

A Christian Tin-Can Theory of Man

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Now is a good time for scientists who profess that their life-consciousness is gripped by the Good News for modern man to exhibit a conception of the human creature that is really new instead of just a reshuffling of old ideas, replete with pagan dilemmas and dead ends. By “new” I mean a conception of man and woman that rings an exciting bell of blessings for theoretical analysis and professional praxis rather than frustrations: a conception that straightens us out, the psalmists would say, and affords a prophetic integration of how we do things in the laboratory, at home, in our hobby, as student, citizen or whatever. We need to have the presence of the Lord biblically embedded in our understanding of humanity, or we have sold out on our Christian birthright, no matter how often we import God into the environs of human nature afterwards.

With these foolish, brave words I mean to say that committed evangelicals who have grit to their faith would do well to shuck the age-old belief in body and mind, or the formulation that says body, soul and spirit is the composition of man. To think that a human is an embodied soul, or an animated corpse, or a rational animal with a heavenbound spirit, or some other stock combination of a soul and a body, frustrates scientific analysis of man; it is contrary to experienced fact, and is unsupported by the scriptural givens. Many secular scholars, dissatisfied with the honky-tonk, commercialistic exploitation of men and women in our society, predicated on a materialist design, are also looking for some new thing on the nature of man today. Maybe we can help them if we truly do have a new, that is, a biblically fresh vision.

Psychosomatic Effects and Christian Theology

Everybody knows, of course, that so-called psychosomatic disorders have been a reality long before the invisible industrial management strain, or before the invisible university professorial and administrative tensions produced visible ulcers that can be cut and bleed. But trying to analyze psychosomatic troubles with the neat, theological categories of body, soul and mind, inherited from Plato does not work well. Even a faculty psychology, pendent from the Aristotelian-Galenic view of man as having a vegetative soul, sensitive soul, and superimposed rational soul giving distinctive form to the material body, is inadequate, like trying to engineer a space shot with Ptolemaic astronomy.

Recognition of the reality of subconscious processes in human makeup has also demonstrated how artificial and scientifically impotent the traditional, church-

sanctioned, dichotomistic anthropologies are. And the pressing need for a reformation of mind or soul-body problematics can be clearly seen in the quandry of modern psychiatry. Psychiatry has done everything from boring a hole through your skull to giving you a soft soapy talk while reclining on a couch, in its effort to get an analytic, scientific, therapeutic finger on the desires and pains, ideas and values swelling through human behavior. Psychiatric methods have been dangerously blowing in the wind, says zoologist von Bertalanffy, because the fundamental, a priori framework with which modern psychiatry approaches man is uncertain or askew-something no amount of data research can make good (*The Mind-Body Problem*, p. 30).

It is right at this point, I believe, that Christian philosophy should minister to specialized scientists, but not with a learned rehearsal of philosophical conceptions of man from Anaximander to Jean Paul Sartre, nor with a cavalier dismissal of those twenty-five centuries as a nightmare of pseudo-problems from which linguistic analysis shall save us. Needed instead is an encyclopedic conception of man which gently sacrifices that sacred cow of “the (substantial) soul” inside man’s body without defacing him into a molecular combination of physique and biosensitive operations with epiphenomenal values rotating around like electrons. To study a man as a physical phenomenon is a gross inhumanity; it is like observing a water drop form in a man’s eye and say “he leaks,” instead of “he cries” (de Boer, p. 10). But what has passed for non-naturalistic, “Christian” reflection on human nature-whether in its Augustinian, meso-Platonic, freewill hassle of a man, or in the scholastic, intellectualistic version canonized by Thomas Aquinas-such reflections on human nature, have been, in my judgment, ersatz Christian and a stumbling block for down-to-earth Christian scientific analysis. Our Christian conception of man must feature the peculiar richness of his God-responsive creaturehood while accounting for what meets the daily eye, and not yoke exacting, firsthand examination of man with other-worldly, dogmatic baggage.

I do not wish to take the time to berate medieval theology for the fix we Christians are in, but theology that has not minded its own theological business, deepening our confessional life with insights proper to that facet of our inter woven existence, has always tyrannized other responsible, Christian reflection. The Roman curialists learned their lesson with Galileo and never put Darwin’s writings on the Index, but evangelical theology has by and large not had the benefit of that historic training. Even today, conservative theological pamphlets flood the market with judgments on the age of the earth that make Christian geologists squirm. However, all that concerns me now regarding man and woman is this: it does not make good sense to theorize backwards from a supposedly known *post mortem* condition of man (about which Scripture tells us passing little), extrapolate logically back from existence-after-death to the now for determining how man must be found constituted. Such theological dictation is particularly egregious when it is so uncritical of its conceptual debt to a tradition of Orphic cult, Pythagorean mystique and Plato’s *Phaedo*, especially if it misuses the Bible as a text book source precluding direct investigation. The Scriptures-Calvin said it right (*Institutes: I, vi, I*)-are the glasses *through* which, for example, we can look anew at human nature.

A Christian Philosophical Conception of Man

I sketch here what might be the basic elements in a Christian philosophical conception

of man. I shall call it the tin can theory of woman and man. A leitmotif through my presentation is this, that each human creature is only one, a whole one. All special scientists-biologists, physicists, psychologists, sociologists, linguists, economists, ethicists, logicians, aestheticians, mathematicians, theologians, political scientists-each may take out his particular microscope to get a bead on a man or woman, but you may not, like the proverbial blind persons feeling the elephant, think you have the whole picture when you have a hold of the trunk or the tail, its leg or the hide. Scientists must beware of the temptation to parcel a man into pieces even only as a working method, for such a working method really presumes that the human creature is a synthesis of separate, functional compartments. Because a man or a woman is one, single, whole creature, it is the philosophical task to establish an overview, interdependently with findings of the special sciences.

Christian philosophy is not theology in non-ecclesiastic dress. Christian philosophy is philosophy: a systematic, synoptic analysis of things which focus on their interrelational meaning. Like every science, philosophy too has a theoretical character; it abstracts to get at the law-side of things, i.e., philosophy tries to approximate the structure of what holds for certain things and their functionings. Christian philosophy tries to grasp the structural contours which hold for man, in such a way that the truth of Psalm 8-"you have made him almost like a god"-gets obediently and fruitfully, however fallibly, disclosed in quite earthy terms.

A Basic Philosophical Assumption: Individuality-Structure

A fundamental, cosmological assumption I make is the thinghood of whatever is extant. Individuality, for me, is not a guilty philosophical problem until proved innocent; but the individuality-structured way we are constantly confronted I unquestioningly and happily acknowledge as a creational given. Our God-ordered universe is a population of various kinds of concrete, individuality-structured things-that is how God set it up. To be created means to be a cosmically ordered, irreducibly different, definite individual thing, one identifiable and re-identifiable thing among other comparable entities. Intrinsic to every creature or creational item is an enduring identity which bears a certain typifying and foundational closure to its singular configuration, which is established and maintained only by the fiat of God Almighty.

This confession on individuality-structure will sound to someone raised on Hume like a *deus ex machina* bow to convention, unworthy of philosophic tough-mindedness. But I would persist, because the idea of thinghood not only explicates an important dimension of what creaturely, created existence actually means but the philosophical idea of thinghood also corroborates our ordinary experience with an antinomy-free simplicity unknown to the old substance-philosophy accounts of individuation and individual permanence. Sophisticated attempts like that of Russell who, correctly avoiding substance, tries to explain away a-piece-of-matter as a string of physical events linked together-especially when that scientific shredding of things is given general application (Russell, pp. 243-248)-always strikes me as some sort of *homo ex machina* solution, because sooner or later, unless you evasively beg the question, either *Bewusstsein überhaupt*, "a single unified spatio-temporal system" or some other demythologized god of Humanism rears its head to guarantee what is a daily occurrence and a normal assumption-the individuality-structured thinghood of whatever is here or there and everywhere around.

More than two decades ago, the noted Oxford scholar P. F. Strawson, in his painstaking study entitled *Individuals*, stated clearly that a general philosophical corain Deo justification intending to solve the “problem of other selfhood minds” is impossible to give; in fact, even the demand for a solution to the problem cannot be coherently stated (Strawson, p. 112). If he had remained consequent with that confession, his book would have had a shocking character similar to walking outside the walls of the university in emperor’s clothes. But, while disclaiming any proof making, Strawson still argues, and argues persuasively, that material bodies are the indubitable basic particulars and the concept of person has a primitiveness which simply must be admitted because our language, the conceptual scheme we as a matter of fact do have of physical things and other per sons, calls for it and operates that way (Strawson, pp. 53-58, 110-113). Because Strawson wants to affirm the reality of individuals whose identity is more than a numerical or qualitative or monadic type-individual identity, one that can withstand change of place and time (Strawson, pp. 32-34, 125, 131-134), and yet because he is unwilling to profess it as a pre-philosophical ssumption, Strawson courageously (his reticent Kantian back to the wall, so to speak) goes ahead and “makes a case for it, with as much pseudonymic distance as possible, in an essay of descriptive (only “descriptive”! he says) metaphysics.

The predicament of this keen thinker, along with others, makes very convincing to me the fact that this lasting uninterchangeable identity of one thing or another remains unapproachable to theoretical analysis. Individuality structure is a given initially accepted or initially denied by philosophical theory and subsequent investigation. Our everyday experience of the macro world attests to its existence, I think, as a basic ordinance of reality-this is what Strawson is trying to work off of and something the Gestalt psychologists latched onto-that we normally perceive things first-off as whole configurations and fairly certainly recognize in a naive way whether it is the same one, an identical one or a different thing. (The micro particles of physics need special attention because sub-molecular physical entities, as largely theoretical constructs, have an identifiability-dependence upon the entire abstractive, scientized condition and lack the concrete, independent character of macro things. It is very important right here not to give scientific *experimence*, if I may coin a word, primacy over ordinary experience as to which points to the primary order of created reality). But the fact that we normally aprehend macro objects as identifiable wholes does not *prove* an individuality-structured setup to a skeptic who’ simply disbelieves it, anymore than the fact that we see the sun disappear and that it is the evening and morning of a new day witnesses to the secularist that our Lord is the faithful Creator.

Many more observations and qualifications must be made, of course, about “things.” A blade of grass or the wind, a crow or my neighbor is never known disconnectedly as a completely separate, singular entity. But every thing is always like a thread on the loom whose warp and woof of quantity, extension, gravitational forces, energy, growth, sensibility, formativity, style, significance, conceptualization, use, and still more features as properties or latent qualities, totally enmesh the thing. Individual things also only exist as members of a kind; it is one of the plants or animals (despite the invisible crossover line), the inanimate physico-chemical kingdom, the human race, or angel creatures. Everybody knows that each thing within animalkind, for

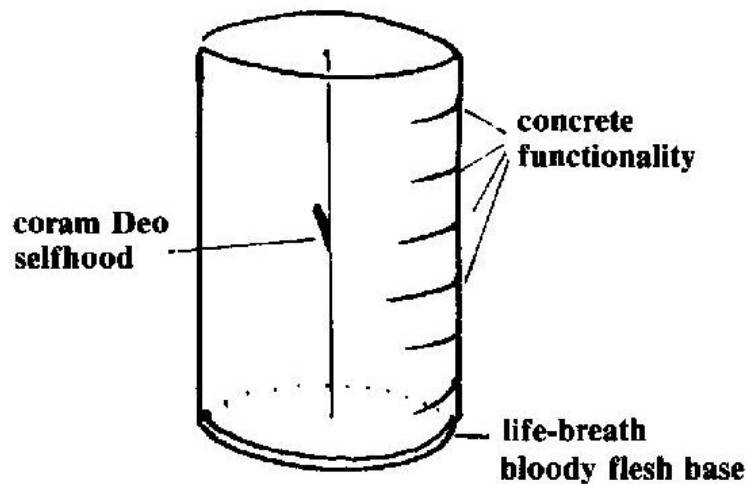


Figure 1. A tin-can model of man

example, falls into a subgrouping dependent upon a common genetic or internal morphological structuration. Further, most macro things, despite their integral simplicity, have other individualities complexly interwoven within their wholeness, like the heart, lungs and stomach, for example, of a squirrel. But the original, whole thing is more than the sum of its internal organs, skin and nervous system, for their subordinated role is defined by the thing's singular configuration. Ordinary experience, it seems to me, bears that out again: a squirrel that has just been shot is not conceived of as a ruptured brain, collapsed lungs, stilled heart with four feet and punctured fur, but is taken to be a whole, dying squirrel. To notice, accept, and assume the enduring oneness of individuality-structuration does not mean you think every thing is blankly simple.

So the fundamental, cosmological assumption I make which is the cornerstone for my tin-can theory of woman and man-is that individuality-structure is an ontic given holding for creation. The multiple functions of an individual thing are indeed present and can be differentiated, and the whole complex, integral, concrete thing is certainly open to development, deterioration and proliferation; but the identifiable, single prime which undergoes all such change and eludes theoretical determination is simply a structural creational given. Every attempt to locate that irrefragable oneness of a thing in some mysterious, hidden focus as a tension of functions (as monism does) or to pinpoint it as the relation of parts (as dualism does-as if a relation could be prime!) is going to lose the configured wholeness of a blade of grass, the planet or a squirrel. And then you have lost a lot. Because that leading idea of individuality-structure catches most perceptively the import of the biblically revealed truth of creation in that the very singularity of the thing, as well as its whole relative, temporal existence, is utterly and thoroughly dependent upon the creative-sustaining Logos of God who cares for it directly, whether it be sparrow, hair on your head, fily of the valley, or zygote.

The Skeleton of a Christian Philosophical Anthropology

Few people on the street deny thing-character to subhuman existents, that a rock, tree or an animal is of one piece. But it is with woman and man that especially Christians on the street have balked. There seems to be more to woman and man than meets the

eye, and the “more” to humans is usually thought to be more than something like the back side of a box in one’s visual field. There is something special, different, “spiritual” in the human creature.

I should like to disarm the man on the street or the woman in the home with the fact that woman or man is a creature, and as creature woman or man is a temporal, identifiable, individuality-structured thing. A human creature is also of a piece, whose single existence manifests itself in all sorts of ways—a man is so big, with such a shape, moves, has weighted mass, breathes, feels, forms, can play imaginatively, talks, thinks, socializes, saves possessions and spends them, fights, loves, prays—all these ways of concrete existence, which constitute the man’s corporeality, are all manifestations of the one same, individual subject. A woman or man is a single, full-bodied, tin-can functioning unit, a prime individual thing grounded with physico-organic functionings and qualified by selfhood. Every constitutive factor of this configuration, including its bloody-fleshly base, is human only as and because of the integrally constituted, inseparably bound-together nature of the whole self-dimensional structure.

The normal features, as well as the selfhooded peculiarity, deserve emphasis. Man has a this-one nature and an unbroken fabric of concrete corporeal existence simply by being a created individuality-structured creature.

Again, the unrepeatable singularity of a given man cannot be scientifically established. Characterological studies may pinpoint persistent act-features; handwriting experts (presumably) identify a definite and recurring temperament; autobiographies get written, and good old fingerprints seem to approach documenting that woman and man exists one for one, an unquestionably individual creation. But at rock bottom you have to believe that the fellow who has put on twenty pounds, divorced his wife, gotten false teeth and learned Swahili ten years later, is still the same person. Actually the impenetrable mystery of the gift of individuality is guaranteed surely and only by biblical revelation—even beyond the eschaton (cf. I Corinthians 15:38).

As to the seamless unity of a woman or man’s many-sided activity, much could be said. One crucial matter is this, that a human’s energy, metabolic processes, desires, ability to control things, attempts to imagine things, communicate verbally, think, and other distinct functions are not to be understood as “faculties,” some sort of autonomous powers which she or he has corralled and tries to keep in subjugated order. No, all the discernible ways humans can act are the very defining, cosmic, operating order of reality which each then as an individuality-structured entity enjoys. These ways of being-there in God’s world which a woman or man bodies forth are facets of God’s ordinances for all kinds of things, their existential reality. And the full-bodying tin-can human breathes, feels, opens a door, thinks, and does all the rest, not as if these were ontologically separate compartments one “participates” in; but all the many mutually irreducible ways in which a woman or man functions are interpenetrating, intra-related moments of his or her concrete existence. For example, there is power not only in a fist action but also reverberating within a man’s desires and speech and loyalties. While a woman’s feelings are not her thinkings, there is always emotional content inside thought, and there is a creational pressure to have emotions thoughtful. There are analogies of vitality in activity beyond one’s muscles,

in a woman or man's conversation, occupational routines or church life. And there are elements of economy anticipated in one's physical acts, aesthetic response, and social relations.

In fact, this tin-can solid, this cohering pattern of ordered, enduring activities is the proper meaning of corporeality.

That is an important point, because centuries of Western intellectualism have reduced the conception of corporeal and body to the cursed abstraction of "matter," to what is hard, intractible, this physical hulk about us, and pointedly disparaged it as animal baggage, but much too real for comfort. And that web of misconceptions has played havoc with our reflection on the human creature's created glory and over-all cohering reality. Any concrete durable act of man, I would maintain, is bodily expression-human speech, insinuation, penetrating reflection, are all corporeal acts. Words and thoughts kill as surely as rocks and bullets; a brick wall indeed stops a truck, but I have seen parental emotional upbringing stop a twenty year old more permanently in his tracks than any brick wall. Nicodemian scientists must learn that while poisons can end a man's breathing and brain waves, certain secular ideas can finish off a woman or man completely for good, as the New Testament puts it, when the Lord punishes him or her both "body and soul" in hell (Matthew 10:28). That is, the whole gamut of man's concrete action should be designated corporeal. The functioning tin-can man is a body. A woman or man is not incarnate, as if like Christ once was not yet human there is a human substance possibly not yet fleshed out concretely. If man be incarnate, where does the "carnage" begin? with his speech? craft ability? feelings? or only physique? Where does a woman or man's "body" stop and start? Is the promise of a love-act or sentencing one to jail, so that the other winces or knows joy, less corporeal, less bodily an action than bleeding or falling down a flight of stairs?

Do not misunderstand me. Because angels are as real as cement I am not saying prayers are like digestion and toothaches are mental. Only this: the whole blanket of activities, all the ways a man is in concrete action is him or her bodily, corporeally there. And there are no second-class citizens in kinds of human activity. There is, to be sure, an order of conditioning: organic health gives psychic life stability in the clutch; good psychic integration certainly strengthens analytic development, and if psychic life is disturbed, it quickly shows up in malfunctioning social intercourse and frequently blocks confessional activity; a measure of technical competence is prerequisite for all forms of art, language, science, and societal leadership. And discovering the interlocking order and dynamic of support and enrichment among the complicated ways a woman or man functions has important implications for education. Physico-organic functioning also has special foundational character; it is the life-breath base of a woman or man that God gives and God takes away. As underpinnings, then, such bio-physical, bloody-fleshly functioning grounds the other activities, not as some "primary stuff" they shape and direct, nor as a set of neurophysical processes that maintain an isomorphic correspondence with the more cultural workings, but just as the founding, undergirding element needed, given by God, cohering in structuration with selfhood, to constitute a living, human individualitystructured creature. Man is not an animated corpse anymore than he is an embodied spirit: woman or man is a selfhooded thing with physico-organic base.

(Once God pulls that physico-organic rug out from underneath you, so to speak, your natural given time is up and that human one goes to be with the Lord or to hell, says Scripture. The left-overs or remains in this aeon are not human, not part or piece of a woman or man; although the remains are often the *object* of human devotion and distinguishable for a time from a carcass, the remains of an animal, relatively soon the corpse shows it is but dust left.)

Each human creature is only one, a whole one.

What makes *this whole* creaturely *thing* a *human* individuality-structured existent, what makes us people men and women rather than male and female animals, is this: we are built selfhoodedly open, and ready to be receivers of God's Word. Men and women are religious creatures: individuality-structured entities called to act out the self-conscious (communal-conscious) office of being *coram Deo*, serving lords of the universe. Peculiar to a woman or man's existence is that the whole richly concrete corporeality a human is has a thrust bent to it. That man's existence is thrust, innerly focused and intrinsically referential of all one does and means toward the true or some pretended Absolute Origin: that is woman or man's being in the image of God. All human's bear God's image. The worshipping dependent, structural peculiarity of human creatures remains intact and is not annihilated by sin. Unbelievers betray the *imago Dei* by their restlessness, which leads to their distraction and eventual damnation. Manly and womanly believers, sinning saints, witness to their thrust nature, glory in it, as they reflect and reveal God's ordinances.

The crux of my position is that the selfhood, the concentrated heart-specialness of a woman or man is not a separable from the body, the human's concrete functioning, nor is selfhood independent from being the lever-windowfocal point of woman or man moved by sarx or the Holy Spirit. Selfhood or "heart" or "soul" is the unconscious structural opening-gateway thrust of man's inescapable relation to God under the Word-command, "Love me above all, praise!" This is why I use the tin-can metaphor to describe woman or man. What defines man is not an entity inside man but is the structured thrust of the whole, as invisible yet as all-determining and as inseparable as the axis of a cylinder. A tin can (cylinder) also has the graphic, humbling connotations that may stop us women and men from thinking more highly of ourselves, as earthen vessels, than we ought to think.

It is the structural before-God position that provides a sense-of-self to human activity, i.e., a sense of a concentration point below consciousness which makes all one's operation personal. Man acts personally, intentionally-toward things in reality and realizes such intention by active deed. Such built in, reflexive act-character adds the dimension of shame to man's life-animals do not blush and are never naked-so that this monitoring t&e-d-t&e reservoir of silence in one's own preconsciousness (conscience=knowing with) is an important and delicate feature coloring all human doings. This inner room for embarrassment can be a hidden check to avoid what ruins one's self. This selfhooded preconscious depth is also able to be corrupted by false guilt-feelings or secularly defaced and leveled out so it is virtually inoperative, defacing the three-dimensional richness of human existence into a onedimensional creature easily programmed for direct reactions to stimuli. But this creational sense-of-self in women and men is one important reason why human sexual relations can

never be animalistic: they can be debased, wedlocked, full of joy or orgiastic, but they are always human.

Mankind in Community

Integrally interwoven with the self-act-structure of man is one's being a fellow-creature. *Mitsdin*, a being bound together with other selves in society, neighborhooded, is what characterizes mankind alone. This non-genetic, interpersonal bond of communal consciousness is a given for every member of the human race because by its very creaturely specialness every human creature stands directly under the same central command of "Love God above all and your neighbor as yourself." Men and women who still exist in the first Adam experience this innate, neighborhooded given as a societal burden or make of it a distorted ideal: those who live in the second Adam accept it gratefully as a task within which we are called to be patient and gracious good Samaritans.

Sin

No understanding of woman or man is biblically Christian and complete without also showing how the reality of sin fits into the picture. Animals are not sinners, but individuality-structured humans are. Sin is not an animalbeastial lower roughness in men needing to be rationally overcome. Sin is also not simply devilish control of human nature. Since Adam's fall, I believe, sin is a fully congenital human condition. Sin is not due to our creaturely temporality. It is also not a passing functional state of affairs, although it shows up functionally. As a sinful religious creature, man is foolishly in proud, idolatrous rebellion against God. Sin is the whole-hearted, turned-in-upon-itself direction of religious man (pride) and the rooting of himself in creation at large or in his own self (idolatry), which is unlawful ground for ontic rootage, usurping God's prerogative of being the jealous Absolute Origin and Direction giver for existential human meaning.

Despite ignorance or sincere intentions, if one does not keep God Almighty's Love-command, that person is breaking it and is therefore ignoring or violating God's central directive. While sinful, woman or man does not stop being woman or man, does not lose religious selfhood, does not lose touch with the world, but he or she does ironically deprive the self of its ground for being there. This apostate orientation also threatens the human creature with meaninglessness and the riddle of a disintegrating cosmos, since the focal point-the God-focused, viceregent calling to creaturely lordship in Jesus Christ-is lost. Sinful man loses himself by depending upon and giving total allegiance to creaturely things or creaturely activity, like science, for example.

One may be saved from this condition in time, through the work of the Holy Spirit, by being made a member of the body of Christ which is historically busy, in fear and trembling joy, to reconcile affairs of the whole world back to God, keeping the Lord's Word for all reality, since all creaturely reality was made by him and through him and for him. The heart of Christians is wholly turned, away from selfish-centeredness, converted, transplanted and set in Christ; but the concrete reforming of their bodily acts take time and often comes on inconsistently wagging its tail of sanctified

feelings, skills, holy imagination, language, scientific analysis and societal relations behind.

The Whole Person

The fact that such a constellation of philosophical anthropological ideas together recognize the persistent unity and identity of the whole person defined *coram Deo* in history on earth is what marks them as biblically Christian. Traditional philosophical anthropologies have been unbiblical in so far as they misconceived the spirituality (the structural, to-God's-Word response-ability relatedness) and corporeality (multi-sorted ways of concrete action) of the human creature and theoretically abstracted and hypostatized spirituality into a spiritual part (a substantial soul) and corporeality into a somewhat begrudged, that-too, material part (a body one has for a while). Such Godneglecting analysis, begun by pagan thinkers who explained man *per se*, has been largely accommodated rather than critically reformed by Christian theoretical thinkers; the synthetic Christian, conceptual result has usually defined man in *se* and added a relation of man to God or Jesus Christ. Secular thinkers by and large define man *pro se*, and then have the problem of what to do with our selves. But the to-God-relatedness is what defines man, and only this idea of *coram Deo* structural centering, I think, has the ontological wherewithal to stop the theory of woman and man from losing the unity and identity of the human creature as only one whole woman or man whose total corporeality must be directly obedient to the Lord, rather than letting him or her be fractured off into pieces where, for example, one talks about being a Christian *and* an athlete, or a Christian *and* a scientist.

Implied Reorientation for Theory of Knowledge

Let me give one brief hint of the kind of reform a Christian tin-can philosophical anthropology entails, for example, in the theory of knowledge. Every special scientist, as well as artists and every thoughtful person busy in daily life, works with a stance on knowledge. Most unchristian theories of knowledge infecting the cultural air we breathe assume a dichotomistic anthropology or a reductive one, and have impoverished and warped our knowledge of knowledge.

I have presented an idea of woman and man as a selfhooded, flesh-and-bloodily based, individuality-structured creature operating within all kinds of God's creational ordinances, a creature who is a sinful, neighborhooded, religious woman or man belonging to the body of Christ or who is a card-carrying member of the *civitates mundi* which is passing away. As historically developing human creatures, we whole humans are aware of other knowable, similarly cosmonormically ordered creatures, whether human, animal, plant, stone, artefact, or whatever. But most unchristian theories of knowledge assume a different setup than tin-can communions of humans in touch with other whole creatures.

The basic outline which unchristian theories of knowledge approximate, in several variants, assumes that there is a low-down sensing body either mysteriously linked or tenuously joined with a purely mental, thinking apparatus, and this localized combination is confronted by a bumpin-to-able world of stuff that can be weighed, measured, pin-pointed and double checked. In addition to such bump-into-able facts

in the world there may also be abstract ideas called values, which at least some people consider important.

There are many lengthy disputes as to exactly how these factors jibe to produce valid knowledge. Does (C) or (B) initiate the process? How do (A) and (C) interact? Can (D) be proved if (A) or (C) is the last court of appeal? But my point here is that the whole setup is humpty-dumpty awry. Because of the partitioned human nature and the split world assumed, knowledge conceived within this unchristian setup has no intrinsic responsibility to be Godobedient, or to be interrelated with other kinds of knowing acts, or to be aware of its historical datedness. The split mind/body, thinking-camera model of registering facts and maybe affirming values has to import history and personal human responsibility and God-relatedness *afterwards*; it also neglects kinds of knowing that don't fit these two sorts, "sensing" and "thinking."

The tin-can vision of woman and man, however, begins by assuming that our human consciousness of other things is a self-reflective field of depth-awareness that is simultaneously subjective, multifaceted, variously normed,

(C) thinking apparatus

(D) "values"

(A) body sensors

(B) bump-into-able stuff

Figure 2. An unchristian theory of knowledge.

and called to bring about Christ's rule in history. From the tin-can perspective human knowing is always full-fledged bodily human action. That holds for human thinking and human sensing too-they are intrinsically subjective, relative to moments of guessing, mistaking, pain and even hoping, called to be holy (cf. Philippians 1:9) and called to be true, that is, called to be full of compassionate wisdom (cf. John 16:13).^a

Even scientific knowing, which is an important, controlled modification of everyday knowing, takes place in the same setting and is liable to the same basic conditions and norms, because scientific knowing is also human knowing. The peculiar x-ray problematizing of creaturely things into fields of specific functions which special scientific scrutiny effects must be judged not only by the standard of accuracy but also by the norm of correct relatedness to other knowledge and to whether the scientific comprehension fills out the Truth itself. A tin-can philosophical anthropology, which will develop its own kind of scientifically precise knowledge, can be of service to Christian special scientists and help them find ways to couch their accurate psychological, biological or physiological points within a limiting and directing network of knowledge such that the specialized results give body to Christ's lordship of the world. If one's special scientific knowledge is not itself philosophically

integrated with an anthropological vision that is true to our whole, tin-can status directly before God, no amount of prayer or church attendance or theological piety afterwards can make it Christian scientific knowledge acceptable to the Lord.

Conclusion

Medieval Christians usually allegorized nature into an earthly fact with a correspondingly heavenly meaning. We evangelical Christians have often pushed the biblical faith we hold into our professional scientific acts in the same easy, bloodless way. But such an atrabilious approach to creation-especially if one is treating the human creature scientifically, trying to fashion a philosophical anthropology-underrates the creaturely object examined (for creation is revelation!) and overrates the scientific analyst into a type of God-discerner of meaning (who may postulate “spiritual truths” on top of “the facts”). If we could but begin to see woman or man as a tin can for whom Christ died-Christ did not die to save soul-pieces for a post-mortem existence-then we can begin to catch the full meaning of “the resurrection of the body,” when the Lord comes again, and begin to track down the implications of “sanctification of us bodies” now, reconciling all we bodily are, including the most professional scientific knowing, quietly into his service.

One of the first projects needing attention in a theory of knowledge working out of the viewpoint of a Christian tin-can, philosophical anthropology would be making a case for the interdependent existence, validity and richness of other kinds of human knowing, such as the hunch, or an imaginative grasp of things, or the kind of deliberative weighing of political intangibles we call prudence-all of which are not reducible to either “sensing” or (pure) “thinking.” Cf. my essay on “The Fundamental Importance of imaginativity Within Schooling” in *Rainbows for the Fallen World*.

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