

# Faith and Thought

A Journal devoted to the study of the inter-relation  
of the Christian revelation and modern research

Vol. 98

Number 1

Autumn 1970

---

J. K. HOWARD, M.B., CH.B., B.D.

## The Concept of the Soul in Psychology and Religion

### SYNOPSIS

The study commences by querying the validity for either psychology or religion of the concept of the soul. Traditional religious concepts have always given a prominent place to man's soul as a distinct entity. It is argued that this idea derives from Platonic philosophy and historical evidence is adduced to support this contention.

The Christian religious viewpoint must be founded upon the biblical data and these do not provide any grounds for the traditional 'dipartite' or 'tripartite' views of man. On the contrary, it is argued, the Bible sees man as a unity, a single personality. Similarly modern psychology begins with the 'person.' Modern views of the personality are discussed and it is maintained that the overwhelming consensus of opinion sees personality as dependent upon bodily integrity, particularly that of the central nervous system.

It is argued that for both religion and psychology the only valid view of man is as a unified and integrated personality. The practical implications of this are very briefly discussed.

The late C. E. M. Joad was renowned for his insistence upon the need for adequate definition, and it is a commonplace of human experience that much of the misunderstanding that may arise between one person and another does so as a result of imprecision in language and a lack of mutually accepted definitions of terms. It might, therefore, with reason, be argued that a discussion of the concept of the soul in psychology and religion should begin with a definition of what we are to understand by 'soul'. Such a course of action, however, would be to 'put the cart before the horse'. It is a manifest impossibility to arrive at a meaningful definition without possessing all the relevant data. Furthermore, we must ask ourselves whether the concept of 'the soul' as a distinct entity possesses either validity or meaning. In order to reach a decision it is essential for us to examine the psychological and religious

views of man's constitution. It should be added at this juncture that, for the purposes of the present study, the term 'religion' will be taken to mean 'the Christian religion'.

From the biological standpoint there is nothing by which we can *quantitatively* distinguish man from the other animals. While there may be differences in degree, there is no absolute difference in biological terms between man and, say, the higher apes. On the other hand the Judaeo-Christian tradition affirms that man stands as distinct from the rest of the animal creation. The biblical record states that man was created in 'the image of God'. Does this then imply that man has some sort of spiritual 'extra' – a 'soul'? The traditional religious viewpoint would almost certainly reply in the affirmative. It is, however, our conviction that this viewpoint is defective and misleading, and it will be part of the purpose of this study to argue that the concept of a 'soul' cannot be considered as meaningful for either psychology or religion and should thus be discarded. Before any misunderstanding can arise, let it be stated clearly that we affirm man's distinction from the rest of the animal world. Man alone, as far as we can tell, is capable of making value-judgments and man alone is the one that the biblical record presents as being able to co-operate as a willing agent in the purposes of God. Further, it was through a Man that God chose to redeem His creation.

Before proceeding further with our argument, however, it is essential that we look briefly at the traditional religious concept of the soul.

#### *Traditional Statements concerning the Soul*

It is surely axiomatic that the Bible is to be considered as the foundation for the Christian faith. The Christian viewpoint and the formulations of Christian doctrine should owe their origin to the biblical data, irrespective of the precise terminology we may use in our statements. The question we must face at the outset is whether the traditional statements of the doctrine of man are derived from the biblical data or whether they owe their conception to categories of thought which are essentially unbiblical. It is our conviction that the latter is the case.

In seeking to establish this contention we shall begin with a reference to Plato's *Phaedo*. This is an imaginary report of a discussion Socrates is supposed to have held in his condemned cell. In the course of the discussion we have propounded the essence of the Greek view of the soul. It is conceived as being immortal, immaterial and like the divine.<sup>1</sup> O. Cullmann summarises the viewpoint as he writes, the 'body is only an outer garment which, as long as we live, prevents our soul from moving freely and from living in conformity to its proper eternal essence . . . (Death) looses the chains, since it leads the soul out of the prison of the body'.<sup>2</sup> This conception was to be developed later by the Neoplatonists, especially Plotinus and Proclus, into a more cohesive form. Almost inevitably, Christian thought was greatly influenced by this viewpoint as it moved further from its Palestinian roots into the Hellenistic world.<sup>3</sup>

The systematic formulation of these ideas into Christian doctrine came with Augustine of Hippo. His view of the soul was thoroughly Platonic. It was an immaterial and indestructible substance which ruled the body. It was to be considered the mirror of the divine nature corresponding in its faculties to the Trinity itself.<sup>4</sup> Augustine's writings were to exert a profound influence upon the development of Christian thought down to, and beyond Thomas Aquinas and the development of mediæval Aristotelianism. Aquinas himself, although renowned for introducing a system which harmonized Christian thinking with Aristotle, was nonetheless also influenced by Neoplatonic concepts. His view of the soul differed from that of Augustine in many respects, especially in considering the soul as united with matter to produce the 'form' of the body, yet he still thinks of it as occupying an intermediate position between

<sup>1</sup> See especially *Phaedo* 78E ff. Note also *Republic* 10. 608C ff., *Timæus* 90A ff. For Aristotle the soul was not so much a separate entity as the formal cause of the living body. See further C. S. W. Taylor, 'Forms as Causes in the *Phaedo*', *Mind* (1969), LXXVIII. pp. 309 ff.

<sup>2</sup> O. Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead* (London, 1958), pp. 19 f.

<sup>3</sup> See further, C. Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford, 1968).

<sup>4</sup> This is especially developed in *De qualitate animæ*. A good introduction to the period is G. Leff, *Medieval Thought; St. Augustine to Ockham* (London, 1958).

purely material and purely spiritual. Man's understanding is the demonstration of the soul in his system and is evidence of its spiritual nature and its immortality.<sup>5</sup>

Not surprisingly the Reformation theologians, in view of their cultural and intellectual background, did not move from these basic presuppositions in regard to the soul. They formulated their 'doctrine of man' in the traditional categories of a christianized Greek philosophy. Calvin, for example, speaks of the soul as 'an immortal, yet created essence . . . an incorporeal substance'.<sup>6</sup> Calvin represents a return to Augustinian thought rather than the Aristotelian concepts of the schoolmen, but the basic categories remain the same.<sup>7</sup> In each case, in fact, it is apparent that the understanding of the soul of man was based upon metaphysical speculation rather than observed or recorded data. While certain shifts of emphasis occurred through the years the governing presuppositions remained unaltered.

What is surprising is to find that these viewpoints are still held by a large number of modern theologians. Two writers will illustrate this point. L. Berkhof develops a theory of 'realistic dualism' to explain the relation between soul and body and writes, 'body and soul are distinct substances, which do interact, though their mode of interaction escapes human scrutiny and remains a mystery to us . . . from the continued conscious existence and activity of the soul after death it appears that it can also work without the body'.<sup>8</sup> It is important to note the assumptions that are made here. In the first place the 'soul' is a distinct *substance*, capable of being separated from the body and of surviving death. This is but a restatement of Platonism. Furthermore, he refuses to admit that the nature of the 'soul' and its relationship to the body are matters for investigation.

<sup>5</sup> *Summa Theol.* 1. 75. 6. For further details of Aquinas and his thought see, F. C. Copleston, *Aquinas* (London, 1955).

<sup>6</sup> *Institutes*, 1. 15.

<sup>7</sup> John Marsh *The Fulness of Time* (London, 1952), is probably right in asserting that 'it would seem to be as characteristic for the reformed theologian to follow Plato as for the catholic to be Aristotelian.' p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, 1941), pp. 191 ff.

The second example is a writer well known in evangelical circles of Christian thought. Erich Sauer considers man to be 'a trinity in unity, and his invisible inner being consists of two substances to be clearly distinguished'. These two substances are 'soul' and 'spirit' and he goes on, 'the soul is the connecting link . . . a "body" for the spirit, even as it is itself enclosed by the body as its own material frame'.<sup>9</sup> Once again we are confronted by the Platonic conception of 'soul' as a distinct substance, but Sauer adds the further thought that the body is the 'frame' for the soul. This is little removed from the idea of the body as a prison from which the soul is released at death. Space precludes mention of other modern writers who adopt the position we have outlined and which may be considered as the traditional conception of the soul.<sup>10</sup>

It is true that many theologians today have abandoned these traditional formulations and categories of thought, recognising their unbiblical origin; they are, nonetheless, deeply rooted in religious thought. Furthermore, it is this metaphysical approach which is generally viewed as the Christian understanding of man. It is an essentially speculative concept, and, while it may be considered a religious view of man, we contend that it is not the *Christian* view of man. It is this traditional concept which is, rightly we judge, viewed as highly suspect by physiological psychologists and is one of the factors leading them to voice their strong criticisms of 'religion' for indulging in metaphysical speculation which bears no relation to observed realities.

In this discussion we purpose to demonstrate that the biblical understanding of the soul is far from these ideas derived from Greek philosophy. Further, we also hope to show that the view derived from the biblical data is in essential agreement with the findings of modern physiological psychology.

<sup>9</sup> E. Sauer, *The Dawn of World Redemption* (ET, London, 1953), pp. 39 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Other recent works which continue to propound the traditional concept of the soul include J. M. Shaw, *Christian Doctrine* (London, 1953), E. L. Mascall, *The Importance of Being Human* (London, 1958), and T. C. Hammond, *In Understanding be Men* (Rev. D. F. Wright, London, 1968). Similar views are stated in the older but still widely recognized and valued works of A. H. Strong, C. Hodge, etc.

The Bible is concerned with the wholeness of man and its basic concepts and assumptions are those of Hebrew thought which stands in marked contrast to that of the Greeks.<sup>11</sup>

### *The Biblical Concept of the Soul*

If the traditional formulations concerning the nature of the soul are judged inadequate and misleading from the standpoint of the Christian religion, it is imperative that an alternative view be propounded. Such a view, as we have already indicated, must be derived from the biblical data. We shall therefore commence our study of the biblical concept of the soul by investigating the data provided respectively by the Old and New Testaments. In a study of this nature it will be impossible to do more than indicate the essentials of our argument and it will not be possible to give any treatment of the possible objections to our thesis. Before proceeding further we should note two features of biblical syntax. The first is the use of synecdoche, a figure of speech in which the part stands for the whole. Secondly, we should also be aware of the use of poetic parallelism, in which two or more phrases standing side by side utilise different words to express the same meaning. These usages will become apparent as the study progresses.

Two words are of especial relevance to our study in the Old Testament. These are *nepeš* and *rûah*, usually translated by 'soul' and 'spirit' respectively in the AV. *Nepeš* is etymologically related to the Akkadian *napistu* meaning 'throat', 'gullet', or 'neck'.<sup>12</sup> It is used in this physical sense in a number of places in the Old Testament. At Psa. cv. 18, for example, we have, 'His feet were hurt with fetters; his neck (*nepeš*) was laid in iron'. Again, at Psa. lix. 1f. we read, 'Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck (*nepeš*); I sink in the deep mire, where there is no standing, I am come into deep waters,

<sup>11</sup> These differences have been carefully worked out by T. Boman, *Hebrew Thought compared with Greek* (ET, London, 1960).

<sup>12</sup> Basic lexicographical data has been derived from L. Kohler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden, 1953), for the Old Testament and W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Cambridge, 1957), for the New Testament.

where the floods overflow me'. A further usage which is again essentially physical is seen in the relationship expressed between *nepeš* and blood, as at Gen. ix. 4; Lev. xvii. 11; Deut. xii. 33, etc. In this respect the suggestion has been made that this is the way we are to understand *nepeš* at Gen. xxxv. 18 – 'as her *nepeš* was departing . . . she (Rachel) called his name Benoni'. Death from post-partum haemorrhage was tragically common before the days of blood transfusion.

At this juncture we should take note of the fact that an essential feature of Hebrew thought is the idea of movement.<sup>13</sup> The Hebrew conceived his world in dynamic terms and this was naturally applied to the concept of living beings. The basic distinction between the living animal and the dead one was that the living were active, involved in constant movement. The man who was alive showed this by doing things, he worked, when necessary he fought, he ate and drank, he fathered children and so forth. This essential feature of all living things was captured by an extension of the use of *nepeš*. It came to represent the vitality of the individual and in this sense was used of anything that was alive. Thus the animals share this characteristic with man and can be called 'living souls' (Gen. i. 20, 24; ii. 7, 9; Lev. xi. 10, etc.).

A. R. Johnson<sup>14</sup> has conveniently summarized this usage under four headings. The word may speak of the principle of life as at I Kings iii. 11; Gen. xxxvii. 21. It may refer to the physical vitality of an individual as at Num. xi. 6; Lam. ii. 12, etc. Then again it may be used to express affect, a man's emotional vitality as at Psa. xlii. 6; Job. iii. 16. Finally, it may speak of the volitional vitality of the individual, expressive of will and purpose, as at Gen. xxiii. 8; Num. xxi. 5; Deut. xxi. 14; II Kings ix. 15. The intrusion of death into individual existence brings about a cessation of all activity, whether physical, emotional or volitional. The coming of death thus means the loss of vitality, the loss of *nepeš*. Accordingly, we find such

<sup>13</sup> Note T. Boman, *op. cit.* pp. 205 f. 'According to Israelite conception everything is in eternal movement; God and man, nature and the world . . . the Greeks describe reality as *being*, the Hebrews as *movement*.'

<sup>14</sup> A. R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel* (Cardiff, 1949), pp. 9ff.

expressions as 'all the days that he separates himself to the Lord he shall come at no dead body (*neḫeš*)' (Num. vi. 6, see also vi. 11; Lev. xxi. 1; Hag. ii. 13). A dead man is a dead *neḫeš*.

When the biblical creation narrative states that, 'the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath (*rúah*) of life; and man became a living soul (*neḫeš*)' (Gen. ii. 7,) we may conclude from what we have seen of Old Testament usage that there is no thought here of some metaphysical essence. Writes G. A. F. Knight, 'the result of God's action was not a soul within a body, one that could later be extracted from that body and which would then continue to exist apart from that body, when the body finally crumbled into dust. Man is not an amalgam of two separate entities, dust and the breath of life. He is one entity'<sup>15</sup>. The *neḫeš* thus becomes the totality of conscious being, or, as we may put it, the personality expressed in the wholeness of vitality at every level of existence. It is for this reason that we find *neḫeš* standing in place of the personal pronoun, a fact that will be seen from an examination of the references already provided. In the Old Testament 'soul' is 'not meant as a *tertium quid* between spirit and body, but denotes the totality'.<sup>16</sup> Man's 'soul' is the man himself.

Two other words require brief mention in order to complete our picture of the Old Testament view of man's personality. Closely related to *neḫeš* is the word *rúah*, a word which contains the basic idea of air in motion. In a high proportion of cases the word is used in this original sense of wind - 'He commands and raises the stormy winds' (Psa. cvii. 25). The word, however, became related to man's being and was used of the power and vitality of human life. The creation of man, as we have already noted, commenced with the 'breath (*rúah*) of life' being breathed into him. Air, by virtue of its oxygen content, is

<sup>15</sup> G. A. F. Knight, *A Christian Theology of the Old Testament* (London, 1959), p. 34.

<sup>16</sup> W. Eichrodt, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (ET, London, 1967), p. 137. See also E. C. Rust, *Nature and Man in Biblical Thought* (London, 1953), pp. 101 ff. It is surprising to find a scholar of the calibre of L. Kohler, writing that, 'soul is therefore the (individualized) spirit, delimited by its connexion with a body.' *Old Testament Theology* (ET, London, 1957), p. 145.

essential for the life of all but the more primitive forms of animals and plants. Throughout his life man is dependent upon the air he breathes, but the movement of air in terms of wind and tempest suggests power and energy. Thus, by metonymy, that which man requires for the continuance of his vitality, becomes the vitality of being itself.

Any unusual manifestations of power or energy could be described as having or showing more 'spirit'. This was often used in relation to God given vitality for some special purpose (e.g. Gen. xli. 38, 39, Judges xv. 14, etc.). What is important to note is that in every instance to be filled with 'spirit' implied action. Indeed, one could go so far as to say that to be filled with 'spirit' and not engaged in some activity, not performing some action, is a contradiction in terms.<sup>17</sup> It is also important that we do not personalize this manifestation of God given vitality – the concept of the Holy Spirit as a mode of God's being related to the life of the Church belongs to the post-Easter theology of the New Testament.

In much of Old Testament usage there is little to distinguish *rûah* from *nepeš* (note Isa. xlii. 5, etc.). The word is used to mean 'self' or simply life. Furthermore, the whole animal creation shares with man this 'vital breath' (e.g. Gen. vi. 17). Commonly *rûah* is used to express the vitality of the mind as expressive of the whole personality (Psa. xxxii. 2, lxxviii. 8, etc.) and it may also be used to describe a man's inclinations and desires (e.g. II Chron. xxi. 6; Num. v. 14; Hos. iv. 12, etc.). In none of these usages, however, is it possible to make any absolute distinction between *nepeš* and *rûah*. Both words denote the life within a man and the individual himself in the expressions of his total personality.

A number of physical expressions are also used to denote the totality of man reflected in a particular action, activity or emotion. The word 'flesh' is to be noted particularly, especially the fact that it is never used as something over against *nepeš* or

<sup>17</sup> This conception is carried over into the New Testament. While here the Spirit of God is personalized and related to Christ's life within the Church there is still the implication that activity follows the 'filling of the Spirit' (cf. Acts 2.4, 4.31, 13.9 ff., etc.).

*rúah*. The flesh is simply the outward form or expression of the *nepeš*. It is the living form of the personality, or, as Eichrodt has put it, 'the necessary expression of our own individual existence, in which the meaning of our life must find expression'.<sup>18</sup> As H. Wheeler Robinson has pointed out,<sup>19</sup> however, it is often used to emphasise the fact that, in comparison to God, man is frail, dependent and incapable. Other words such as 'heart', 'hand', 'foot', 'mouth', and so on are also used, by the use of synecdoche, to speak of the whole personality (e.g. Job xxiii. 11, etc.).

It is this concept of man that is taken over into the New Testament. While of necessity the vocabulary was Greek rather than Hebrew, the underlying ideas that governed the use of the words was Hebrew rather than Greek. In the writings of Paul, for example, we look in vain for any evidence of Hellenistic dualism. Indeed, as N. P. Williams has pointed out, to ascribe such ideas to Paul is a psychological, ethical and spiritual impossibility.<sup>20</sup> 'No sustained argument is necessary to justify the assumption that ideas found in the Old Testament are fundamental to the understanding of much of St. Paul's teaching'.<sup>21</sup>

As in the Old Testament we are faced in the New with an holistic view of man. The New Testament was written out of a conviction that the coming of Christ had brought about a remarkable and radical transformation of human existence, but this change did not alter man's constitution. Rather, the coming of Christ restores man to the wholeness of being which he had lost as a result of his divorce from God. The action of God in Christ brings to man, for the first time since the Fall,

<sup>18</sup> W. Eichrodt, *op. cit.* p. 149.

<sup>19</sup> H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man* (Edinburgh, 1911), p. 25.

<sup>20</sup> N. P. Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin* (London, 1927), p. 149.

<sup>21</sup> R. P. Shedd, *Man in Community* (London, 1958), p. 3. Note also J. Klausner, 'there is nothing in all the teaching of Paul . . . which is not grounded in the Old Testament, or the Apocryphal-Pseudepigraphical and Tannaitic literature of the time' *From Jesus to Paul* (New York, 1944), p. 482.

the possibility of realizing his full potential. In one sense the power of the divine life adds a new dimension to man's being, but in another it brings about that inner harmony of being which allows the total development of personality in relation to God'.<sup>22</sup>

The key word in the New Testament is *psychē* which is generally translated as 'soul'. In some senses it stands as equivalent to the Hebrew *nepeš*. It may simply mean a person's life as at Phil. ii. 30, where Epaphroditus is said to have risked his life (*psychē*) on Paul's behalf (note also Matt. ii. 20; Mark iii. 4; Acts xv. 2v 26, xx. 10 etc.). Again the word may be used to describe man's volitional activity, his vitality of purpose, as at Acts ii. 32, xiv. 12; Phil. i 27; Heb. xii. 3, etc. In these instances the use of *psychē* can hardly be distinguished from the other Greek words used in the New Testament to express purpose and will. Similarly we find *psychē* used to denote emotional activity (e.g. Mark xiv. 34,) and there is one example of particular interest involving both volitional and emotional ideas. At Mark xii. 30 (=Matt. xxii. 37) our Lord outlines man's proper response to God. By the relationships of the words in this verse it is clear that *psychē* in this context refers to the totality of man's being and not to some part of it.

At other times the word is used in place of the personal pronouns when greater emphasis is desired (e.g. Luke i. 46, xii. 19; Acts ii. 41, vii. 14; Rom. xiii. 1, etc.). In many instances, however, man's vitality is expressed by another word, *pneuma*, usually translated 'spirit'. Indeed, this seems to be the more common word in the New Testament and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that this may have been to avoid the metaphysical overtones of *psychē*. In certain contexts the two words are used with identical meaning (e.g. Luke i. 47). Moreover, *pneuma* may speak of the mind (Acts xix. 21; II Cor. ii. 13), and may be expressive of purpose (Phil. i. 27, where, once again, it is equated with *psychē*). In conjunction with *soma* (body) it denotes the totality of human personality (I Cor. v. 3-5, vii. 34).

<sup>22</sup> This explains the New Testament emphasis on 'peace' as one of the primary results of the divine forgiveness, for peace denotes the wholeness and health of a man. See further at p. oo.

Both the words we have discussed are many-sided and in each case it is the context that gives the clue to the meaning. In this respect it is essential to distinguish when *pneuma* is used of the human personality in its various expressions and when of the Spirit of God which we may view as the transforming life and power of God at work in the human situation and adding, as it were, a totally new dimension to human experience. As such it stands in complete contrast to everything that characterizes this age of sin and death; it is the principle of the life of the age to come. In this sense *pneuma* may stand in contrast to *psychē*. Paul's words make this clear, 'the first man Adam was made a living soul (*psychē*); the last Adam a life-giving spirit (*pneuma*)' (I Cor. xv. 45). By his incorporation into Christ the personality of man takes on an added dimension, that of the incorruptible life of God. This, however, is a somewhat specialized use of the concept. In normal usage it is impossible to distinguish between *psychē* and *pneuma* as representative of man's personality.

Thus, in both Old and New Testaments we are presented with an holistic concept of man. In terms of biblical psychology, man does not have a 'soul', he is one. He is a living and vital whole. It is possible to distinguish between his activities, but we cannot distinguish between the parts, for they have no independent existence. 'Man is an entity, quite indivisible into his various elements, even though aspects of his personality, such as his appetites, his affections, his moral purposes, may be examined and handled one by one, just as we can look at each side of a coin in turn'.<sup>23</sup> From the biblical point of view the concept of 'the soul' is meaningless and has no validity. The consequences of this approach will occupy us at a later stage of the discussion. We must now turn to consider the psychological concept of the soul.

### *The Psychological Approach to Personality*

In our consideration of the religious concept of the soul it was emphasised that from the standpoint of Christianity our

<sup>23</sup> G. A. F. Knight, *op. cit.* p. 37.

understanding must be based on the biblical data. In this respect we need to remember that the biblical data must be elucidated and the conclusions drawn with the same dispassionate care that would be taken over the analysis of data from any laboratory experiment. In the same way, such care is also demanded from the psychologist in the assessment of his data. Some, especially the representatives of the psychoanalytic schools, have been as prone to speculation as the theologians they so readily criticize. The genuine scientist must, as far as possible, maintain an objective and disciplined outlook, even when the results he obtains and the conclusions he is forced to draw from them appear to be in conflict with previously held theories. For this reason we intend to concentrate upon the views of those psychologists who are most consciously endeavouring to follow the scientific method and base their conclusions upon the empirical data of experiment.

Little attention will be paid to the psychoanalytic schools of Freud and Jung and their followers. Those who follow this approach have allowed a free rein to their speculations, indeed, at times their imaginations! H. J. Eysenck remarked some years ago that psychoanalysis 'is essentially non-scientific and is to be judged in terms of faith and belief, rather than in terms of proof and verification'.<sup>24</sup> Our assessment is not intended as a value judgment; on the other hand it is essential for us to be aware of the subjectivity and intuition upon which psychoanalysis is based. Deliberately and consciously the psychoanalysts have not based their work upon scientific methodology, and whatever value their approach may have, a matter in dispute, it is not to be considered a scientific discipline. Thus it will be given no place in the present discussion.

It must be admitted, however, that even where there has

<sup>24</sup> H. J. Eysenck, *The Uses and Abuses of Psychology* (London, 1953), p. 226. It is surprising how Freudian psychoanalysis seems to dominate religious thinking on psychology. For example R. L. Shinn, *Man: The New Humanism* (London, 1968), in the series 'New Directions in Theology Today', seems unaware of any other form of psychological thinking and E. White, 'A Preface to Biblical Psychology', *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* (1951), LXXXIII, pp. 51ff. utilizes exclusively these categories of thought.

been a conscious effort to follow genuinely scientific principles much psychological theory tends to be the outcome of inductive rather than deductive thinking. In this respect we need to take into consideration the timely warning sounded by G. S. Klein and his colleagues, that 'the study of personality continues to be a many-faceted field, with diverse conceptions of its subject, and certainly not agreed upon demarcation of the phenomena that should be its proper concern as a distinctive speciality within psychology'.<sup>25</sup>

In spite of the divergences of approach it is apparent that most psychologists are prepared to begin with the 'person'. There is little of that old division into 'mind' and 'body' which bedevilled early psychological theory as much as the closely related concepts of 'soul' and 'body' still bedevil theological thinking. Irrespective of one's psychological outlook, it is generally agreed that a study of personality must arise out of a consideration of the whole human organism. This is the case whether we are concerned with establishing the sources of individual differences or with the integrative functions that go to produce a coherent organism. H. Helson is concerned with the relevant variables that make up individuality and he writes, 'personality is the person in the situation'.<sup>26</sup> In the same way those more concerned with intra-individual integration, that is to say with those processes which make for personal integration demonstrable through specific functions, again take the 'person' as their point of departure and the prime object of analysis, rather than some particular form of behaviour or physiological process in isolation.<sup>27</sup>

Thus the psychologist in his study of personality is concerned with what G. Murphy has called 'the interdependence of a large number of qualitatively distinct attributes in some sort of coherent whole'.<sup>28</sup> Personality may thus be viewed as an

<sup>25</sup> G. S. Klein, H. L. Barr and D. L. Welitzky, 'Personality', in *Annual Review of Psychology* (Palo Alto, 1967), 18, p. 467.

<sup>26</sup> H. Helson, *Adaptation-Level Theory; An Experimental and Systematic Approach to Behavior* (New York, 1964), p. 541.

<sup>27</sup> See for example J. Loeringer, 'Person and Population as Psychometric Concepts,' in *Psychol. Review* (1965), 72, pp. 143-155.

<sup>28</sup> G. Murphy, quoted in G. S. Klein, *et al.*, *op. cit.* p. 469.

interlocking of functions and traits, an architectural unity involving the whole person. Moreover this coherent interaction fulfils the function of maintaining identity across a wide range of environmental conditions, thus making the organism to some extent independent of its environment. It should be made clear, however, that in saying this we do not advocate that 'organismal' approach beloved of the psychoanalysts. We simply wish to make it clear that from the beginning the organism is a whole and that this wholeness may be considered as the total personality. The separate parts, such as cognition, memory, affect, may be viewed one by one, but the personality itself cannot be considered in isolation as a 'system' of the body.

It should be noted that this approach involves us in two basic assumptions. In the first instance we assume that man is an 'open-system'. That is to say he is capable of entering into transactions with surrounding energy resources. Secondly it is assumed that man, in common with other living systems, will always tend to preserve his identity, both in spite of and because of these energy transactions. In other words the 'person' as a coherent whole possesses two distinct attributes. He has the ability to relate in a variety of ways to his environment and at the same time relate to himself, preserving himself as an independent unit separate from the environment. These tendencies will tend to produce tension and, partially at least, we may see their outworking in the phenomena of 'socialization' on the one hand, and 'individuation', the 'self-concept', on the other.<sup>29</sup>

It is thus assumed that the human organism possesses a genuine degree of self-regulation, and further, this is considered explicable, ultimately, in physiological terms. The integrative functions of the organism are to be described in terms of inborn behavioural tendencies, imprinted genetic patterns and the response patterns of the central nervous system. It might well be asked whether these somewhat mechanistic terms are adequate to describe such a complex picture as human personality. Some psychologists have preferred to see personality in

<sup>29</sup> See further C. R. Rogers, 'Towards a Science of the Person', in *Behaviorism and Phenomenology* (ed. T. W. Wann). (Chicago, 1964), pp. 109-140.

terms of value concepts and describe behaviour as that which endows human action with meaning. Such concepts however, are matters of belief not verification. They may be true but they cannot be proved. G. W. Allport states the heart of the problem succinctly as he writes, the 'theoretical issue is not the truth or falsity of any particular formulation for some particular occasion. The question is rather where do the primary dynamics of human life lie? Shall we say that our patient suffers from a biochemical intolerance, or from an intolerable loss of self-respect? Both statements may be true; but to science it seems more objective. less animistic and mystical, to attack the problem at the biochemical level where cause and effect are easier to perceive'.<sup>30</sup> The problem with all value-orientated judgments and categories is quite simply that they are unable to provide us with any experimentally testable hypothesis.

Clearly much of our approach will be conditioned by individual preference, but in this respect it needs to be remembered that if psychology is to be considered as a science then it must be prepared to be governed by the same objectivity and discipline that mark the more exact sciences. The scientist must be governed by the results of experiment and observation his conclusions must be based on these alone. He is concerned with the answer to the question 'how?' and not that of the ultimate 'why?' of existence. On this basis the problem of personality is to be answered in terms of physiology and biochemistry and not in the realms of metaphysical speculation. Reverting to Allport's example, biochemical intolerance can be measured and, in principle at least, corrected. On the other hand a loss of self-respect, while a genuine entity in terms of intra- and inter-personal relationships, is merely a descriptive term to describe the outward effects of the underlying physiological abnormality. The theologian or philosopher is entitled to use the categories of value-judgments, the scientist is not.

The psychologist thus has to interpret personality in terms of the physiological mechanisms of the body. Recent work in a number of fields, much of it popular knowledge, has made it

<sup>30</sup> G. W. Allport, 'The Fruits of Eclecticism - Bitter or Sweet?' *Acta Psychol* (1964), 23, pp. 27-44.

apparent that the expression of personality is intimately connected with the central nervous system. The behavioural changes which the manipulations of neurosurgery can induce, the increasing knowledge of the pharmacology of such substances as the mono-amine oxidase inhibitors, lysergic acid derivatives, the amphetamines, and tryptamine derivatives, all of which are capable of producing changes in personality and behaviour, make it abundantly clear that in personality we are dealing with something which is biochemical in its origin. Further, the personality breakdowns which occur in such conditions as schizophrenia are due, fundamentally, to biochemical abnormalities and disturbances of neuro-cellular metabolism. This is seen again in other pathological conditions where the primary fault may lie in genetically determined enzyme deficiencies, disjunction of the nuclear genetic material, vitamin deficiencies or toxic substances acting on the brain, but where the result is seen in personality disturbances.

The widening frontiers of neurophysiology have revealed the complex system organization which relates the cortical and autonomic arousal systems and the inter-relationships of cortical and sub-cortical units. Not that these functions can be considered in isolation; each system is dependent upon the integrity of the body as a whole and the correct inter-working of all its functions. The personality may be unequivocally related to this interworking. The integrity of the personality is to be considered dependent upon the proper functioning of the central nervous system at all levels. Viewing the available evidence N. Sanford writes, 'it is only to the activities of the brain, the conserver of experience and the integrator of processes, that we may ascribe the *organization* that is the most essential feature of the personality'.<sup>31</sup> H. J. Eysenck is even more explicit. His conception of the personality is explicitly linked to the overall functioning of the central nervous system and its processing of information.<sup>32</sup> Starting at neural levels he

<sup>31</sup> N. Sanford, 'Personality, Its Place in Psychology', in *Psychology: The Study of a Science* (ed. S. Koch). (New York, 1963), p. 554.

<sup>32</sup> H. J. Eysenck, 'The Biological Basis of Personality', in *Nature* (1963), 199, pp. 1031-34. See also his earlier work *The Structure of Human Personality* (London, 1953).

postulates a genetically determined cortical and autonomic response to stimuli out of which the structure of the total response of the organism develops, in terms of conditioned behaviour. The concept of conditioned responses is of vital importance to our understanding of the development of human behaviour and the structure of personality.<sup>33</sup> The practical importance will occupy us at a later stage of the discussion.

From the standpoint of scientific psychology it is possible to say that the coherent whole which we term personality is dependent upon the integrity and proper functioning of the central nervous system. This in itself cannot be considered an isolated entity for it is bound up with all parts of the organism's functioning – the body's systems do not work in isolation. Personality and bodily identity are thus inseparable. It is not a case of 'mind' and 'body', but rather of a unified, integrated, functioning person, the architectural unity of a single personality.<sup>34</sup> Once again we would assert that the concept of 'the soul' as something distinct within man can have no meaning. From the psychological point of view, as from the Christian, man is a unity.

### *Some Conclusions*

If our argument thus far has carried any weight it will be apparent that the concept of 'soul' as some immaterial and immortal part of man should be abandoned. The data provided by psychology on the one hand and religion on the other, although approaching the problem from widely differing standpoints, both point to the inescapable conclusion that man is an indivisible entity. For this reason it may well be that we should abandon the use of the word 'soul' altogether since it

<sup>33</sup> See further H. J. Eysenck, 'Conditioning and Personality', in *Brit. J. Psychol.* (1962), 53, pp. 299–305 and, 'Principles and Methods of Personality Description, Classification and Diagnosis', in *Brit. J. Psychol.* (1964), 55, pp. 284–294.

<sup>34</sup> A philosophical, as distinct from purely psychological, case has been convincingly made out for the inseparability of personality and bodily identity by B. A. O. Williams, 'Personal Identity and Individuation', in *Essays in Philosophical Psychology* (ed. D. A. Gustafson). (London, 1967), pp. 324–345.

will be impossible at this stage to rid it of the Platonic overtones it has carried for so long. Our study leads us to affirm that the concept of 'the soul' has no place in religion or psychology. Psychologists would be unanimous in discarding the word since it belongs to the realm of metaphysics and not to the realm of observable phenomena and scientific investigation. Equally, from the standpoint of the Christian religion, the idea of the 'soul' as a distinctive entity must be rejected as unbiblical and belonging to the speculative world of Greek philosophy. We would emphasise with O. Cullmann that 'the teaching of the great philosophers Socrates and Plato can in no way be brought into consonance with the New Testament'.<sup>35</sup>

In place of these fragmentary concepts we put forward the view of man as a living being, a vital organism, expressing this vitality of his existence through his personality. The personality thus becomes the expression of his being. It is the observed and observable phenomena of the total life displayed through inter-personal relationships.<sup>36</sup> Such a view of personality leads us to a further important concept, that personality can only be developed in terms of community, in terms of 'I-thou' relationships. From the religious point of view this will mean not only the adequate development of horizontal, inter-personal relationships, but, and primarily, the development of a correct vertical relationship between man and God. Much of our psychiatric practice is concerned with the breakdown of personality under conditions of stress. Such breakdowns interfere with the development of those normal relationships which belong to the proper outworking of personality and are essential for the maintenance of its integrity.

It is at this point that there is a close contact between religion and psychology. The biblical emphasis is consistently upon the wholeness of being which belongs to the fully integrated person. This wholeness is commonly expressed in the

<sup>35</sup> O. Cullmann, *op. cit.* p. 60.

<sup>36</sup> As a full definition this may be inadequate and we are forced to admit with W. L. Carrington, that 'there is no simple and yet adequate definition' of personality (*Psychology, Religion and Human Need* (London, 1957), p. 40.

word 'peace' which to the Hebrew mind meant far more than merely the absence of strife. In Greek thought, as in modern Western, peace was viewed as a state, but in biblical thought peace denotes 'well being' in every department of life. The essential feature of the Christian gospel is that the coming of Christ has brought peace to man in its fullest aspect. The reality of this peace denotes the present fact of the new creation and the restoration of the whole man; it is God's salvation. The biblical emphasis is upon the fact that man astray from God can never know true harmony of being – 'there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked' (Isa. lvii. 21). On the other hand God's healing is extended to the humble and contrite, restoring the fullness of their being (Isa. lvii. 15-19). This God-given wholeness of personality is evidenced in the 'fruit of the Spirit' (Gal. v. 22f.), traits which every competent psychologist would recognize as belonging to genuine maturity in the development of personality.

The Christian would maintain that such wholeness and maturity belong only to the one whose life has been invaded by the power of the risen Christ. The Lord Himself said that He had come 'that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly' (John x. 10). This is the fulness of life that comes from a personality correctly orientated at all levels. On this view it will be seen that 'redemption must be accomplished as a bodily event'.<sup>37</sup> Just as the intolerable burden of guilt affects every part of life, so the reality of liberation through Christ affects the totality of the personality. Psychiatric methods by themselves do not remove the deep seated sickness of man, what D. M. Baillie has called the 'moral-failure complex'.<sup>38</sup> The liberation of man's total being belongs to the realm of divine action.

The fact that man's redemption is a bodily event bears with

<sup>37</sup> W. Eichrodt, *op. cit.* p. 149. He goes on to emphasize that the conquest of death is to be envisaged 'not in the impossible form of the immortality of a spiritual portion of man, but only in a new mode of existence for him as a whole' (p. 156).

<sup>38</sup> D. M. Baillie, *God Was in Christ* (London, 1961), p. 164. His whole section on 'The Need for Divine Forgiveness' (pp. 160-166) is worthy of careful attention.

it the corollary that any future state must be peopled by real beings and not incorporeal spirits. From the psychological point of view the personality is dependent upon the full function of the total organism, it has no existence in its own right as an immaterial substance. The same holds true from the biblical point of view, but to this is added an additional fact. 'The hope of the *new corporeality* is grounded in the bodily resurrection of Jesus'<sup>39</sup>, a fact that the New Testament makes abundantly clear (Rom. viii. 11; I Cor. xv. 20-22, etc.). Christ has conquered death and has introduced into life the new dimension of incorruptibility (II Tim. i. 10). This is already at work in the being of him who is 'in Christ' and the process will be brought to fruition at the Day of His Coming. There is not space to develop this and in particular how the personality can exist after death. The clue may well lie in Paul's expression, 'them also which sleep through (*dia*=by the agency of) Jesus' (I Thess. iv. 14). By the agency of Christ the transfer of being from one plane of existence to another is accomplished. The exact nature of this intermediate state must be a matter of speculation and thus unverifiable. Without prolonging the discussion we would suggest that in some way it involves the preservation of personality within the corporate personality of the body of Christ.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, we must touch upon the subject of conditioning. If our psychological viewpoint is correct, the development of conditioned responses is of prime importance in the formation of the total personality.<sup>41</sup> In one sense this is seen in the development of conscience. This regulatory mechanism is dependent for its origin upon the initiation of conditioned responses to certain 'value-situations' and in particular those

<sup>39</sup> W. Künneth, *The Theology of the Resurrection* (ET, London, 1951), p. 287.

<sup>40</sup> W. Künneth, *op. cit.* pp. 270-276, rightly emphasizes the theological importance of the 'intermediate state.' See further the discussions of O. Cullmann, *op. cit.* pp. 48-57 and E. Stauffer, *New Testament Theology* (ET, London, 1955), pp. 210-213.

<sup>41</sup> The dangers of conditioning are well illustrated by H. J. Eysenck, 'The Technology of Consent', in *New Scientist* (1969, 42, 655, pp. 688-690. W. Sargant's *Battle for the Mind* (London, 1959), is probably still the best popular introduction to the subject.

developed in childhood. For this reason an uninformed conscience is an unreliable guide, in spite of the advice of Jiminy Cricket. The biblical writers were well aware of the value of conditioning, as one writer puts it, 'Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it' (Prov. xxii. 6). Total freedom of choice is an impossibility, there are too many factors impinging upon us. The anarchists dream would lead to the destruction of genuine personality. The Christian responsibility, both from religious and psychological standpoints, is to ensure the correct conditioning of their children which will lead to the full maturity of personality in relation to Christ.

Inevitably much has been omitted from our discussion and lack of space has necessitated dogmatism without proof. Nonetheless, if our approach has been valid it will produce a more realistic awareness of the truth and the hope that underlies our credal affirmation, 'I believe . . . in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.'