

Naturalism and the Crisis of the Soul
Dr. J. P. Moreland

Let me give you a piece of advice before I make my remarks. Due to the writings of Dallas Willard and others, we are now learning more and more about spiritual disciplines.¹ Spiritual disciplines are about bringing your body into the practice of discipleship. Just as you train for tennis or playing the piano, you have to practice to get good at them. In the same way, training in life requires using your body to practice certain things. For example, you need to begin using your body in worship. You need to learn to raise your hands in worship and to hold your hands out. It will change your life. If you think I am wrong, do a study of the role of the body in worship in the Old and New Testament, and you will discover that there are all kinds of phrases about lifting up holy hands.

Remember, learning to do anything important is always awkward and insincere in the early stages of learning it. It is wooden. Learning to play golf is awkward and formal in the early stages. Learning to study the Bible is awkward and formal. Learning to open your body to God as you worship is also going to feel critical, awkward; you will feel like everyone is looking at you. However, you will not be as successful in making contact with God as you could if you do not learn to bring your body into your worship. I should not be looking into an audience of men and women going into the ministry, who will have an opportunity to train other people in how to worship, and see people who are worshipping like this. You would not do that at a football game. So let us practice it. There is nothing to be ashamed of in this. Remember, I am an old guy, and you can brush off everything I have to say. It is your business, but it will change your life. The single

most important thing in my worship of God has been learning to use my body as a part of worship.

Let us turn now to our main topic of the day. Yesterday, I talked about the importance of worldview. It is not enough for you just to know the Scriptures and to teach the Scriptures in your churches unless you are teaching and equipping your people to think worldviewishly about what is going on in the world and in the culture. I said that there are three worldviews fighting for the hearts and minds of the people: Christianity, naturalism, and postmodernism.² Learning how to see the world and how to think worldviewishly is very important.

Let me illustrate: When Peter Jennings was dying, Elizabeth Vargas took over for him and anchored the *ABC Evening News*. If you have watched *ABC News*, you will notice that every week they do a “Person of the Week.” One Friday night, Elizabeth Vargas did the “Person of the Week” where she focused on a gentleman in Atlanta who has a theater for handicapped people. This person only allows handicapped persons to audition for plays. The plays are put on only by people who have various handicaps. It has been a very big success, and they were celebrating this man’s activities. They asked him, “Why do you think this has been so successful?” and he said, “Because for a short period of time, these handicapped people feel like they’re part of something bigger than they are.”

Now, most people, even most believers, who saw the feature probably thought that the segment was nice and turned in for the night. As a Christian, I was outraged by it. I was thinking that we ought to be exterminating these people. We should sterilize them, get them out of the general public, put them in statehouses, and if possible, exterminate

them in order to protect the gene pool. Now, I do not actually believe that, but for me to say this to you and to have you look at me the way you are looking at me tells me that you still do not know how to see the world worldviewishly.

Think about what a postmodernist should say about the segment. A postmodernist says there is no objective right and wrong, everything is relative. So the difference between caring for those handicapped people and exterminating them is like the difference between preferring Burger King® or McDonald's®. You are not going to have a whole show celebrating the person who is a Burger King® lover because in a relativistic culture, nothing rises to the level of being important. If everything is relative, then everything is trivialized. Why celebrate a trivial activity?

On the other hand, if you're a naturalist, we have a duty to purify our gene pool. If you think I am making this up, from the years 1905 to 1930, there was a movement in the United States called the eugenics movement. The eugenics movement was a movement to sterilize "morally degraded people" (prostitutes, drunkards, people who had mental problems), to put them in statehouses and sterilize them so that they could not reproduce after their kind. Did you know that thirty states adopted sterilization laws for people like the folks in those plays? Did you know that there was one woman, I believe it was in Ohio, who was dragged into the hospital and had forced sterilization on her ovaries because she was immoral, was a drunk, and had committed adultery? The state that pushed eugenics more than any state was California, because California was the most secular state. In fact, Hitler and the Nazis actually used minutes from the state legislatures' meetings in California to promote the sterilization of Jews. Now, what these people were doing was merely applying a Darwinian naturalist view of the world to

people who were degenerates. The state that did the best job of standing against the eugenics movement was Louisiana because there was a robust Christian commitment in that state that said people are made in the image of God irrespective of whether they are handicapped or not. What this person in Atlanta was doing with these handicapped individuals was the right thing to do because they were made in the image of God.

The point I am making is the media today can not have it both ways. They can not bash Christianity and push postmodern relativism on the one hand and naturalistic Darwinism as the explanation for everything on the other hand, *and* celebrate someone who is helping the handicapped in Atlanta. They are borrowing intellectual capital from a Christian worldview. What that person is doing makes sense on a Christian worldview, but not on a postmodern or naturalistic one. We need more Christians who will be able to see that kind of thing and write letters to the editor and make a difference. You can study the Bible until you are blue in the face, and you will not have eyes to see that kind of thing if you do not have (combined with biblical teaching) philosophical instruction on how to think worldviewishly.

I hope the Vargas story illustrates the importance of worldview, and how much we Christians, who often have not had adequate training in how to think worldviewishly, just let things pass by when we should be challenging them from a biblical perspective. But we do not have eyes to see the issues, because we have pooh-poohed the philosophical training for too long in our community. It is time for the evangelical community to do what John Wesley said when he was told that there are a handful of things a minister must know in order to be a servant of Jesus Christ³: How to share his

faith, how to study the Bible very carefully, how to get his prayers answered, and fourth and finally, philosophy.

Nowhere is worldview more important than the question of the soul, because naturalists say there is no soul. All you are is your brain and central nervous system. This view has filtered into the culture. For example, if someone is smart, we will say he has brains. Whereas on a Christian worldview, your brain has very little to do with your thinking. It comes as a shock to some people to find out that God does not have a brain and does not need one. He can think without a brain, and you could too. Your brain is a nice piece of electrolyzed meat; that is about all it is.⁴ It has got some potassium in it and some C-fibers and some synapses, but it is a chunk of meat. The point is, though, that the soul and mind are no longer believed to exist by naturalists because they say that you are your brain and central nervous system. When your brain is dead, you are gone.

Postmodernists say that you do not have a soul or a self. As a matter of fact, for the postmodernist, you are nothing more than a bundle of your social roles. So I have a father-self and a professor-self and I have a Southern-California-cowabunga-thank-you-very-much-dude-self. I have a Kansas City Chiefs self. For the postmodernist, there is no self. You just are every social role you have.

The impact of this is as follows: *Time* magazine did a story not long ago on abortion, and it said that if you look at a zygote several weeks after it has been fertilized, all there is, is a cluster of cells hanging together and, for those who choose to believe it, a soul.⁵ That is to say, we have hard evidence that there is a cluster of cells. We know that scientifically. Is there a soul? It's kind of like the tooth fairy. For those who believe in a soul, it is like flipping a coin. Heads, there is a soul; tails, there is not. The choice is

arbitrary. There is no fact of the matter. So belief in the soul is a private choice for the faithful. There is no evidence one way or another. That there is no soul, that there is just a brain, that the soul is this nice, private kind of belief certain people have, is often used to justify a functionalist view of a human person.⁶ A human person is a brain that is functioning properly. So since a fetus does not have a brain that is functioning as an adult yet and since defective newborns or elderly patients that have developed Alzheimer's and other forms of degeneracy do not have brains that are functioning properly, they are human non-persons. The debate today in abortion is not whether the fetus is a human. That is granted. The debate is whether it is a person. The idea is that a fetus is a human non-person because, while it is clearly a human brain and body, since it is not yet functioning in the sense that it is not yet capable of generating language and thought and so on, it is not yet a person. And abortion is not the taking of the life of a being with value, namely a person.

It is true that being a human is not the same thing as being a person. This should be obvious to us. For example, God is a person but not a human. Angels are persons but not humans. If God had wanted to, He could have created Martians! If He had done so, He would have created persons, but they would not have been humans. So we will agree that being a human is not the same thing as being a person.

Does it follow that there could be human non-persons? No. Being a person is to being human as being a color is to being red. Something can be colored without being red or blue, but something could not be red without being colored. Someone can be a person without being a human (an angel), but someone can not be a human without being a person. Being red is one way of being a color and being a human is one way of being a

person. When we think of it this way, we can make sense out of how there could be colored things that are not red things or persons without being humans (God, angels, Martians). But it does not make any sense to say there could be a human non-person any more than it would make sense to say there could be a red object that was not colored.

Most naturalists will have none of this, because for most naturalists you are a brain that functions; if your brain is not functioning, it turns out that you are not a person. So it is important for Christians not only that we have souls but that we know we have souls.

What I want to talk about in the time I have left is substance dualism. Substance dualism is the idea that consciousness and the soul are different from the body and are not physical. Many New Testament scholars and some theologians today think that dualism is a Greek idea and that it is not biblical. Unfortunately, that is confused. I think many New Testament scholars think that dualism is the view that the soul matters but the body does not make any difference or is evil or is irrelevant. Plato did hold that view, but you can be a dualist and still value the body. Let me be very clear here. I think the soul is different from the body. I think that when you die you can continue to exist because you are a soul. I think that is an unnatural state, as Paul tells us, and that the best state is for the soul to be reunited with the body. The soul was meant to be embodied. In my view, the body is absolutely critical and important. We were made to inhabit a body. All of that is still consistent with the idea that the soul is still real and not the same thing as the body.

This is clearly a biblical idea.⁷ My evidence for it, among other things, is that there is an intermediate state which was clearly understood as disembodied and non-

physical in New Testament times.⁸ Between death and the resurrection of the body, people continue to exist as disembodied souls.

So what we want to do is ask the question, “How would you go about making a case for the nonphysical nature of consciousness and the soul?” Let me begin with consciousness. Water can exist in three states: solid, liquid, and gas. Consciousness can exist in five states: sensations, thoughts, beliefs, desires, and volitions or acts of free choice.⁹ Just as sensations, thoughts, beliefs, desires, and choosings are different, they’re all states of consciousness in the same way as solids, liquids, and gases are different states of water. A sensation would be, for example, an awareness of yellow. A feeling of anger or a feeling of pain would be a sensation. By contrast a thought is something like my thought that snow is white or my thought that lunch is in an hour and a half. A belief is an entire content I take to be true. Thoughts are not the same thing as beliefs. Thoughts can only exist while you are having them, but I have many beliefs, e.g., about the multiplication table that I am not currently entertaining. I have many thoughts that I do not take to be true, but a belief is something you have to take to be true to some degree. So there are sensations, thoughts, and beliefs. In addition there are desires, like a desire for ice cream. A desire is a felt inclination toward something or away from something. By the way, there is a huge practical implication of this for discipleship. A desire is not the same thing as a feeling. Feelings are sensations; desires are different. You can have a desire for God while you do not feel much. Do not confuse desires with feelings.

Finally, there are acts of free choice. Philosophers have a fancy word for an act of free choice; they are called an “endeavoring” or a “trying to bring it about” that something happens. Let me give an illustration. Suppose in the middle of the night, a

scientist comes into my bedroom and gives me injections in my arms so that my arms are paralyzed, and I can not move. I wake up in the morning; I am still half asleep; I stumble over to the wall, and I stand there trying to turn on the light switch. But my body does not move. I have still performed a mental action, even though my body has not moved, and that mental action is the “trying to bring it about” that my arm raises and turns on the light. I have endeavored to raise my arm and turn on the light even though my body is unresponsive. That “endeavoring” is not a sensation, is not a thought, is not a belief, is not a desire. It is an exercise of choice. These are five different states that constitute consciousness.

But none of these is physical. They are all mental. For example, thoughts can not be a physical state of the brain. Why? Because there are things true of my thoughts that are not true of a physical state of my brain. It does not make any sense to ask how many inches long is my thought that lunch is in an hour and a half. How much does it weigh? Is that thought closer to my left ear or closer to my right ear? What geometrical shape does that thought have? Is it sort of weird shaped or is it a square or a rectangle? That is all nonsense. However, while I am thinking, the state that is going on in my brain at that time does have a shape. It is located in, say, my left or my right hemisphere, so it will be closer to my left or right ear. It will have a certain mass and chemical composition. And there is something true of a thought that can not be true of a brain state. Thoughts can be true or false. Brain states are neither true nor false, they just exist. So there are things true of my thoughts that can not be true of my brain state, so thoughts can not be the same thing as my brain state.

I will give you another quick illustration of this. Suppose that I imagine a pink elephant in my mind. At that moment, there is an awareness of pink that is in my mind. There is no pink elephant outside, but there is a sensation of pink. Like when you dream, you may have a vivid sensation of red or this, that, and the other. However, there is no awareness of pink that constitutes a physical state in my brain. You could look all throughout my brain with an electron microscope and you would never find an awareness of pink in my brain. So there are things true of my conscious life that are not true of my brain, so they can not be the same thing.

One time we were in the living room having a time of prayer, when my daughters were in elementary school--my daughter Allison who was in about the third or fourth grade at the time said, "Daddy, how do we know that when mommy looks at red-colored things, she doesn't see them as blue and just uses the word 'red'?" She also said, "Dad, if I could just see God, it would be easier to believe in Him, but since I can't see Him, it's just really hard to believe He's really there." I said, "Honey, I understand, but the problem is not just that you have never seen God, you have never seen your mother." She was sitting right next to me. My daughter said, "What do you mean, daddy?" I said, "Well, suppose that we were able, without hurting mom, to take her apart cell by cell. So we start at the top and take her skin apart and all of her brain cells and her organs and her bones, all the way down to her feet. You would never be able to say, "Aha! That is what mom believes about pro football. She doesn't like it, dad." Or "My Gosh! Mom is thinking about getting out of here!" Or "There are mom's emotions." And I said, "By the way, you would never reach a point where you would find mommy, her 'I'. 'You know what, dad, you know that cell we just took out, that brain cell right there, all the rest of

them that we already took out didn't have mom in them, but mom's in there!' ” I said, “See you can't see mommy's consciousness; and you can't see her 'I'. You can only see her brain and body because persons are invisible. The only reason you can see anything of mommy is because she's small enough to have a body. God is too big. So let's pray.”

You have to understand that consciousness and the self are invisible. I could put a slide of my brain up here, but a slide of my thoughts and feelings and beliefs would be disgustingly hard to come by. Consciousness is not the same thing as something that is physical. Not only is consciousness non-physical, but the thing that has consciousness is not the brain, it is the 'I' or the soul. So consciousness is different from a state of the brain, and the bearer of consciousness, or the possessor of consciousness, is not the brain. It is the self or the I or the soul.

So what is it that has consciousness?--my ego or my self or my soul, not my brain. How do we know that? Well, there are many, many arguments for this, for the fact that the soul is different from the brain.¹⁰ One of them is free will. If you were just a brain or body, everything you do would be totally determined by the laws of physics and chemistry and your environmental inputs. By the way, this is often what is assumed in television analyses of why people commit heinous crimes. It is a legitimate thing to say that your environment influences you. It is another thing entirely to say that it completely determines your behavior. But there would be no alternative if I am my brain because material objects are totally determined by the laws of nature and their inputs. So if I am my brain and my body, then there is no free will, no responsibility. I have no choice about anything. But we do have free choice. So we can not be the same thing as our brain or our body; that is one argument.

Here is a second argument for why the soul is different from the brain.¹¹ Consider this podium. Suppose I were to take the parts of the podium away one at a time and replace them with a new part. Suppose I took this piece, threw it on the floor and put in its place frozen, green Jell-O. And I kept doing this until all of the parts of the podium were on the floor, and I had before you a podium that was completely composed of frozen, green Jell-O. Would it be the same podium as the one we started with? The answer is pretty much no. For one thing, I can not eat this podium, but I could eat the new one. So there is something true of the new podium that is not true of this one. Here is what that proves. Listen carefully to me. Physical objects can not lose parts and gain new parts and still be literally the same physical object. Well, I am constantly losing parts and gaining new ones. If I were my brain and my body, I would not be the same person as I was at the beginning of this lecture or ten years ago. But I am literally the same person from one moment to the next. So, I can not be my brain and my body. What if you say you are not the same person? If I am not the same person from one moment to the next, then I should never be punished for anything that happened in the past because I did not do it – a look-alike did. Nor should I fear going to the dentist next week because it will not be I who goes to the dentist but a look-alike. Fear of the future and punishment for the past presuppose that we are the same person that exists through time. If I were my body, I would not be the same person.¹²

Here is a final argument. Suppose that water is H₂O. Would it be possible to have water here that wasn't H₂O, if water is H₂O? If we had something here that was clear but was not H₂O, it would be fool's water. It would look like water, but it would not really be water, would it? If water is essentially H₂O, then it would be impossible to have water

without H₂O because they are just the same thing. Now, if I am my brain, disembodied existence is not only not real, it is completely impossible. How could a body exist disembodied? How could a brain exist disembodied? But everybody, I think, would agree that disembodied existence, even if it is not real (I believe it is) is at least metaphysically possible. I had a student in a class whose grandfather died on the operating table. He left his body and was observing from up on top of the ceiling of the operating room two doctors, an old doctor and a young physician, trying to bring him back. I kid you not, the young physician told the old doctor after a few minutes, “This is an old man who has had a good life. There’s nothing we can do. We need to let him go.” The old doctor said, “I’m not giving up on him.” So they kept working. He is watching this. So eventually, he comes back into his body, and he wakes up, and he starts cussing out the young doctor because the young doctor gave up on him.

Now, did that story happen? I think it did. But let me ask you a different question. Is it at least metaphysically possible that it could have happened? I think that clearly it could have happened. If that is the case, I can not be my brain because I will tell you one thing I know for sure about the brain – brains can not be dis-brained. Brains are essentially bodily objects. You can not have a brain that is disembodied. But I can, at least possibly, be disembodied. Therefore I am not my brain.

In sum, I have suggested to you that the defense of the soul is important, first of all, because it is true. It is biblical. Secondly, it is important for life after death. Third, it is important for abortion and other things. Because as a naturalist, you believe that a human is a brain that is functioning such that if a human has a brain that does not work or is not functioning yet, it is not a person. Contrary to that, I am claiming, while there can be

persons that are not humans, there can not be humans that are not persons because being human is to being persons as being red is to being a color. What this opens to us as Christians, then, is a defense of the spirituality of consciousness and the ego, that these are immaterial. They are not physical. I began by trying to show that there are five states of consciousness that are not states of the brain; namely sensation, thoughts, beliefs, desires, and exercises of free choice. Why do I think these things are not physical? Because there are things true of my brain states that are not true of my conscious states, and there are things true of my conscious states that are not true of my brain states. So they can not be the same thing.

Now, that still leaves open the question of what is it that has consciousness, the brain or something else? I argue that it is the soul or the self that bears consciousness, not the brain. Why do I claim that? Well, first, I have free choice at least some of the time, at least when my wife is not around, I have free choice. If I were just my brain and nervous system, my behavior would be totally determined by the laws of chemistry and physics and so on, but I am not. Therefore, I can not be a material object. Were I a material object, I would not have freedom. So the argument goes: if I were a physical object, I would not be free. But I am free, therefore, I am not a physical object. That is the argument.

The second reason I believe that I am not my brain is that if I were my brain, I would be like a podium. As my parts are changing, I would be a different self from one moment to the next. But I am not a different self from one moment to the next. I might have a different attitude, but it is still I. And my entire framework for fearing the future and being responsible for the past presupposes that I am literally the same through

change. So the argument is that if I were a physical object, I would not be the same thing through part replacement. But I am the same thing through part replacement, therefore I am not a physical object. Similarly, I have argued that there is something true of me, namely that I am disembodiable, that is not true of my brain or my body, namely that it is not even possible that it be disembodied. Therefore there is something true of me (I am possibly disembodiable) that is not true of my brain or body (it is not possibly disembodiable), so I can not be the same thing as my brain and my body.

I think this is important for a number of reasons, but before I tease this out I will consider objections to what I have just said. You say to me, “Wait a minute. Alzheimer’s patients have changes in their brain and lose their ability to think. So there appears to be a relationship between the brain and the body.” Here is the way I like to put it. This is only an analogy, and it does not work completely, so do not push it too far. It goes like this: Suppose I was in a car, and I was strapped into a seat with a seat belt that was locked such that I could not get out. So now I am in the driver’s seat of a car, and I am locked in there and can not get out. Were that true, then my ability to get around town and go different places would be determined by the car. If the car broke down so that it could not move, I would be stationary. I would not be able to go to the store. If the steering wheel broke so that it only turned right, I would not be able to make a left-hand turn. Would that prove I was the car? No. Is not it consistent with those data that I am the driver of the car? So what happens with defects to my brain is that while in my body, I lose the ability to turn left, that is, to have memories or to think certain things. Now, what if I were trapped in a car, and the car was broken down so I could not move. If I were able to get out of the car, would I still be limited? No, because I might be able to walk around, even

if the car was broken. Well, in my body, if my brain is destroyed, I may not be able to access my memories, but if I could get out of my body after death, I could recover my ability to remember certain things because I am no longer dependent on a broken car.

And, by the way, if you change your thinking, you can reconfigure your brain chemistry.¹³ I do not know if you knew this, but you can change the anxiety patterns in the brain. There are certain chemicals that are activated in the brain with anxiety. You can literally change your brain chemistry and your habitual ways of thinking. So the brain can do things to the mind, and the mind can do things to the brain, but that does not prove that they are the same thing.

I have tried to call to your attention to the importance of worldview and the importance of philosophy in learning to teach the Scriptures. John Wesley, and most of the great theologians and teachers of the church, up until this generation, have been philosophically trained in addition to biblically trained.

One more piece of advice from an old guy who can get a senior's discount at Denny's, and then I will sit down and behave myself. You do not want to come to seminary solely to reconfirm the categories that you already had when you came here. I think the majority of you are trying to ponder what I have said and make sense of it, and I respect that. Some of you are resistant. Why? This sounds new and foreign. Maybe you feel a little bit insecure because you were not able to follow me, and no one likes to feel little and small and inadequate and insecure. So it would be easier for you to say, "I'm not comfortable with that philosophical stuff" as a way to protect yourself from your inadequacies and to grow. What I do not want you to do is to come here and conduct your life at seminary largely because it is about you. It is not about you; it is about the

kingdom. What that means is, when you hear someone like me or one of your professors in class, and he is giving you ideas that you are not able to follow or they sound a little foreign and you do not know what to do with them, do not adopt a defensive, self-protective attitude that says, “I’m scared. I don’t know what to do with this. I just want to get out of here with my degree believing the same things I did when I came in or maybe accepting a few safe new ideas, but that’s it.” You do not want to believe everything you are taught, but if you go to a faithful seminary that has the reputation for having a faculty that believes the inerrant Word of God, then that does not mean that everything your faculty teaches you is true (because there are differences among the faculty), but what it does mean is that you can relax. You can open your mind and learn to see things from a different perspective and then judge whether you think what your professor is saying is true or false. If I have done nothing for you, even if you do not remember the details of what I have shared, I hope what I have said to you has been sufficient to illustrate that if you are going to think well as a Christian, then you also need to learn to think worldviewishly. And a great tool in learning to think worldviewishly is learning to think philosophically. Thank you.¹⁴

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¹ In my opinion, the two most important writings of Willard on the spiritual life are *The Divine Conspiracy* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998); *Renovation of the Heart* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 2002).

² See J. P. Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), chapters 1-4 for a detailed analysis of this worldview conflict.

³ John Wesley, "An Address to the Clergy," delivered February 6, 1756. Reprinted in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3d ed., 7 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1996), 6:217-31.

⁴ See Collin McGinn, *The Mysterious Flame* (New York, N. Y.: Basic Books, 1999), chapter one. See also, J. P. Moreland, *Consciousness and the Existence of God: A Theistic Argument* (New York, N. Y.: Routledge, forthcoming, 2008).

⁵ Michael Kinsley, "If You Believe Embryos Are Humans...." *Time* (June 25, 2001), 80.

⁶ See J. P. Moreland, Scott Rae, *Body and Soul* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2000); Francis Beckwith, *Defending Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁷ See John Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, rev. ed., 2000).

⁸ I believe that this has been conclusively established by N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), especially pages 200-206.

⁹ For a detailed examination of these mental states, see Richard Swinburne, *The Evolution of the Soul* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, rev. ed., 1997).

¹⁰ See Moreland, Rae, *Body and Soul*; Swinburne, *The Evolution of the Soul*.

¹¹ I am assuming what philosophers call mereological essentialism for composed material objects according to which such an object can not sustain absolute identity with the loss or gain of separable parts. I believe the only plausible way to avoid mereological essentialism for ordinary objects is to treat them as irreducible substances that are not composed of separable parts that are themselves substances. For more on this, see Christopher M. Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus* (London: Continuum, 2005).

¹² Though dated in some respects, still relevant to this issue is Geoffrey Madell, *The Identity of the Self* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1981).

¹³ See Jeffrey Schwartz, Sharon Begley, *The Mind and The Brain* (New York, N.Y.: HarperCollins, 2002); Mario Beauregard, Denyse O'Leary, *The Spiritual Brain* (New York, N. Y.: HarperCollins, 2007).

¹⁴ For more on this, see J. P. Moreland, Garry DeWeese, *Philosophy Made Slightly Less Difficult* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005); J. P. Moreland, William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003).