Unity of the Soul- Hume’s Debate and its Bearing on Our Lives

By Dallas Willard

Announcer:

On-going colloquium series sponsored by the M.A program in philosophy and ethics. And for those of you that are not part of that program we have a very exciting graduate program here in philosophy and ethics and see a few of you that aren't. But most of you are. But there is a very real tenderness and love that we have for each other and it has been a real joy to study together in a community of people that have a fond affection for one another and I can tell just by looking at the graduate students that there is just a joy in being together. We like being together and talking and arguing and fussing and praying and and being a group of people that love each other. And it's been a real delight to be with you. And I want to say on behalf of Dr. Guy and Professor Cox and Ray that we've all been deeply touched by our dear brother that will speak to us this evening he gave us all quite a hard time when we were at USC. But apart from that we've been deeply encouraged by his life and ministry.

Now we're going to have a colloquium lecture by Professor John Mark Reynolds Dr. Reynolds would you raise your hand? He's a post-doctoral fellow that we have here from the University of Rochester. And on December 6th he's going to be talking about Plato's doctrine of the soul in the Timayas and it'll be slanted in a certain way for Christians. His expertise is the philosophy of Plato and ancient Greek philosophy and which is we love the Greeks around here and we're glad to be hearing from you on December 6. Dr. Reynolds so we'll look forward to them. Doug was
there something else supposed to say. There some extra handouts. Are there extra handouts if someone didn't get it who did not get a handout? If you didn't get a handout since the Republicans got voted in you'd better get out quickly. I'll tell you that it's very important for us to understand while we know there is a soul and to try to explore its texture and nature it's very important for us. And Dr. Willard is going to be discussing now the texture of the soul and there'll be a chance to talk to him afterwards so let's bring him on with the warm welcome.

Dallas Willard:

Thank you very much. I hope you have were able to get a hand out or look on because I'm going to be going over quite a lot of stuff and what we have an hour hour and 15. OK. So I will move a little more quickly than I did this afternoon. And let me tell you what I'm going to try to do. I'm going to try to come up against a what I call a myth about the mind or the soul and um try to explain why we should not take this myth seriously and then I'm going to spend the rest of the time trying to give details about the texture of the soul or self. I would say mind but I want to talk about something more inclusive than the mind. But what I'm talking about does include the mind and then finally today I think I'm not going to say much about what physics can't do because I want to spend more time on these other things and finally I want to talk about the self or soul as a substance and what that means. So let me just begin. With a statement from a one of the better contemporary philosophers named Collin McGinnis. And here's what Collin says. The idea of a peculiarly mental substance is when you think about it extremely weird. And that's really what I'm after this. I hope that when we come out of here tonight you will say that ain't so at all there's nothing weird about the idea of that peculiarly mental substance. Now when things
look weird or are treated as weird or seem weird. That is only some background which is usually left unexamined but on the other hand we have to do what we can to fill out the concept of a mental substance or soul so that people will have a better grasp of what it is. Now the very stuff that would fill it out is systematically dismissed today for reasons which I am shall try to explain.

So column McGinnis says it is weird he says it is quite unclear that there is any intelligible conception associated with the words immaterial substance and that is what is really in the background of any number of debates about the nature of the world about creation about creation science about freedom about the after the we call it the afterlife. But we should call it the real life probably and idea that the idea of an immaterial substance really is unintelligible. This is shown in fact he says by the alleged by the fact that the alleged substance tends to get characterized purely negatively. And unfortunately it does but that's because everything that would characterize it positively is dismissed and I'll be points A through K on your page. That's the stuff that can characterize it positively but it's true that we need some positive description of immaterial substance.

Now he says he says and you have to guard yourself when you're reading philosophers. You have to guard you are listening to philosophers. You have to guard yourself at every turn of phrase that is used. Now listen to what he says. He says we are prone and since we include you you'll have to decide whether or not you're prone we are prone to picture it, the immaterial substance in imagination as an especially ethereal or attenuated kind of matter how many of you are prone to do that. I’m sorry Collin isn't here. I'll report this result to him. He says stuff of the rarefied sort we imagine the bodies of ghosts to be made up. This is a favorite trick is to associate discussions of the mind with discussions of ghosts and of course we all have images of Casper the Friendly Ghost the kind of stuff through which a hand could pass without disturbance.
Now I see you wonder why a serious philosopher would go to the trouble to say such things as this. This is the sign that a myth is operating because a myth has the power to make us say things seriously which if you stop to think about probably no one believes at all. I doubt that Collin McGinnis himself does this and you have to beware of philosophers who come telling stories that begin with instead of Long Ago and Far they would begin with statements like we are prone to we are prone to so. OK McGinnis goes on in this passage now to wonder whether the immaterial substance is capable of discharging the role it is introduced to play and whether or not it is only the lack of clarity about immaterial substance that induces us to suppose that locating mental phenomena in it is any advance on physicalistic monism the properties of the material substance are supposed to constitute I think he means by that render intelligible in some such manner as supposedly the atomic structure of matter would render intelligible things like rigidity and maybe even color and things of that sort.

And so he's saying that the immaterial substance should render intelligible mental phenomena in the same way. Here we seem to be faced with a dilemma he says. Either we must postulate something beyond the mental properties the mental phenomenon or we do not. If we do thus conjecturing the existence of properties of mind hitherto undiscovered there will still be the question how these properties render intelligible the essential nature of sensations and Propositional attitudes and of course that's difficult just as it's difficult to explain how the atomic structure of matter could render rigidity intelligible. I mean it's there is an explanation but it is hard and probably not a one of us in this room could come up with it. So we believe it and we have good reason to believe it because we read good books and that's perfectly adequate reason to believe. But what he's suggesting is that there's nothing similar to that in the realm of the mind that the mind as we experience it doesn't have that depth of sort of super imposed layers of
properties and parts and subparts and subparts and I don't know how he knows this but he seems to know this from some source. I think he knows it because in fact he has dismissed the very stuff that would constitute those layers and parts and some layers and so on and we'll see why in a moment.

Now begin earlier make statement in the statements in the same book. The book by the way is simply called the character of the mental the character of the mind. The character of the mind by Colum McCann it's a good book. Don't know. Don't be misled by what I'm saying about it. It's a good book wrong but good and you know in philosophy that's perfectly sensible. He earlier said some other things that don't seem quite to fit together with this he said. He says he he talks as if the problem were with what the familiar mental properties belonged to. That's what that's what he's been saying. He said well you know we have this familiar mental properties and we list thoughts and feelings and sensations and beliefs and things. So these are familiar mental properties and he suggested that the real problem is about what they belong to because that would be the substance right.

And so it's in what sense can we make and then that now then listen to what he says. Because I think this is where the real problem lies. He said earlier that consciousness like redness and sweetness belong to the range of properties that can only be grasped by direct acquaintance and he does believe that we are directly acquainted with sensations and believes but then he goes on to say some very remarkable things and these are things that tie into a long tradition which I will review briefly for you. He says consciousness is elusive even to acquaintance as an exercise in introspection will reveal. Consider your consciousness of some item and external object your chair for example your own body or a sensation and try to focus attention on that relationship. Your awareness of your chair your seat on a chair you can be aware of your chair focus attention
on your consciousness of the chair. Now he says as many philosophers have observed this relation of consciousness to its objects is peculiarly impalpable and diaphanous. All you come across in introspection are the objects of consciousness not consciousness itself. Then you have to think about the implications of saying that you don't come across consciousness itself, you come across objects of consciousness and I'm sure most of you know he's been reading he says this feature of consciousness has undo some thinkers to describe consciousness as a kind of inner emptiness. It is nothing per se that means it's nothing in itself but pure directedness onto things other than self.

No wonder then that it is hard to say what consciousness intrinsically yens well I have quoted at link from again and commented on him because I think he gets out in a rather neat fashion. Many of the commonplaces about the mind are soul and how it presents itself that have framed the philosophy of mind and self in the in recent centuries at least from the 18th century on.

Descartes. In an interesting way quite apart from his intentions suggest the problem when in his meditations you recall he first discovers that he is because he's thinking and then he says what I am. And he says well I'm a thing that things precedes remembers imagines for and so on down the line. And then he deals with an imaginary with an objection to the effect that he has no image of himself. And this is the part if you recall where the famous piece of wax comes in. Because what Descartes basically does is to show that even with reference to physical things I don't have an image of their substance I know substance always and everywhere without images and now having done that he rubs his intellectual tummy and walks off and says I've had a good meal and this gets me in the clear now and we can go on and say that I am a thing which thinks and there's no image and so what.
But of course not long afterwards you have John Locke coming along and his conclusion from the same line of argument basically is we have no knowledge of substance the substance disappears and that's one of the things that I want to say you say to you first and hope you remember as we go along. The problem with material immaterial substance is not primarily immaterial it's with substance. It isn't as if we know what material substance is very nicely and we're all confident about that and we don't know what immaterial substance is. The problem is with substance the problem is with a kind of unity that creates an identity with stratified parts and properties that are explanatory at various levels within that whole and that's a tough idea. That’s a categorical idea. It has nothing to do with the distinction between the mental and physical so what Locke surrenders is the possibility of knowledge of substance now Locke wanted to hold on to physical substance and mental substance both.

But as you recall Barkley and Hume his successors gradually pulled him to pieces so that when we come to whom we have that famous statement when I turn my reflection on myself I never can perceive the self without some one or more perceptions and perceptions are little objects nor can I ever perceive anything but the perception these she says is the composition of these are the bundle. We often we often say when talking about Hume which forms the self. So what is the self? It's merely a succession of images more or less vivid. And he continues to say now philosophers ought to be reconciled with the principle. I’m sorry philosophers began to be reconciled to the principle that we have no idea of external subject physical substance, distinct from the ideas of particular qualities. This must pave the way he says for a like principle with regard to the mind. That we have no notion of it distinct from the particular perceptions we have no notion of the mind that's in the appendix to his Treatise of Human Nature. Page six thirty four of the Selvi big edition.
And in the chapter on personal identity in the same book he compared the mind to a theater where several perceptions successively make their way make their appearance past repass glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. And then he adds the comparison to the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only that constitute the mind. Nor have we the most distant notion of the place where the scenes are represented or of the materials of which it is composed. Now here we have the myth full blown that comes to expression in mind and in many people who have never read the stuff and just picked it up from from the atmosphere. If I had time to discuss Kant's Paralygisms that's another source of this The Paralygisms in Kant's critique of pure reason is a story of invalid arguments which supposedly lead us to believe that we have a perception of self. So we have knowledge of self. Some later philosopher of the name August Comte insisted on the impossibility of grasping our mental acts by reflection.

He said it would be like having a hand strike itself which is hard coming on up into the 20th century G.E. Moore's statements in his paper the refutation of idealism. These are the closest parents to McGinnis view that in the sensation of blue the term blue is easy enough to distinguish but the other element which I call consciousness is extremely difficult to fix on that many people fail to distinguish it all is sufficiently shown by the fact that there are materialists Moore says that argument that says and in general that which makes the sensation of Blue a mental fact seems to escape us well if it escapes us how do we even begin to talk about it. It seems if I may use a metaphor continues to be transparent. We look through it and see nothing if we see nothing. How do we know we're looking for it? We see the blue that's all. We may be convinced that there's something but what is no philosopher I think has been able to do is to say what it is and Moore says the moment you try to fix our tension of unconsciousness and see what distinctly
it is it seems to vanish. It seems as we had before us a mere emptiness and see all of the seeming stuff is in opposition to what what would we like consciousness to be. Another blue what are we bucking against here. That makes us say that consciousness itself is not observable is hardly anything at all now that's the question we have to keep in mind.

So McGinnis statements stand in a long tradition perhaps a long tradition of confusion. Certainly it is hard to make sense of all that McGinn says. I review just a bit here. He moves from the claim that the relation of consciousness to its object is peculiarly impalpable and diaphanous to the claim that all you come across in introspection are the objects of consciousness not consciousness itself. Which of course are two quite different claims and here about consciousness he's clearly not referring to the substance of consciousness but what he calls the familiar mental properties? But if that's all you come across then you could not know that you were introspecting. You would just think you were looking at it all the time. And you would not know that consciousness is impalpable and diaphanous and you would not know it is a pure directedness to things other than itself.

And if it is a pure directedness then that is precisely determined in nature and not an inner emptiness at all and if that is true one wonders why beyond general problems of substance and quality these determined natures, these directed illnesses we talked about them as intentionality as in the earlier session could not come together to form substances quite as well as the determinant natures that enter into physical objects do ultimately of course. Everything is weird but that's a part of what it means to be ultimate and if you ever get down to what is ultimate about matter. You're certainly going to discover that matter is just as weird as anything you could possibly think on. Non weird is always against the background of assumed regularities which you can say oh yes that's fine. Like the lady who asked the veterinarian why her dog’s noses cold
and the man replied. Dogs noses are always cold and she said Oh that's I see. If you have a background of presumed regularities then you can say well this is not weird at all it just goes on. But if you lose the background which you do when you get to anything ultimate that's what it means to be ultimate then everything is weird.

Okay. Now. So this is very strange. Something very strange going on. You wonder how Hume could know that he entered into himself and what he discovered when he did that. There really is no way within his theory. There's the old joke that Hume is like a man who goes outside of his house and looks in the window to see if he's home. Probably won't work. At any rate we have. What does it say to enter most intimately into myself? If then I turn around say myself is just objects. Okay so there's something wrong here. Now when we look at the level of common experience over against the idea that subjectivity or the mental or soul is just empty emptiness stands our de facto awareness of our mental and experience of states. When someone asks us how or how we feel we can tell them in great detail more than they wish to know.

So we all abbreviate don’t we. Fine. Let's suppose we just started telling I mean what what would happen the rest of the day. You wouldn't get it said because you have you have such an awareness of your just your feelings. That you could never fully express what you know about your feelings. Now does that sound like an inner emptiness to you? I ask you. Something to think about. Or when we go to the optometrist as I mentioned this afternoon we report on what we see. There's nothing vacuous about it. Motivational psychologist actors novelists poets interior decorators and cooks constantly report on and describe about the subjective flood of mental life that makes up our existence. The idea of an inner emptiness is a ridiculous contrivance of a view of mind based on the mythology of empiricism the idea that what you know has to be given to
you roughly through sense perception. The mind is not given since perception it isn’t. And so what that shows is just tougher empiricism.

Now if we turn to something like say William James’s book the principle of psychology or any of the books on psychology really though that's easier to get them in someone like James where you don’t have to at least pay attention to some post empiricists ideologies about what you can and cannot know about self. If you look for example in Chapter 9 of Chapter 10 the stream of thought and consciousness of the self respectively in James's book The Principles of Psychology. You'll see all of the material that a thoughtful psychologist has to deal with in order to describe the life of the mind or the self. Edmund Husk treats what he calls the pure psychical being or the psychical life as a nature resembling flow of events in a quasi-space of consciousness. And here in a nature transcending sphere that isn't a sphere that is not given to physics chemistry and the hard sciences as we call them.

We have what he calls an infinitude of knowledge previous to all deduction and absolutely independent realm of direct experience although for reasons of the central kind it has so far remained inaccessible and it was Husk’s view Bergson view in any number of people around this time thought that there was simply a natural tendency of the mind to turn outward and to be obsessed in objects and to not reflect on our consciousness of the objects. And so it took a special will to turn your attention which is true and if you try to sort of fit in with what I'm saying tonight and begin to report on your experience you'll find it difficult and you will constantly be turned towards the object. And this is one of the sources of Sark in his book Being of Nothingness calls the illusion of eminence because when we try to describe our experiences the objects always show up and we describe our experiences in terms of the objects and that has very deep and harmful tendencies and it would make the attempt to describe experience often
confused. And then of course lends substance to the idea that we must not be looking at anything at all. Because otherwise how can we get it so wrong. Okay so what I want to say then is that we have this story about what must be the case with our own experience that it's almost nothing and then over against that we have this absolutely inexhaustible supply of observations we make of our own expert that psychologists such as James philosophers such as as possible are able to recognize this and it's not an accident that neither one of them were empiricists because if you are an empiricist you're in real trouble with the self if you're not then you might very well suppose that what you can correctly report on you actually know.

So now the inner emptiness line cannot account for what we actually know about the flow of reality that makes up our own lives. I'll read that one again I say the inner emptiness line cannot account for what we actually know about the flow of reality that makes up our own lives. Empiricism as a theory of knowledge is a recognized failure in any form that has been definitely specified and has left nothing to support it but the bias of a centralistic culture so it should be studied sociologically as Pitkin Sorokin does in his book The Crisis of our age because it is a sociological phenomenon. Of course philosophy as Nietzsche pointed out is as much subject to the laws of sociology and psychology as anything else. So we have to be careful about that. And when I say that I must try to be aware of the causation in my own life as well as in the life of the empiricism. I like to dump him. So we have to be honest about that and a lot of the high dudgeon in which Nietzsche lived towards philosophers was due to the fact that they were not honest about it and they often found themselves arguing for positions which they probably didn't believe themselves that they thought they ought to and that's the source of the saying that F.H. Bradley puts at the front of his book appearance and reality that metaphysics is the search of bad reasons for things we already believe on instinct or perhaps out of habit.
So what I'm saying is there's no reason to regard conclusions about mind or substance that derive from empiricist’s empiricism as serious challenges to what the ordinary thoughtful and experienced person assumes to be the case about self-knowledge and self-identity. Anything that we can accurately report about our experience must be assumed to be the case. I put that down on point 3 on your page. So this is going to be. You may want to fight like crazy about this but this is going to be the operating principle that I'm going to use now. For building the texture or bringing out the texture of the soul. I say here anything we can accurately report about our experience must be assumed to be the case. Otherwise it wouldn't be accurate. If we can accurately reported and and that doesn't say anything about whether we introspected or whatever we do if we can accurately report.

It must be assumed to be the case if an epistemology falls foul of this principle. Too bad for the Epistememon we here what we have is a situation where people trained in an intellectual environment are ready to give up the accurate spontaneous thoughtful reports of their on their own experience because it doesn't fit into an epistemology which is merely the expression of an age. So now let me take the rest of my time to just call attention to the stuff that makes up the soul and we'll leave these remarks McGinn and others in the background as a sounding board. The first thing that you come across when you begin to reflect on the flow of your own experience is feelings feelings are an incredibly complex topic of bodily emotional mental. We do have mental feelings and structures of feelings feelings are carriers of intentionality of all kinds. For example once you learn to drive a car for example you'd basically drive that car by feelings your sense of the wheel the brakes the situation on the road and so on. You don't have to think about. He had to think about it. You wouldn't be safe to get close to me. It's when you get it down to the feelings so you have a set of feelings and these feelings are very rich in their content
and their structure. They are not by any means the dumb sort of things that empiricists such as Mel and Hume like to treat them as with little atomic units that just sort of sit there and do nothing except move along. Feelings are actually loaded with life and so intuitively.

The descriptions of poets and songwriters are much better than empiricists when it comes to feeling. So there was a song some years ago feelings whoa whoa whoa whoa feelings. You remember that yeah. Well that was a better description of feelings than anything you can read in Hume. That puts them right in right in the substance of the line. That's what you live for that's how you live and that's what you write songs about no one would ever think of writing a song about what Hume was talking about. But the songwriter. I mean how desperate we are in our dependence on feeling. I mean just frankly if you don't have good feelings you are going to come apart or die or something pretty fast you've got to have some good feeling and that's because of the texture of your soul. Feelings are like the foundations of your soul. You're not in control of them you don't run them you don't direct them.

You can do very little but you can do some important things to control them once you understand them. But fundamentally they are the basis of action- you act from feeling like action. Choice is oriented primarily around two things representations or ideas and feelings and you have to have both to act. Now I'm talking about acting in full sense to drive your car once you learn to drive your car you don't need to think about it and you don't need to get emotional about what you have to have these little feelings that clue you in and guide you as you go on your way. But action requires feeling if you do not have feelings you cannot act that's why emotions are called emotions. You have to have feeling to act. You act from feeling they don't necessarily determine you but without them you can’t. Well there's so much that can be said about the course our
connection to our body and our bodily insertion into our world is primarily one feeling can be lifted up and articulated but if you articulated too much you'll be paralyzed again.

Then secondly we have acts of various kinds various levels of acts of thought we all know what it is to think of something probably as you sit here there are two or three trains of thought going on all the time while you're listening to me by comprehending me and so on. But you think of things as you. I know just as sure as I'm standing here that since I've been talking that's happened to you probably 10 12 times you thought of something has nothing to do with the situation. Just pop up. There it is. There's thoughts come up and sometimes they come up in associative trains and that's more likely what is happening here. Sometimes they come up for no reason at all that you can sign. And sometimes they are the result of logical explorations or of creativity. Logical explorations are matters of taking. We think of things and we think of them in certain ways and we say what is implied in this and how the narcotic spores.

If this then that one of the characteristics of thought is its capacity to handle what we call hypotheticals or subjunctive conditionals. If then situations and a lot of thinking does. People will sit in lectures and think well now if I take this course then that will happen or if I say this to Suzy then that will happen and then this other will happen. See that's thinking and all the while your own feelings are just going there. They don't. You don't say I won't feel now had I think right. Well I'm done thinking so I can let the feelings start. No no. It all comes together. And a large part of what I want to do this evening used to make you realize what a massive reality this stuff is. It's just got layer upon layer and they interact because your thoughts can make your feelings go in a different direction can't they. And your feelings may determine what shows up in your thought. So I know that a lot of you are a psychologist and you have been to a lot of time working on these kinds of connections. And you have some like so-called cognitive therapy very
interesting line of thought because it essentially tells you how to change your thoughts by verbalizations of certain kinds and these thoughts all carry feelings and feeling tones and that restructures or enables you to manage or get along with the feelings that may be overwhelming you and then that enables you to act differently and your action changes your world and so forth and so on.

So okay inference. Inference is very important. I call here logical groundings arriving at beliefs on the basis of other things you know that's very important especially for the rational side of our lives a mind that merely associated or explored logically and creative in the sense that word describe might not necessarily be rational rationality has to do more with roundings of beliefs about action on a reality in terms of other beliefs logical relations are a part of the Web that textures your soul. Even if other people think you're rational. By and large you do a lot of this sort of stuff. Being rational is a one of the biggest challenges of human life that physics cannot explain because physics cannot be built with logical relations. It is hopefully subject to logical relations as a discipline. But there, physics does not deal with logical relations study physics you will never find it dealing with the relation of implications of contrariety contrariety or any of the standard logic relation.

It doesn't even deal with the logical irrelation of irrelevance. That's a different subject matter has nothing to do with I see out of that comes a whole string of things. Because being rational is not a small thing in human life. You’re not going to be able to be virtuous and be a good person unless you are rational to a high degree and if you're not rational to a high degree and virtuous you're not going to be capable of having a good life. These are all topics which are of great interest to the person or the individual. And so I was just saying that about physics because I'm not going to say much more about it but this is tremendously important. Every inference logical
grounds then attitude orientations preferences hobbies social political orientation is more
pungently perhaps something like racism now racism is a part of the texture of many souls. It
may well be that it's a part of the texture of every human. Maybe it's eradicable maybe it isn't. It
may be a primary dimension of sin. And I haven't put sin on the list but sin is another part of the
texture of the human soul and fallen condition but attitudes orientations hobbies political social
orientations. Republicans have already been mentioned. And when people say there's no
difference between Democrats and Republicans I often wonder if they've met one you know
there are differences and they're knowable and most Democrats know them and most
Republicans know them.

Of course there are a lot of us that are neither Democrats nor Republicans. We just vote for the
ticket. But being a Democrat or being a Republican is a definite part of soul structure. Same way
with Hobbies serious hobby people I've never had a hobby in the sense that some people have
hobbies. I don't think I'm capable of having a hobby in the sense of some hobbies because a
hobby for me could never operate at this level. Dreams and fantasies. Another part of the texture
again related Republicans have different dreams and fantasies than Democrats do so and the
feeling level and the conceptualizations the way of reasoning all that comes together see what
we're talking about here is a texture with many many strands that interact and work together or
contrary to one another. Uh character traits intentions choices. All of these choices were in
Portland. If you wish for my reading just read over next to F there. Spirit the spirit in the human
being is primarily a matter of the capacity to choose. The spirit is like the executive center of the
self which is capable of reprogramming and restructuring the whole organization. And it utilizes
the mind utilizers feeling utilizers habits in the body and in the soul but that it has a distinct
capacity which again.
Anything we can accurately report about our experience must be we can accurately report that we chose to do things and that's true of all of these things I'm mentioning here. Intentions or purposes character traits these of course organize huge areas of our lives. If your purpose is to be a faithful witness to Christ and that really is your purpose you see that's going to permeate everything you do. That's going to organize all of your actions. If you want to win public office elective office. If you want if you have any deep set purpose then it will embed itself throughout all of these dimensions of the self and for example if you don't have certain kinds of feelings you find you can't run for public office. That's true. You’ll just be smashed and driven nuts or you just won't be able to do. I often am amazed that people who do run for public office because what they're getting into what they're even trying to get into.

But you see if they have deep set in- [gap in recording] and she hadn't read G.E. Moore or Collin McGinnis’s she thought that the soul was this incredible castle with seven huge subdivisions that she was able to just go directly to experience including the experience of faith and find all this stuff that made her up. So this is just kind of a review of of the things that I think you are most apt to come across when you begin to report on your experience and accurately reported. Of course you can make mistakes about it. I'm not saying you're infallible at all and you don't need to be. It's just that you are sometimes right and you are largely right. We rarely are people wrong when they say they're thirsty for example and thirst is a part of the human soul. Now it's tied in with the State of the body related to that but that's just an illustration. I suppose you could be wrong. OK let's look at some conclusions and draw this towards the idea of substance. One of the first things we notice is that most people philosophically, and I think psychologically also today who try to deal with the self or the soul from the materialist point of view or even from the behavioral psychologist's point of view do not deal with all of this or any substantial part of let
me put it like this there is an initially dismissive attitude toward this whole range of phenomena and initially that is dismissed at the outset. You don't have to take it seriously.

Now if you have that attitude is it any wonder that then when you look at the soul you say well it's just like an inner emptiness you know you let all the horses out of the corral and then you say well the corral is empty. Of course it's empty. You let all the horses out. If you're if you're going to dismiss this then you're going to come up with nothing and then you're going to say well we can only characterize the soul in negative terms. We can only say it's not material not spatial not causal not sense perceptible well. But you know look at this list of things how much of this is merely negative characterization. Pretty positive. This is a report about what things are when they are how they are in relationship to one another. It’s not just a set of nonmaterial claims. But this is a cultural fact. It is a cultural fact that we are initially dismissive of this.

Now let me ask you a question if that is true and if this is the soul is it any wonder that all of our learned professions; law, education, medicine, are in an epistemological crisis. And they are all in an epistemological crisis. That is to say basically that what counts as knowledge in all of our primary professional fields is settled by social consensus mediated through training institutions and government agencies. It has to be settled politically. What counts as knowledge in these fields is it any wonder that a field like education is so torn politically because what is an educated person. Do you think you can say what an educated person is except in some terms that involve all of this? That's the only way you can do it because being educated is a condition of the human mind and soul and I would challenge anyone any materialist you want to crack up to give me a statement in physicalist terms of when you've got an educated person they won't even know where to begin. What are you going to do cut a piece out of them and analyze it chemically do
statistical analysis of how their body moves or the inflections and the tones of their voice. What are you going to do? You can't do anything you see.

We are in epistemological crisis in all of our major fields of knowledge related to practice because this has been wiped off the board just wiped off the board. You can't get people at USC to take this seriously the human self has disappeared from the horizon of knowledge. This is not a religious point but it has tremendous implications for religion we are in as much a crisis I should say at least on most campuses where we have divinity schools as to what constitutes religious knowledge as we are in any field we are absolutely grounded in many of these places. We're beyond crisis. It's unmitigated disaster and apart from a few shreds of Jungianism and feminism there isn't anything that comes of knowledge in the theological field. How did that get into the theological field the first place? I’ve discovered whole patches of ministers who can still believe in something spiritual only because they've bought unionism that is their version of God and spirituality and the soul and I won't start on that. Maybe I did start on it but I'll stop. OK. Well I was about to get excited there for a moment.

Yes indeed. By the way one of the things that I think you can use this stuff well on is if you go back to your Bible now and begin to read it was psychological realism. That is when you find this guy using the word soul. Suppose he means something by it. Why art thou cast down oh my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God for thou shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. Do you suppose that possibly means something? Just a thought. Read the Bible with psychological realism. Suppose that words like soul's spirit mind body all of those really does mean something. Try to put it together make sense of it but do so in the light of a view of the self that has not already been botched and cleaned out by a false epistemology OK now under five B there is a bunch of heavy stuff I need to talk about it at least a little bit because
what I want to say now is given all of this. There’s no problem with mental substance. What do we think of in substance? The first thing we think of and you often have this complaint of people who are trying to deal with the mind. They say well what is the stuff. Is there mental stuff. And if there is no mental stuff then supposedly there can't be a mental substance. And I'm prepared to accept that now what is the mental stuff. It is exactly what has been listed in these previous headings. That is the mental stuff.

Now you can break these up. You can build theories about their parts and that's what we ought to do. What are the components of a thought? Now if you can't take that question seriously then you can't get anywhere with it. But once you take it seriously you might be surprised what you could find out. We got into a little bit of it this afternoon in two hours. What are the components of love? How our feelings are made up. What are their qualities their parts their relationships influences attitudes. If you take these realistically then and nondeductible we reductionism is the attitude that lies back of the initial dismissiveness. It's the dogmatic assumption that there can't be anything here because we all know it must be something else. But just try not doing that try not. I mean after all if you could use a reductive approach to solve the problems which the lack of knowledge of the self brings upon human beings well then by all means let's do it.

But you know we've been trying reductive ism for a long while we're not getting much of anywhere. Jim Hillman's stuff you know he's one of the main psychologists today. He put it beautifully 100 years of psychology. And we're getting worse well if that's what's happening maybe we should try something else. And so you take these and you break them down in your part you analyze them you look at what you can determine about the parts and their relationships. And that gives you your stuff. Now in there may be levels that we have to work through there. There were levels in material substance. There was a time when atom meant atom. Now it
doesn’t mean atom anymore. Because it is divisible in more senses that one. And you keep punching down down down and levels that same thing. I have no problem with that. And in fact I think that's exactly the way we ought to feel about the mind. What is the soul? What is the human soul? What is the human soul? How does the body. It's very important to deal with the body because the body is not a throw away thing. It goes very deeply into the nature of the human soul to understand that we have bodies and that in a sense we are our bodies our identity is tied to our bodies so that you get the stuff that makes up the substance simply by analyzing the material that shows up in the texture of the human self or soul.

But I warn again if you're not committed to the idea that this is real stuff then you never get anywhere with it then you keep going back to brains and drugs and whatever else you think can manage the experiential side of the self by punching around in the body. OK. Unity. That's another important topic about substance. Unity of properties now if you analyze these attitudes inferences feelings acts of thoughts and so on what you will discover is that they are what they are only because they belong to the same being that the other things belong to for example how you feel about thought your feelings and your thinking are not two things that are separate but they are interactive running alongside of one another and it's because they are part of the same whole that they behave the way they do. And that will be true of all of these things that you mentioned here for example in knowledge the unity of the self presupposes that when you have premises and a conclusion the same person thinks the premises that thinks the conclusion spoken discourse is the same way you can't get a sentence of I have one person say one word.

Another person says another word. Another person says another word and so on down the line you don't get unity that way. I mean you can contrive a case where we could produce a sentence which everyone would understand in that way but if that's all you have is people going around
with the fragmented parts of the inner experience you simply never get the kinds of wholes of feeling thought and action and so on attitudes that actually show up in the self and this is a very important point for traditional philosophy with its concern for the unity of the self as well as for the contemporary issue about materialism for example Kantian philosophy for those of you who are familiar with it a major issue in Kantian philosophy is the unity of the self and the unity of the self is argued from the necessary conditions of the possibility of experience while after dinner. I don't want to worry a bunch of nice people with a topic like that but the point is simply this that you can't have experience unless it is unified in a certain way. Way namely that the parts of the experience belong to the same person.

You have to have that and that unity is just the unity of substance and that's revealed among other things by identity. We remain the same persons and that means that the flow of our experience exhibits essential stru- essential structures establishing a continuity of the self-memory but not just memory purpose also intentions of various kinds that carry over years to their fulfillment. These constitute a kind of sameness. The body itself is involved in that sameness they constitute a kind of unity or I'm sorry a kind of an identity exhibiting a central component structures that remain the same even though there's a lot of change. Still you have the enduring fundamental problems. That’s one of the features of substance that Aristotle really comes down on the side of essence as substance what he called secondary substance because substance for him and up into the present substance really does or essence and substance mean pretty much the same and essence refers to the deeply explanatory properties that remain the same over time being of some sort.

And to explain all of the other properties that it may have and that applies to everything from apples on the tree to mountains to to particular kinds of particular animals kinds of animals and
so on. It’s the same story everywhere and we have that showing up in this texture of the soul. We also have parts and we have causation for example a person who is walking to school with a Walkman playing. I don't get no satisfaction. Now that's a part of their experience but they could have done quite well without that it could have been lifted out of their experience and their life would not have been dramatically changed hardly changed at all. And yet it is a part of their experience it's an accidental part. Now it can't exist on its own like if you take the leg off of a chair. It can exist on its own.

So the hearing of I don't get no satisfaction on Tuesday morning as you walk to school or drive to school. That is not something that exists on its own but it is a part in the sense that it is an element which is destroyed if the whole is destroyed. And if it is a part of two things if they are one of them is destroyed then a part of another is destroyed parts are to be distinguished from properties in that sense. So experience has parts that's another feature of substances bodies have parts they have rules by which those parts are incorporated into them they behave in certain ways. It may be possible in the case of fractured personalities split personalities we call it may well be possible that you have some parts that are capable of existing distinct from other parts in personality. So you have parts and then finally you have causation. The unities which arise out of these different strata of the texture of the self-persons substances minds are causally active. They cause things to happen and that is another mark of substance. At least of individuals. I don't happen to think that events are independent of substances other than events some people think that events are ultimate but events are in any case individuals and have the unity of properties and parts that go with substances and they behave in a little different way than substances we call things.
But in any case the unity of experience that I depicted here does indeed cause things to happen all the time. Thoughts, feelings, intentions, character traits, faith in God through Christ, I hope that's causing something to happen. Wouldn't it be sad if it didn't? And causing things to happen both inside and outside of the self. So these are all causally active. You know, a lot of people today say that they want to admit that there are properties of a non-physical sort but not that there are substances of a non-physical sort. And normally that takes the form of saying if we have substances like a mind and a body, how can they interact? And if you read a book like say, Richard Taylor's little introductory metaphysics, you'll see him building the whole case around the difficulty of the interaction whereas [inaudible] talks about a person who's who, the very thought of heights causes perspiration to break out on their palms.

And he makes a grave discussion about where could the thought interact with the self and what I want to say to you this evening is number one. That's just a red herring. Causation does not require points of interaction. If I say the rumor caused the stock market to fall 25 points, there's no point of interaction between the stock market and the rumor nor is there any reason why there should be. This is simply a crude and misguided picture of what causation is and if you all do you have to do is explore the ordinary causal patterns of life not just in the physical and not just in the mental world by the way but in the physical world as well. There is no point of action. There is no point of interaction by which the moon causes the tides to rise. You may want to think about that. Let's just try it on. And in general this idea that there has to be a point of interaction is severely misguided. It's a red herring and a red herring is something you drag across the track to throw the dogs on, they smell the rotten fish and don't know what to do.

And then finally I don't want to say about causation is that it is no help to say well we have mental properties but no mental substances because those mental properties are going to be
causally active too. And if there is a problem with a point of interaction between mental substance and physical substance there's going to be at least as big a problem of interaction between qualities that are mental and qualities that are physical say for example well you know there's an event in the brain and it has a physical side which is a chemical process and a mental side which is a memory of old anxiety and you're still going to be totally defeated to explain how that mental side could interact with the physical side.

There's not going to be a point in the physic- in the chemical process which the mental quality somehow puts a screwdriver in and makes something happen or which comes out I mean it doesn't pop out of the middle of the physical process at any point but so I do honestly there's nothing gained as it's becoming increasingly popular popularly now in admitting that there is this mental realm but it's all quality if there's any problem with substances we're still going to have the problems you don't get to the problems that way but then most importantly there's no problem in the first place except in the background of a mistaken picture of what causation amounts to well I want to quit. I only gave you three minutes to discuss. But can we have a little question and answer time just a few minutes. [Inaudible question asked] Sure. Take for example just the unity of an inference in an inference I validly derive a premise from a conclusion now then when you try if you try to account for a logical relation or a motivational relation or any of the others that I've mentioned here in terms that are available to you from the science of physics in its present state you simply aren't even talking about anything that looks like an inference.

So it's simply the the difference in the descriptive terms involved there is no way to translate the unity of an inference or the unity of a purpose or the unity of a virtue honesty for example into terms that can be handled by the vocabulary of physics at present. It isn't like well we're almost there we haven't gotten it we don't even have the beginnings so we don't know what it would
look like. So that's my main point. Yes. [Inaudible question asked] Well actually what my point there was I do think that brain transplants will occur and it will be interesting to see what happens to the consciousness of the people involved. My own prediction is that if for example you get my brain I'm the one that's out of here and you're still here. You may be a little confused but you're still here just like you if you get my heart. I'm out of here and you're still here. And that's based on the simple point the brain is another physical organ. There's no reason to suppose that if you transplant brains you're going to get a greatly different effect a qualitatively Quantum Leap different kind of thing and if you transplant hearts and the reason being they are just physical organs.

Now I suspect the confusion. I suspect that confusion will be caused from the fact that in fact you know there is a very intricate pattern of interaction between the chemistry and structure of the brain and the corresponding money and that's now well established experimentally. In other words that the patterns of experience actually do shape the structures of the brain the way that the nerve groups cooperate with one another and organize themselves. So I don't I'm sure there will be it will be a trying transition to say the least. But my understanding is that the self is associated with the body as a total as a whole. Now obviously you know you can tell stories about well suppose we shave off an inch then a shave off another inch then a shave another inch or at a certain point it's all over. But you know you can go quite a ways. It's amazing how far you can go. Yes. [Inaudible question asked]

It's an interesting thing about the nature of the human self that it is very much a result of propulsive organization so if you don't take charge of your soul it won't go away at least for a while. But it's not going to have the appropriate kind of organization. And of course in the religious context we're talking about subordinating the spirit to God the soul to the spirit and the
body to the soul. And so that’s very important for us to say as Heidegger says the human being is in itself a kind of being that is responsible for its own being that it is what it is and so we really are we have serious responsibilities here. And so in the area of spiritual disciplines for example this becomes very important and the scriptures follow this once you read it realistically by word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against me. What is that? That’s just admitting that the soul has a texture and you’d better do something about it that if you go at it in one way things will turn out one way if you go at it in another way or another way. We have to pay attention that by the way is why one of the reasons why from the practical points of view life so important for us to understand the texture of the soul and not buy this stuff about the inner emptiness.

Questioner:

Yes Dr. Willard you might say something similar you said to Dr. Moreland But several of us went to the conference in Notre Dame on the Philosophy of Mind run by the society of Christian philosophers and there were a number of Christian philosophers trying to be materialist. One of the Philosophers brought up that the idea of intentionality [inaudible]... said the same thing talking about unity and other things and I was just wondering what you would say to [inaudible].

Dallas Willard:

That. Well I mean I think what you want to say in response to that is something like this. If they have any interesting avenues of exploration we would be glad to follow them up including that intentionality's a property of the brain. So you don't for we don't rule it out. Now tonight I didn't
get into the arguments about that but I mean truthfully I think you can sum up the results of this now 40 yearlong about attempt to do something called the identity thesis by saying that if you're able to pick out the mental adequately enough to assert its identity with the material you will never get rid of it. And that is really about what has happened is that if you can pick out the mental you must identify it by properties which in no way can be identified with physical properties.

So the way I put that for years to say is the condition of the identity as being meaningful is for it to be false and it's very I really think that increasingly that's where it's coming out. If you read Richard Warner's book the mind body problem that just came out it's got a set of readings and I mean he just very nicely summarizes where all of this comes through. I'm a little prejudice because Richard and I have worked with work through this problem a long time together but I mean I really think that's what is shown about where things are coming so I'm quite happy to follow up any leads they have look into anything they want to. I'm a little unhappy if they have already dismissed what I've been describing here this evening and you see one of the things that's remarkable about the identity thesis people is they never want to talk about Moreland's knowledge of troops being reducible to his brain. They want to talk about the pain sensation. Or maybe a propositional attitude or Pavarotti’s knowledge of Labe Lay. They don't want to talk about them. I say I'll give them sensations and Propositional attitudes if they can do this other they don't even get around to the interesting stuff.

And when they do get around to it they say things like well now when we report the sensation of yellow we're merely saying something is happening. Like happened at such and such another occasion and they retreat into so-called topic neutrality as they refer to it which doesn't even apply to the case but that's what they'll say. And then you have to come back and deal with that.
You see a lot of the power of the materialist at this point is succeeding in throwing the burden of proof on the other side. That is not a logical device. That's a rhetorical trick. Who gets the burden of proof depends upon the social context doesn't prove anything. So what we want to do is just say sure we follow up and you're done and sincerely and we and our check there is logic. We follow the logic is the best friend of the truth in these kinds of things. But I know that context and I really sympathize with your concern about that. I think that is really just what we say [inaudible]

Questioner 2:

I have a question about [inaudible] you said that Richard Taylor criticizes substance [inaudible]. Uh and his criticism is [inaudible].

Dallas Willard:

Well it's stronger than that for him. He claims it's unintelligible to say that my thought of heights could create perspiration in my palm but that's only because he assumed that if the dead knew that there would have to be a precise point in my body which it interacted with. That I say is the red herring property.

Questioner 2:

... better account of the tendency to... [Inaudible]
Dallas Willard:

Absolutely not. No absolutely not. I don't think so.

Questioner 2:

So their criticism of [inaudible] claims that the relation... red herring.

Dallas Willard:

If it's a red herring they can call it a red herring that point. The point is they don't accept it as a red herring and therefore they have the problem that you're pointing out. So I mean how does exactly how are we to dependence is an interactive relationship. If we don't want to call it a causal that's OK it's still an interactive relationship and we have to define what it is and say what it is. Now if there is a problem about the interaction of the physical and the mental in space they're going to have a problem. They still have. Now there's an old guy named Vought a German who see this. This has been all been here before. And middle of the 19th century Haykel Vought, Du Bois, Raymond and two or three other people were pushing the same materialist view if you want to see it it's fascinating read Haloes’ book The Riddle of the universe the riddle of the universe recently been reprinted in paperback and what was done here is how similar it all is. And Vought used to have this saying that the brain secretes thought like the liver secretes bile. Now you have to think about that just a millisecond to realize it's no such thing. When deliver secrets while there little tubes where the bias comes out they know little tubes in the brain where
the thought comes say but I mean here comes this guy and he says this and you just say you know what are you going to say.

So that's where your logic comes in handy. Ok one more statement or question of sorry. I don't know whose first let's have two quick ones. OK. I don't think so. I think it's an essential feature of the body that makes it significant for the soul but I don't believe they're inherently female and male. So I think by the way Jesus had something to say about this and if you're hung up on gender you better get used to getting along without it because you're not going to be dealing with it in the next world which would be a great relief to some of us. This book is basically the originative or creative aspect of human personality. It's intuitively it's to be identified with the power of choice.

Now we can use our choice to redirect our bodies and reprogram our souls. In some Asian and so for example to go back to the case I word if I hit in my heart that I might not sin against need that you can decide to hide the word in your heart if you do. There will be consequences for your body and your soul. You can decide to program your heart with MTV in which case you'll get different results. So basically the spirit is the creative aspect of human personality. It is the same in God. God is the infinite creative spirit. He's the only one of whom it can be said I am that I am in other words my being is based on my being.

Now we have this tiny little element here that's just a touch of and so not much but enough to make a difference. If we're willing to apply. No I don't think so sufferer's Gorsline plain. It suffers great limitation pain restriction in action and so on. I don't think personality disappears or is permanently damaged in that condition. We have to look at it from the bodily point of view in others. It's like when you die you leave a real mess behind that. Others have to clean up but
you're out of here. Except in this case you don't get out so easy outside. So that's a tough that's a tough one. So whether it's Alzheimer's or cancer or whatever it is. I mean we we we are so closely tied to our bodies that we will suffer with it.

But our aspiration as Christians is that we might know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering so that our suffering would be in fellowship with Him. Notice the order. It's not I know suffering first I know Christ then I move on to know the power of his resurrection. So I'm ready for the fellowship of the suffering. Thank you friends.

[End]