical flesh but as a term synonymous with the *self*. For him, the *soma* meant the 'person' – the 'body' was synonymous with the 'ego'. This revisionist understanding of the *soma* led Bultmann further than just affirming anthropological holism; he advanced, in fact, beyond anthropological dualism into the territory of anthropological monism. This was a major shift of thought in the history of theological anthropology, which – until this point in time – had predominantly affirmed some form of anthropological dualism.²²

¹⁹See, for instance, the Anglican post-communion prayer – a liturgical example of an anthropology espousing a dualism of body and soul. The congregation pray 'Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Through him, we offer you our *souls and bodies* to be a living sacrifice . . .' Church of England, *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000) (the same anthropology as articulated in the original *Book of Common Prayer*).

²⁰H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1911), p. 69.

²¹R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951-55), 1:194.

²²While dualism has historically been the dominant anthropology, it has had different manifestations through Church history, ranging from holistic dualism in the early Church Fathers (e.g. Irenaeus), through Augustinian forms in the fourth and following centuries, through to Thomistic dualism in the medieval

Oscar Cullmann further progressed this thought with his eschatological contention (which arose in a series of lectures, published in the mid-1950s). Cullmann's major contention asserted that the goal of biblical eschatology is the resurrection of the *body* not the immortality of the soul. The latter he regarded as imported from Platonic (Greek) philosophy, whereas the former he viewed as the actual – the Hebraic eschatology of Scripture.²³

These three publications were landmarks in biblical studies, and shaped and formed the basis for much anthropology that followed. Succeeding these milestones, numerous works resulted contending that Paul was Hebraic in his anthropology and that humans, in biblical thought, are 'holistic/monistic' beings.²⁴ While critiques of Bultmann did follow, particularly from Jewett and Gundry,²⁵ their effect on the tide was limited; the 'holistic/monistic' model, by this point in the twentieth century, had become the favoured anthropological understanding for scholars in biblical studies.

At the end of the twentieth century James Dunn advanced the opinion yet further, through the anthropology contained in his work *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*.²⁶ In that text he argued that Paul's anthropological terms – such as *kardia*, *psuche*, *soma* – should be understood 'aspectively' in a Hebraic and holistic sense. In contrast to viewing them 'partitively', in a Greek, constitutive, sense,²⁷ Dunn affirmed instead that Paul uses the terms to depict a human in the whole/entirety of her being – each term denoting the person by way of a particular aspect. Paul's use of the term 'soul', on Dunn's aspectivalist view, is to describe the entire person as a *living*, creaturely being; his use of the term 'body' denotes that same entire person but referring to her now as an *appetitive physical* being; 'mind' is his term for the same whole person as a *thinking or rational* being; 'spirit' is the whole of the person in *orientation/relation to God*.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, these themes received further enhancement by the work of Joel Green. Through focus on the image of God, with extra neurological study, Green drew on additional fields to corroborate the monistic view. In a multi-disciplinary work, Green joined with a cohort of scholars from

period, through Cartesian dualism in the modern period, to the holistic dualism again of Wheeler Robinson. Dualism in some variety was the dominant view of constitution throughout the history of the Church. However, there was always a minority tradition that instead advanced trichotomy, a view affirming that a human is a 'body, soul and spirit'. While not a topic explored in this article, a helpful analysis and critique of this view is given in Berkhof's comprehensive review; L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1939), pp. 191–94.

²³O. Cullmann, 'Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead: The Witness of the New Testament' (1955 lectures), first published as "Unsterblichkeit der Seele und Auferstehung der Toten" *Theologische Zeitschrift* (1956).

²⁴The terms 'holistic' and 'monistic', for many, came (and have come) to be understood as meaning the same thing (though as the rest of the article displays, that equation is unfortunately fallacious [cf. n. 51]).

²⁵Jewett's study concluded it is actually the *kardia* (not *soma*) that is more like the 'I' in Paul; R. Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums 10; Leiden: Brill, 1971). Gundry concluded his study confirming that *soma* in fact refers to the *physical* aspect of man in Paul; R.H. Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 19; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

²⁶J. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), pp. 54–78.

²⁷'Constitutional' here meaning 'what constitutes [makes up]' (a human).

related anthropological fields, to contend that biologically, psychologically, philosophically – as well as indeed biblically – humans are monistic beings.²⁸ In continuing subsequent works, Green continued to make this case, with his 2013 lecture summing his established position. Entitled ‘On Doing Without a Soul: A New Testament Perspective’,²⁹ Green argued his explicit contention, showing the modern-day preference of translators to opt for alternative words such as ‘life’ (or ‘I’, ‘living being’ or ‘person’) when translating the NT term *psuche*.

This biblical studies heritage casts light on W+T’s thinking, showing the ideas and voices of influence in their anthropological thought.

Considering the heritage’s influence in Thompson’s anthropological lecture, first, Green’s work is explicitly prominent as Thompson traces the meanings of anthropological terms through the Old and New Testaments. While bringing additional thought from his OT survey of terms, his NT survey is clearly coloured by Green as Thompson seeks to establish the NT meaning(s) of *psuche*. In that part of his lecture, and very similarly to Green, Thompson identifies the leading translation of *psuche* – in 46 of its 103 NT appearances – as ‘life/living being’.³⁰ He later refers to Green as a leading authority on the subject, confirming Green’s obvious influence in Thompson’s anthropological thought.

When considering the lecture of Wright, it is particularly the writing of Dunn that colours Wright’s own constructive proposal, but the wider heritage is apparent when considering the whole of his lecture. Wright precludes his constructive proposal with warnings against anthropological dualism(s), fuelled evidently by the heritage’s dualistic concerns. The Classic Cartesian position, or the philosophical idealism of Kant, he views as erroneous dualistic foundations; and dualisms foreign to Judaism, those denigrating the body, or those entailing eisegesis of terms, are likewise anthropologies he admonishes as those to be avoided.³¹

²⁸Cf. the compendium edited by W.S. Brown, N. Murphy and H.N. Malony, *Whatever Happened to the Soul?: Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998) and J.B. Green, *What about the Soul? Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004).

²⁹J.B. Green, ‘On Doing Without a Soul: A New Testament Perspective’, paper given at Biola University’s Conference ‘Neuroscience and the Soul’, July 2013, available at: <https://cct.biola.edu/on-doing-without-a-soul-a-new-testament-perspective/> (accessed 8 July 2021).

³⁰Of the other appearances of *psuche*, he sees the best translation as being ‘soul’ in 33 of those instances (but usually as a direct translation of *nephesh* from an OT citation), as ‘one/person’ in 10 instances, ‘I/you/us’ in 7, ‘self’ in 3, and ‘being’, ‘mind’, ‘heart’, ‘spirit’ in 4 individual instances.

³¹Wright helpfully identifies that the word ‘dualism’ has been used in numerous ways in theology. He cites ten (though as will be seen, his category 1 needs augmenting, with letter ‘g’ needing further clarification).

Category 1 – those dualisms/dualities that would be at home within ancient Jewish thought:

- a. A heavenly duality: not only God exists, but also angels and perhaps other heavenly beings;
- b. A theological or cosmological duality between God and the world, the creator and the creature;
- c. A moral duality between good and evil;
- d. An eschatological duality between the present age and the age to come;

Category 2 – those dualisms that would not be at home within ancient Jewish thought:

e. A theological or moral dualism in which a good god or gods are ranged, equal and opposite, against a bad god or gods;

f. A cosmological dualism, a la Plato, in which the world of space, time and matter is radically inferior to the noumenal world; this would include, perhaps, dualisms of form and matter, essence and appearance, spiritual and material, and (in a Platonic sense) heavenly/earthly (something like this characterising the

After this cautionary prelude, Dunn's influence is prevalent as Wright forges his own constructive proposal, one he names that of 'eschatological integration'. Wright frames and colours this work by his meta and regular theme, with his Dunn-styled anthropology then formed and inserted within. Wright's meta and oft-sounded theme is the God-given human vocation: to bear and reflect God's image, in, and to, his creation – a telos finding its ultimate fulfilment in and through the person of Christ.³² This motif then informs his proposal, which adapts Dunn's 'aspectival monism', using the familiar anthropological terms (such as soul, body, mind, heart, spirit) to describe the whole of the human person from different aspects of her being. Adopting this idea of Dunn but changing his terminology, Wright articulates the following by way of his summary: '... when Paul thinks of human beings he sees every angle of vision as contributing to the whole, and the whole from every angle of vision. All lead to the one, the one is seen in all.'³³ But Wright's adaptation of Dunn goes further in what it asserts, claiming that full *integration* of a human – in all the aspects above – occurs fully and only ultimately at the point of the eschaton. Wright's own unique construction, built upon the foundation of Dunn, attempts to advance *eschatologically* this aspectival monism of Dunn. In short it can be summarized, with an analogy that Wright employs, that like the church in its diversity of members, whose (eschatological) goal is unity in Christ, so the telos of the individual human is eschatological integration in Christ.

As this overview illumines, the heritage of W+T has influenced their thought. Their citing the heritage's maxims,³⁴ and building on Dunn and Green respectively, reveal a deep imbibing of that heritage with its colouring their anthropology. Any sense of Platonic import is viewed with theological aversion and, in union with their disciplinary heritage, W+T have distanced themselves from dualism, appearing, instead, to prefer an anthropological monism.³⁵

In addition to what has been seen, a closer look at W+T's anthropology, and indeed their biblical studies heritage, reveals their thought being particularly influenced by the 'Biblical Theology Movement' (BTM).

thought of Philo);

g. An anthropological dualism which postulates a radical twofoldness of soul and body or spirit and body (again, familiar in Philo);

Category 3 – three other dualities that might possibly be at home within ancient Jewish thought:

h. An epistemological duality between reason and revelation (though Wright comments that such a dualism may be problematic, since it is really the epistemological face of the cosmological dualism mentioned above);

i. A Sectarian duality in which the sons of light are ranged against the sons of darkness, as in Qumran;

j. A psychological duality in which the good inclination and the evil inclination seem to be locked in perpetual struggle, as in Rabbinic thought.

Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', p. 4, originally penned in his *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 253-54.

³²See, for instance, Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', p. 12.

³³Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', p. 15.

³⁴Specifically citing those of Bultmann, Cullmann and Dunn.

³⁵This is seen particularly in Wright's own and other maxim (seen in the earlier footnote) – one of aversion to Platonism: 'The central message of the New Testament isn't that we are to escape the world and go to heaven, but rather that God's sovereign rule would come to birth "on earth as in heaven"' (e.g. Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', p. 2).

The BTM (developed through the 1940s–60s) was a response to the Fundamentalist-Liberal debate (of the 1910s–30s), which sought to value and retain the historical-critical tools of liberalism while applying those more fully in a theologically confessional framework. The BTM viewed the Scriptures as writings to be handled critically, but also regarded them collectively as a divinely authored *unity* – a book revealed progressively through centuries of human history. In addition to this understanding, they saw the viewing of these divine-human Scriptures in a Greek (or modern) philosophical sense as a deficient and inapt approach; Scripture instead was to be regarded in a more appropriate sense as a Jewish *Hebraic* revelation – one that had originated out of a Jewish and Hebraic horizon. Appreciating this Hebraic horizon, the aim of the BTM was to understand God's revelation in history – and its development of theology through history – in the writings of the progressively revealed Old and New Testaments.

In the movement's golden era (the 1940s–60s), scholars such as (the familiar) Wheeler Robinson, Bultmann and Cullmann were key in its development of thought; and although its popularity waned following Barr's critiques of it during the 1960s, biblical theology has persisted (in a variety of forms) through and up to the present. Indeed, a version of biblical theology has been embraced by contemporary evangelicalism – their enthusiasm for biblical overviews (or for the [Wright-coined] 'big sweep of Scripture') is fuelled by biblical theology. And recognized now not just as a method, but by way of its content as well, biblical theology's modern-day form has been defined by (evangelical scholar) Don Carson (in distinction from *systematic* theology) as: 'a collation and restatement of biblical data, without the logical analysis and dialectical correlation between texts that systematic theology emphasizes'.³⁶

In addition to the prior-seen influences, these specific features of biblical theology are also evident in W+T's work, and together with Carson's (biblical theology) definition help further illumine their thought enabling assessment of their anthropology.

Assessment of Wright and Thompson's Ideas

It is evident from the above that the Hebraic horizon of Scripture is a theme prevalent in W+T, and when applied anthropologically this Hebraic understanding of a human results in their putting a helpful emphasis upon the value of the human body. The doctrines of creation, incarnation and (re)new(ed) creation very much confirm such an emphasis, and this affirming of physical bodies is a strong and helpful contention. Likewise, their desire for scriptural terms to be understood in their proper and *biblical* sense is also a valuable contention, with their seeking the meanings of *nephesh* and *psuche* through biblical exegesis. The warning of eisegesis is the converse of this helpful contention, again maintaining the importance of Scripture's anthropological terms being discovered through *exegesis* not buried through *eisegesis*. These two and foremost contentions are valuable emphases of W+T and those to be gladly affirmed; theological anthropology benefits healthily

³⁶D.A. Carson, 'Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology', in T.D. Alexander and B.S. Rosner (eds.), *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), p. 89.

from applying and upholding these themes. But while affirming these both and retaining these helpful themes, W+T's anthropology beyond these ideas is not as strong in comparison. In fact, by contrast to these healthy contentions, their wider anthropology is diminished by a number of philosophical frailties contained in the thinking thereof. A closer look at such work reveals limitations in analytical scrutiny and dialectical correlations between (biblical) texts, and so problematic exegesis hence follows of certain significant verses. The effect of these limitations is that their wider anthropology then suffers, so the insights of such work are curtailed beyond their two key contentions.

Beginning with Wright in this regard, this philosophical shortcoming is evident through substantial portions of his anthropological lecture. To begin with his constructive proposal, his view he terms 'eschatological integration' displays an unfortunate conceptual blurring of the category of human *vocation* with that of human *constitution*. His attempt to contribute theo/teleologically to an *ontological* mind-body discussion results in his focusing on *vocation* when the actual topic in focus is *constitution*. While Wright might claim they are one (implied by the closing comments of his lecture) a closer examination reveals this instead to be a lack of conceptual precision.

Wright's meta and regular theme is of a *theological* and *teleological* quality. The human vocation he expounds is a biblical theological narrative – one helpful for understanding the God-given purpose of humans. To highlight the eschatological goal of humanity as being renewal and resurrection in Christ (enabling humans to fully reflect the image of God in, and to, his world) brings a biblically rich meta-principle for appreciating the human vocation.³⁷ Wright's understanding of the Church related – as an eschatological 'differentiated unity' (or eschatological 'integrated whole') – is also theologically beneficial; but while helpful regarding *vocation* (and indeed, the *communal* human vocation), the attempt to apply this to *ontology* does not make conceptual sense. A person could become more integrated in *function* – for instance, her heart (will), body, mind, spirit could become more unified in purpose – but she could not become more integrated *ontologically* – in her fundamental constitution. Wright's blurring of the categories is a lack of conceptual precision and results in his discussion and proposal suffering – his anthropology hence being diminished in substance as well as in clarity.³⁸

On a similar train of thought, his earlier dualistic admonishments against the views (he thinks) modern philosophers hold are rather under-informed conceptually and caricatures of their actual views. His eisegetical warning is valid, like his

³⁷In Wright's wider work, he often affirms that as God's image bearers to the world, humans have been made to rule over, and sum up the praises of, creation – a telos finding its ultimate fulfilment in the person of Jesus Christ (cf. Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', p. 12 [but is a phrase regularly heard in his popular books and preaching]).

³⁸Wright is fond of saying that philosophers are experts at focusing on issues in 2D, that theologians look at in 3D. His feeling is that were philosophers to look at their issues through the 3-dimensional lens that theologians do, they would find more resources for answering their questions than their 2-dimensional paradigms allow (cf. Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', p. 15). This is possibly true and highlights the richness of theology, but a philosopher might potentially respond, with an analogy from cricket, that if fielding a ball proves difficult when it's rolling along the ground, is the fielder more likely to catch it when it's flying through the air?

concern for denigrating the body,³⁹ but his unawareness of philosophical dualism – in its best and contemporary form(s) – mean his other dualistic admonishments are unfortunately strawmen-directed.⁴⁰ These philosophical inadequacies appear through much of his anthropological lecture, rendering its benefit somewhat (unusually) limited in what it can proffer the topic in focus.

The lack of conceptual analysis is additionally prominent in Thompson. The matters of personal identity (through time) and that of human free will are issues that in particular reveal conceptual holes in his view.

The first of these is exposed when considering the probing and pertinent question as to how a person at death could be identical with herself at the time of her resurrection (a person's death = [time] t_1 and her resurrection, t_2). Dualists answer the question by reference to the immaterial soul, which ontologically grounds personal identity between these two moments. But having rejected that position, the view Thompson espouses instead reveals a philosophical hole; its absence of ontological continuity, between the events of t_1 and t_2 , gives no grounds for *exact* identity persistence between those two moments. On the view Thompson holds, the person is *re-created* at t_2 as opposed to being *resurrected*. While raising an interesting distinction, the implication that follows (from the *re-creation* view) is that at the point of t_2 the *exact* identity of the person who dies at t_1 is lost.⁴¹ As John Locke famously stated 'One [identical] thing cannot have two beginnings';⁴² and when Locke's dictum is applied to the issue here being considered, this insight helpfully discloses that the person re-created at t_2 would not be (personally) *identical* to herself at the point of t_1 ; rather, the person at t_2 would be just a *replica* of herself at t_1 . When questioned along these lines (in the Q+A session[s] following his lecture[s]), Thompson's attempted responses were *theological* in nature, suggesting God's love for or his remembering a person as possible grounds for addressing this specific conceptual problem. But such *theological* attempts are weak and inadequate responses to a precise and *philosophical* issue – an issue of human ontology and persistence of personhood through time.

In addition to the issue above, the fully monistic view raises philosophical problems for the affirming of human free will. If humans are constituted entirely of just

³⁹Though these warnings are already heeded by most contemporary dualistic philosophers. Cf. J.W. Cooper, *Body, Soul and Life Everlasting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989); J.P. Moreland and S. Rae, *Body and Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis of Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2000); J. Farris, *The Soul of Theological Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 2018); J.J. Loose, A.J.L. Menuge and J.P. Moreland (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2018).

⁴⁰No responsible contemporary dualist advances an outdated Cartesian view – a view out of touch with the neuroscience. And only one (atypical) thinker attempts to build his view on Kantian idealism. On a similar line of critique, Wright's 'ten theological uses of "dualism"' (a list that is otherwise very insightful) is categorically under-nourished, having no anthropological category for a biblical holistic dualism. His list portrays the view that any anthropological dualism postulates a division between soul and body (comparable to that of Plato or Philo [Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', pp. 3-4]), whereas the responsible and best Christian dualisms advance not a 'radical twofoldness' ('division') between soul and body, but an integrated, holistic unity, like that espoused by Wheeler Robinson.

⁴¹While in a theological and general sense, Scripture speaks of resurrection and re-creation synonymously, in a philosophical technical sense, there would be a difference between the two, as identified by the main text.

⁴²J. Locke, *Essay II*, xxvii, 1.

atoms and physical ‘stuff’, then determinism follows. Green had previously recognized this issue and attempted a response in 2008 (though with comparable limits philosophically, that response was likewise conceptually thin⁴³); but Thompson had apparently not conceived of this issue, so when raised at the end by his audience, could give little by way of reply.⁴⁴ This lack of philosophical analysis, in a manner similar to Wright, means that his anthropology also suffers, putting limits on what it can offer.

This importance of philosophical method for anthropological understanding is actually acknowledged by Green (even if needing further employment in his anthropological work). In his book entitled *Body, Soul and Human Life*, he highlights the implicit nature of Scripture’s anthropology. He states that at times Scripture *assumes* an anthropology, at others it *counters* alternate views, and still others it *implies* a position (as opposed to being explicit from exegesis).⁴⁵ The importance of deducing and inferring Scripture’s implicit anthropology is thereby revealed by Green and shows the importance of logic and reason for the theologian engaged in this task. While theological anthropology is reliant on exegesis for understanding the *verses* of Scripture, the philosophical tools are likewise essential for discerning the scriptural *view*. (Indeed, the extent to which these tools are required for fully engaging this doctrine might emphasize the topic’s location in the discipline of *philosophical theology*.)⁴⁶

Given the level of philosophy required, an exegete might be wise in displaying caution before attempting to leap from a survey of biblical terms to the conclusion of a monistic anthropology. Such a leap results in an error of logical thought – a fallacy commonly seen in monistic biblical scholarship. It is commonly assumed that if *psuche* in all its appearances were aptly translated as above, then monism necessarily follows as the logical biblical anthropology. But such a conclusion is weak, based on fallacious and erroneous logic. For even if the translations above (namely ‘life’/‘living creature’/‘self’/‘person’ [+]) were exhaustive of the meaning(s) of *psuche*, an immaterial aspect of a person might still be scripturally implied, but just never termed in Scripture as *psuche* (or [OT] *nephesh*). Such a prospect arises in 2 Cor. 12.1–4 concerning Paul’s heavenly vision and experience.

⁴³Green’s approach to the issue was not a rigorous conceptual engagement. Instead, it was a general New Testament reflection on the nature of ‘sin and freedom’. J.B. Green, *Body, Soul and Human Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), ch. 3. (Green admits in an earlier section of the book ‘... I make no promises that the biblical account I will narrate will be satisfying to contemporary philosophers ...’ [p. 34]).

⁴⁴Thompson, ‘The “Soul” in the New Testament’, min 33.28–34.40.

⁴⁵Green, *Body, Soul and Human Life*, p. 46.

⁴⁶Distinguished from *Systematic Theology*, Philosophical Theology defined is ‘a matter of thinking about the ... doctrines of the Christian faith from a philosophical perspective; it is a matter of employing the resources of philosophy to deepen our grasp and understanding of them.’ A. Plantinga ‘Christian Philosophy at the End of the Twentieth Century’, in S. Griffioen and B. Balk (eds.), *Christian Philosophy at the Close of the Twentieth Century: Assessment and Perspective* (Kampen: Uitgeverij Kok, 1995), p. 41; Cf. Crisp ‘[Philosophical theology is] the consideration of philosophical issues in particular theological traditions.’ O. Crisp, ‘Analytic Theology’, *Expository Times* 122.10 (2011), p. 471, or Wood, ‘Philosophical Theology uses the tools of philosophy to investigate the theological claims made by a specific religious tradition’. W. Wood, ‘Analytic Theology as a Way of Life’, *Journal of Analytic Theology* 2 (2014), p. 45.

In 2 Cor. 12.1-4 Paul reflects on the nature of his heavenly vision, musing as to whether he experienced it *in* or *away from* his physical body. Conceiving that it might have occurred *away from* the physical body implies Paul's possibly entertaining the belief of an anthropological dualism. Although not mentioning the *psuche* in connection with his heavenly experience, this does nothing to deny the logic implied in Paul's thought. As much is admitted by Wright in his comment concerning the passage:

the fact that he [Paul] can consider the possibility that the experience might *not* have been 'in the body' does indeed indicate that he can contemplate non-bodily experiences . . .⁴⁷

But instead of perceiving the logic, or letting that logic take root, Wright returns instead to the strawmen, with his sentence descending as follows:

but as will become clear I don't think one can straightforwardly argue from this to what is now meant, in philosophical circles, by 'dualism', or, in particular, to the conclusion that it is this other non-bodily element which is the crucial, defining part of the human being.⁴⁸

Wright hints at the passage's logic in the former part of his comment, but his latter return to the strawmen means that that logic is regrettably dropped. For if it were even *possible* that Paul's vision could have occurred *away from* or *out of* the body, then whatever the entity is termed – that was having this conscious experience – would have to be non-physical in nature. So, the implication of the passage – even if not employing the term *psuche* – is that there is potentially an aspect of a person that is immaterial in nature that bears/experiences consciousness either in or away from the body.

Related to this point, there are certain eschatological passages – occurring in both the Old and New Testaments – that imply a similar anthropology. From these particular passages a related case can be made that conscious existence continues beyond the death of the body. And if a person's consciousness continues after the death of her physical (/material) body, then whatever is bearing this consciousness must be immaterial in nature.⁴⁹

Aware of these pertinent passages, W+T give them significant time in their lectures, and in response to the argument above affirm resurrection as the eschatological human telos. As the *ultimate* goal of a human, this is right and biblically rich, but of the time following death *until* that resurrection telos, they miss the biblical nuance. This concept of continued existence, beyond the death of the physical body, is potentially hinted at in Psalms 16 and 49. Ps. 16.10 asks God not to abandon 'my soul' (*naph^eshi*) to the grave, and Ps. 49.15 more specifically pleads that he would

⁴⁷Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', p. 6. This statement is in contrast to Thompson's 'Paul couldn't conceive of unembodied life' ('The "Soul" in the New Testament', min 23.55).

⁴⁸Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', p. 6.

⁴⁹This argument is made particularly clearly by J.W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989). While the following two paragraphs above are responding to Wright and Thompson, the arguments of these paragraphs are influenced by the thinking of Cooper (from pp. 55-66 and 94-178 respectively of the book *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting*).

redeem 'my soul' (*naph^eshi*) from the grave. The case for a possible existence, in an intermediate state following death, is strengthened by additional passages which imply the OT's view. A passage of particular insight is the ghostly appearing of Samuel. There Saul goes to a medium in Endor and calls up the spirit of Samuel who appears as a (non-fleshly) ghost – as a 'shade' of his original self (1 Sam. 28). 'Shade' is an apt Hebrew description because of the un-enfleshed nature of the ghost;⁵⁰ it is a reduced version of Samuel, merely spirit in substance and form.⁵¹ However, his being called up from the dead in this form implies a spirit existence in the grave, the shade (while a diminished form of the person) being the immaterial essence of a person that survives beyond the death of the body.⁵²

This idea of a spirit existence – more explicitly of a conscious variety – receives fuller exposition in certain New Testament verses, verses which likewise imply the intermediate state. In his lecture and earlier books, Wright acknowledges this intermediate state, with his lecture identifying its reality through exegesis of Acts 23.6-9, Phil. 1.23 and Lk. 23.43.⁵³ But while acknowledging this existence (which Thompson appears keen to deny⁵⁴), Wright's lecture decidedly affirms that whatever the entity is called that 'carries' one's consciousness through that intermediate

⁵⁰The term used in Scripture, which appears in the plural in the OT passages in which it occurs, is the Hebrew word 'rephaim' (which is translated as 'shades').

⁵¹It is common for advocates of monism either to ignore this passage or to defer to Bill Arnold as the monistic authority on the subject. In a chapter entitled 'Soul-Searching Questions about 1 Samuel 28: Samuel's Appearance at Endor and Christian Anthropology' in *What about the Soul: Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology* (ed. J.B. Green; Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004) Arnold states that this appearance of Samuel might have been a physically *resuscitated* appearance of Samuel (as opposed to being Samuel's ghost/spirit) – asserting this as an alternative reading of the passage to the traditional view. He prefers this resuscitated view because he thinks it is more in line with the worldview of the Hebraic holistic OT, commenting 'the socio-historical background of the text makes it unlikely that a disembodied "soul" of Samuel could be involved' (p. 81). He follows this, later, with 'Recent studies have admitted the Hebrew Bible's purely physical perception of human personhood, acknowledging the impossibility of developing a Christian dualistic anthropology on the basis of these data' (p. 83). But these statements make the (common) mistake of assuming that Hebrew holism equates to ontological monism. Once that false equation has been made, exegesis that follows is distorted, meaning Arnold feels there is no option other than the less convincing resuscitation view. But Hebrew *functional* holism is different to *ontological* monism, and either ontological monism or dualism are consistent with that functional holism. Cf. J.W. Cooper, *Body, Soul and Life Everlasting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989). Once this category error is realized, then the ghostly/spirit (dualistic) reading re-recommends itself as preferable to Arnold's resuscitation view – the dualistic view being the more obvious and natural reading of the passage and the view affirmed more thoroughly in the history of interpretation.

⁵²Contra Thompson who claims the OT knows of nothing between the grave and final resurrection ('Neuroscience, the Bible and the Soul', mins 12.30-14.25). Further to the passages above, Steiner has contended that the verses of Ezek. 13.17-21 also give indications of Israel's belief in disembodied existence after death. His interesting (while contentious) monograph argues that these verses in Ezekiel show an awareness in Israel (and a possible applying) of the practices of necromancy that were being carried out in the nations surrounding them (R.C. Steiner, *The Nefesh in Israel and Kindred Spirits in the Ancient Near East, with an Appendix on the Katumuwa Inscription* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015).

⁵³Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', pp. 7-8. Wright refers to his book *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (London: SPCK, and Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003) in the lecture, but such belief is also prominent in other writings such as *Surprised by Hope* (London: SPCK, 2007). (He also shows awareness of 2 Cor. 5.1-10 as a passage indicating the reality of an intermediate state [Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul, Body', pp. 9-10]).

⁵⁴Thompson, 'The "Soul" in the New Testament', mins 21.27-23.26.

existence, it is never in the NT denoted as the *psuche* (with the [potential] exception of Rev. 6.9).⁵⁵ But even if this is so terminologically, the logic of dualism still follows; if conscious existence continues beyond the death of the body, then whatever the entity is termed that carries a person's consciousness, it cannot be physical in nature – rather it is *immaterial* (/spirit) in nature.⁵⁶ If the physical body dies, but consciousness continues, then humans are dualistic beings, whatever the carrier is called. An implied dualistic anthropology is therefore further illumined by consideration of the logic of biblical eschatology.

But in further response to Wright's statement about the NT usage of *psuche*, the term *does* appear to occur – in certain NT verses – to refer to this immaterial vessel that survives into the intermediate state. As has been already noted, Wright acknowledges the possible instance of such in Rev. 6.9 (though the apocalyptic context and language of this verse might make it difficult to build a doctrinal case upon). But a clearer example of such is the famous passage in Matthew where Jesus says to his disciples: 'Do not fear those who kill the body (*soma*) but cannot kill the soul (*psuche*); rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell' (Mt. 10.28). This has been normally viewed, by traditional and contemporary scholars alike, as a verse assuming a dualism, and the *psuche* (here) affirmed as a reference to an immaterial soul.

The consensus among contemporary scholars is that the translations highlighted by Green (namely 'life', 'living being', 'creature', 'self', 'mind', or 'person') are often the best translations for denoting the (NT) meaning(s) of *psuche*. But while affirming these meanings, that consensus desires to go further when expounding the meaning of *psuche* in Mt. 10.28. In this commonly cited verse (in discussions of anthropology), Jesus contrasts the physical body – which can be killed at the hands of a human – with the entity here termed the *psuche* – which *cannot* be killed by a human. The entities' difference in nature, and the flow of the passage's logic, mean the consensus among NT scholars is to opt for a fuller translation of *psuche* – a meaning of *psuche* that is richer than can be captured by translations just given. By way of a number of examples: In translating this verse in their commentary, Davies and Allison opt for the word 'soul' to bring out the meaning of *psuche* – a "soul" which can survive bodily death and later be united with a resurrection body'.⁵⁷ Carson, by way of agreement, translates it as the 'inner man' of a person – drawing its contrast with a body that can physically die and be killed.⁵⁸ Turner's exegesis agrees, explicitly commenting as follows: 'The language of this verse assumes a sort of dualism of body and soul.'⁵⁹ Osbourne is similar in thinking, his commentary on the verse asserting, 'God alone is sovereign over both the temporal body and the eternal soul' (though his language might helpfully be modified to

⁵⁵He states this first in relation to the Pauline passages and then in relation to all the others. Wright, 'Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body', p. 7.

⁵⁶Cf. the language used in Heb. 12.22-24 (particularly v.23b), to describe the people of God in the intermediate state.

⁵⁷W. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (London: A Continuum, 1991), p. 206.

⁵⁸D.A. Carson, *Matthew: The Expositors Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), pp. 254-55. Cf. C.A. Evans, *Matthew* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 226.

⁵⁹D.L. Turner, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), p. 279.

avoid misleading and ‘Greek’ connotations).⁶⁰ And in a comment of particular insight, France distinguishes the meaning of *psuche*, as it stands in Mt. 10.28, from its wider NT’s meaning(s) – while additionally showing the relation:

[*Psuche* is] . . . normally more appropriately translated ‘life’, but it often refers to *real* (spiritual) life as opposed to mere animal existence . . . Here the saying requires a term which denotes the continuing life of the person after the life of the body has been terminated, and ‘soul’ . . . is probably the best English word to denote that continuing life . . .⁶¹

[he adds] R.H. Gundry, *Soma*, 87-160, argues that Jews, like Greeks, typically spoke of the soul as leaving the body at death.⁶²

These exegeses indicate the consensus of biblical scholars who view the understanding of *psuche* in Mt. 10.28 as fuller in scope than its meaning in other NT passages. Indeed, the contemporary thinkers above affirm the consensus of tradition – that a dualism is assumed here in Matthew, so affirming an immaterial soul.

In seeking to counter this consensus, W+T appeal to the telos of resurrection as the eschatological framework of Jesus. As seen in earlier sections, this is uncontroversial, but their steps beyond this affirmation are vague and imprecise as they seek to respond more specifically to the consensus surrounding this verse. Wright’s response continues (in a way reminiscent of Green) with a rather opaque assertion: ‘it’s strange, if this [dualism] is meant, that Jesus speaks [in this verse] of the one who can destroy soul *and body* in Gehenna’.⁶³ With no further explication, his counter swiftly continues (and Thompson joins him in taking this step) by drawing attention to Luke’s wording in his own equivalent of the passage (Lk. 12.4-5). He and Thompson suggest that Luke’s avoiding there the term (*psuche*), is to circumvent misunderstanding in the mind of Luke’s Hellenistic intended reader.⁶⁴

But neither of these comments are reasons for refuting the natural reading of Mt. 10.28 with its assumed dualistic anthropology. As orthodox belief affirms (and both scholars clearly attest), bodily resurrection from the dead is the destiny of both the faithful and the unfaithful – the former to inherit eternal life, and the latter, eternal destruction (in Gehenna). So, the (final day) punishment of the unfaithful in soul *and body* is standard orthodox belief, and in no way refutes the traditional dualistic

⁶⁰G.R. Osborne, *Matthew. I. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), p. 397. Because of its history in Platonic philosophy, the word ‘eternal’ (or ‘immortal’) can convey the wrong (and negative) overtones. A biblical theologian, for instance, may hear in this word ‘a ([philosophically] necessary) entity that has always existed, and will always exist forever (like the Platonic realm of Forms).’ But the more Christian theological sense (when referring to a human soul) would be to hear it as ‘a ([philosophically] contingent) entity (created and sustained in existence by God) that survives the death of the body, and – contingent on God’s grace – lives on forever into eternity (temporarily disembodied, then re-embodied at the resurrection)’.

⁶¹R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), p. 399.

⁶²France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 399.

⁶³Wright, ‘Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body’, p. 8.

⁶⁴Wright, ‘Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body’, p. 8.

interpretation of the verse.⁶⁵ Moreover, the avoidance of the term *psuche* in the parallel passage in Luke may well be for the reason both scholars advocate but Luke's avoiding the word *psuche* does nothing to take away from a dualistic anthropology assumed in *Matthew*. In fact, as Thompson's Old Testament anthropology implies, the meaning of the term *nephesh* developed as the writing of the Old Testament progressed; (according to Russell) its development of meaning then continued through the time of the Intertestamental period, coming further to be used to refer to those in the intermediate state (not just as living bodily beings on earth).⁶⁶ Recognizing this development of meaning, and the intended (Jewish) readers of *Matthew*, it would not be at all surprising if he were using the word *psuche* with these connotations it had gained from the Jewish Intertestamental literature. So, while Luke opts to change the language to bear in mind the more Gentile audience he is writing for, *Matthew* retains the word with his Jewish reader in mind – an audience who would have understood the term with its OT and Intertestamental connotations, hearing the word *psuche* with its Hebraic and nuanced meaning. None of this gives reason for rejecting the traditional and contemporary dualistic understanding of Mt. 10.28, so W+T's rejection of such exegesis is unwarranted, and their revisionist exegeses unconvincing.

Responding to Wright and Thompson's Anthropology as a Whole

In light of the foregoing critique, there appear to be philosophical and exegetical reasons for biblically rejecting monism and embracing some form of dualism. To entertain, *philosophically*, the possibility of disembodied conscious visions, or for a person's conscious experience to continue while her material body decays in the earth, a person's essential core must be *immaterial* in nature – that immaterial entity being what 'carries' a person's consciousness. And while *exegetically* vital to realize the (NT's) actual meaning(s) of *psuche*, there is, at least, in *Matthew* a genuine appearance of *psuche* referring to the person's immaterial core that survives into life-after-death⁶⁷ (to be followed, in Wright's choice of words, by 'life-after-life-after-death'⁶⁸). From these and the additional issues of identity persistence through time and that of human free will (and possibly exegesis of Rev. 6.9), it appears that W+T's expressed anthropology falls short, and a dualistic view is instead preferable.

While advocating this case, any preferable dualistic option (whether of a contemporary or historical variety) must be carefully considered and expressed, and maintain the biblical emphases discussed which W+T so clearly affirm and contend. Two particular forms of dualism, namely the Platonic and (Classic) Cartesian varieties, clearly do not pass those criteria, through either downplaying the body or

⁶⁵The verse assuring and warning that humans can only destroy the physical body, whereas God could destroy both body and soul in Gehenna.

⁶⁶Russell finds the usage of 'soul' in this sense in the books of Enoch, Psalms of Solomon, 2 Enoch, Testament of Abraham, 2 Baruch; and the usage of 'spirit' in this sense in 1 Enoch, Assumption of Moses, and 3 Baruch. D.S. Russell, *The Message and Method of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 151.

⁶⁷In continuance with the progressive revelation of the Old Testament (then developed through that of the Intertestamental period).

⁶⁸A phrase coined by Wright to refer to life in the (re)new(ed) creation.

separating the functions of body and soul. But in declining these particular versions, W+T's following step should be avoided, namely moving from a rejection of these *two* to a rejection of *all* anthropological dualisms. To do so inadvertently passes over many healthier dualistic varieties, dualisms that are *holistic* or *integrated* in nature and appreciate the soul & body's unity of *function*.⁶⁹ These latter varieties of dualism, discussed in the modern-day literature,⁷⁰ affirm an intimate relation between a person's body and soul, thereby heartily affirming the contentions established above. All of these varieties welcome and are consistent with the findings of neuroscience and indeed affirm the value of the physical body. Moreover, these same varieties of dualism allow for continued and conscious existence beyond the death of a person, so are fully consistent with the scriptural eschatology of intermediate state followed by ultimate resurrection. Indeed, these *holistic* types of dualism (comparable to that of Wheeler Robinson) healthily emphasize both body *and* soul and so avoid the mistake of the reactive pendulum swing – swinging from an unhealthy version of dualism, which denigrates the body, to a poor substitutionary monism, which denigrates the soul.⁷¹

When further seeking the advancement of a preferable form of dualism, it is likewise important to heed the other of W+T's contentions – that of avoiding the common error of reading a present-day meaning of 'soul' back into the scriptural term(s). The understanding and employment of language as the disciplinary context demands is essential for the progressing of strong and healthy anthropology. But this being true for philosophers, so it is similarly true for the exegetes; while philosophers need precision when exegeting the *actual* meanings of biblical terms (and avoid eiseging present-day understanding[s] into biblical words such as 'soul'⁷²) so biblical scholars need similar care in recognizing the nuanced understandings of

⁶⁹The symbol '&' here is used to connote a particularly close, integrated partnership of the soul and body in their (ordinarily) united functioning – the symbol expressing a closer intimacy of relation than the word 'and' might convey.

⁷⁰As well as those cited in n. 39, see for instance R. Swinburne's (contemporary Cartesian) substance dualism in R. Swinburne, *Mind, Brain and Free Will* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), the alternative substance dualist view of C. Taliaferro in his *Consciousness and the Mind of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), W. Hasker's emergent dualism in his *The Emergent Self* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), E. Stump's Thomistic dualism (here termed dualist because of its being able to endorse the survival of the soul into the intermediate state) E. Stump, 'Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism without Reductionism', *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995), pp. 505-31 – to name but a few. See also W. Lycan's 'Giving Dualism its Due', *Australian Journal of Philosophy* 87.4 (2009), pp. 551-63, a materialist philosopher's acknowledgment of the lack of justification for the arguments given against a substance dualist position.

⁷¹In response to the concern, then, that the writings of certain theologians through history might show hints of Platonic or (Classic) Cartesian dualisms – those colours then being inherited by subsequent traditions and liturgies – the following can be said. Even if the concern is valid (though in this current author's mind, the claim is commonly over/mis-stated), it is unproblematic so long as the *relation* of body and soul espoused is biblically understood and the holistic unity of the body and soul upheld. Endorsing 'body and soul' anthropology does not commit receiving traditions to Platonic or Classic Cartesian assumptions, rather dualism can still be received with the *holistic* (soul-body) relation affirmed.

⁷²This being an issue particularly at the popular level. As seen above, the word 'soul' (and [to a slightly lesser extent] other terms – such as 'heart', 'mind', 'flesh', 'spirit', 'body' etc.) is (and are) used by a number of biblical authors in varying ways – with *differing* meanings. To denote a 'one-size-fits-all' understanding of the term(s), then, is often inadequate and (accidentally) misleading.

philosophical terms (and not by default assuming a Platonic/Classic Cartesian understanding when hearing the word 'soul'). In contemporary anthropology, this principle (has been and) is being demonstrated by leading Christian philosophers. These thinkers are carefully modelling that meanings of biblical anthropological terms can be disciplinarily respected, making sure that the biblical meanings of terms are not confused with the technical and specific sense(s) in which those terms are employed in the philosophy of mind/philosophical theology. This work set and sets a precedent for the development of preferable anthropological dualism(s), combining biblically responsible exegesis with rigorous philosophical precision.

In so drawing towards a conclusion, the contentions of W+T are valuable reminders for scholars seeking to advance anthropological thought. Theological anthropology does well to affirm the (physical) body and avoid eisegesis of terms. Yet while these contentions are helpful, the rest of W+T's anthropology is representative of (too) much theological anthropology in its problems in need of addressing before healthier anthropology can ensue. For over a century now, there has been a theological tirade against the dualisms of yester-year – the Platonic and Classic Cartesian views receiving (ongoing) extensive critique.⁷³ But in continually attacking the strawmen, the views of the soul that are stronger have been and are being missed, the result of this trend being the stagnation of the advancement of theological anthropology (particularly in biblical studies). In further addition to this trend, the lack of adequate application of the necessary philosophical tools is further impeding the progress of theological anthropology. By contrast and in response, this article has sought to uphold the importance of both biblical studies *and* philosophy to the theological anthropological venture – drawing upon the insights of both disciplines to promote a healthier, dualistic, anthropology. Specifically, within this endeavour, it has displayed the essential factors for proposing a richer view of the soul – one that is conceptually stronger and more biblically rooted than the views the trend highlighted above tends to pendulum-swing to instead. To view the human soul as 'an immaterial entity that is the seat/carrier of consciousness, which (in normal, embodied, condition) functions in holistic unity with the body', allows for the affirmation of the (ordinarily) embodied nature of a human, but enriches our anthropological understanding further by likewise affirming the immaterial soul. In response to W+T's concern, then, that to emphasize the soul leads to denigrating the body, such a definition demonstrates the contrary in its valuing both body *and* soul. And in defining the soul in this manner, so affirming both body *and* soul, the view carries seeds of potential for contributing to pertinent questions in related topics of interest, as opposed to being an anthropology that encumbers the Church and Academy. Related topics of interest, such as personhood, mind-body relation, ethics, disability, eschatology and more, are all potentially enriched

⁷³The word Classic needs to be emphasized because contemporary versions of the view, which affirm the body, the neuroscience and advance a holistic understanding, are very much alive today, as seen in the works of Swinburne, Farris and Taliaferro cited earlier.

through engagement with anthropology of this kind; and both the Academy and Church – the latter both theologically *and* missionally – have much of potential to gain from this anthropology, with its affirming both body and soul.⁷⁴ So in response to W+T’s challenge, and the anthropology they have expressed, this article has proposed in rejoinder a healthier, dualistic, anthropology, with a richer view of the soul – a view that is conceptually stronger, and one more biblically rooted – anthropology that furthers enrichment of the human in both body *and* soul.⁷⁵

⁷⁴For instance, (alongside the topics highlighted above) the value of the body – with its associated theme of embodiment – continues to receive much focus and celebration in contemporary scholarly work and popular culture (the late/post-modern climate and influence encouraging this body/embodiment focus). The valuing likewise of the soul brings its own theological and missional benefits, offering further of potential interest to studies of human identity, consciousness, mental health and in addition provides the grounds for building a contemporary apologetic. (If constructed philosophically [and while still valuing the physical realm], such an apologetic can be built by presenting the [philosophical] evidence for the existence of the immaterial soul, so allowing the apologist to contend that reality is more than just physical. In thus undermining *physicalism*, the door is then opened for considering a world beyond the physical – the immaterial world of God and the spirits.)

⁷⁵I am grateful to my anonymous reviewers and to Kristi Mair, David Bennett and Ruth Holmes for their constructive comments on earlier versions of this paper.