Introduction

Wholeness and Hope

The Problem

Plato, in his dialogue *Phaedo*, declared that "soul is a helpless prisoner, chained hand and foot in the body."[1] Michel Foucault answered Plato two-and-a-half millennia later: "the soul is the prison of the body."[2] The pendulum of philosophical discourse has made a complete swing. How are we, as Christians, to speak about the soul now?

The existence and the immortality of the soul was and remains a fundamental assumption of the Christian worldview. To challenge it is to touch the apple of faith's eye. Nevertheless, the concept of the soul has become problematic in recent decades because of advances in the neurosciences,[3] biblical studies,[4] and Christian philosophy of the mind.[5] In fact, technology

1. Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*, 135. (The line number in Plato's dialogue is 82e).

2. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 29.

3. See Green *Body, Soul and Human Life*, Green, *What about the Soul?*, Brown et al., *Whatever Happened to the Soul*, for a description of scientific discoveries that challenge dualism. See Swinburne, *Mind, Brain, and Free Will*; Beck, Demarest, *The Human Person*, for a response to the challenge of the neurosciences.

4. See, e.g., Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, 7–79, for OT anthropology; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 114–21 for Pauline anthropology; and Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul*, for a comparative study of the Greek notion of immortality and the NT teaching on the resurrection.

5. See Murphy, *Bodies and Souls*; Murphy, "How To Keep The 'Non' In Non-Reductive Physicalism"; Murphy, "Physicalism without Reductionism"; Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature*; Jaworksi, "Hylomorphism and Resurrection" for Christian monist anthropologies in philosophical perspective. Murphy argues for non-reductive physicalism, Corcoran defends the constitution view of person, Jaworski offers a modern version of hylomorphism.

in the twenty-first century has become so self-confident that it claims to know the answer to the question *How to Create a Mind?*[6] There seem to be good reasons to re-open the question of the reality of the soul.[7]

Current Christian theology is not necessarily on the side of Plato, while secular thought is not always on the side of Foucault. "The realm of history and matter is not a prison from which we must escape by contemplating unchanging reality, but the theatre of God's glory," says a theologian Michael Horton.[8] "The body can't distinguish between cleansing and punishing for the body is ignorant and mute beside . . . I'm trapped in it, but it isn't my own," echo Plato the heroes of the novelist Joyce Carol Oates.[9]

Even within a narrowly Reformed tradition (with which I am going to deal in this book) the emphases are different. John Piper, motivating his flock to be spiritually minded, urges his people to "ponder your life that will very soon be without a body."[10] Donald Carson prefers to remind us that "We are made to know and love and enjoy God in the context of embodied existence."[11]

These randomly selected pairs of quotations reflect two fundamentally different attitudes to the body and the soul, and, consequently, attitudes to this material world and the immaterial world beyond this life. Belief in the immortal soul that survives the death of the body throws a shadow on the importance and value of life in the body. Removal of this belief might, perhaps, remove the shadow.

In fact, the existence of this shadow is felt even by those who hold to the traditional dichotomist view of man. John Cooper suggests that dualists should aim at being holistic dualists or dualistic holists.[12] He wants to avoid the axiological dualism of the material and the spiritual. He argues that belief in an autonomous and immortal soul does not necessarily entail undervaluing the material.[13] Whether he succeeds in his argument or not,

6. See Kurzweil, *How to Create a Mind*.

7. See Green *In Search for the Soul* for the current debate between Christian dualists and monists.

8. Horton, *Christian Faith*, 44.

9. Oates, *The Collector of Hearts*, 18, 45.

10. Piper, "How to be Spiritually Minded," accessed Feb 3, 2014, http://www.desiringgod.org/aritcles/how-to-be-spiritually-minded.

11. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, 46.

12. Cooper, *Body, Soul and Life Everlasting*, xxvii.

13. Similarly, Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology,* 83–84, as a biblical scholar, defends a dualistic reading of Pauline anthropology but wants to avoid a dichotomy between the body and the soul and suggests the use of the term *duality* instead of *dualism*. He also denies that substance dualism entails axiological dualism. The fact

he points out another reason—besides scientific, biblical, philosophical and technological ones—to rethink the concept of the soul. This reason is axiological dualism.

Cooper helpfully describes the meaning of this term:

> The body-soul distinction has often been blamed for the tendency of historical Christianity to postulate a polarity of value within the created order itself. In a variety of ways Christians have considered some dimensions of life to be intrinsically more worthy than other dimensions which, if not downright evil, are clearly inferior. This illegitimate polarization or hierarchy of value or worth within creation is "axiological dualism."[14]

He continues:

> The fact that there is evidence of axiological dualism within traditional Christianity may be an indication that elements of the Hellenistic worldview were uncritically adopted . . . The flavor of axiological dualism can still be discerned in the attitudes of some contemporary Christians. In subtle ways we consider the soul superior and the body inferior.[15]

But Cooper denies the connection between dichotomistic anthropology and axiological dualism: "What is deniable is the claim that axiological dualism is necessarily correlative with anthropological dualism."[16]

The thesis of the possibility of the true unity of the human being in dualist anthropology can be tested by a study of a specific dualist anthropology. This is one of my aims in this research.

Provided it can be shown that the belief in the separable and immortal soul entails axiological dualism, a further problem arises. Is not the price for solving the problem of this dualism too high? Can we really refuse to use the discourse of the immortality of the invisible and immaterial part of man?

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that dualists make such kinds of disclaimers indicates that they sense the problem of axiological dualism inherent in their anthropologies.

14. Cooper, *Body, Soul and Life Everlasting*, 184–85.

15. Ibid., 185.

16. Ibid., 186. Beck, Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology*, 124, take a position similar to that of Cooper adopting his language of holistic dualism. They say that "the person is a bipartite unity of an immaterial, undying soul/spirit and a material, dying body that functions as an integrated whole." They recognize that the Bible describes man "as a unified whole" but at the same time they want to retain traditional dualistic anthropology. There are indications that they cannot but put more stress on duality rather than unity thus giving room for axiological dualism. (ibid., 138)

Or to put it the other way: Why is the belief in the soul so important? What important aspects of the Christian faith does it hold together? What is lost if the belief in the immortal soul is dropped?

Joel Green lists the following functions the concept of the soul plays in traditional dualist anthropology:

> For persons of faith—Christians included, but many others beside—the idea of a soul separable from the body is not only intuitive but has contributed a great deal. We have regularly appealed to the soul as proof that humans are not mere animals, and thus as a foundation for our views of human dignity and the sacredness of human life; we have imagined that human possession of a soul has immediate and far-reaching consequences for the burgeoning and troubled arena of bioethics. Moreover, Christians generally have derived from belief in the existence of the soul their affirmation of the human capacity to choose between good and ill, as free moral agents. Further, since it is with regard to the soul that the divine image shared by human beings comes into clearest focus, the soul provides the necessary (though not sufficient) ground of human spirituality, of one's capacity to enter into and enjoy a relationship with God. Still further, the existence of a non-physical soul, distinct and separable from the body, is typically regarded as the means by which human identity can cross over the bridge from this life to the next; indeed, traditional Christian thought has tended to regard the body as frail and finite and the soul as immortal.[17]

Thus there are four functions of the soul: (1) the soul makes us distinct from animals and gives us unique dignity, (2) the soul makes us rational and moral agents, (3) the soul is the bridge to the transcendent reality of God, (4) the soul guarantees life after death. The question, however, is whether the soul is in fact able to fulfil these functions. And are there no other and better ways of securing our human dignity, rationality, knowledge of God and eternal life than ascribing to human beings possession of an immortal soul? A study of representative dualist and monist anthropologies should provide answers to these questions. This is another aim of this research.

Yet monist anthropology, even if it helps to overcome axiological dualism, may hide its own dangers. One of them is the problem of the reality of the afterlife or the problem of temporal monism. Since human beings, on a monist view, do not possess an immortal element that survives death this may entail that human beings are absolutely mortal and that death means

17. Green, *In Search for the Soul*, 10.

a total termination of conscious existence. The study of a concrete monist anthropology will give an answer to the question if anthropological monism necessarily entails temporal monism.

The Method and the Thesis

I enter the monist-dualist debate exactly at this point. My aim is not to develop philosophical, biblical, or scientific arguments for some kind of a monist position. I will not suggest a philosophical or scientific theory of the mind-brain interaction. I intend to provide a functional comparative analysis of a dualist and a monist anthropology. By functional analysis I mean a study of the important ways in which the concept of the soul is employed in theological anthropology. That this analysis is comparative means that I will register the continuities and discontinuities between dualist and monist anthropologies in the way they answer the key questions about human beings. Naturally, this study is focused on ontological anthropology, by which I mean a study of what man is.

With these aims in view, I suggest a functional comparative study of John Calvin's and Karl Barth's ontological anthropologies. The reasons for this choice may not be obvious but there are four of them.

1. For the type of analysis I propose complete anthropologies are needed. In other words, a theologian should have systematically developed statements on all important aspects of anthropology. Calvin and Barth provide us precisely with such developed anthropological thought.
2. Calvin and Barth formally belong to the Reformed tradition: Calvin as one of its fathers, Barth as its most innovative interpreter. I underscore the formality of this relationship because in many important respects Barth did not hold to the Reformed faith.[18] Nevertheless this formal relationship exists.[19]
3. Calvin and Barth present opposing anthropological positions: the dualist and the monist.
4. Barth is one of the originators of the so-called relational view of the image of God.[20] This is important because the concept of the image of God

18. "Neither in his early years as theological teacher nor in later life can Barth be called in a simple way a confessional Reformed theologian." (Webster, *Barth's Earlier Theology*, 11)

19. For further discussion see MacDonald and Trueman, *Calvin, Barth and Reformed Theology*; Chung, *Admiration and Challenge*.

20. I follow the classification of the views on the image of God as it is presented in Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 517–36. He groups them in three types: substantive,

> is determinative for the Christian view of human beings. The relational approach, in contrast to the substantive approach, embraces the whole man as the image of God without dividing him into material and immaterial parts. This may be a way out of the axiological dualism inherent in Calvin's view of the *imago Dei*. I am going to examine this possibility.

This last reason for choosing Calvin and Barth deserves a bit more elaboration. The birth of the relational interpretation of the image of God may be one of the greatest changes in theological anthropology that has occurred since Calvin. And, since Barth is in large measure responsible for this change, it makes sense to compare these two theologians. Furthermore, Calvin's view of the *imago Dei* has been reinterpreted in terms of the relational Barthian model.[21] This reinterpretation requires critical assessment. Furthermore, Barth's concept of relation is sometimes presented as an interpersonal encounter between human beings[22] but I will show that Barth's view is more complicated than that.

The contribution of my research lies in the field of systematic theology and partly of historical theology. It is an historical study because I deal with the historical views of two theologians of the past. However, my study is emphatically not historical in the sense that I do not trace the development of theological anthropology between Calvin and Barth and I do not try to uncover the historical reasons for the changes that occurred in Barth in comparison with Calvin. Rather, I look at their theological anthropologies as examples of developed views on human ontology, views that present a dualist and a monist position, views that can be used as the basis for the dualist-monist dialogue and for mutual criticism.[23]

relational, and functional. The substantive view identifies the image of God with a resident human quality or capacity, mainly reason. Calvin belongs to this category. The relational view sees the image of God in the dynamic relationship of human beings with God and other human beings. Barth and Brunner are representatives of this position. On the functional view, the image of God is what man or woman does, primarily the exercise of dominion over creation. This view has a long history, actually so long that Calvin knows of this view and rejects it in *Psychopannychia*. But this view has gained popularity in recent decades in the wake of OT studies. See, for example, Middleton, *The Liberating Image*. It should also be noted that the classification of the views of the image of God given in Grenz, *The Social God*, 142, is incomplete because it misses the third, functional, view.

21. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man*.

22. Price, *Karl Barth's Anthropology*, 119.

23. I also do not try to evaluate the exegetical foundations of Calvin's and Barth's statements. I refer to their exegesis as it stands and I do that when I think it helps to clarify their thought.

This study is also not historical in the sense that I do not try to *establish* the sources of Calvin's and Barth's philosophical ideas about man and his soul. However, I am deeply aware of their dependence on philosophy and I cannot avoid some analysis of their philosophical presuppositions. In particular, I relate Calvin's view of the soul to Platonism and consider Barth in the context of Kantian and Hegelian philosophy. I do not attempt to be original in this respect and to suggest any new interpretation. I *assume* Calvin's dependence on Plato (or Platonism in general)[24] and Barth's acceptance of a Kantian critical epistemology and a Hegelian actualistic ontology.[25] I will suggest that both Calvin's and Barth's philosophical presuppositions played a role in the formation of their anthropologies. Moreover, the shift in the philosophical presuppositions that occurred in the time between Calvin and Barth is so significant that for adequate comparison of these two theologians it is necessary to spell out the changes in their presuppositions. This will be done in chapter 5, which functions as the transition between the chapters on Calvin and the chapters on Barth.

There are comprehensive studies of Calvin's[26] and Barth's[27] theological anthropologies and there are comparative studies of Calvin and Barth in various theological *loci*[28]. There are specific studies of Calvin's concept of the

24. Partee, Engel, and Helm show that Calvin was not a dualist in the strict Platonic sense although they admit that he accepted dualistic anthropology of a Platonic type. On the other hand, Quistorp, Battenhouse, and Fowler speak about persistent and extreme Platonic dualism of matter and spirit in Calvin. The evidence strongly indicates that Partee, Engel, and Helm are correct.

25. For Barth's relation to German philosophy, I depend primarily on McCormack and Dorrien. Unlike Price, who attempts to suggest his own reading of Kant and Hegel and then traces links between Barth's theology and their philosophies, I pretend to have no such skill and erudition. I build on the work of the experts.

26. See Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man*; Engel, *John Calvin's Perspectival Anthropology.*

27. See Cortez, *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies*; Price, *Karl Barth's Anthropology*; McLean, *Humanity in the Thought of Karl Barth*; Brewer, "The Anthropology of Choice." See Webster, *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation*; Webster, *Barth's Moral Theology*; Nimmo, *Being in Action*, for the ethical aspect of Barth's anthropology.

28. See Kooi, *As in a Mirror*, on epistemology; Chung, *Admiration and Challenge*, on natural theology; MacDonald and Trueman, *Calvin, Barth and Reformed Theology*, on belonging to the Reformed tradition, sacraments, Scripture, and atonement; Kelsay, "Prayer and Ethics," on prayer; Helm "John Calvin and the Hiddenness of God"; Helm, "Karl Barth and the Visibility of God" on the doctrine of God and Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 389–416 on justification.

soul[29] and the body[30]. What is lacking is a comparative study of Calvin and Barth in the area of theological anthropology. My research fills this lacuna.

The approaches to reading Calvin and Barth are different. Calvin's writings developed around the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* as the core of his theological thought that developed comparatively little (the development of the *Institutes* itself was, of course, very considerable). Therefore, in treating his anthropology, I start with the English translation of last Latin edition of the *Institutes*, follow the structure of discussion suggested by this work and add relevant data from Calvin's biblical commentaries, sermons and separate tractates.[31] The first edition of the *Institutes* has been consulted, too. One particular treatise stands apart—this is *Psychopannychia,* which is entirely devoted to the problem of the soul's survival after death. Besides, this is Calvin's first theological work that predates (at least in unpublished form) the *Institutes*.[32] This book will be given special attention. The concept of the soul, in line with its functions described above, will be studied in relation to four areas of Calvin's theology: the doctrine of the image of God, epistemology, the intermediate state, and the resurrection. Consideration of these four topics will be the basis for assessing the problem of axiological dualism in Calvin's thought. The last topic on the resurrection is also important in relation to the problem of temporal monism and the ultimate Christian hope.

As the structure of Barth's writings is different from that of Calvin's, I cannot simply repeat the procedure employed in the case of Calvin. One important difference is that Barth's thought developed over the years, so much so that it became common and perhaps even normative to divide Barth's theological development into stages and to speak of early Barth and mature

29. Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 129–56; Partee "The Soul in Plato, Platonism, and Calvin."

30. Miles, "Theology, Anthropology, and the Human Body"; Davis, "Not "hidden and far off'"; Goodloe, "The Body in Calvin's Theology." Wilkinson, *The Medical History*, and Cooke, "Calvin's Illnesses," provide reconstruction of "medical history" of Calvin's own body.

31. See Greef, *The Writings of John Calvin*, for classification and history of Calvin's writings. Calvin's letters have not been studied. See Muller, *Unaccommodated Calvin*, for the historical context of Calvin's writings.

32. See Tavard, *The Starting Point of Calvin's Theology*, for a comprehensive study of *Psychopannychia* and Muller, "The Starting Point of Calvin's Theology: An Essay-Review," for a critical analysis of Tavard's study.

Barth.[33] The lines can be drawn at different points.[34] It is not my purpose to determine whether Barth's theology can be seen as a unity or whether the "mature" writings cancel the "early" texts. For example, McCormack places very strong, perhaps excessive emphasis on the shift in Barth's ontology that occurred in *CD*, II/2, where Barth presented his new doctrine of election. McCormack takes this shift so seriously that at times the earlier writings of Barth, so McCormack seems to think, are incompatible with his later writings. I prefer to think that the development of Barth's thought was self-consistent from the second edition of his commentaries on Romans and onwards. Nevertheless, the development of Barth's theology cannot be denied therefore my aim is not to analyse Barth's anthropology in all the phases of its possible development but to focus on *CD*, III/2,[35] where Barth discusses all the key anthropological issues such as anthropological methodology, the

33. For example, the title of one of Torrance's books on Barth reads: *Karl Barth: An Introduction To His Early Theology, 1910–1931*. See also Dorrien, *The Barthian Revolt*, for a study of Barth's break from liberalism.

34. There are two rival views on the genesis of Barth's theology. One view is that of a Catholic scholar Hans Urs von Balthasar, (see his *The Theology of Karl Barth*) who suggested that after the second edition of *Romans* the major shift took place in the early 1930s when Barth, after studying Anselm, ostensibly turned from dialectic to analogy. This view has been challenged by Bruce McCormack in his *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, who, on the one hand, showed the continuity between Barth of the mid-1920s and Barth of the first volumes of the *CD*, and, on the other hand, discovered that the real change took place in the late 1930s when Barth made a massive revision of the doctrine of election. See also Wigley, "The Von Balthasar Thesis," for a reassessment of Balthasar's view in the light of McCormack's thesis. I am inclined to agree with the judgment of Dorrien, *Kantian Reason*, 566: "The key to Barth's theology was the dialectical Paulinism of his *Romans* commentary, although he misled generations of interpreters by claiming to have left dialecticism behind after he became a dogmatic theologian." Webster, *Barth's Moral Theology*, 4, similarly says that "Barth scholarship has sometimes been mesmerized by a developmental reading of his theology in which the *Dogmatics* represents a quite new departure, which has maximized the difference between the Barth of 1915–30 and the Barth of the *Dogmatics* . . ." See also Webster, "Balthasar and Karl Barth," for an analysis of "dialectic to analogy" thesis; Webster, *Barth's Earlier Theology*, for a study of the lesser known early writings of Barth.

35. There are three recent studies that either focus on or give considerable attention to *CD,* III/2. See Cortez *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies*, for a study of *CD*, III/2, with special focus on Barth's anthropological method and soul-body relation; Price, *Karl Barth's Anthropology*, for the place of Barth's anthropology in the context of modern secular psychology; and Dawson, *The Resurrection in Karl Barth*, for an in-depth study of Barth's doctrine of the resurrection, which includes close analysis of the concept of the contemporaneity of Jesus in *CD*, III/2, sec. 47.

doctrine of the image of God, the existence of man as soul and body, and man's being in time in the light of Jesus' resurrection.[36]

Barth's holistic anthropology is monistic in two respects: he not only denies the existence of the soul separable from the body (ontological monism) but he also denies human existence after death (temporal monism). This is why the issue of the ultimate Christian hope is included in this research. While Barth's holism and relational view of the image of God may overcome the problem of axiological dualism, it creates a no less severe problem of temporal monism: this life is all there is for human beings. The important question is, of course, whether ontological monism necessarily entails temporal monism. If the answer is in the affirmative, then ontological monism is compromised and cannot be regarded as an acceptable solution to the problems created by dualistic anthropology.

Several decades ago, Gerrit Berkouwer raised the issue of Barth's doctrine of "eternalizing," which questions the possibility of eternal, nonending conscious existence for human beings.[37] Marc Cortez reads Barth differently and argues that "Although Barth's language at times would seem to suggest that human existence is limited to this life alone, he clearly states that humans enter into the eternal life of God "in fellowship with him.'"[38] John McDowell, in a number of articles and in a book points out that for Barth the hope is not about things (eternal life, kingdom of God, etc.) but about a person—"about Jesus Christ in his threefold *parousia* ('effective presence') of resurrected life, presence in the Spirit, and consummating coming."[39] This gives an apparent foundation for the charge that "Barth has no time for any futurality of the eschatological."[40] Thus, if Berkouwer's interpretation is correct, then the question should be raised whether the doctrine of eternalizing is an inevitable outcome of monistic anthropology. In other words, does Barth's ontological monism logically entail temporal monism?

36. I would also like to point out that my *manner* of reading Barth and reporting on this reading agrees with a rule set by Webster, *Barth's Earlier Theology*, 68: "the essential prerequisite for understanding is careful and attentive reading. Such reading has to be prepared to allow that what Barth is attempting may have value, for all its unconventionality . . ." Because of this, I tend to give more attention to the secondary literature on Barth that is more patient with his unconventionality (e.g., McCormack, Webster, Hunsinger, Berkouwer) than to purely critical studies that aim at proving Barth's unorthodoxy (e.g., Van Till, Klooster, Harris).

37. Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace*, 328–46.

38. Cortez, *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies*, 118.

39. McDowell, "For What May We Hope?," 2.

40. McDowell, "Karl Barth's Having No-Thing to Hope For," 35.

Thus the theological anthropology of Calvin and of Barth will be evaluated by means of two criteria: (1) Does it view man as a whole without dividing him into unequal parts? (2) Does it give man hope that transcends the physical life here and now?

My thesis is that there are evidences in Calvin's anthropology of the connection between ontological and axiological dualisms and that Barth's holistic anthropology satisfactorily solves the problem of Calvin's axiological dualism. At the same time Calvin's axiological dualism is countered by his own epistemology, soteriology and the doctrine of the resurrection while Barth's holism creates the problem for the possibility of life after death but does not entail its denial. My subsidiary thesis is that philosophical assumptions play an important role in the ontological anthropologies of both theologians.

The book consists of four parts: anthropology of Calvin, transition from Calvin to Barth, anthropology of Barth, and comparison of Calvin and Barth.[41] In the first part, I will write about Calvin's views on the soul and the body in relation to the image of God (chapter 1), to the knowledge of God (chapter 2), to immortality and the intermediate state (chapter 3), and to the resurrection (chapter 4). In the second part, I will describe Barth's Kantian epistemology and Hegelian ontology (chapter 5). In the third part, I will deal with Barth's new anthropological method (chapter 6), his doctrine of the image of God (chapter 7), his view on the soul/body relationship (chapter 8), and his understanding of time and death (chapter 9). Finally, in the fourth part, I will provide a comparative analysis of the two anthropologies (chapter 10).

41. A similar structure is used in Kooi, *As in a Mirror*.