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John W. Cooper: *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 262. $16.95, paper.

The topic of this work is not only one of the central doctrines of the Christian faith, but is at the heart of great controversy and uncertainty in both theology and philosophy at present. To say the book is timely is therefore an understatement. There is a crying need for a work on human nature in relation to the doctrine of the resurrection to everlasting life which takes Scripture as the authoritative and primary data, shows a mastery of the literature, and is philosophically and scientifically informed. On all these counts Cooper has more than succeeded, he has prevailed. I say this as one who has realigned his own view as a result of the convincing case Cooper has made.

As to the mechanics of the work, I find the writing clear and to the point. It uses a minimum of technical terms and so is suitable for intelligent lay Christians as well as pastors, theologians, and scholars. Cooper has organized the work in exemplary fashion. Each chapter clearly states its topic, the problems to be taken up, and several major positions on them. Each ends with a definite conclusion and/or summary so that the reader is never in doubt about just what has or has not yet been established at any given point along the way.

The central contention of the book is that there are (at least) two types of dualism possible concerning human nature. Thus he can agree with many of the objections that have been lodged against the traditional dualism found in Plato, adapted by Augustine, and defended by Descartes—the type he calls “functional dualism.” But while agreeing that this sort of dualism is objectionable from the standpoint of biblical teaching, Cooper shows that the solution to this difficulty is not to abandon every sort of dualism in favor of some version of anthropological monism. Instead, he makes a case for what he calls “holistic dualism,” which deletes what is objectionable in the traditional anthropology while retaining the sort of duality required by the scriptural teaching of individual survival between death and the resurrection.

The book begins with a chapter surveying traditional Christian anthropology and its modern critics, and then proceeds to the meat of the book: two chapters on OT anthropology, one on intertestamental anthropology, and four on NT anthropology and eschatology. By that point Cooper has compiled impressive evidence for his conclusion that what Scripture says about human nature is best explained by the holistic dualism he defends. Chap. 9 then deals with six objections to his view. It is to his credit that Cooper does not suppose that his replies to these objections are always decisive. Concerning several of them his position is that they turn on points that are undecidable both from Scripture and by argument, but that his position is at least as plausible as the objections. Thus he regards his view as the one best supported by a preponderance of the evidence, rather than as the only possible view.

In the final chapter, Cooper surveys some of the points at which his type of dualism impinges on current theories in science (brain physiology and psychology) and philosophy. The scientific section of this chapter is the least developed of the book, but makes no pretense at extensive scientific expertise. In fact it is really a brief essay

in the philosophy of science rather than science per se, and is only intended to show in broad outline that there is no overt conflict between his position and any well-established scientific data. Likewise, the philosophical section is not a treatment of philosophical arguments for and against holistic dualism. Rather, it is a brief account of four contemporary Christian philosophers, each of whom defends a holistic dualism: John Cobb, Richard Swinburne, Pope John Paul II, and Herman Dooyeweerd. The section is intended to illustrate the fact that there are different possible versions of holistic dualism and that the position "is not just intellectual quackery."

My general admiration for this work does not prevent my being disturbed by a few things, however. The first is the way Cooper uses Aristotle's theory to illustrate his anthropological holism in contrast to an anthropological dualism like that of Plato. For Aristotle, Forms are indeed substances (in the secondary sense) despite Cooper's denial of this point on p. 55. Aristotle insists that Forms are all independent, eternal, and incapable of being created or destroyed. Moreover, on Aristotle's theory there would be only one Form for all humans rather than one for each individual. And finally, Aristotle's concept of substance (in the primary sense) leaves no way to account for a real unity of Forms with matter; in the end his proposal is of a composite *union* of two principles, principles so mutually exclusive that there is no way to explain how they could even relate let alone become one. For all these reasons, I find Aristotle's theory to be as unrelieved a dualism as Plato's and unsuitable for illustrating Cooper's own position.

Another minor disturbance is Cooper's criticism of the view of Barth, Bruce, Harris, Pannenberg, Kueng, and others, that believers are resurrected immediately after death. Cooper objects to this several times on the ground that it is incompatible with Scripture's teaching that there will be a general resurrection of the dead in the future (pp. 118, 133-34, 150–52, 155). But it seems at least possible that the doctrine of immediate resurrection be compatible with a future general resurrection at the Day of the Lord provided that the soul has a supratemporal side as well as its temporal life. In that case there would be no passage of time for the individual souls of those who have died, whose temporal life has been suspended but who are nevertheless with God outside time. So, from the viewpoint of their experience, their resurrection would be literally immediate relative to their death even though thousands of years might have elapsed since their death from the viewpoint of those still living in time. It seems a bit odd that Cooper never considers this way of reconciling the two since he (correctly) attributes to Dooyeweerd just the sort of view—the view that the soul is supratemporal—which makes it possible.

Finally, I confess to feeling slightly disappointed with the way the last chapter simply cites several thinkers who attempt to defend holistic dualism without a more thorough examination of whether they succeed. Cooper does at least mention that the metaphysic underlying the view of John Cobb seems to require a monism rather than a holistic dualism (p. 239). But there is no subsequent evaluation of whether Cobb can really be consistent in accepting both. Similarly, the view of Swinburne is described as holding that soul and body are so different that no account can be given of their interaction. That would at least suggest a parallel impossibility of accounting for a real unity of the two. But this too passes without evaluation. As a result the section

gives the impression of citing these thinkers only to establish that holistic dualism is in respectable company and that "it is not intellectual quackery."

But after the job that Cooper has done in expounding the relevant biblical passages and defending his view, an assurance of its mere respectability is a come-down that is hardly necessary.

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