CONTENTS

Introduction: What's So Important about the Soul and Consciousness? 9

Chapter 1: A Toolbox for the Soul 21

Chapter 2: The Bible on the Soul and Consciousness 40

Chapter 3: The Nature and Reality of Consciousness 74

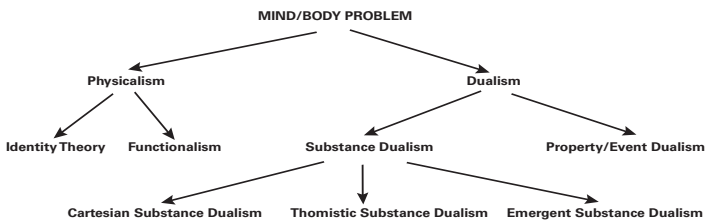
Chapter 4: The Reality of the Soul 117

Chapter 5: The Future of the Human Person 155

Glossary 194

Chapter One: A TOOLBOX FOR THE SOUL

Currently, there are two main positions taken on the *mind/body problem, as illustrated in the chart below.



The details of the chart are not important for now, and we will unpack them in later chapters. For present purposes, note that the two main views are *physicalism and dualism. The former claims that a human being is completely physical, whereas the latter maintains that a human being is, in some sense or other, both physical and mental. Dualism comes in two major varieties: *substance dualism and *property/event dualism (more on this later). Physicalism comes in different varieties as well, but we will not explore them here. Our present purpose is to examine three key concepts that are essential to understanding the mind/body debate, and

then briefly contrast dualism and physicalism. I will begin by clarifying the nature of *substances, properties, and *events.

SUBSTANCES

A *substance* is an entity like an acorn, an electron, a dog, or an angel. A human person is a substance. Substances have a number of important characteristics. First, substances are *particular, individual things*. A substance, like a particular acorn, cannot be in more than one place at the same time.

Second, a substance is a *continuant*—it can change by gaining new properties and losing old ones, yet it remains the same thing throughout the change. An acorn can go from green to red, yet the acorn itself is the same entity before, during, and after the change. A human person can be thinking about lunch and later thinking about something else, but it is the same person engaging in both mental activities. In general, substances can change in some of their properties and yet remain the same substance. That very acorn that was green is the same acorn that is now red.

Third, substances are *basic, fundamental existents*. They are not *in* other things or had by other things. My dog Fido is not in or had by something more basic than he. Rather, properties (and parts) are *in* substances that have them. For example, Fido has the property of brownness and the property of weighing twenty-five pounds. These properties are in the substance called Fido.

Fourth, substances are *unities of parts, properties, and capacities* (dispositions, tendencies, potentialities). Fido has a number of properties like the ones already listed. He also has a number of parts—four legs, some teeth, two eyes.

Further, he has some capacities or potentialities that are not always actual. For example, he has the capacity to bark even when he is silent. As a substance, Fido is a unity of all the properties, parts, and capacities had by him.

Finally, a substance has *causal powers.* It can do things in the world. A dog can bark, an acorn can hit the ground. Substances can cause things to happen.

PROPERTIES

In addition to substances, there are also entities that exist called *properties.* A property is an existent reality, examples of which are brownness, triangularity, hardness, wisdom, painfulness, being a neuron. As with substances, properties have a number of important features.

One feature is that a property is a *universal* that can be in more than one thing at the same time. Redness can be in a flag, a coat, and an apple all at once. The very same redness can be the color of several particular things all at the same time. Or, to take another example, roundness can simultaneously be in a watch, a wheel, and a pizza.

Another feature of properties is their immutability. When a leaf goes from green to red, the *leaf* changes by losing an old property and gaining a new one. But the property of redness does not change and become the property of greenness. Properties can come and go, but they do not change in their internal constitution or nature.

Moreover, properties *can, or perhaps must, be in or had by other things more basic than they*. Properties are in the things that have them. For example, redness is in the apple. The apple has the redness. One does not find redness

existing all by itself. In general, when we are talking about a property, it makes sense to ask the question, "What is it that has that property?" That question is not appropriate for substances, for they are among the things that have the properties. Substances have properties; properties are had by substances.

EVENTS

Finally, there are entities in the world called *events.* Events are temporal states that occur in the world. Examples of events are a flash of lightning, the dropping of a ball, the having of a thought, the firing of a neuron, the change of a leaf, and the continued possession of sweetness by an apple (this would be a series of events). Events are temporal states or changes of states of substances. An event is the coming or going of a property in a substance at a particular time, or the continued possession of a property by a substance throughout a time. "This shirt being green now" and "this acorn changing shape then" are both examples of events. The central identifying feature of an event is the property involved in that event. For example, the event of "this shirt being green now" crucially involves the property of being green. Any event that failed to involve that property could not be the event of "this shirt being green now."

PHYSICALISM VS. DUALISM

Physicalism

Keeping these critical distinctions in mind, we can now move on to consider in more detail the basic mind/body views listed in our chart. Let's look at physicalism first.

According to strict physicalism, a human being is merely a physical entity.[1] The only things that exist are physical substances, properties, and events. When it comes to humans, the physical substance is the material body, especially the parts called the brain and central nervous system. The physical substance called the brain has physical properties, such as a certain weight, volume, size, electrical activity, chemical composition, and so forth.

There are also physical events that occur in the brain. For example, the brain contains a number of elongated cells that carry various impulses. These cells are called neurons. Various neurons make contact with other neurons through connections or points of contact called synapses. C-fibers are certain types of neurons that innervate the skin (supply the skin with nerves) and carry electrical impulses associated with pain. So when someone has an occasion of pain or an occurrence of a thought, physicalists hold that these are merely particular physical events—events where certain C-fibers are firing or certain electrical and chemical events are happening in the brain and central nervous system.

Thus, physicalists believe that we are merely a physical substance (a brain and central nervous system, a body) that has physical properties and in which occur physical events. My conscious mental life of thoughts, emotions, and pains is nothing but a stream of physical events in my brain and nervous system. The neurophysiologist can, in principle, describe these events solely in terms of C-fibers, neurons, and the chemical and physical properties of the brain. For the physicalist, I am merely a functioning brain and central nervous system enclosed in a physical body. I am a material

substance characterized completely by physical properties and in which occur merely physical events, a creature made of matter—nothing more, nothing less.

What is matter? we might ask. There is no clear definition of matter, but examples of it are not hard to come by. Material objects are things like computers, carbon atoms, brains, and billiard balls. Material properties are things like negative charge, mass, and extension. Material events are items like the occurrence of a flash of lightning, the moving of an electron, the firing of a neuron in the brain.

To say more about material (or physical) properties, they are (1) publicly accessible in the sense that no one person is better suited to have private access to a material property than anyone else; any way you have available to you to know about the presence or nature of a material property (say, the weight of a chair), I have available to me as well; (2) such that an object must be either spatially located or extended to have a material property; (3) such that when a strictly material object has physical properties, that object does not engage in genuinely teleological behavior—that is, it does not undergo change for the sake of some end, purpose, goal, or final cause. Physical properties are the properties that one finds listed in chemistry or physics books. They are properties such as hardness; occupying and moving through space; having a certain shape; possessing certain chemical, electrical, magnetic, and gravitational properties; having density and mass; and being breakable, malleable, and elastic. A physical event would be the possession, coming, or going of one or more of these properties by a physical substance (or among physical substances).

Another very crucial observation to make about material substances, properties, and events is this: *No material thing presupposes or requires reference to consciousness for it to exist or be characterized.* You will search in vain through a physics or chemistry textbook to find consciousness included in any description of matter. A completely physical description of the world would be in the third person and would not include any terms that make reference to or characterize the existence and nature of consciousness. Assume that matter is actually like what our chemistry and physics books tell us it is. Now imagine that there is no God and picture a universe in which no conscious, living beings had emerged. In such an imaginary world, there would be no consciousness anywhere in the universe—no selves, sensations, beliefs, or thoughts. However, in this imaginary world, matter would still exist and be what scientists tell us it is. Carbon atoms would still be carbon atoms, electrons would still have negative charge. An electron is still an electron regardless of whether or not conscious minds exist in the world. In such a world, there could be mindless zombies with brains and nervous systems but without consciousness. This is what we mean when we say that the existence and nature of matter are independent of the existence of consciousness.

Dualism

Dualists disagree with physicalists. According to them, genuinely mental entities are real. As with matter, it is hard to give a *definition* of mental entities to which all philosophers and scientists would agree. The most popular definition of a mental property or event is one in which the subject who is

having it has privileged access, that is, a way of knowing it (through introspectively experiencing it in the first person) that is not available to anyone else (someone else cannot know directly by introspection what my mental states are). Physical properties like being square or hard and physical events like a flash of lightning are such that no one person has a special way of knowing something about it. Whatever ways you have for knowing something about a flash of lightning (measuring it, taking a picture of it) are available to me and vice versa.

While there is some dispute about a definition of the mental, *examples* of mental entities are easy to supply. First, there are various kinds of *sensations:* experiences of colors, sounds, smells, tastes, textures, pains, and itches. Sensations are individual things that occur at particular times. I can have a sensation of red after looking in a certain direction or by closing my eyes and daydreaming. An experience of pain will arise at a certain time, say, after I am stuck with a pin.

Further, sensations are natural kinds of things that have, as their very essence, the felt quality or sensory property that makes them what they are. Part of the very essence of a pain is the felt quality it has, which is very different from an itch or a taste; part of the very essence of a red sensation is the presentation of a particular shade of color to my consciousness, which is quite different from a smell. Sensations are not identical to things outside a person's body—for instance, a feeling of pain is not the same thing as being stuck with a pin and shouting, "Ouch!" Sensations are essentially characterized by a certain conscious feel, and thus, they presuppose consciousness for their existence and description. If there

were no conscious beings, there would be no sensations.

A second type of mental entity is called a **propositional attitude:* having a certain mental attitude involving a *proposition that is part of a "that-clause." For example, one can hope, desire, fear, dread, wish, think, or believe that *P*, where *P* may be the proposition, "The Royals are a great baseball team." A proposition is a declarative sentence that is either true or false. Propositional attitudes include at least two components. First, there is the attitude itself. Hopes, fears, dreads, wishes, thoughts, etc., are all different attitudes, different states of consciousness, and they are all different from each other based on their conscious feel. A hope is a different form of consciousness from an episode of fear. A hope that it will rain is different from a fear that it will rain. What's the difference? A hope has a very different conscious feel from a fear.

Second, they all have a content or a meaning embedded in a proposition—namely, the propositional content of my consciousness while I am having the attitude. My hope that *P* (for example, that I am having eggs for breakfast) differs from my hope that *Q* (say, that it won't rain today) because *P* and *Q* are different propositions or meanings in my consciousness, even though the attitude (hoping) is the same in each case. My hope that it will rain is different from my hope that taxes will be cut. The contents of these two hopes have quite different meanings. If there were no conscious selves, there would be no propositional attitudes.

A third type of mental entity is *acts of free will or purposings.* What is a purposing? If, unknown to me, my arm is tied down and I still try to raise it, then the purposing is the

"trying to bring about" the event of raising my arm. Intentional actions are exercises of active power by conscious selves wherein and whereby they do various things. They are free acts of will performed by conscious selves.

To summarize, dualists argue that sensations, propositional attitudes, and purposings are all examples of mental entities.

In addition to these differences between physicalists and dualists, there is also an intramural debate between *mere *property dualists* and **substance dualists.*

Mere property dualists believe there are some physical substances that have only physical properties: For example, a billiard ball being hard and round. They also maintain that there are no mental substances. On the other hand, they contend there is one material substance that has both physical *and* mental properties—the brain. When I experience a pain, there is a certain physical property possessed by the brain (a C-fiber stimulation with chemical and electrical properties) and there is a certain mental property possessed by the brain (the pain itself with its felt quality). The C-fiber event may cause the pain event, but they are two events, not one. The brain is the possessor of all mental properties and events. I am not a mental self that *has* my thoughts and experiences. Rather, I am a brain and a series or bundle of successive experiences themselves. Moreover, property dualists claim that, just as wetness is a real property that *supervenes or emerges upon a group of water molecules, so mental properties supervene/emerge upon brain states.

In contrast with property dualism, substance dualism holds that the brain is a physical thing that has physical prop-

erties, and the mind or soul is a mental substance that has mental properties. When I am in pain, the brain has certain physical properties (electrical, chemical) and contains certain physical states (e.g., C-fiber firing events), and the soul or self has certain mental properties (the conscious awareness of pain) and contains certain mental events (a pain state, an episode of thinking). The soul is the possessor of its experiences. It stands behind, over, and above them and remains the same throughout my life. The soul and the brain can interact with each other, but they are different entities with different properties. While in the body, the soul's functioning may depend on the proper working of the brain or other organs (e.g., the eyes). Since the soul is not to be identified with any part of the brain or with any particular mental experience, the soul may be able to survive the destruction of the body. Substance dualists accept the existence of both mental properties and substances. So substance dualists are also property dualists (they believe consciousness is a mental property), but substance dualists are not *mere* property dualists (those who deny a spiritual soul or self).

THE NATURE OF IDENTITY

It is time to turn to a topic that will explain our strategy for defending property and substance dualism: *the nature of identity*. The eighteenth-century philosopher/theologian Joseph Butler once remarked, allegedly, that everything is itself and not something else. This simple truth has profound implications. Suppose you want to know whether J. P. Moreland is Eileen Spiek's youngest son. If J. P. Moreland is identical to Eileen Spiek's youngest son, then in reality, we are

talking about one single thing: J. P. Moreland, who *is* Eileen Spiek's youngest son. And everything true of J. P. Moreland will be true of Eileen Spiek's youngest son, and vice versa. However, if even one small thing is true of J. P. Moreland and *not* true of Eileen Spiek's youngest son, then these are two entirely different people. Furthermore, J. P. Moreland is identical to himself and not different from himself. So if J. P. Moreland is *not* identical to Eileen Spiek's youngest son, then in reality we must be talking about two things, not one.

This illustration suggests a truth about the nature of identity known as *Leibniz's Law of the Indiscernibility of Identicals* (from the German philosopher G. W. Leibniz who formulated it): For any entities x and y, if x and y are identical (they are really the same thing, there is only one thing you are talking about, not two), then any truth that applies to x will apply to y as well. This suggests a test for identity: If you could find one thing true of x not true of y, or vice versa, then x cannot be identical to (be the same thing as) y. Further, if you could find one thing that could *possibly* be true of x and not of y (or vice versa), even if it isn't actually true, then x cannot be identical to y.

For example, if J. P. Moreland is five feet and eight inches tall, but Eileen Spiek's youngest son is six feet tall, then they are not the same thing. Further, if J. P. Moreland is five feet eight and Eileen Spiek's youngest son is five feet eight, but it would be possible for J. P. to be five feet nine while Eileen's youngest son were five feet ten, then they are not the same thing either.

What does this have to do with the mind/body problem? Simply this: Physicalists are committed to the claim that

alleged mental entities—substances, properties, events/states—are really identical to physical entities, such as brain states, properties of the brain, overt bodily behavior, and dispositions to behave (for example, pain is just the tendency to shout "Ouch!" when stuck by a pin, instead of pain being a certain mental feel of hurtfulness). If physicalism is true, then everything true of the brain (and its properties, states, and dispositions) is true of the mind (and its properties, states, and dispositions) and vice versa.[2] If we can find one thing true, or even possibly true, of the mind and not of the brain, or vice versa, then dualism is established. Then the mind or its properties and states is not the brain or its properties and states.

In some of the chapters to follow, I will present a number of arguments that imply that something is true of the mind or its states and not the brain or its states, or vice versa, and thus the former cannot be identical to the latter. But if they are not identical, physicalism is false and, taking dualism to be the only other option, dualism would be true.

WHY THE FINDINGS OF NEUROSCIENCE ARE LARGELY IRRELEVANT TO THE DEBATE

Keep in mind that the relation of identity is different from any other relation—for example, the relation of causation or constant connection. It may be that brain events cause mental events or vice versa: Having certain electrical activity in the brain may cause me to experience a pain; exercising an intention to raise my arm may cause bodily events. It may be that for every mental activity, a neurophysiologist can find a physical activity in the brain with which it is corre-

lated. But just because A causes B (or vice versa), or just because A and B are constantly correlated with each other, that does not mean that A is *identical to* B. Sunlight may cause me to sneeze, but it's clear that the sunlight is not the same thing as my sneezing. Something is trilateral (three sided) if and only if it is triangular (three angled). But trilaterality (the property of having three sides) is not identical to triangularity (the property of having three angles), even though they are constantly conjoined.

Therefore, and this is critical, strict physicalism cannot be established by showing that mental states and brain states are interdependent on, causally related, or constantly conjoined with each other in an embodied person. *Physicalism needs identity to make its case, and if something is true, or possibly true of a mental substance, property, or event that is not true or possibly true of a physical substance, property, or event, then strict physicalism is false.*

For example, it is sometimes claimed that neuroscience has demonstrated that items such as memories are really just physical goings-on in certain regions of the brain. Now, what is the basis for such claims? The neuroscientist will attach certain probes, for example, an EEG, to various regions of the scalp and ask the subject to try not to think of much in order to establish a baseline reading of the electrical activity in various regions of the subject's brain. Then the scientist will present a series of numbers to the patient and, occasionally, interrupt the series and ask him to recall the number that was two numbers removed from the currently presented number. While the subject is engaging in this act of memory, the neuroscientist records increased electrical activity in certain re-

gions of the brain and concludes that memories just are those activities. However, it should be clear that all that has been established is a correlation, not an identity, between the mental act of remembering and the activated network of brain firing. In general, neuroscience is wonderful for providing information about the neurological aspects of mental functioning and the self's actions, but it is of no help whatsoever in telling us what mental states and the self are. Correlation, dependence, and causal relations are not identity.

We should have known this all along, and it becomes evident when we observe that certain leading neuroscientists—Nobel Prize winner John Eccles, U.C.L.A. neuroscientist Jeffrey Schwartz, and Mario Beaureguard—are all dualists and they know the neuroscience.[3] Their dualism, and the central intellectual issues involved in the debate, are quite independent of neuroscientific data. As we shall see in later chapters, those issues are largely theological and philosophical, not scientific.

The irrelevance of neuroscience also becomes evident when we consider the recent bestseller *Proof of Heaven* by Eben Alexander.[4] Regardless of one's view of the credibility of near-death experiences (NDEs) in general, or of Alexander's in particular, one thing is clear: before whatever it was that happened to him, Alexander believed the standard neuroscientific view that specific regions of the brain generate and possess specific states of consciousness. But after his NDE, Alexander came to believe that it is the soul that possesses consciousness, not the brain, and the various mental states of the soul are in two-way causal interaction with specific regions of the brain. Here's the point: his change in view was

a change in metaphysics that did not require him to reject or alter a single neuroscientific fact in which he believed. Dualism and physicalism are empirically equivalent views consistent with all and only the same scientific data. Thus, the authority of empirical data in science cannot be claimed on either side.

CHAPTER IN REVIEW

In this section I introduced a number of concepts that are crucial for understanding the mind/body question, such as substances, properties, and events. You will want to familiarize yourself with these, and other significant terms discussed in the chapter (see Key Vocabulary below). We also discussed a number of important differences between physicalism and dualism, and contrasted physical properties with mental properties. Additional points of importance include the following:

- **According to Leibniz's Law of the Indiscernibility of Identicals: For any entities x and y, if x and y are identical, then any truth that applies to x will apply to y as well.**
- We can use Leibniz's Law to show that something is true of the mind or its states and not the brain or its states, demonstrating that physicalism is false and dualism, provided it is the only other option, is true.

- **The key issues are theological and philosophical and not neuroscientific.**
- Neuroscience shows *correlation* between mind and

brain, not that mind and brain are identical.

- Near-death experiences (NDEs) offer strong evidence that the soul possesses consciousness, not the brain, and the various mental states of the soul are in two-way causal interaction with specific regions of the brain.
- Dualism and physicalism are empirically equivalent views consistent with all and only the same scientific data. Thus, the authority of empirical data in science cannot be claimed on either side.

KEY VOCABULARY

Event: A temporal state that occurs in the world (e.g., water freezing or a dog barking).

Knowledge: To represent reality in thought or experience the way it really is on the basis of adequate grounds.

Mind-body problem: The problem of understanding the relationship between the apparently immaterial mind and the physical body and brain.

Physicalism (or strict physicalism): The view that the only things that exist are physical substances, properties, and events. In relation to humans, the physical substance is the material body, especially the brain and central nervous system.

Property: An existent reality that is universal, immutable, and can (or perhaps must) be *in* or *had* by other things more basic, such as a substance. Thus, a cow (a substance) can have the property of being brown. The brownness (property) is had by the cow (the substance).

Property dualism: A human being is one material substance

that has both physical *and* mental properties, with the mental properties arising from the brain.

Proposition: A declarative sentence that is either true or false. Examples of propositions include: "The earth orbits the sun," "Greg is six feet tall," and "I lived in Canada when I was seven."

Propositional attitude: An attitude (such as hoping, fearing, wishing, regretting) toward a certain proposition. For example, "I hope that the test will be cancelled," or "I fear that the economy is slowing down," or "I regret that I didn't have a second piece of cake."

Substance: a particular, individual, continuant and basic, fundamental existent thing that is a unity of parts, properties, and capacities, and has causal powers.

Substance dualism: A human person has both a brain that is a physical thing with physical properties and a mind or soul that is a mental substance and has mental properties.

Supervenience: A relationship of dependence between properties such that one level of the properties correlates to conditions at a different level. For example, when water molecules come together, the property of wetness supervenes upon them. In mind/body discussions, some philosophers (such as certain property dualists) hold that mental events supervene upon (or emerge from) brain events.

NOTES

1. Weak physicalism allows for supervenient "mental" properties as long as they are nomologically or metaphysically necessitated by their subvenient bases. There are two main ways to cash out this (non-reductive physicalist) view. First, physicalist functionalism according to which mental properties are functional properties with only physical realizers. This view cannot handle adequately the intrinsic nature of intentionality or phenomenal consciousness. Second, there is property dualism. The problem with this second alternative is that, once we grant genuine mental properties, we have strong intuitions that they are contingently related to their subvenient bases and this violates the necessitation requirement.
2. Different physicalists identify the person with different material objects, e.g., the brain, a sub-region of the brain, the entire living organism, an atomic simple. I will continue to make reference to the brain because that is the view most generally found in popular culture. For more on this see Eric Olson, *What Are We?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
3. See John C. Eccles and Karl Popper, *The Self and Its Brain* (London: Routledge, reprint edition 1984); Jeffrey Schwartz, *The Mind and the Brain* (New York: ReganBooks, 2002); Mario Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary, *The Spiritual Brain* (New York: HarperOne, 2008).
4. Eben Alexander, *Proof of Heaven* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012).