

Herman Bavinck's Critique of "Modern" Accounts of the Human Constitution:
Is the Anthropological Constitution Monistic or Dualistic?

*"It is of the essence of humanity to be corporeal and sentient"
'the essence of human nature is its being [created in] the image of God'*

Herman Bavinck

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Abstract

In this thesis, I argue that a dualistic ontology of human constitution, despite the advances in neuroscience, is still to be preferred both theologically and philosophically. In chapter 1 I give a brief history of the dominant and influential views on dualism. In chapter 2 I examine Bavinck's view of human constitution considering his theology of the organic motif and giving considerable attention to his view of the *imago Dei* and its necessity for human constitution. I argue that Bavinck's view is essentially dualistic, despite the contrary claim. Finally, in chapter 3, I argue that the non-reductive physicalist view of human constitution cannot be adequately established and fails at critical points both philosophically and theologically.

INTRODUCTION

The 'ontological distinction between body and soul'¹ has been firmly accepted by traditional Christianity over many centuries without controversy. The philosophical and theological consequences of this view of the nature of humankind is predominantly the result of exegesis of the Biblical text, with great emphasis coming from the doctrine of the intermediate state, and arguments from reason.² In recent years many Christian scholars, both theologians and philosophers, have challenged the traditional Christian view as dualistic and, therefore, unbiblical.³ Taking a more unitary view of human constitution, they claim to be in agreement with modern scientists and philosophers who hold a physicalist view of man.⁴

Gilbert Ryle famously depicted the dualistic theory of man as the 'dogma of the Ghost in the Machine',⁵ primarily in response to Cartesian dualism,⁶ stating it to be a category mistake in language.⁷ Although there is much truth to this, Ryle is a naturalistic materialist and has a worldview with a frame of reference that does not accept a separate immaterial ontological reality in man's constitution. However, from an orthodox Christian perspective, man is not a Ghost, nor is he a machine. Man is not two separate substances but a unified whole personal being which is both 'corporeal and sentient'⁸ yet with the potential to exist temporarily without

¹ John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and The Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), p.31.

² Ibid.

³ Thiago Silva, 'Herman Bavinck's Anthropology and the Recent Body-Soul Debate', *Puritan Reformed Journal*, 9.2 (2017), p.226. See the whole of this essay for a good brief overview/ introduction to the current debate.

⁴ Nancey Murphy, 'Human Nature: Historical, Scientific, and Religious Issues', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*, ed. Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy and H. Newton Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), p.2.

⁵ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), p.17.

⁶ I will discuss Cartesian dualism further on.

⁷ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (2000), pp.17, 20-24. See also Greg Bahnsen for an in-depth view of the mind/body problem from a Christian substantialist monist perspective, with agreement with Ryle's view of a category mistake: Dr Greg Bahnsen, *The Mind/Body Problem in Biblical Perspective* (Covenant Media Foundation, 1972). <http://www.cmfnw.com/articles/PA143.htm>

⁸ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two: God and Creation*, ed. by John Bolt and trans. by John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), p.559.

a physical body.⁹ In Thomistic fashion this is known as substantial union, where the soul and body form one substance yet individually keep their distinction: the spiritual animates the physical.

Although there is a consensus around man's multifaceted being with an incredible degree of complexity, there is a profound disagreement around the ontological status, and metaphysical makeup,¹⁰ of man¹¹ causing many questions to arise: what is the human constitution? What is the soul? Is there a soul? What is man? What happens when we die? What is resurrected? These are but a few questions that dominate this debate. The view one takes on the metaphysical constitution of man, whether physicalist or dualist, has profound theological consequences which are manifest in one's understanding of a biblical eschatology and ethic. John W. Cooper emphasises that 'the basic issue in the debate is the nature of biblical anthropology': how do the scriptures portray the human constitution?¹²

The Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck stands in the traditional Christian heritage by affirming the unity of man, emphasising that 'the essence of human nature is its being [created in] the image of God'.¹³ Concomitantly Bavinck affirms a dual distinction in man and subscribes to a dualistic nature stating that 'it is of the essence of humanity to be corporeal and sentient. Hence man's body is first (if not temporally, then logically) formed from the dust of the earth and then the breath of life is breathed into him'.¹⁴ Bavinck calls this a 'position of Harmonism',¹⁵ which could be considered a form of Cooper's 'holistic dualism'.¹⁶ Bavinck's anthropology is more in line with a Thomistic understanding of human constitution.¹⁷ Bavinck offers us a nuanced way beyond the modern critique, helping us to maintain the unity-in-distinction of the human constitution.

⁹ Ibid., p.556.

¹⁰ This is a term used by Nancy Murphy.

¹¹ In his *Reformed Dogmatics* Bavinck often uses the term "man" to represent "humankind" especially in relation to human nature. Given my intention to explore Bavinck's theology, and given his use of the term this way, for ease I will follow his convention and do the same.

¹² John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting* (2000), p.4.

¹³ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.530.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.559.

¹⁵ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One: Created, Fallen, and Converted Humanity*, ed. by John Bolt (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), p.46.

¹⁶ John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting* (2000), p. xxvii.

¹⁷ This was helpfully highlighted to me in an email correspondence with Prof. John W. Cooper on 03/09/2019.

Bavinck is a holist, but he is also an anthropological dualist. Ryle's Ghost in the machine is therefore no dogma in the Christian worldview.

In chapter one, I will lay out a brief history of the main views on human constitution that have influenced Christians, and philosophers, through the ages. This will give a short adequate basis of where the current views on ontological dualism have emerged from. I will also offer a definition of substance that I will use and refer to throughout this thesis.

Chapter two will survey Bavinck's view on human constitution considering his theology of the organic motif. I will show that Bavinck's understanding of the *imago Dei*, which is essential to his theology of the organic, necessitates man as ontologically dualistic despite his, and his followers, claim to the contrary. Bavinck holds to a view that man is only a duality between death and resurrection, but I will show that man is necessarily, ontologically, dualistic and that Bavinck's theology provides a strong foundation for this claim.

In chapter three, I will describe nonreductive physicalism as advocated by Warren S. Brown and Nancey Murphy. This is a modern Christian monistic view of human constitution that seeks to show there is no immaterial separate soul in man, and that the higher capacities that were once attributed to the soul are in fact emergent capacities. They emerge out of neurological processes that are biological by nature yet possess downward causation influence making them nonreducible to the lower-level parts. I will demonstrate that this position on emergent properties operating a top-down causation influence cannot be accounted for, and as such neither can personal identity. This is both philosophically and theologically problematic.

The aim of this thesis is to show that ontological dualism, despite advances in neuroscience, is still to be preferred theologically and philosophically to its monistic antithesis.

CHAPTER 1–HISTORIC CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY: A DUALISTIC ONTOLOGICAL DISTINCTION

Firstly then, in order to engage with the modern views of the nature of humankind we must briefly look at where the dualistic orthodox view emerged from and the major Christian figures that have defined and refined this ontological dualism. I will look at Augustine, Aquinas, and Descartes respectively, however, to begin with a definition of substance would be advantageous in understanding the issues involved in what follows in the rest of this essay. A *substance* is an entity that is fundamental to reality: it is basic.¹⁸ Because a substance is basic, it is therefore individual:¹⁹ it is a particular thing²⁰ ‘which is capable of existing independently of anything else’.²¹ They are not present in anything as properties; they are not owned but are the owners of properties:²² both intrinsic and relational.²³ A substance’s identity is not subject to change where the properties of the subject are;²⁴ it can be said that a substance’s identity is immutable.²⁵ This definition of substance shall suffice, and I will propound that this definition is agreeable to Bavinck’s theological views in his rejection of ontological dualism.

¹⁸ Robinson, Howard, ‘Substance’, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/substance/>; J. P. Moreland, *The Soul: How We Know It’s Real and Why It Matters* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014), pp.22, 23.

¹⁹ J. P. Moreland, *The Soul* (2014), p.22.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Panayot Butcharov, ‘Substance’, in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 3rd edn and ed. by Robert Audi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.1034.

²² Ibid.; J. P. Moreland & Scott B. Rae, *Body & Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000), p.70.

²³ Richard Swinburne, *Are We Bodies or Souls?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p.13.

²⁴ Panayot Butcharov, ‘Substance’, in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 3rd edn and ed. by Robert Audi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.1034; J. P. Moreland, *The Soul* (2014), p.22.

²⁵ I am aware of the Catholic doctrines of transubstantiation which by its very nature is a changed substance, however for the purpose of this essay I will not discuss this issue as Bavinck and those I engage with do not take this view. For Bavinck’s discussion on transubstantiation see Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Four: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, ed. by John Bolt and trans. by John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), pp. 540-585, especially 553-556. See also Loraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 175-180.

Augustine believed there was an ontological distinction between body and soul, and that each were entities and therefore substances in their own right.²⁶ He says of the soul that '[i]t seems[...] to be a special substance, endowed with reason, adapted to rule the body'²⁷ and he later goes on to say that 'I myself am my soul'.²⁸ In this instance Augustine's anthropology supports the dual substance view of man, where the immaterial component of the constitution is able to exist, in principle, independently of the material.²⁹ The immaterial substance, the soul, is identified as the 'I' in Augustine's anthropology. The body for Augustine cannot survive without the soul, and so the soul is the 'ruling part'.³⁰ For Augustine, therefore, man is a composition of body and soul, each being a substance in its own right.

Augustine diverts from the hylomorphism of Aristotle, where for Aristotle the soul was the form of the body and not a separate entity. For Aristotle a substance was the combination of matter and form, and so in the instance of a human being, the body was the matter, 'what the substance is made of',³¹ and the soul is 'the form which determines what sort of substance the matter constitutes in actuality'.³² Aristotle explains this by stating that 'matter is potentiality, and form is actuality, and this in two ways, one that in which knowledge, the other that in which contemplation, is actuality'.³³ So, the soul is not an entity with an independent existence but ceases with cessation of the body. The soul is not, as Plato and Augustine would say, attached to the body, but is in the body and belongs to the body and that 'a body of the appropriate kind',³⁴ which makes it a type of capacity or property of the body according to our definition. This brings us to Aquinas.

Aquinas seems to combine the substance dualism of Augustine with the hylomorphism of Aristotle, giving rise to what might be called a Thomistic Dualism. For Thomas, the soul is the

²⁶ Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro, *A Brief History of the Soul* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p.33.

²⁷ Augustine, *Greatness of the Soul*, 13.22, 13.72. In: Ibid.

²⁸ Augustine, *Greatness of the Soul*, 30.61. Ibid.

²⁹ Tornau, Christian, 'Saint Augustine', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/augustine/>>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Peter Smith and O.R. Jones, *The Philosophy of Mind: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.77.

³² Ibid.

³³ Aristotle, *De Anima (On The Soul)* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986), p.156, (412a).

³⁴ Ibid., p.161, (414a).

intellectual principle³⁵ and, in agreement with Aristotle,³⁶ the form of the body.³⁷ However, Thomas believed the soul to be ‘a principle both incorporeal and subsistent’³⁸ which ‘has an operation *per se* apart from the body’;³⁹ this made the soul the substantial form and at this point departs from Aristotle and sides with Augustine. The nature of the soul is intellectual, and therefore immaterial, which gives rise to its incorruptibility. The intellectual operation of the soul is wholly separate from the body. This means that the ‘soul is not corrupted by the body’s corruption in death’⁴⁰ for if the soul is a form then it is ‘impossible’, says Thomas, ‘for a form to be separated from itself; and therefore it is impossible for a subsistent form to cease to exist’.⁴¹

For Thomas, the soul communicates existence to the body, as the form, and this gives rise to a unity of existence:⁴² a single substance, where the body receives its subsistence and life.⁴³ This ‘existence of the whole composite is also the existence of the soul’⁴⁴ meaning that ‘the complex, multidimensional operation of the intellect’⁴⁵ is realised through this unity. As a result of this ‘the human soul retains its own existence after the dissolution of the body’⁴⁶ and is therefore a substance. Aquinas’s combination highlights the unity of the human nature, and shows the relation of the constituent parts, but also makes possible the survival of bodily death which is foundational for the Christian view of man with the emphasis on the resurrection and eschatological existence.⁴⁷

³⁵ ST I, Q. 75, Art. 2.

³⁶ De Anima II.1, II.2. (1986: 156-161)

³⁷ ST I, Q. 76, Art. 1.

³⁸ ST I, Q. 75, Art. 2, co.

³⁹ ST I, Q. 75, Art. 2, co.

⁴⁰ Denys Turner, *Thomas Aquinas: A Portrait* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p.78.

⁴¹ ST I, Q. 75, Art. 6, co.

⁴² ST I, Q. 76, Art. 1, ad. 5.

⁴³ Louis de Poissy, *Elementary Course of Christian Philosophy*, Second Edition Revised, O’Shea & Co. New York, 1898. *Psychology or, Anthropology: Chapter III. The Human Soul in Relation to its Body*. (University of Notre Dame). <https://maritain.nd.edu/jmc/etext/cp35.htm>. Art. I. 95.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting* (2000), p.11.

⁴⁶ ST I, Q. 76, Art. 1, ad. 5.

⁴⁷ See: John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting* (2000), p.11.

In the seventeenth-century René Descartes, widely held as the ‘father of modern anthropological dualism’⁴⁸ and the ‘father of modern philosophy’,⁴⁹ dispensed with the hylomorphism of Thomas and reverts back to the substance dualism of Augustine. Descartes believed himself to be wholly separate from his body, and therefore could exist without it. Led by doubt, and deductive reasoning, he came to the conclusion that he was ‘only a thing that thinks...a mind’,⁵⁰ and ‘not...a human body’.⁵¹ This distinction led to Descartes view that mind and body were two separate substances, one extended and the other non-extended.⁵²

The non-extended substance, the thinking thing, was for Descartes his essence: it was what he is.⁵³ Although he believed himself to be closely joined to his body, the extended substance, he was however ‘entirely and truly distinct from [his] body, and may exist without it’.⁵⁴ Although for Descartes the mind and body were combined to form a unit and therefore closely linked, he believed the non-extended substance, his mind, himself, ‘to be something quite single and complete’.⁵⁵ Descartes does not see man as one substance or a completed whole.⁵⁶

There are big issues with Descartes view, not to mention the fact that as he doubted all things corporeal for the purpose of establishing the nature of self, the thinking thing. He concluded that it was a substance based on his imaginings which were conducted through, or in, his body: the very thing he was doubting. The major issue with Descartes though is the interaction between

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.14.

⁴⁹ John Cottingham, *How To Read Descartes* (London: Granta Books, 2008), p.1. Descartes is known as this due to his autonomous reasoning; he looked in intuitively and obtained knowledge *a priori*. Descartes paved the way for independent thinking aside from the restraints and frame set by the religious authorities of the time. Descartes in some ways was the beginning of independent critical, autonomous, thinking.

⁵⁰ René Descartes, *Second Meditation*, in *René Descartes Meditations on First Philosophy*, 2nd edn, trans. and ed. by John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p.22.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.23. It has been previously highlighted by scholars that Descartes’ argument here shares a lot of similarity with Avicenna’s “falling man” argument, see Thérèse-Anne Druart, ‘The Soul and Body Problem: Avicenna and Descartes,’ in *Arabic Philosophy and the West: Continuity and Interaction*, ed. Thérèse-Anne Druart (Washington DC: Center for Contemporary Arabic Studies, Georgetown University Press, 1988), pp. 27-48; also mentioned in Michael Marmura, ‘Avicenna’s “Flying Man” in Context’, *The Monist*, 69.3 (1986), pp. 383-395.

⁵² René Descartes, *The Meditations of Descartes, Meditations on The First Philosophy, Meditation VI*, in: *The Method, Meditations and Philosophy of Descartes*, trans. by John Veitch (London: M. Walter Dunne, 1901), p.270.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ René Descartes, *Sixth Meditation*, in *René Descartes Meditations on First Philosophy*, 2nd edn, trans. and ed. by John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p.67

⁵⁶ Taken from my previous essay on Descartes mind-body dualism.

the two substances, the union. This has led to the modern-day body-mind problem: the ghost in the machine. Be that as it may, there are major Christian Philosophers that still hold to a form of Cartesian substance dualism, such as Richard Swinburne and Alvin Plantinga.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ See: Richard Swinburne, 'Body and Soul', *Think*, 2.5 (Autumn 2003), pp.31-36; Richard Swinburne, *Substance Dualism*, in: *Mind, Brain, and Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Richard Swinburne, *Are We Bodies or Souls* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Alvin Plantinga, 'Against Materialism,' *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 23 (2006).

CHAPTER 2–THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONSTITUTION: HERMAN BAVINCK’S VIEW

Bavinck’s anthropology is significant in understanding human constitution from the perspective of the creation, fall, redemption, and consummation narrative. He does not speculate a great deal on the metaphysical makeup of man, endeavoring to limit his philosophical reasonings in concert with his theological boundaries. He does take a traditional view of man’s nature acknowledging its dual aspect whilst simultaneously emphasising the wholeness of man. Bavinck does associate the wholeness of man, not just an aspect, as that which is made in the *imago Dei*. I say aspect and not substance, or entity, not because Bavinck does not recognise the essential difference of the soul from the body, the spiritual and the material, but because Bavinck rejects the dualism of human constitution stating it to be an ‘error’⁵⁸ and that the two do not co-exist ‘dualistically next to each other but produce something new, a living unity, a living soul’.⁵⁹ This is Bavinck’s ‘position of Harmonism’.⁶⁰

Bavinck states that the essence of human nature is its being [created in] the image of God’,⁶¹ whilst also stating that ‘it is of the essence of humanity to be corporeal and sentient’.⁶² The presuppositions in these statements on the ontological status of man in relation to God are of immense importance in understanding Bavinck’s metaphysical views, which I will highlight in relation to his Christological views where ‘Christ restores the whole person’.⁶³ As Thiago Silva points out Bavinck only holds a ‘dualistic view...between the time of death and the final bodily

⁵⁸ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.46.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.530.

⁶² Ibid., p.559.

⁶³ Ibid., p.554. Mentioned in: Thiago Machado Silva, ‘Bavinck’s Anthropology on Human Nature and The Resurrection of The Body’, *Stromata*, 58.1 (Calvin Theological Seminary, 2016), p.23.

resurrection’;⁶⁴ his view is a form of Cooper’s ‘holistic dualism’,⁶⁵ the emphasis being on man as a whole.

In this chapter I will argue that Bavinck’s view of human nature, what he calls harmonism, is driven by, and receives its origin in, his theology of the organic motif⁶⁶ and that despite his claim to the contrary it is essentially dualistic. The unity and diversity of the universe, all of creation, reflects the unity and diversity of the triune Creator.

The Creative Act

First let us understand Bavinck’s view of the creative act. Bavinck holds to a traditional view that God brought forth both heaven and earth out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) and that this creative act was immediate.⁶⁷ The act of *creatio ex nihilo* maintains the ‘distinction in essence between God and the world’.⁶⁸ Bavinck also identifies a distinction between the initial act of creation *ex nihilo* and a second act of creation where that created material receives ‘form and configuration’⁶⁹ for all creatures by ‘a creating word of God’s omnipotence’.⁷⁰ ‘The Father is the first cause’⁷¹ of all creation. The ‘initiative’⁷² proceeds from him by ‘an act of infinite power’.⁷³ The Son is the Wisdom, the Word, of God by whom all things have been created.⁷⁴ The forms of all things created find their origin in the wisdom of God. ‘The Holy Spirit is the ...immanent cause’ by which all creatures ‘receive their own form and configuration’.⁷⁵ The whole of God’s creation is an act of the trinity and bears this stamp (*vestigium trinitatis*).⁷⁶ This vestige can be seen in the unity and diversity of creation.

⁶⁴ Thiago Silva, *Herman Bavinck’s Anthropology and the Recent Body-Soul Debate* (2017), p.238.

⁶⁵ John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting* (2000), p. xxvii.

⁶⁶ Dr James Eglington’s book *Trinity and Organism: Towards a New Reading of Herman Bavinck’s Organic Motif* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013) helped me to identify this.

⁶⁷ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.479, 416-420.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.419.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.423.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.479.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.423.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.421.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.423.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 421. Bavinck quotes and follows the thinking of Augustine on the Trinity as Creator.

God is not only the author of creation He is also the end and purpose of it. As such the whole of creation is said to be a unity. God created all things with a nature of their own which 'rests in ordinances established by God'.⁷⁷ What Bavinck means by this is that each distinct nature has a purpose, a 'task',⁷⁸ unique to it. All creation has an end and is moving towards that *telos*. Every nature has its own 'increated energies and laws'⁷⁹ which directs the creature to its ultimate purpose and end. God implants this purpose, or desire, in the very nature of the creature and therefore, the direction and guidance toward the creature's *telos* is natural.

When God 'guides and governs'⁸⁰ His creation to its *telos* it is not done by coercion, but by the 'increated energies and laws' distinct to their nature.⁸¹ All of creation was created and pronounced 'good',⁸² and as such is a 'revelation of God's attributes'⁸³ and perfections from the beginning.⁸⁴ If creation was created with this disposition then its natural inclination would be to that which is good, 'the supreme good'.⁸⁵ So it not only has the disposition of goodness, but increases as it develops to perfection as it reaches its *telos* at the end of the age.⁸⁶ Bavinck stands with tradition stating that '[t]he glory of God is the final goal of all God's works'.⁸⁷ All of creation is united in its common end, God the 'ultimate goal of all things'.⁸⁸ He calls this unity an 'organic...bond'⁸⁹ which makes all of creation an 'organic whole'.⁹⁰

For Bavinck unity precedes diversity as it is founded in God.⁹¹ What he means by this is that 'God creates a singular cosmos'⁹² which is ordered. It is this created order that takes place by the

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.435.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.436.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Each stage of the creation was pronounced good (Genesis 1: 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), but then all creation collectively was pronounced as 'very good' (Genesis 1: 31).

⁸³ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.433.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.436.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.433.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.436.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.436.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.588.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.436. See also James Eglington, *Trinity and Organism* (2013), p.68. Where he discusses this point in with references to Bavinck's 1904 work *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing* (the Christian Worldview).

⁹² James Eglington, *Trinity and Organism* (2013), p.68.

second act of creation where he fills the cosmos which provides the reason for the cosmos diverse constituents.⁹³ Creation is diverse, but as a whole it is a unity in its reflection of God's perfection and in its pursuit of the common goal, the glory of God. There is a *teleological* characteristic to this organic motif. Man, on the other hand, is not just a part of creation but is a 'mirror of the universe'.⁹⁴ Man's nature is a unity of 'the material and spiritual world...a microcosm'.⁹⁵ Man does not just bear the *vestigium trinitatis* as a member of material creation, but also of spiritual creation in one being, and as such is the very image of God⁹⁶ 'a micro-divine-being'.⁹⁷ Man, and only man, is the only creation that bears the vestiges of God in both the spiritual and the material organically connected in one being. Man was made in the *imago Dei* and '[a]mong creatures [is the] most perfect revelation of God'.⁹⁸

Bavinck on Human Nature

Bavinck understands the unity of man's nature in the image of God, and that human nature is the composition of two distinct realities: the spiritual and the material. This is the essence of man, that which constitutes his being. We must first look at Bavinck definitions of key terms associated with the content of human nature. He does take a traditional view of the literal interpretation of the creation of humankind where Spirit, Soul, and Body are all essential to the makeup of man:

According to Genesis 2:7, man was formed from the dust of the earth by having the breath of life (*nišmat hayyîm*) breathed into his nostrils and so becoming a living soul (*nepeš hayyâ, psyche zōsa*). The breath of life is the principle of life; the living soul is the essence of man. By means of this combination Scripture accords to man a unique and independent place of his own and avoids both pantheism and materialism.⁹⁹

⁹³ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.435-436; James Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism* (2013), p.68. James Eglinton highlights four principles in Bavinck's organic worldview, see *Ibid.*, p.67-69.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.562.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.561.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.562.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.561.

⁹⁹ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.555.

Bavinck understands the breath of life to be the spirit, the human spirit,¹⁰⁰ which is the principle of life.¹⁰¹ This principle of life was received directly from God which distinguishes man from the beast, for the animals completely came from the earth.¹⁰² There is therefore something from God in man.¹⁰³ Man's spirit is separate from God's, ruling out pantheism, and is like the angels.¹⁰⁴ As such man can 'think spiritual or heavenly things' by nature, and even 'if necessary exist without a body'.¹⁰⁵

But what is the relation between spirit and soul? Bavinck's terminology is not always clear as he uses the terms interchangeably. Sometimes he means spirit in the sense of non-corporeal, and other times it is his manner of living to God. There is a semantic distinction, not substantial. The soul is that which pertains to earthly life, the lower powers of man, whereas the spirit is that which pertains to the powers of man as he contemplates God and pursues union with God. The spirit also names the moral and ethical quality of the person's agency. The spirit is the intellectual part of man. The soul is the 'subject' of that life,¹⁰⁶ and is what animates the body making it a living being.¹⁰⁷ It is also true for Bavinck that the spirit joins with the body making it a living being. Dust and breath join to produce a living soul: a person.¹⁰⁸ Bavinck states that the 'human person has a spirit, but is a living soul'.¹⁰⁹ The soul, *psychē*, in a broad sense is the 'animal sentient principle'.¹¹⁰ But in a narrower sense it is the 'thinking, mental life of human beings'¹¹¹ because the spirit (*pneuma*), as Bavinck understands it, is 'organized' into a soul (*psyche*),¹¹² meaning that the spirit is designed in such a way that it is for a human body. There is a functional distinction,

¹⁰⁰ Some have believed the breath of life to be the Holy Spirit due to Adams original state of righteousness where this can only be possible by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Bavinck agrees with the conclusion, but not with the exegesis of this passage. See *Ibid.*, p. 558.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.555; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p. 85.

¹⁰² Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p. 556. See Genesis 1:24.

¹⁰³ This was helpfully highlighted to me in an email correspondence with Prof. John W. Cooper on 03/09/2019.

¹⁰⁴ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p. 556.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p. 85.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 46, 85, 86.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* pp.85, 46.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p. 85.

¹¹⁰ Strong's #5590. Although Bavinck did not use Strong's, these three words perfectly sum up Bavinck's understanding of the *psyche* in this context. See Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.44.

¹¹¹ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.44.

¹¹² Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.556.

but not substantial. In actuality there is only a semantic distinction, but the terms are used interchangeably. The two are really one.

Bavinck's language is very confusing as it lends support to trichotomism, the view that there are three entities in man: spirit, soul, and body. He says that 'the soul carries the spirit within itself and is its appearance and manifestation'.¹¹³ This type of language makes it unclear whether there are two entities or not and it would have been simpler for Bavinck to just say that the spirit was designed by God in such a way that it is also a soul for this is what he means. Soul and spirit are used interchangeably but they do have their differences. Those differences in the context of human nature are not substantive and so are distinguished as different aspects of the same substance. If man was only *psychē* then he could not rise to the higher faculties.¹¹⁴ If man was only *pneuma* then he would not be human but an angel: he would not be material.¹¹⁵ Man is related to both the angels and the animals, but uniquely exists between the two.¹¹⁶ Man is the very meeting place of heaven and earth, the invisible and the visible.¹¹⁷

Man is also physical, and so has a body. Bavinck believes the body to be the material organism that is animated by the soul and is itself the organism of the soul.¹¹⁸ The soul is that 'which inspirits, spiritualizes, eternalizes, and governs it'.¹¹⁹ The body's matter is 'flesh', which Bavinck states 'refers only to that which is earthly'.¹²⁰ This is important because there are other bodies that are not flesh, including the resurrection body which is spiritual. This fleshly body is a 'natural body', it is mortal.¹²¹ The joining of the physical and the spiritual is not one of equality.¹²² The body is subject to spirit, it is 'subservient to and serves as instrument for the spiritual'.¹²³ The body does not have its own life and existence alongside the spiritual.¹²⁴ The physical and spiritual

¹¹³ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.86.

¹¹⁴ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.556.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), pp.46, 86.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.46.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.86.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., p.46.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

are essentially different and there is not a 'unity, identity, and sameness of matter and spirit'.¹²⁵ Bavinck calls this a 'harmonious joining'¹²⁶ for the unity lies in the new thing that is produced by this joining, 'a living unity, a living soul',¹²⁷ the 'I'.¹²⁸

Bavinck shares a similar understanding of the unity of man with the Thomist in that the two components combine to form a single unitary substance¹²⁹ whilst at the same time the soul remains distinct where it 'retains its own existence after the dissolution of the body'.¹³⁰ In accordance with our definition in chapter 1, the soul for Bavinck is a substance for it can endure after the destruction of the mortal body for it has an existence of its own. For the Thomist 'the union constitutes not only a substantial unity, but also a personal unity'.¹³¹ Bavinck states that '[t]he unity of the human being lies in his or her I'.¹³² This is very similar to Aquinas, for what Bavinck is saying is that the two constituent parts of man form a person, and it is this person, the I, that 'forms our humanity in us, what is actually human'.¹³³ Bavinck says that the I is simple and noncomposite,¹³⁴ it is a complete unity, and although nonspatial it is empirically united to the body¹³⁵ 'and where it is, the whole soul is'.¹³⁶

Unlike the Thomist then this personal unity finds its existence and continuation in the soul. This is significant for he detracts attention away from the dualistic imagery and onto the holistic, revealing the importance of the whole. However, the holistic imagery seems to find its existence in the immaterial part of man in terms of its continuity. This would necessitate a dualistic view of human nature for the personal unity would endure in the soul. Bavinck states that '[t]he whole person is the image of the whole deity'¹³⁷ and that '[t]he whole being...is the image of God':¹³⁸

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.46-49.

¹²⁹ Louis de Poissy, (1898). Art. I. 95.

¹³⁰ ST I, Q. 76, Art. 1, ad. 5.

¹³¹ Louis de Poissy (1898). Art. 1. 95.

¹³² Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.46.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.47.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.530.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.554.

body, soul, person; material, spiritual, unity. Thus, Bavinck understands human constitution in unitary terms as being the image of God, and that the image of God is the essence of humanity: nothing is excluded.¹³⁹ But what is the *imago Dei*?

The Image of God

There are varied takes on what the *imago Dei* is in tradition.¹⁴⁰ For Aquinas the *imago Dei* consists primarily in the intellectual nature¹⁴¹ and therefore is located only in the mind.¹⁴² In this instance the image is a faculty of human nature. The image also, for Aquinas, ‘consists in the conformity of grace’¹⁴³ which Rome called the ‘*gratia gratum faciens* (“the grace that renders one...pleasing to God”)’.¹⁴⁴ This is known as the *donum superadditum* and regarded as original righteousness, the image of God.¹⁴⁵ The superadded gift of original righteousness was added to human nature’s natural righteousness for the natural was not sufficient to reach man’s *telos*, the state of glory, for it was not created with positive holiness.¹⁴⁶ The image of God in this sense is a supernatural power added to man’s original constitution and so is not original to the state of integrity.¹⁴⁷ Interestingly the reformed Theologian John Owen also holds to the image of God as being a supernatural grace added to the natural faculties which is distinct and separate from them.¹⁴⁸ The superadded grace, original righteousness, does not belong to the essence of man for it is distinct and separate from the natural faculties.¹⁴⁹ Owen states that the ‘natural properties entire

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.555; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.46.

¹⁴⁰ Cooper stated that the *imago Dei* has traditionally been located ‘in the human spirit understood as a substance that expresses its God-imaging powers bodily’: John W. Cooper, ‘Scripture and Philosophy on the Unity of Body and Soul’ in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology*, ed. by Joshua R. Farris and Charles Taliaferro (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), p.39.

¹⁴¹ ST I, Q. 93.

¹⁴² ST I, Q. 93, Art. 6, co.

¹⁴³ ST I, Q. 93, Art. 4, co.; ST I, Q. 93, Art. 8, ad. 3.

¹⁴⁴ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.540.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., pp.539-541; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2012), pp.208-210.

¹⁴⁶ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), pp. 539-540; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (2012), p.209.

¹⁴⁷ See Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (2012), p. 209. I will not be critiquing this view held by Rome; stating the main point about what the image of God is will suffice for the purpose of this essay.

¹⁴⁸ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen, Volume III: Pneumatologia*, ed. by William H. Goold (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), pp. 168-169, 287.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

as to their essence' remains with the soul after the fall, but the original righteousness they received was lost.¹⁵⁰ *The imago Dei* here is like a capacity that can be lost.

Others, however, have taken the *imago Dei* to be purely relational.¹⁵¹ The image of God is to be found in the 'capacity'¹⁵² to relate to both God and neighbour. To be a person is to be in relationship to God and therefore personhood is the image of God.¹⁵³ The image in this view is also seen as a divine vocation.¹⁵⁴ For man in covenant relationship to God is to 'reflect God's own covenant love'.¹⁵⁵ This relational perspective is widely held by the non-reductive physicalists as it does not necessitate subscribing to a dualistic nature of man where the soul, or spirit, of man is that what makes humanity unique.

Bavinck understands the *imago Dei* in essentialist terms, and not merely a capacity or 'added gift'.¹⁵⁶ The *imago Dei* is central to his theology of the organic motif and 'is the human similarity to God whereby we display, in our own creaturely way the highest perfection of God'.¹⁵⁷ This similarity is understood in a *broad* sense where the image includes the 'essence and capabilities of the human being',¹⁵⁸ and a *narrower* sense where the image includes 'true knowledge,

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p.287.

¹⁵¹ See: Joel B. Green, "'Bodies - That is, Human Lives": A Re-Examination of Human Nature in the Bible', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*, ed. Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy and H. Newton Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), pp.155-157; Joel B. Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), pp.61-65; Ray S. Anderson, 'On Being Human: The Spiritual Saga of a Creaturely Soul', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*, ed. Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy and H. Newton Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), pp.179-181; Warren S. Brown, 'Conclusion: Reconciling Scientific and Biblical Portraits of Human Nature', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*, ed. Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy and H. Newton Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), pp.224-226.

¹⁵² Joel B. Green, "'Bodies - That is, Human Lives": A Re-Examination of Human Nature in the Bible', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.157; Warren S. Brown, 'Conclusion: Reconciling Scientific and Biblical Portraits of Human Nature', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), pp.225-226.

¹⁵³ Warren S. Brown, 'Conclusion: Reconciling Scientific and Biblical Portraits of Human Nature', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), pp.224-225.

¹⁵⁴ Joel B. Green, "'Bodies - That is, Human Lives": A Re-Examination of Human Nature in the Bible', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), pp.155-156; Joel B. Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life* (2008), p.62.

¹⁵⁵ Joel B. Green, "'Bodies - That is, Human Lives": A Re-Examination of Human Nature in the Bible', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.156.

¹⁵⁶ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p. 37.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 37.

righteousness, and holiness'¹⁵⁹ which is known as *original righteousness*. The image in the narrower sense is not a substance but a natural quality of the essence of man.¹⁶⁰ As a quality, and therefore a property, of human nature original righteousness is natural to man and belongs to the essence of human nature. Because it is not a substance it can be lost without a substantial change and so man remains the image of God in the broad sense even with the loss of the narrow.¹⁶¹ Man remains fully human and the image of God.

Although man remains the image of God, without original righteousness man's essence is in a state of malfunction not in the sense of a lost constituent part but in the quality of that nature.¹⁶² Adam was created good. He did not have to work to become good, or earn goodness, but only to remain in that state of integrity in which he was created.¹⁶³ Human nature possessed goodness from the beginning. This is important because the organic motif necessitates a physical unity and an ethical unity. With true knowledge no longer in the mind which directs the will, righteousness no longer in the will, and holiness no longer governing the heart then a complete moral breakdown occurs.¹⁶⁴ With the loss of the 'increated energies and laws'¹⁶⁵ of original righteousness man can no longer move toward the *telos*.

Adam, as the 'most perfect revelation of God',¹⁶⁶ the very meeting place of heaven and earth,¹⁶⁷ was the head of the creation order and federal head of humankind. This state of integrity was 'known as the covenant of nature or works...[and] rested in the moral law'.¹⁶⁸ Because original righteousness belonged to the image of God any deviation from the moral law would necessitate the breaking of the covenant and 'the moral law...falls in its entirety'¹⁶⁹ along with the image of God in man. Not only was the image lost in the narrow, it was also spoiled in the broad.¹⁷⁰ This

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p. 552.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p.553.

¹⁶² Ibid., p.551; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), pp. 37, 43.

¹⁶³ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.39.

¹⁶⁴ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.558.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p.436.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p.561.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p.556.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p.567.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p.572.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p.554.

reveals a very important relationship between nature and grace as restorative, because the image in the narrow belonged to the essence of man as a natural quality.¹⁷¹ The image in the narrow is what gives ‘harmony’¹⁷² to the whole, and without it man is ‘abnormal...spiritually dead’.¹⁷³

Why is the image in the narrow important for human constitution? What is revealed is that Adam in the state of integrity did not possess the highest kind of life even as the *imago Dei*.¹⁷⁴ Adam had the ability not to sin and not to die, but not the inability to sin or to die.¹⁷⁵ But the latter came by grace through Christ, and so a believer ‘can no longer die’.¹⁷⁶ The importance of this is that the qualities that are restored in Christ¹⁷⁷ are not possessed by the physical flesh for that still perishes. There must therefore be an immaterial continuity separable from the material body where identity is retained.

The body belongs to the image of God in its formal perfection as the instrument of the soul, not in its material substance.¹⁷⁸ If the whole human being is the *imago Dei* and the loss of the narrow spoiled the broad, then grace must also restore the image in the broad sense and so the essence must also become imperishable.¹⁷⁹ This ultimately comes to fulfillment in the glorified body, which Adam would have received by way of obedience. However, the image was not lost in the broad sense and the essence remained the same.¹⁸⁰ It was deformed, and so grace reforms the image of God in the broad sense¹⁸¹ where human nature receives ‘inamissible eternal life’¹⁸² and with it an ‘integrated immortality’¹⁸³ for the entire constitution.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p.549-553.

¹⁷² Ibid., p.551.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p.566-567, 572-573.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.566-567.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p.573. John 3: 16.

¹⁷⁷ Eph.4:24; Col.3:10.

¹⁷⁸ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.559-560.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.573,574.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid., p.560.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

This image in the broad sense ‘consist[s] in the fact that the human spirit (*pneuma*) was from the beginning adapted to union with a human body (*sōma*), and that the body (*sōma*) was from the beginning designed for the spirit (*pneuma*)’,¹⁸⁴ and the ‘spirit (*pneuma*)... [is] organized into a soul (*psyche*)’.¹⁸⁵ Although the body was logically created first out of the dust and therefore called Adam,¹⁸⁶ there is a similarity to Aquinas’s view that the soul is the form of the body: that which communicates existence to the body, giving rise to a unity.

In Bavincks understanding the body receives its life from the soul but is not a substance, and contrary to a Thomistic view the soul is not the substantial form but is a substance. Bavinck does not discuss form, but his understanding of the *imago Dei* seems to suggest that it is the form, not just of the body, but of the entire human constitution. The *imago Dei* communicates existence to the body and the soul. Bavinck would therefore be a hylomorphist, but not in a Thomistic fashion. He would also be a dualist, but not in an Augustinian or a Thomistic way. Bavinck seems to hold to a position that combines the two, and yet is distinct.

The attention is on the relation between God and Man, and not the metaphysical components of man in isolation. Man mirrors the universe as a microcosm. The spiritual creation did not give form to the material creation and likewise neither did the spiritual aspect of man give form to the material. Yet there is a unity. The unity of creation is in its *telos* and bears the *vestigium trinitatis*. The unity of man is in the *imago Dei* which bears the *vestigium trinitatis* in both the material and spiritual parts. Form came by an act of the trinity, and if the *imago Dei* ‘is the human similarity to God whereby we display, in our own creaturely way the highest perfection of God’,¹⁸⁷ and is the ‘most perfect revelation of God’,¹⁸⁸ then man is dualistic imaging the diversity in unity. God reveals himself in both the spiritual and material world, and so man reveals and images God in the pneumatic side and somatic.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p.585.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p.556.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p.559.

¹⁸⁷ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.36.

¹⁸⁸ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.561.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Bavinck has already rejected the dualistic view of man, so the soul cannot be the form of the body in his view. Because his anthropology is linked and intimately connected to his view of the creation, fall, redemption, and consummation narrative where man mirrors the universe¹⁹⁰ which reflects God who is revealed and manifested through a material world,¹⁹¹ then we can say man is designed as the *imago Dei* to reflect this reality with a corporeal body for its manifestation.¹⁹² Therefore, the *imago Dei* is the form. Although the soul is integral to human nature and can exist temporarily apart from the material it is not independently constitutive of human nature, and therefore incomplete. Bavinck calls it a 'relative dualism'¹⁹³ in contrast to an ontological dualism as it is inevitable in this life as we live 'between the times'.¹⁹⁴ John Bolt, interpreting Bavinck, states that 'this eschatological and relative dualism is overcome by the triumph of grace and the gift of revelation; a broken creation and corrupt humanity is healed by divine grace'.¹⁹⁵ I do not believe that the contrast is warranted or that it makes sense. If human nature can split, no matter when that occurs, then by necessity there is an ontological dualism.

Humanity is in a state of malfunction, the image of God in man is not altogether lost but it is severely deformed. If the *imago Dei* is the form, then it cannot be lost completely as man would cease to exist. The image can be deformed and this we see in the fall where man is subjected to death. The relationship with God is severed, yet due to their creation man 'always and forever...remain human and...the image of God'.¹⁹⁶ When God said man would die, a spiritual death occurred in the severing of man's relationship with God resulting in the loss of the image in the narrow sense. This loss impacted the entire essence and because the body 'is subservient to and serves as instrument for the spiritual',¹⁹⁷ when man lost his spiritual life his physical body

¹⁹⁰ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.562.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p.560.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Herman Bavinck, *Common Grace*, trans. by Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, *Calvin Theological Journal* 24 (1989): 38-39. Cited in: John Bolt, 'Doubting Reformational Anti-Thomism', in *Aquinas Among the Protestants*, ed. by Manfred Svensson and David VanDrunen (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), pp.144-145; Also cited in: John Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life: Following Jesus in Faithful Service* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), pp.69-70.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.585.

¹⁹⁷ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.46.

became subject to decay as consequence of sin.¹⁹⁸ Therefore, if a spiritual death occurred then so did a physical in the sense that the whole being lost immortality for man is a unity. Adam did not possess eternal life and so when Christ reforms the essence of man, the body included, receives 'an integrated immortality'¹⁹⁹ into 'inamissible eternal life'²⁰⁰ and so the state of glory is different to the state of integrity.

Humanity's uniqueness lies in its unity of the physical and the ethical²⁰¹ in Bavinck's view. Because original sin is not physical but ethical, then according to Bavinck '[sin] can only be rooted in the ethical and federal unity of the human race'.²⁰² Why is this significant for the human constitution? Well Bavinck states that 'on the basis of a physical unity an ethical unity has to be constructed',²⁰³ which makes human persons organically connected. Human race is a whole and is made of individuals. The individual human is the image of God, and so is humanity as a whole.²⁰⁴ If there is an organic connection then logically if the head dies, all dies, and vice versa. Bavinck states that 'both the *sin* and the *righteousness* presuppose a federal relation between humanity as a whole and its heads'.²⁰⁵

Man's constitution is created in such a way that it was possible for him to die if a violation of God's commandment occurred,²⁰⁶ but at the same time it was created in God's image, which is the form, making it possible for a reforming of the image and a restoration in Christ. As the absolute eternal image of God, Christ with his righteousness could, and did, confer that righteousness on human nature by entering into human flesh for 'on the basis of a physical unity an ethical unity has to be constructed'.²⁰⁷ This ethical unity is a moral unity,²⁰⁸ but it is also a way of talking of man's ordained end and so is *teleological*. If sin is ethical then it affected man's attainment of the *telos*. Bavinck states that '[t]he incarnation of our Lord is the definitive proof

¹⁹⁸ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Volume Two (2004), p.560.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Volume Two (2004), p.586.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.587.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.560.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.586.

²⁰⁸ See Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, Volume One (2019), pp.17-23, 60.

that humans...are created in the image of God, and that the human body is an essential component of that image'.²⁰⁹ This brings us to Bavinck's Christological view of man.

According to Bolt Bavinck's view is that there had to be some form of dualism in this age for eschatological reasons, not ontological,²¹⁰ for a restoration of the image of God in man and an exchange of federal headship. This is because 'we still live "between the times" [and] our lives are historically...conditioned by sin'.²¹¹ Man's constitution had to be such that it was fit for 'the highest degree of conformity to God and for the most intimate indwelling of God'.²¹² From the beginning this shows man's body is not evil but is of immense importance and to be respected as the material constituent of the image of God in man. God is Spirit and is not some abstract cognate working of a brain but is pure being. That pure being took on flesh and became a man in the person of Jesus Christ. This is an impossibility from a non-dualistic perspective in this dispensation when we look at the constitution from Bavinck's theological stance.

If, however, the spiritual joins with the material to form a new unity, how do we understand that with Christ, for Christ does not join to a body and become a person. His unity with human nature does not produce a person for if it did 'no union other than a moral one would be possible'.²¹³ If Christ's personhood was a 'composite person',²¹⁴ as some have stated, then he would be substantially part creation, which is a contradiction for the eternal one cannot be substantially created.²¹⁵ It is contrary to the aseity of God. Nor can a substance, by our definition, be a composite. Bavinck sees human nature as 'united with and incorporated in the person of the Son'.²¹⁶ This is not the same as a person being a composite for the person of the Son unites the

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p.530.

²¹⁰ John Bolt, 'Doubting Reformational Anti-Thomism', in *Aquinas Among the Protestants*, ed. by Manfred Svensson and David VanDrunen (2018), pp.144-145.

²¹¹ John Bolt, *Bavinck on the Christian Life: Following Jesus in Faithful Service* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), p.70. See also Ibid., pp. 144-145.

²¹² Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.560.

²¹³ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Three: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. by John Bolt and trans. by John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), p.305.

²¹⁴ ST III, Q. 2, Art. 4.

²¹⁵ Bavinck highlights the preexistence and eternality of the person of the Son: Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Three* (2006), p.307.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

two natures, divine and human, within himself.²¹⁷ Bavinck believed that ‘persons are unities of body and soul’.²¹⁸ The union ‘develops into “persons” in humans’.²¹⁹ In the case of Christ he had a body and soul, human nature, which was ‘united with and incorporated in the person of the son’.²²⁰ Christ’s human nature never existed without a person, for he is the creator and so ‘increated [human nature] within himself’.²²¹ At no point does it compose the person of Christ. Although there is great mystery here with Christ’s union with humanity, Bavinck was emphatic that the union was not of persons but a ‘personal and substantial union’.²²² Why is this significant? Well for Bavinck the:

“nature” is the substratum, the presupposition, that by which a thing is what it is, the “principle by which”; and “person” is the subject not of a given nature in general but of a rational nature, the individual substance of a rational nature, the “principle which”. “Person” is what exists in and for itself, the owner, possessor, and master of the nature, a completion of existent.²²³

This is completely in line with our definition of a substance in chapter 1 and shows that for Bavinck the person, as substance, is the result of the spiritual and material union. There is a completion of existence. Christ is not just from God he is God and is the true image and likeness of God.²²⁴ If the *imago Dei* is the form, then Christ does not just give life to the body but is perfectly fit for it naturally as the image of God. So in this instance, although we do not understand and cannot for we are finite and have no experience of such an act, the intimate union of the divine nature and the human we do know that one person is the subject of both.

The Son, the Word, who is the author of life and personal, is life and gives life, so he gives life to his human body; therefore making the man Christ Jesus both corporeal and sentient as Bavinck would define the essence of humanity. The Word, who is Spirit, is fit for a human body and vice versa. A human body is created for a soul and is the instrument for the soul. The spirit that was

²¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 304-308.

²¹⁸ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.34.

²¹⁹ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Three* (2006), p.306.

²²⁰ Ibid., p.307.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Three* (2006), p.305.

²²³ Ibid., p.306.

²²⁴ See: Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), p.44.

breathed was organised into a soul, but the Word is Spirit and is already organised as the Creator, that which spoke all things into being, and united to the body in the person of the Word. That Word is fit for the body as the body belongs to the image of God in its formal perfection.²²⁵ It is the instrument that the spirit is designed for as its manifestation, even as the material world is the revelation and manifestation of God.²²⁶ This is what Bavinck was getting at when he said that man 'united and reconciles within himself both heaven and earth, things both invisible and visible'.²²⁷

Bavinck on the Intermediate State and the Resurrection

Bavinck then holds a harmonious view of man as an organic unity, whilst concomitantly recognising the necessary distinction in man in this dispensation. But as Thiago Silva mentioned, Bavinck only really holds a dualistic view 'between the time of death and the final bodily resurrection'²²⁸ which contrary to Bavinck's intended understanding I do believe necessitates an ontological dualism. This brings us to the much-debated intermediate state. Many arguments for dualism are centred on the intermediate state, whilst many that reject dualism for monism reject an intermediate state along with it and advocate for various alternatives. But Bavinck does affirm a belief in the intermediate state for biblical exegetical reasons and by the necessity of the soul's immortality and independent existence.

Bavinck affirmed that 'death is not the end of a person [as] the soul cannot be killed (Matt.10:28)'.²²⁹ This is clearly a contradiction to a non-dualistic position, for Bavinck explains that 'death is never identical with annihilation, with non-being, but always consists in the destruction of harmony'.²³⁰ This is extremely important for Bavinck's position is that of 'harmonism' and Christ restores that harmony. If the destruction of harmony is metaphysically realised in the separation of human constitution at death, then we can understand why Bavinck

²²⁵ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), pp.559-560.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.560.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.556.

²²⁸ Thiago Silva, *Herman Bavinck's Anthropology and the Recent Body-Soul Debate* (2017), p.238.

²²⁹ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Four: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, ed. by John Bolt and trans. by John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), p.604.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.614.

only holds to a relative dualism and that between death and resurrection. Everything for Bavinck is through this lens.

The destruction of harmony is the separation from 'various life settings in which a creature has been placed in keeping with one's nature, in returning to the elementary chaotic existence that...underlies the entire cosmos'.²³¹ The body dies, decays, and returns to the earth: its elements return to the ecological system and man ceases to be on this side as it were. For Bavinck, 'death, then, is an exit from this life, the breaking of *all* bonds with *this* world'.²³² Man is both earthly and heavenly, physical and spiritual, corporeal and incorporeal. The spiritual remains in existence, but where and how is a different question. There is evidently a dualism in Bavinck's view however he dresses it up: it is inescapable.

Bavinck believes the soul is located after death in the realm of the dead, *hades*, and will be located there until the resurrection.²³³ Although the place is not significant for our topic of the constitution, it is Bavinck's view where the immaterial aspect of man is in the intermediate state. He is emphatic that the resurrection is not a resurrection '... "from death" but "from the dead", that is, from the realm of the dead'.²³⁴ This is to highlight the view that there is no annihilation, but a continuation. Death is seen as a separation of soul and body. This brings us to the resurrection where persons are 'completely liberated in soul and body from the rule of death'.²³⁵ The separation is unnatural, and human nature is incomplete: it is a naked existence.²³⁶ Bavinck goes so far as to say it is 'not yet life as it befits and behooves human beings'.²³⁷

How then does the soul exist in a state of independence and nakedness, when the body is its organ of manifestation? How do the higher faculties continue to operate without the necessary organ to manifest those activities? It may seem like a cop out for Bavinck as he simply does not know, and does state that the bounds of scripture on the intermediate state are sufficient for our

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid., p.615.

²³³ Ibid., pp.604-605.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid., pp.605-606.

²³⁶ Ibid., p.615.

²³⁷ Ibid.

needs in understanding in this life and that anything more is conjecture that 'run the risk of negating the divine witness'.²³⁸ He does mention that 'there is nothing preposterous in thinking that if necessary the soul can continue its activities without the body'²³⁹ for the activities of the higher faculties belong to the soul, the 'psychic "I" ...'²⁴⁰ and that the relationship with this world has completely been cut off, but new relations will immediately replace them from another world.²⁴¹ That other is not known nor been experienced by any on this side. Scripture presents the person as being conscious after death, and that is sufficient for Bavinck.²⁴² It is not intellectual suicide or ignorance to not pursue via conjecture into a realm of existence completely outside of the human experience. Bavinck is conscious of his epistemological boundaries and stays within his frame of reference.

The purpose of the general resurrection is 'only to restore in all human beings the temporary rupture of the bond between soul and body'.²⁴³ This includes those who are destined for eternal punishment. It is not a narrow vision that only incorporates those in Christ. The resurrection applies to all humans.²⁴⁴ This is where Bavinck's relative dualism is realised for he states that it 'occurred only with a view toward grace in Christ'.²⁴⁵ The emphasis is on Christ's work, not an ontological distinction in entities. Bavinck explains how 'originally the punishment for sin was death in its full scope and severity',²⁴⁶ but because of 'God's gracious intervention',²⁴⁷ a rupture in human constitution occurred, a gap, or delay, between temporal death and eternal for the purpose of gathering 'for himself a community for eternal life'²⁴⁸ throughout generations. The rupture for Bavinck is not ontological. It is purposeful and temporal. The resurrection, even for the unbeliever, is indirectly a fruit of Christ's work.²⁴⁹ It was planned with Christ's redeeming

²³⁸ Ibid., p.614.

²³⁹ Ibid., p.617.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid., pp.617, 618.

²⁴² Ibid., p.617.

²⁴³ Ibid., p.693.

²⁴⁴ Acts 24:15; John 5: 28,29; Daniel 12: 1,2; Mathew 10:28; etc.

²⁴⁵ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Four* (2008), p.693.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

work in view, and so even the unbeliever has a bodily resurrection to restore his humanity as a whole. Thiago Silva states, 'sin affects human nature as a whole'²⁵⁰ and therefore the image of God needs to be restored in the believer. It is also true for the unbeliever that 'judgement must strike the whole person'.²⁵¹ A resurrection is needed for all humanity, a reunion of body and soul.

For Bavinck the *I*, the person, is 'the most intimate union of soul and body'²⁵² and therefore there must be of necessity a continuation of identity with the body that decays, as well as the soul, with the resurrection body.²⁵³ Preservation of identity is paramount in the resurrection body due to the 'substantial unity',²⁵⁴ the *I*. We know that the physical is composed of atoms which are continually being replaced so that the physical structure is constantly changing at its atomic level, yet identity is maintained. Bavinck was aware of this and that after a period of time not a single particle that made up the substance of the body would be present.²⁵⁵ This he saw emphasised in nature where matter and form change but identity is maintained by looking at the maggot and the fly, the caterpillar and the butterfly, etc.²⁵⁶ He recognised the change and the continuation of identity but did 'not know what it is that remains the same under all these metamorphoses'.²⁵⁷ The application is the same with humans in the sense that matter changes, is replaced, but identity continues. Identity, therefore, is 'independent of the body mass and its constant change'.²⁵⁸ When humans die the body decomposes and the elements re-enter the ecological system, of which will pass into other creatures,²⁵⁹ so it cannot be the same 'flesh' that is resurrected: the identity is independent from the flesh, the matter. Bavinck therefore makes a distinction and states that the scriptures '[do] not teach the resurrection of the flesh, but of the body'.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁰ Thiago Machado Silva, *Bavinck's Anthropology on Human Nature and The Resurrection of The Body* (2016), p.27.

²⁵¹ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Four*, (2008). P693.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p.694.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.696.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.695, 696

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.696.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.696.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.697.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.696.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

How then is identity maintained? What is resurrected? Bavinck affirms that the very same body is the body that is raised, but there is a 'qualitative distinction'²⁶¹ with the new from the old. This is seen primarily in Christ, who's physical body did not see corruption but nevertheless was not the same qualitatively when he rose again: his body was a glorified body.²⁶² Bavinck holds that identity is maintained through the perishable body being the 'seed from which the resurrection body springs'²⁶³, in line with 1 Cor. 15: 35-38; the resurrection body is not flesh and blood, not perishable, but 'is clothed in imperishability and glory'.²⁶⁴ For Bavinck, therefore, although there is a qualitative distinction it is nonetheless the same body in the continuation of identity. There is something that remains 'that constitutes the substratum of the resurrection body',²⁶⁵ but Bavinck does not conjecture on this and specifically states what it is 'we do not know and will never be able to discover'.²⁶⁶

He is very clear that the resurrection body, in some way, arises from the body that was laid in the grave and therefore remains a body that comes from the earth. It remains material, but material not 'organised into perishable flesh and blood but into a glorified body'.²⁶⁷ This glorified body is more than the mere reunion of body and soul, but 'also an act of vivification, a renewal. It is an event in which believers, united in soul and body, enter into communion with Christ and are being re-created after God's image (Rom. 8:11, 29; Phil. 3:21)'.²⁶⁸ When Christ rose from the dead the image of God was completely restored and the relative dualism ceases: humanity is glorified and in complete union with Christ, the federal head, and harmony returns in a way where dualism cannot. There can be no separation anymore, no death, no parts.

Bavinck seems to be opposed to a certain kind of dualism known as *dichotomy*. Dichotomy is the view that something can be 'cut' in two.²⁶⁹ This is rejected by Bavinck for although Bavinck

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid., p.697.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., p.698.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p.693. Also quoted in: Thiago Machado Silva, *Bavinck's Anthropology on Human Nature and The Resurrection of The Body*, (2016), p.27.

²⁶⁹ For a good explanation of this term theologically and of its roots and etymology see: Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans USA/ Carlisle: Paternoster Press UK, 1994), p.209, 210.

believes there is a separation after death it is wholly unnatural and caused by sin and it is not ontologically essential. Man cannot be cut in this dispensation, nor in the resurrection. There is only a separation between death and resurrection. I think using the term 'relative dualism' is unfortunate. Human constitution is not relative but fixed. The harmony of that constitution can be lost, but the constituent parts do not change ontologically. There will always be two for man is the meeting place of heaven and earth, the spiritual and the material.

CHAPTER 3–THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONSTITUTION: MODERN ACCOUNTS

Many contemporary theologians and Christian philosophers have rejected the dualistic nature of man as two separate entities. The most dominant contemporary theory is that of *non-reductive physicalism*,²⁷⁰ primarily spearheaded by the philosopher Nancey Murphy. This view rejects both dualism and contemporary physicalism and holds to a materialist view that ‘the person is a physical organism’²⁷¹ whilst simultaneously holding a non-reductive view of the “higher” capacities...essential for...humanness’.²⁷² This theory believes that man is a completely physical organism with no additional immaterial substance. The higher-levels are said to have top-down causation influence on the lower-levels. There is no part of man that can exist temporarily in separation from the physical. Although consciousness is affirmed, it does not have an existence of its own. This consciousness is not reducible to the biological and so man, the person, is not just physical, not just ‘... “nothing but” a body’.²⁷³ This view is a form of monism²⁷⁴ and has a lot of ground to cover in order to establish a coherent theological and philosophical view that could replace the traditional dualistic understanding of man or contend with it as equal.

The non-reductive physicalist view rejects the intermediate disembodied state and therefore must account for the continuation of identity at the resurrection after physical death. We will see that the consequences of the physicalist view of man fails to make sense of Genesis 2:7 and the original plan of God as highlighted in Bavinck’s theology. We must note that Bavinck’s epistemology is that of a revelatory epistemology with the frame of reference being the bounds of Scripture. This will be important when critiquing other Christian theologians and philosophers.

²⁷⁰ Italics mine.

²⁷¹ Nancey Murphy, ‘Human Nature: Historical, Scientific, and Religious Issues’ (1998), p.2.

²⁷² Ibid. See also: John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting* (2000), p. xxiv.

²⁷³ Nancey Murphy, *Human Nature: Historical, Scientific, and Religious Issues* (1998), p.2.

²⁷⁴ Whenever I use the term monism, I am only referring to the nonreductive physicalist position.

I will argue that the non-reductive physicalist position on emergent properties operating a top-down causation influence cannot be accounted for, and as such neither can personal identity in this life or the life after bodily death. I will use Bavinck in contrast to the non-reductive physicalist view, to question and deepen the exegesis of their position and to show an alternative dualistic view that is not contradictory to scripture or science and that can account for personhood.

Monism–Nonreductive Physicalism

For Bavinck when it comes to ultimate issues, those concerned with the nature of reality, the ultimate standard is divine revelation. He holds to a revelatory epistemology, the view that ‘revelation is the presupposition, the foundation, the secret, of all that exists in all its forms’.²⁷⁵ Everything that is known or can be known has its foundations in revelation. Bavinck stated that ‘revelation underlies all created being’.²⁷⁶ There is general revelation, which makes known the power of Gods mind through creation, then there is special revelation that makes known redemption in Christ and comes by the Scriptures and applied to believers.²⁷⁷ Both have the same foundations and the intelligibility of the one is contingent on the other.²⁷⁸ This is the foundation of his worldview. His frame of reference is bound to his epistemological foundation. This is extremely important for the non-reductive physicalist is in collision with Bavinck’s theological and philosophical views on human constitution, and Bavinck states that ‘[a] philosophy that either does not know or rejects divine revelation always lapses into empiricism or rationalism, materialism or spiritualism. But Scripture reconciles the two.

As we saw with Bavinck man has a “spirit” (*pneuma*), but that “spirit” is psychically organised and must, by virtue of its nature, inhabit a body.’²⁷⁹ Although the term ‘non-reductive’ is intended to distinguish it from purely materialist accounts of the soul the position is a materialist perspective on man, which I will demonstrate is a distinction without a difference, where all things are the result of material interaction including the emergence of consciousness and spiritual or religious

²⁷⁵ Herman Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation: A New Annotated Edition*, ed. by Cory Brock and Nathaniel Gray Sutanto (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2018), p.24.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p.25.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., pp.24-25.

²⁷⁹ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.559.

capacities.²⁸⁰ The non-reductive physicalist primarily holds to an empirical epistemology and so automatically is on a different starting point approaching the question of the nature of man and human constitution from a different foundational perspective.

Warren S. Brown states that:

If, as the scientific record tells us, God's work in creation of human persons was progressive, what was the nature of the step from intelligent ape to human person? How could biological and cultural development...result in a race of souls?²⁸¹

An interesting observation is that Brown bases his rejection of the soul here not on the impossibility or the irrationality of the concept of soul, an immaterial entity in man, but on the biological development of humans. Why is this important? Well the concept of the soul is not biological and therefore would never develop from a biological process: it is qualitatively different. The dualist perspective does not advocate for a biological process of development for the soul, and so if Brown is using that as a point of rebuttal then it is a straw man. For Aquinas, the soul is the form and so animates the body making it logically prior to the biological aspect of man. For Bavinck, the body is logically prior to the soul but the spirit is breathed into man and organised into a soul: the body and spirit become something new, a living soul a person. Even from the Scriptural perspective and tradition there is no biological development of the soul.

Brown states that '[if] there is a direct link between neurological processes and psychological events...how does a neurocognitive system have a soul in the sense often presumed by Jewish

²⁸⁰ Nancey Murphy, 'Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*, ed. Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy and H. Newton Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), pp.130-131.

²⁸¹ Warren S. Brown, 'Cognitive Contributions to Soul', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*, ed. Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy and H. Newton Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), p.99. Brown holds to an evolutionary theory of man, where man evolved from the ape and over time developed rational capacities and personhood. This rests on the distinction between macro and micro evolution, which has been widely criticised. The philosopher and mathematician, Dr David Berlinski, is one of the foremost critics of the macro evolution theory and is one of the first to publicly critique it back in the 1970's. His main emphasis is that it is not a scientific theory, as it lacks the main attributes that class it as scientific. He thinks it to be vague, open ended, and makes no quantitative predictions, it has no sound mathematical structure. See his interview with Dr Frank Turek on his book "The Devils Delusion: Atheism and its Scientific Pretensions" and his person entry into the debate: <https://youtu.be/NLrXQ47s1bA> ; For Bavinck's interaction and refutation with Darwinism and theory of evolution see Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), pp. 83, 511-20, 525-26, 535-537.

and Christian theology?'.²⁸² Brown here asks a rhetorical question but enters into the fallacy of bifurcation, for his argument is this:

- A- If there is a direct link between neurological processes and psychological events, then there can be no separable soul, with its own existence.
- B- There is a direct link between neurological processes and psychological events.
- C- Therefore, there is no separate soul with its own existence.

Although the argument is a valid *modus ponens*, premise A is a false premise for Brown creates a false dilemma: it is not sound, not true. The fact that neurological processes have a direct link to psychological events does not entail that man's constitution does not have a separate soul with its own existence. Brown is begging the question. He assumes that a separable soul, that is qualitatively different, cannot affect a biological process. As we saw in Bavincks theology the body is the organ of the soul, united in the *imago Dei*, it is the organ of manifestation and therefore it is perfectly in keeping with the concept of a soul to have this biological process affecting psychological events.

Brown's data is from Malcolm Jeeves who is specifically talking about mental processes.²⁸³ Now it was the downfall of Descartes to suggest that the *mind* was a separate substance to the body, but biblical dualists of all kinds do not make the connection that the mind is the soul, or that the mind is a separable substance. The soul is much more. Moreland and Rae state that '[f]or the Thomist the mind is a faculty (a natural grouping of capacities) of the soul that may require certain physical states of affairs to obtain in the brain and central nervous system before it can function'.²⁸⁴ From the dualist perspective the physical processes linked with psychological events do not negate the existence of a potentially independent existent immaterial part of man.

²⁸² Warren S. Brown, 'Cognitive Contributions to Soul,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.99.

²⁸³ Malcolm Jeeves, 'Brain, Mind, and Behavior', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*, ed. Warren S. Brown, Nancey Murphy and H. Newton Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), p.79.

²⁸⁴ J. P. Moreland & Scott B. Rae, *Body & Soul* (2000), pp.200, 201.

It is clear that Brown rejects the notion of a separable immaterial entity in man designating the soul as the 'physiologically embodied property of human nature'.²⁸⁵ If the soul is a property, then in keeping with our definition in chapter 1 it is not a substance and therefore cannot have a separate independent existence. Brown accounts for the capacities and experiences that have been applied to the soul as those which emerge out of personal relatedness,²⁸⁶ 'and that personal relatedness is an emergent property of human cognition'.²⁸⁷

Brown explains that as an emergent property, personal relatedness and the capacities associated with the soul are not reducible to the 'underlying mental processes from which they emerge'.²⁸⁸ These neurological processes are biological in nature and therefore are reducible. However, emergent properties are said to have '*downward causation influence*'²⁸⁹ on the lower level processes they emerge from. These higher levels of cognition 'determine the course of the neurophysiological systems that instantiate them'.²⁹⁰ For Brown the higher levels of cognition only differ from the lower in complexity.²⁹¹ The problem with this is how does a difference in complexity avoid determinism and establish downward causation? If the difference is qualitative then an ontological problem arises. Is it possible that powers that are qualitatively different can emerge from systems that only differ in degree of complexity, or that only differ quantitatively?²⁹²

Nancey Murphy in concert with Brown believes that higher-level capacities such as consciousness and religious experience, 'are emergent properties [which] have top-down causation influence on the biological'.²⁹³ She says 'the nervous system is the seat of consciousness'.²⁹⁴ Murphy affirms

²⁸⁵ Warren S. Brown, 'Cognitive Contributions to Soul,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.99.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.101, 123.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.101.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.103.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.102.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² The last sentences are one point and I was hugely helped by Robert Delfino's helpful insight into Nancey Murphy's views from this exact same perspective. I have used his points here and applied them to Brown. He talks about the metaphysical problem of 'powers that are qualitatively different emerging from entities that are only quantitatively different'. For his whole discussion on this see Robert Delfino, *Christian Physicalism and Personal Identity* (metanexus, 2008). <https://www.metanexus.net/christian-physicalism-and-personal-identity/>

²⁹³ Nancey Murphy, 'Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), pp.130-131.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

ontological reductionism, the view that there are no added ingredients to produce higher-level entities from lower, but rejects reductive materialism and causal reduction believing that the higher-level entities are not just the sum of their parts²⁹⁵ but that they are still 'as real as the entities that compose them'.²⁹⁶ The higher capacities are not reducible to the atomic. Causal reduction is the view that the laws of physics that govern the lower-level entities, the parts, determines the behaviour of the higher-level entities. Murphy refers to this as 'bottom-up' causation.²⁹⁷

Non-reductive physicalism seeks to show that higher-level properties such as consciousness are ontologically dependent on the body²⁹⁸ but not reducible to it. The defeat of causal reduction is therefore essential for maintaining a traditional view of personhood that upholds free will, moral responsibility, and the capacity for reasoning:²⁹⁹

The question of *causal* reduction seems to be the one that matters for retaining our traditional conceptions of personhood...First, if mental events can be reduced to brain events, and the brain events are governed by the laws of neurology (and ultimately the laws of physics), then in what sense can we say that humans have free will? Are not...their willed actions merely the product of blind forces? Second, if mental events are simply the product of neurological causes, then what sense can we make of *reasons*?³⁰⁰

In order to overcome the problem of causal reduction Murphy must establish a view where mental events are related but not reducible to brain events and operate a 'top-down' causation, whilst not appealing to a separate soul with its own existence. If top-down causation cannot be established or justified from a monistic view, then causal reduction will be inevitable and non-reductive physicalism will be a distinction without a difference. It is not only personhood that is affected for if causal reduction is the consequence of the physicalist position then sin is not

²⁹⁵ Nancey Murphy, 'Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), pp. 129-131.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.130.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.129; Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.73.

²⁹⁸ Mikael Leidenhag, 'From Emergence Theory to Pansychism – A Philosophical Evaluation of Nancey Murphy's Non-reductive Physicalism', *Sophia*, 55 (2016), 381-394 (p.382).

²⁹⁹ See: *ibid.*, p. 383; Robert Delfino, *Christian Physicalism and Personal Identity* (metanexus, 2008); Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.72.

³⁰⁰ Nancey Murphy, 'Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.131.

ethical, as we saw in Bavinck's theology, but physical and a cause of brain events. If this is the consequence, then sin becomes materialised creating a major problem for Christology. If sin is ethical then, as Bavinck highlighted, it is 'rooted in the ethical and federal unity of the human race'.³⁰¹ If sin is materialised then it becomes determinative meaning Christ could not be the federal head of the human race or take on human flesh. We can see here the epistemological importance of revelation. Murphy seeks to establish her position by appealing to her view of *supervenience*.

Supervenience is the dependent relation between higher-level properties (those that are emergent) and lower-level properties, or base properties.³⁰² The higher-level are said to supervene on the lower. Murphy has a specific view that supervenient properties are often what she calls 'multiply realizable',³⁰³ meaning that many different lower-level properties or brain states can realise the same higher-level properties. Murphy gives the following definition, 'if *S* supervenes on *B* (given circumstance *c*), then something's being *B* entails its being *S*, but its being *S* does not entail its being *B*'.³⁰⁴ Murphy seeks to show the truth of this definition by R.M. Hare's description of supervenience where the characteristic 'good' supervenes on the character traits of St. Francis, who is a 'good' person.³⁰⁵ Murphy highlights that 'goodness' is multiply realisable for 'there are many life patterns different from St. Francis's that also constitute one a good person'.³⁰⁶ So 'goodness' as a property that is supervenient is not identical with the base property for it is multiply realisable.³⁰⁷ The dependence on circumstance is what makes a given property multiply realisable. These higher capacities are not reducible because they supervene on lower

³⁰¹ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.586. (see also p.574-576).

³⁰² I am specifically using the language of the nonreductive physicalist so as to give clarity and continuity i.e. referring to properties as 'emergent'. For a good overview of Supervenience and its philosophical history, see Terence E. Horgan, 'Supervenience', in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 3rd edn, ed. by Robert Audi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.1038-1039.

³⁰³ Nancey Murphy, 'Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.135.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ R.M. Hare's description is from *The Language of Morals* (1953), quoted by Terence E. Horgan, 'Supervenience', in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 3rd edn, ed. by Robert Audi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.1038-1039.

³⁰⁶ Nancey Murphy, 'Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.135.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

level properties under certain circumstances and are not identity relations.³⁰⁸ Supervenience is the key to non-reductive physicalism.³⁰⁹

Murphy sees these supervenient properties as 'new causal powers'.³¹⁰ She rejects that these new powers can be reduced to the 'combined effects of lower level causal processes'.³¹¹ Mikael Leidenhag suggests that Murphy is endorsing *sui generis*³¹² emergence making the new properties ontologically different.³¹³ If they cannot be reduced because they are ontologically different, then they are of a different 'kind'.³¹⁴ If they are of a different kind and cannot therefore be reduced then they are ontologically independent. But is this possible? We can see here the tension with supervenience which, by definition, is a 'dependent' relation. Murphy uses two main examples to show the emergence of 'new causal powers' that operate downward causation, the watch and the paper plane.

A normal watch exhibits bottom-up causation for 'its behavior is...determined by the behavior of its parts'.³¹⁵ However, there is another kind of watch. One where its behaviour can be readjusted by external causes. These are radio controlled where the watch picks up orbiting signals. the watch 'has been designed specifically so that its behavior is subject to readjustment by causal factors *from outside* the system'.³¹⁶ The problem with this is evident. No new causal power has emerged *from* the system but only an external causal influence acting upon it. This also does not eliminate reduction or determinism. What we see here is a purely physical phenomenon, what

³⁰⁸ Nancey Murphy, 'Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.134-137.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.132.

³¹⁰ Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.76; Nancey Murphy and Warren S. Brown, *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?: Philosophical and Neurobiological Perspectives on Moral Responsibility and Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.79-80.

³¹¹ Nancey Murphy and Warren S. Brown, *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?: Philosophical and Neurobiological Perspectives on Moral Responsibility and Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.80.

³¹² This term just means unique, of its own kind.

³¹³ Leidenhag, Mikael, 'From Emergence Theory to Pansychism – A Philosophical Evaluation of Nancey Murphy's Non-reductive Physicalism', *Sophia*, 55 (2016), p.386.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.77.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Leidenhag calls 'micro-to-micro physical causation'.³¹⁷ There is not a difference in kind, only a physical interaction due to specific environmental factors which is explainable.

The paper plane is much the same. Its parts are simply the atoms that constitute it which 'only serve the function of providing mass and rigidity'.³¹⁸ This is bottom-up causation. The behaviour of the plane demonstrates downward causation and is governed by its shape, a holistic property, and two environmental factors: '[T]he hand that throws the plane and the air currents that affect its flight path'.³¹⁹ The new causal power is flight. Using Murphy's supervenience definition, we can say the causal capacity to fly supervenes on the arrangement of atoms that constitute the paper plane under certain circumstances, or environmental factors. But again, this is not actually true. The plane does not have a new causal power. Nothing has emerged from the paper plane. All we have are external causal influences acting upon the plane.

Murphy's point was to prove the falsity of the claim that 'the behavior of an entity is determined by the laws governing the behavior of its parts',³²⁰ and to thereby guard against reductionism. But in both these illustrations Murphy has appealed to higher-level properties outside of the subject that are acting upon it. The plane is not acting in a new way, and neither is the watch.³²¹ These new causal powers are all explainable by the laws of physics and are therefore bottom-up. This in no way entails the subject has new causal powers that are nonreducible.

We will now look at how this emergent theory is applied to human beings. Murphy cannot appeal to an incorporeal separable soul to establish a higher-level ontology that avoids deterministic downward causation, and deterministic bottom-up causation. Non-deterministic downward causation is fundamental to human freedom. As we saw with Bavinck the body is subservient to the spiritual, it is the organ of the body, and as such there is established an ontological relationship exhibiting non-deterministic downward causation. The unity of this relation, as we

³¹⁷ Leidenhag, Mikael, 'From Emergence Theory to Pansychism – A Philosophical Evaluation of Nancey Murphy's Non-reductive Physicalism', *Sophia*, 55 (2016), p.385.

³¹⁸ Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.77.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Leidenhag, Mikael, 'From Emergence Theory to Pansychism – A Philosophical Evaluation of Nancey Murphy's Non-reductive Physicalism', *Sophia*, 55 (2016), p.385.

saw, is rooted in the *imago Dei*. Human nature is the meeting place of heaven and earth and bears the *vestigium trinitatis* in both the physical and the spiritual in a most perfect union. Bavinck's understanding is significant theologically for the physical is subservient to the spiritual and therefore cannot operate a bottom-up causation on the higher-level, or spirit. Even within the trinity there is a hierarchy and a perfect unity. Creation reflects this hierarchy, and unity, as it bears the *vestigium trinitatis*.

For Bavinck then the soul is qualitatively different and cannot be subject to the determinism of 'subatomic physics',³²² but the relation between these qualitatively different constituent parts are based in the *imago Dei*. Murphy however must rely on the complexity of atomic arrangement for the emergence of qualitatively different properties, or powers. Specifically, the atomic arrangement of the 'human nervous system...in concert with the rest of the body (atomic arrangement) in its environment'³²³ for the emergent properties of consciousness and religious awareness, in other words 'mental phenomena'.³²⁴ The issue here is that these higher properties are fundamentally different from the lower-level parts. The paper plane is a higher-level structure arranged by atoms, the lower level parts, but the higher-level structure is still of the same kind.³²⁵ It could be said matter-begets-matter. The complexity of atomic arrangements can clearly lead to quantitative differences, but not qualitative. It will always be an arrangement of atoms – matter.

Murphy does not provide an adequate explanation for how something that is fundamentally different can emerge from something else based on atomic complexity and environmental factors. She does not explain how new causal powers that are ontologically 'distinct'³²⁶ can emerge from the microphysical under certain circumstances. What she does do is refer to environmental factors, as she did with the watch and plane. Murphy has shown that mental

³²² Nancey Murphy, 'Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.129.

³²³ *Ibid.*, p.131. Brackets added mine.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.131.

³²⁵ Robert Delfino, *Christian Physicalism and Personal Identity* (metanexus, 2008).

³²⁶ Nancey Murphy and Warren S. Brown, *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?: Philosophical and Neurobiological Perspectives on Moral Responsibility and Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.79.

states are multiply realisable. There are other environmental factors, or circumstances, bearing on the brain states that gives rise to these causal powers.

Murphy begs the question. She is assuming the truth of emergence, and then using her thesis of multiply realisable to argue for the ontological status of mental events. As a non-reductive physicalist she is committed to defeating causal reduction and as such cannot explain the relation between higher-lower levels without giving them '[a]n ontological or metaphysical definition'³²⁷ making them '*really real*'.³²⁸ But at the same time, she is still a physicalist and so must maintain the ontological dependence on the physical base and hold to ontological reductionism. Murphy has not shown that new causal powers that are ontologically distinct can emerge from brain states. What she has shown, as pointed out by Leidenhag, is 'the epistemological claim pertaining to the problem of capturing...the relationship between higher-lower happenings and the physical base structure.'³²⁹

Murphy has demonstrated that there are higher-levels that can be realised in multiple ways which have a clear relationship to the lower-level. But this, in and of itself, does not prove that higher-level ontologies can emerge from the microphysical. There is a vast chasm between an epistemological claim and an ontological claim which Murphy does not seem to fill.³³⁰ As we saw with Bavinck, the interaction, or relationship, between higher and lower is in the unity of human nature as the *imago Dei*. Man has a spirit and is a soul. We saw that these were one but designed in such a way by God that the spiritual aspect was fit for a human body as its organ of manifestation. Bavinck shows us that theologically there is no need for an appeal to emergence if man is the meeting place of heaven and earth. Although Bavinck was writing over a hundred years ago, scientifically nothing has changed.

Human constitution cannot be proved scientifically as either monistic or of a dualistic nature due to the metaphysical claims involved which are not empirically verifiable. The only empirical data

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Nancey Murphy, 'Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.129.

³²⁹ Leidenhag, Mikael, 'From Emergence Theory to Pansychism – A Philosophical Evaluation of Nancey Murphy's Non-reductive Physicalism', *Sophia*, 55 (2016), p.387.

³³⁰ Ibid.

that is available, what we absolutely know from a verifiable scientific perspective, is that, as Cooper states, 'there are two kinds of events-mental and physiological-each of which appears to be able to affect the other'.³³¹ He goes on to state that '[b]eyond this point scientists and philosophers are interpreting the data, not reporting what is self-evidently true'.³³² This also is true for theologians without contradicting science for '[t]he data are consistent with various philosophical theories'.³³³ This has been a widely recognised observation from all sides.

Murphy states that 'it has long been recognized that substance dualism cannot be disproved by empirical evidence...no amount of evidence from neuroscience can prove a physicalist view of the mental',³³⁴ and also that 'this evidence will never amount to proof'.³³⁵ This is significant because the logical conclusion would be that the Scriptures do not give a scientific account of human constitution, and therefore would not be dogmatic from a scientific verifiable perspective and neither does science itself prove the physicalist interpretation. We all have the same empirical starting information, the same data. Bavinck makes it clear that 'Scripture never intentionally concerns itself with science as such...it is not a scientific book in the strict sense'³³⁶ and that it 'does not speak the exact language of science and the academy but the language of observation and everyday life'.³³⁷

The issue in the debate is not the data but the specific frames of reference. The physicalist has a frame of reference that excludes an immaterial aspect in man that has the potential for temporal independent existence because of the scientific data that the brain conducts, as a function, mental operations; but as we have seen they are not mutually exclusive. The theologian Colin Brown states that '[a]ll perception and knowledge involves interpretation. What we call facts are

³³¹ John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting* (2000), p.207.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Nancey Murphy, 'Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.139.

³³⁵ Nancey Murphy, 'Human Nature: Historical, Scientific, and Religious Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.13.

³³⁶ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume One: Prolegomena*, ed. by John Bolt and trans. by John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), p.445. This quote of Bavinck's, in a shorter version, is quoted and translated from the Dutch version by G. C. Berkouwer in *Man: The Image of God* (1962), p.194.

³³⁷ Ibid., p.446. This quote of Bavinck's is quoted and translated from the Dutch version by G. C. Berkouwer in *Man: The Image of God* (1962), p.194.

items of information that we have processed within our scheme of reference'.³³⁸ The frame of reference precedes the data: it is what interprets the data. The fact that we all have the same data is very important, because any collision or dispute between philosophies is not a result of the data but a result of one's presuppositions and ultimate authority which leads to the interpretation of the data.³³⁹

We have seen that Murphy cannot adequately explain the relation between the higher and lower levels and so seeks to establish new causal powers that are ontologically distinct to defeat causal reduction. She runs into difficulty with her view of supervenience (which is important for the nonreductive physicalist in establishing the irreducibility of the higher-levels), because the new causal powers are ontologically independent which undermines the 'dependent' nature of supervenience. With this in mind, and if human constitution cannot be proved scientifically and the data is consistent with various theories, let us look at personal identity from the non-reductive physicalist perspective and its theological implications.

Personal Identity

According to the non-reductive physicalist persons are not separate substances. It would be a contradiction to affirm the opposite for it would necessitate dualism. The person is not able to exist separate from the body. They are 'generated by organisms but not explainable by biological categories'.³⁴⁰ Murphy holds a holistic view of man, which is commendable theologically for even Bavinck's emphasis is on the holistic nature of man as the *imago Dei*, although his preferred term is harmonism. Murphy views the person as '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'.³⁴¹ The higher capacities of 'consciousness and memory, moral character,

³³⁸ Colin Brown, *Miracles and the Critical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), p.282; Philosopher and Mathematician David Berlinski states that '[a]rguments follow from assumptions, and assumptions follow from beliefs, and very rarely-perhaps never - do beliefs reflect an agenda determined entirely by the facts': David Berlinski, *The Devil's Delusion: Atheism and its Scientific Pretensions* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), pp. 103, 104. Also mentioned and expanded on in this interview with Dr Frank Turek: <https://youtu.be/NLrXQ47s1bA>

³³⁹ Greg Bahnsen, *Always Ready: directions for defending the faith* (2011), pp.71, 68.

³⁴⁰ John W. Cooper, 'Scripture and Philosophy on the Unity of Body and Soul' in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology*, ed. by Joshua R. Farris and Charles Taliaferro (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), p.38.

³⁴¹ Nancey Murphy, 'Human Nature: Historical, Scientific, and Religious Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), pp.24-25.

interpersonal relations, and especially, relationship with God',³⁴² are what constitute the person. In addition to these capacities Murphy accepts Keith Ward's argument that 'dispositions, habits, and practices'³⁴³ are necessary for personal identity. As a physicalist she maintains the necessity of the body for this continuity for these capacities are contingent on the 'spatio-temporally continuous material object'.³⁴⁴ Even '[l]ife is an emergent property that is dependent on complex organization'.³⁴⁵

The emphasis on relation with God is important theologically, however, to say that the active relationship with God is that which gives rise to these soulish capacities does seem to contradict Genesis 2:7 where man receives his life principle directly from the breath of God and is not emergent but comes externally. There are no physical processes involved in the creation of man, only an immediate divine agency.

As we saw with Bavinck, the breath of life can be understood as the spirit of man. But even if the monist rejects this interpretation and advocates simply for life as in *being alive* there is still a problem with supervenience.³⁴⁶ The physical, prior to God's inbreathing, was inanimate.³⁴⁷ Murphy sees divine action supervene on the natural.³⁴⁸ But as we saw previously supervenience is the result of brain events and neurological processes which presupposes life. If life is presupposed and necessary, then how can higher human capacities, and therefore personhood, emerge from inanimate matter? The problem is evident.

Murphy's definition of a person as a physical organism with emergent higher capacities fails to grasp the ontological distinction, and I would say significance, of human beings as those made in

³⁴² Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.132.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.140.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.141.

³⁴⁵ Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.57.

³⁴⁶ See Joel B. Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), pp.64-65. For a good discussion and interaction with Christian physicalism on emergentism and the rejection of the existence of spirit entities, especially in relation to Gen. 2:7 where the monist rejects the traditional view of the creation of man as two different ontological parts, see: Callie Joubert, 'Emergentism and the Rejection of Spirit Entities: A Response to Christian Physicalists', *Answers Research Journal*, 4 (2011), 113-125 (p.116).

³⁴⁷ Callie Joubert, 'Emergentism and the Rejection of Spirit Entities: A Response to Christian Physicalists', *Answers Research Journal*, 4 (2011), 113-125 (p.116)

³⁴⁸ Nancey Murphy, 'Nonreductive Physicalism: Philosophical Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.147.

the *imago Dei* as we saw set forth by Bavinck. James Eglinton highlights Bavinck's view of the Creator-creation distinction as being rooted in being and becoming.³⁴⁹ God is immutable by nature and therefore God is 'being'.³⁵⁰ 'every change would diminish his being'³⁵¹ and therefore he is ontologically different from his creation. Eglinton interpreting Bavinck's view of becoming states that 'the cosmos...is unfinished, growing and developing to a point of foreordained eschatological climax. History is the tale of mutability moving into eschatology. The cosmic organism's teleological drive also presupposes its inherent mutability'.³⁵²

So far so good, and Murphy would agree as physical organisms are by nature mutable. However, all of creation is not the image of God, that is unique to humanity. Eglinton draws out the fact that for Bavinck it is in the creation of humanity and the incarnation of Jesus Christ where, paradoxically, the mutually exclusive being and becoming meet.³⁵³ There must be something that continues unchanged: man's identity. The issue that arises is that if man, a person, is just a physical organism with higher capacities then how can being and becoming meet? How does identity continue unchanged, and how could Christ enter into humanity?

The higher-level capacities that are said to constitute the person are all subject to change. Memories are made and lost; habits can be acquired and even dispensed. One's moral character is constantly subject to reformation, both negative and positive. If the person is the collection of capacities then with constant change, what can be said is left of the person? Robert Delfino highlights that if the higher-level systems are constantly changing then they 'cannot account for...personal identity over time'.³⁵⁴ The one nonnegotiable criteria for personhood is that there is something that remains unchanged when all else is subject to change. This is the importance of the *I* for Bavinck. That amid many different changes, including qualitative, there is no quantitative change with identity and therefore there is a continuation of identity. In line with

³⁴⁹ James Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism: Towards a New Reading of Herman Bavinck's Organic Motif* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), pp.114-127.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p.117.

³⁵¹ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.154. Quoted in: Ibid., p.117.

³⁵² James Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism* (2013), p.119.

³⁵³ James Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism* (2013), p.122. Bavinck highlights that these are the only two instances in which this happens.

³⁵⁴ Delfino, Robert, *Christian Physicalism and Personal Identity* (metanexus, 2008).

our definition in chapter 1, the *I* is the substance which is not subject to change whereas the properties attributed to it are. The substance's identity is said to be immutable, even as 'being' is immutable. But this is only demonstrable dualistically and is necessary theologically as we have seen.

Bavinck says of man that 'he becomes and he is at the same time; he passes away and yet he abides'.³⁵⁵ Something of man continues after death, something of man is transcendent and immutable. As *mikrotheos*, '[a]ll that is in God...finds it admittedly finite and limited analogy and likeness in humanity'.³⁵⁶ Man reflects God's communicable attributes even immutability. The physical part of the constitution is mutable, hence constant change and physical death, but in the resurrection man will be like Christ³⁵⁷ and will be immutable, sustained by Grace. But this could only be by Christ restoring the image of God in fallen humanity through exchange of federal headship. This makes no sense from Murphy's monistic perspective.

If sin is not physical but ethical as Bavinck mentioned then it only makes sense that Christ could confer his righteousness on human nature by entering into human flesh for the physical is not the origin of sin, and if it is united to the spiritual and the spiritual died then the physical died also but was not the originator of sin. However, this option is not available by Murphy's monistic perspective, and so if all originates from the physical, even if some supervene they nonetheless originate from the biological, then how could Christ enter into that which gave rise to original sin? Murphy states that one option for the monist is 'that the entire person simply disintegrates at death to be recreated by God at the general resurrection'.³⁵⁸

Joel B. Green also affirms that personhood is 'inextricably bound up in our physicality'³⁵⁹ and that 'identity is formed and found in self-conscious *relationality* with its neural correlates and embodied *narrative*'.³⁶⁰ He advocates here for the physicalist view as argued by Nancy Murphy

³⁵⁵ Herman Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909), p.140. Quoted in: James Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism* (2013), p.123.

³⁵⁶ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two* (2004), p.561.

³⁵⁷ 1 John 3:2

³⁵⁸ Nancey Murphy, 'Human Nature: Historical, Scientific, and Religious Issues,' in Brown, *et al.*, eds., *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), p.23.

³⁵⁹ Joel B. Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life* (2008), p.179.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

and does not shy away from the fact that the logical conclusion to this view is that at death the 'person *really dies*'³⁶¹ and that nothing survives. For the non-reductive physicalist, these higher capacities are supervenient and therefore not a separate entity. Because they are supervenient, and ontologically dependent, when the body dies the person ceases to be. They do not continue to exist apart from the biological. This also means that the person ceases to exist.

Green links continuity with re-embodiment that 'provides the basis for relational and narrative continuity of self'.³⁶² But if there is an extinction what is re-embodied, how is identity sustained? Green, like Murphy, believes that it is sustained in a 'relational ontology',³⁶³ which he assumes is hinted at by St. Paul. What he means by this is that the person, the I, is preserved in 'relational terms: *with Christ, in Christ*'.³⁶⁴ It seems that Green cannot escape some form of independent existence, even though he would reject this conclusion, yet something is still preserved in existence. It is a contradiction to say the person '*really dies*' and that nothing survives if the person does survive by being preserved in Christ. The problem for the nonreductive physicalist is that if something has survived (avoiding causal reduction) then in what sense is there ontological reduction?

Green states '[t]his suggests that the relationality and narrativity that constitute who I am are able to exist apart from neural correlates and embodiment only insofar as they are preserved in God's own being, in anticipation of new creation.'³⁶⁵ This is the extinction-re-creation view. Green admits that something exists apart from the physical. Is there not here some form of dualism? The body dies and something, me or what constitutes me, still exists, but in God. Relationality must be something, it cannot just be an idea or memory in the mind of God. A relationship concerns the link of two or more things. You cannot have true relationality if one of the two things do not actually exist. An idea, or memory, is not a continuation of identity. If something that constitutes the I continues in relationship with Christ then, as Cooper states, 'I-my essential

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Ibid., p.180.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

selfhood or core personhood – must survive physical death. The being or entity who I am must continue to exist’.³⁶⁶

However unnatural it is, one cannot escape the duality between death and resurrection. Bavinck would agree that the *I* continues, that the *I* for the believer even continues in relation to Christ, but that *I* is something it is an existing person. Another major problem for Green’s view is that it cannot account for the unbeliever’s continuity, for the unbeliever is not in relation with Christ, so how is the preservation of their identity accounted for? Bavinck accounted for it in the theological understanding of the intermediate state where prior to the resurrection persons are in the realm of the dead.

If the nonnegotiable criteria for personal identity is that there is something that remains unchanged, numerical continuity, then recreating what was annihilated is a different person. It must be because the person that was annihilated underwent a change from being to nonbeing. There is a profound theological problem that arises with the non-reductive physicalist position at this point. For if there is annihilation, the ceasing of the person after physical death, then the believer has not received eternal life in Christ³⁶⁷ for that person has ceased to exist. Even if it were possible for that same person to be recreated, which I do not believe it is as I’ve sort to show, God would still have been the God of the dead³⁶⁸ and it would not be true that the person received eternal life and could no longer die for that person had been subject to death after receiving inamissible ‘eternal’ life.

If this is not serious enough theologically, what about the person of Christ? if man is merely a biological organism with higher level capacities, then did he cease to exist? This obviously does not make sense in relation to Christ, for he has a human nature, but as we saw earlier with Bavinck his person is not a product of the biological. The hypostatic union would become impossible theologically and philosophically. If extinction-re-creation is true, and that there is no separable part of man between death and resurrection, then at death the human being Jesus ceased to exist and his two natures separated which would mean, if true, as Cooper states, ‘the

³⁶⁶ John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting* (2000), p.162.

³⁶⁷ John 3:16; John 4:14.

³⁶⁸ Matthew 22:32; Mark 12:27; Luke 20:38.

teaching of Chalcedon is false':³⁶⁹ the hypostatic union is invalid and inaccurate. This would lead to a second incarnation. Alternatively, as Cooper also highlights, Christ would have two persons, divine and human.³⁷⁰ The flaws are evident.

Bavinck avoids this conclusion by his understanding of the *imago Dei*. Man is ontologically created in the image of God, and so that image as a form cannot cease to exist. If it does then man would need to be created again and would not be a continuation of the identity that ceased. Being and becoming would not therefore meet. Man's identity in the image of God would not be immutable. As we saw in chapter 2 for the non-reductive physicalist, *the imago Dei* is personhood which is the capacity to relate to God.³⁷¹ It is not essentialist, but relational.³⁷² If it is a capacity then it can be lost and can cease to exist, for capacities are contingent on properties which are owned by substances. If emergent higher-level properties, as we saw with Murphy, cannot avoid causal reduction then neither can it account for personal identity in time, or after bodily death.

Although the higher capacities are said to be supervenient, and therefore not identical to the base properties, there is still the issue of ontological distinction. Ontological distinction undermines supervenience, and supervenience has not proved that new causal powers, that are radically different, can emerge as we saw with the watch, paper plane and human beings. Causal reduction is constantly looming. There is a constant tension between the necessity of supervenience and ontological distinction for nonreductive physicalism. Until causal reduction can be adequately defeated, or avoided, then personal identity cannot be established for there will always be change. There will never not be something that continues unchanged.

Constitutionalism and the Person

Another important monistic, non-reductive, perspective worth mentioning is *constitutionalism* advocated by Lynne Rudder Baker. Unlike Murphy and Brown, persons are not identical to their

³⁶⁹ John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting*, (2000), p.131

³⁷⁰ Ibid., pp.131, 132.

³⁷¹ Joel B. Green, "'Bodies - That is, Human Lives': A Re-Examination of Human Nature in the Bible", in *Whatever Happened to the Soul* (1998), p.157; Warren S. Brown, 'Conclusion: Reconciling Scientific and Biblical Portraits of Human Nature', in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998), pp.224-226.

³⁷² Joel B. Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), p.65.

bodies, although they are constituted by them. For Baker, the uniqueness of persons lies in what she calls a 'robust first-person perspective'.³⁷³ This is a second-order capacity, a bit like Murphy and Browns higher level capacities by personal relatedness, where the first-order is common to 'higher animals and persons which requires only consciousness and intentionality'³⁷⁴ which is known as a rudimentary first-person perspective. The robust stage is 'the ability to conceive of oneself from the first-person, as a subject of thought and action'.³⁷⁵

What is interesting about Baker's position is that due to her focus that human nature is a psycho-physical unity, *prima facie* her view is very similar to Bavinck's metaphysically, philosophically, speaking. Baker views the person as a 'whole person',³⁷⁶ not made up of parts, although they are constituted by their bodies, they are not identical to them: persons are spiritual beings as a result of a robust first person perspective.³⁷⁷ Now for Bavinck, the *I* forms a complete unity and humans are 'persons because we can say "I"'.³⁷⁸ Baker, very similarly, states that 'what makes a person is exemplifying a first-person perspective essentially'.³⁷⁹ For Bavinck humans have this first-person perspective essentially because of the image of God in them: God is the ultimate personal being and has conferred his image on man. This is just the surface for the theological frame bears heavily.

The person is nonspatial, noncomposite, whole, identical with itself, and empirically united to the body.³⁸⁰ Both would fully agree. However, the *I* for Bavinck does not negate the soul. The *I* is 'ubiquitous in the body, and where it is, the whole soul is'.³⁸¹ The body and the soul form a unity, something new: the *I*. Recall that the spirit is psychically organised into a soul that is fit for a body. Baker states that the brain is what makes possible the first-person perspective even though she

³⁷³ Lynne Rudder Baker, "Constitutionalism: Alternative to Substance Dualism," in Loose, et al., eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (Wiley Blackwell, 2019), p.342.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 341.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.46.

³⁷⁹ Lynne Rudder Baker, 'Constitutionalism: Alternative to Substance Dualism,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, ed. by Jonathan J. Loose, Angus J. L. Mengue, and J. P. Moreland (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), p.342.

³⁸⁰ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.47.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

has no idea how, nor does anyone know *how*³⁸² the brain makes possible other mental capacities.³⁸³ This is very interesting, because Bavinck states that the soul, though it ‘does not have a seat in the body’,³⁸⁴ ‘works mainly through the brain [and] remains permanently identical’.³⁸⁵ Baker’s position does not negate the soul, nor does it provide a satisfactory account of the constitution theologically, for as we have seen both are saying very similar things, but Bavinck’s is rooted in a theological account.

Again, we have a physical, biological, composition with no immaterial subsisting part (not even relatively to this dispensation). So how is there continuity of identity, or what continues? Baker states that the human person is like a statue or a rug which are constituted by pieces of bronze and threads, yet they remain the same even through various changes such as frayed and loose threads. The rug is still in existence and so the rug is not identical to the sum of its parts, even so the human goes through various biological changes over time most importantly the continuous replacement of cells.³⁸⁶ Bavinck came to a similar conclusion due to the constant biological change, and that man’s continuity of identity could not be contingent on the flesh but must be independent. He therefore made a distinction and states that the Scriptures ‘[do] not teach the resurrection of the flesh, but of the body’.³⁸⁷ The distinction was a ‘qualitative distinction’³⁸⁸ not numerical, and so he still affirmed the very same body being raised. There is, therefore, a continuity of identity.

However, for Baker identity is not linked with the flesh or the body (if she would ever make such a distinction), but only with the robust first-person perspective. She clearly states that a person is identical to herself and nothing else, and that is what makes the person non-reductive.³⁸⁹

³⁸² Emphasis my own.

³⁸³ Lynne Rudder Baker, ‘Constitutionalism: Alternative to Substance Dualism,’ in Loose, et al., eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), p.342.

³⁸⁴ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics, Volume One* (2019), p.47.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Lynne Rudder Baker, ‘Constitutionalism: Alternative to Substance Dualism,’ in Loose, et al., eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), p.342.

³⁸⁷ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Four* (2008), p.696.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Lynne Rudder Baker, ‘Constitutionalism: Alternative to Substance Dualism,’ in Loose, et al., eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), p.343.

However, Baker still affirms that the person is 'wholly material',³⁹⁰ but not identical to a specific body for that can and, in Baker's view, is subject to change, but the identity of the person the first-person perspective needs a brain that can support a first-person perspective.³⁹¹

Baker does not shy away from bodily resurrection, or the continuity of identity, but affirms both due to the biblical doctrine of the resurrection. The issue that arises with Baker is that she does not make a qualitative distinction between the perishable body and the resurrection body and so the body has no bearing on continuity. Now this could be understandable, to some extent, if there was a separate subsisting immaterial entity, but that is rejected, and man is constituted purely by material. But the elephant in the room: didn't Christ's human body change qualitatively to a glorified body and not numerically? Now we have the same issue as with Brown and Murphy.

If man is biological, ontologically, completely, then when the physical dies the person temporarily ceases to exist. However way the monist tries to go the logical conclusion is that there is annihilation of the *person*. Baker foresees this problem and offers the solution that it 'is a matter of God's free decree'³⁹² which body will constitute someone's first-person perspective in the afterlife. The big issue here is conjecture on God's decrees that is in opposition to Scripture and so has no objective theological foundation, no objective authority to support such a conjecture.

It would also mean that a person's first-person perspective gets annihilated and then is recreated as an idea, or memory (if that is not too base), in God's mind. This is not continuity of the same person over time, but new creation which is exactly what contradicts continuation of identity as we have seen for a gap in existence necessitates a change from being to nonbeing. There would be both a new creation of body and first-person perspective. For Bavinck, the person is the coming together of the God breathed spirit and the created material body, and so both are fundamental for the continuation of identity: they constitute the person, the identity lies with them.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid., p.347.

CONCLUSION

I have argued here that human constitution is ontologically dualistic and that even considering modern accounts that lean on new advances in neuroscience dualism is still to be preferred. There is a reason that dualism, in some form, just will not go away however much science is invoked; the interpretation of the metaphysical makeup of human constitution as being dualistic in some way has stood the test of time and theological scrutiny.

We have seen the theological profoundness and complexity of the nature of man in Bavinck's theology. The organic motif set the backdrop to his entire theology with creations *telos*, the glory of God, as that which unites the diversity of the cosmos. In his theology of the organic, we saw that man's essence was an organic unity of the material and spiritual world, reflecting God who reveals himself in the material and spiritual world. This is his position of harmony. This position was one that looked beyond the immediate constituent parts and sort the unity of those parts in the *imago Dei*. The parts produced something new, a living soul, a person. The *imago Dei* is more than a mere capacity but is understood in essentialist terms and provides the necessary theological and philosophical framework to establish a coherent argument for the dualistic nature of man. Man's essence is seen as the meeting place of heaven and earth and we established that his form is the *imago Dei*, making Bavinck both a hylomorphist and a dualist in his own way. We also saw that the *imago Dei* in the narrow, which gives harmony to the whole, can be lost but the constituent parts do not change ontologically. Bavinck's theological narrative is profoundly convincing for an ontological dualism, despite his unfortunate claim to relative dualism.

We also saw that non-reductive physicalism, which has made itself an alternative to dualism, is a distinction without a difference. It failed to establish non-deterministic downward causation, which is fundamental to human freedom, and therefore to Christianity. Ontological reduction could not be sustained whilst holding to the ontological distinction of higher-level properties and capacities. There was constant conflict between supervenience, due to its dependent nature, and the ontological distinction of the emergent higher-levels. We saw that the non-reductive physicalist failed to establish that new causal powers that were ontologically distinct could

emerge from the microphysical under certain circumstances. There was no explanation for the emergence of powers that are qualitatively different from the base level that only differ in degree of complexity, or quantitatively. Because of this tension, we saw that causal reduction has not been defeated or avoided and therefore personhood, and personal identity, could not be established. We saw that Murphy's non-reductive physicalism, and those that follow it, missed some fundamental theological and philosophical commitments that severely weaken it as a contender with dualism as put forth by Bavinck.

Dualism has garnered a bad name, especially since Descartes. However, Bavinck offers an approach to dualism that includes a broader theological framework. If we stop looking at dualism and the relation between body and soul in a narrow sense, where we only take account of the metaphysical constituent parts, and start emulating Bavinck by setting it in a broader context, and narrative, then we can begin to appreciate the significance of a dualistic ontology. If we telescope out, we will avoid the error of denouncing an ontological claim for dualism from an epistemological ignorance of the relationship between body and soul, of higher and lower levels. Although Bavinck failed to grasp the significance of a dualistic ontology, he provides us with profound, coherent, theological, and philosophical arguments with great insight into the complexity of human constitution.

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