

Why a *Bodily* Resurrection?: The Bodily Resurrection and the Mind/Body Relation

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Abstract: The doctrine of the resurrection says that God will resurrect the body that lived and died on earth—that the post-mortem body will be numerically identical to the pre-mortem body. After exegetically supporting this claim, and defending it from a recent objection, we ask: supposing that the doctrine of the resurrection is true, what are the implications for the mind-body relation? Why would God resurrect the body that lived and died on earth? We compare three accounts of the mind-body relation that have been applied to the doctrine of the resurrection: substance dualism, constitutionalism, and animalism. We argue that animalism offers a superior explanation for the necessity of the resurrection: since human persons just are their bodies, life after death requires resurrection of one's body. We conclude that Christian dualists owe us an explanation and that Christians should seriously consider the merits of animalism.

1. Introduction

According to traditional Christianity, eschatological human afterlife is embodied.¹ Christianity affirms the eschatological² bodily resurrection of the dead. Supposing the Christian doctrine of the resurrection is true, what are the implications for the mind-body relation? We will consider three possible positions: Lynne Baker's constitutionalism, substance dualism (e.g., Plantinga and Swinburne), and animalism (e.g., van Inwagen and Merricks), the view that human persons are identical to biological organisms. Both Baker and Swinburne have argued that the existence of an afterlife counts in favor of dualism or constitutionalism (respectively). We will argue that both are mistaken: if there is an afterlife of the sort envisioned by Christianity, an afterlife that

¹ We say 'eschatological human afterlife' purposefully. Our paper concerns the *final*—thus eschatological—state of humans, not the intermediate state (if there is such a thing).

² By 'eschatological,' we mean 'from the moment of Christ's return—the eschaton—forward'.

requires eschatological bodily resurrection, then constitutionism and substance dualism fail to explain why God would resurrect bodies. On the other hand, animalism naturally explains why God would resurrect bodies—they are necessary for the existence of the human person. Our argument proceeds in two steps. First (section 2), we offer exegetical evidence that post-mortem existence for humans is existence in the body that one inhabited when one was alive. Then (section 3), we proceed in a Bayesian way: animalism must make less assumptions than constitutionism or dualism to explain why God would resurrect the self-same body, and this renders animalism more likely than dualism or constitutionism. In fact, given that a specific human will exist in the afterlife, animalism implies that her body will be resurrected. We conclude that Christian dualists owe us an explanation and that Christians seriously should consider the merits of animalism.

2. Bodily resurrection

We begin by outlining some textual support for the claim that Christianity endorses not only a physical resurrection of the body but that this resurrection of the body is essential for eschatological post-mortem existence. Here we argue only that the future bodily resurrection is an essential part of Christian theology (i.e., if there is no resurrection of the dead, Christian theism is false). From this, we will draw out desiderata for an account of the mind-body relation for those endorsing the Christian account of the resurrection of the body.

It should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the Christian faith and Christian theology that it includes a belief in the eschatological bodily resurrection of the dead. Indeed, the resurrection of the dead is “the cornerstone of the preaching of the church from the very beginning” (Hagner 1998, 99). The launching point for this pattern of preaching is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And this is with good reason. Donald Hagner comments:

For the death and resurrection of Jesus are not mere interludes in the story of God’s greater work, the establishment of his kingdom. Rather, they are themselves at the heart of God’s saving work—being the basis, means, and demonstration of the restoration of God’s rule. In particular, the resurrection of Jesus, which is an intrinsically eschatological event, is both the proper beginning of distinctly Christian eschatology and the foreshadowing of the coming resurrection of the dead. (Hagner 1998, 99)

One sees this position in St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians. In I Cor. 15:20, Paul asserts that Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is ‘the firstfruits’ of a coming resurrection harvest. ‘Firstfruits’ is a Jewish idiom denoting the best of a harvest of crops; the indication here is that *if* there are firstfruits, then *necessarily* there is a harvest from which they come.³ Paul’s use of this idiom tells his reader that, to his mind, Jesus’

³ Note that there is some disagreement about the timing of the firstfruits in ancient Hebrew practices. Joost Holleman, for example, argues that the firstfruits of a given harvest are presented only *after* the

resurrection *ensures* the bodily resurrection of the dead. Filling out Hagner's point, Christians are led to affirm the intrinsically *eschatological* nature of *Christ's* resurrection precisely because his resurrection is the first instance on an already assured eschatologically future resurrection (cf. I Cor. 15:23-28; 51-57). In this text, we are immediately confronted with Christian theology's (in)famous 'already and not yet,' since Paul's implied point in I Cor. 15 is, minimally, that the harvest has begun; its firstfruits have been presented. However, the full harvest is *not yet* here.

Perhaps all of this is obvious for the theologically informed. However, it is not merely the case that Christian theology affirms an eschatological bodily resurrection. On our reading of Christian theology, bodily resurrection is *essential* for eschatological afterlife. The truth of the Christian account of afterlife implies the eschatological bodily resurrection. To put the point another way: if there's no eschatological bodily resurrection, the Christian account of afterlife is false.⁴ While we don't feel the need to argue that Christianity's doctrine is true (that's a whole other argument), we do wish to provide a few points of note.

Our first appeal is to scripture. Again, in I Cor. 15, Paul suggests that

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. (I Cor. 15:12-19)

From this passage, a question immediately arises: why is Paul so adamant that Christ's *resurrection* guarantees the Apostle's preaching and the hope that Christ's followers have placed in Christ? We submit that, precisely because Jesus would be *dead* if he had not resurrected, there would be nothing he could do for his followers. If Jesus had remained dead, his Jewish followers would have seen this as affirmation from God that Jesus was *not* the messiah. Given that Paul links Jesus' fate with the fate of his followers, we submit that Paul's argument implies that, if there is no resurrection, Christ's followers also remain dead.⁵

crop has been harvested (Holleman 1996, 51). Others, (e.g., Anthony Thiselton and Murray Harris) assume that the firstfruits "were gathered before the remains of the harvest was ripe" (Harris 1998, 158). These commentators, though, agree that firstfruits imply a guaranteed harvest. See Thiselton (2000, 1224).

⁴ Here we make a clarification: we're not asserting that the falsity of the Christian account of afterlife implies or entails that there is no afterlife. We are making a specific claim about a specific account of afterlife, viz., the orthodox Christian account.

⁵ We take it that Paul doesn't mean that Christ's followers remain 'asleep' (Gk. *koimethentes* as a euphemism for death); rather, we take it that Paul means that, if there is no resurrection, followers of Christ are destroyed/ruined/lost for good (Paul's use of the *apollumi* verb '*apōlonto*' gives an indication that this is the case). See, for additional commentary, Thiselton (2000, 1214) and Watson (2005, 163). See also Turner (2015a, 411, 419 notes 15 and 16).

It is hard to overstate the importance of the eschatological bodily resurrection for Christian faith and theology. A common claim in Christian theology is that if one undermines the resurrection, one undermines the Christian faith.⁶ We agree. Furthermore, we take it that we are aligned with the rest of the tradition in stressing the importance of resurrection vis-à-vis Christian hope. Consider, for example, Irenaeus, who, in Book V of his (2004), argues vehemently against any theology which might undermine the *necessity* of bodily resurrection for Christian hope (in his context, he has in mind Gnosticism of various sorts).⁷ Or, in a much later medieval context, consider Thomas Aquinas who, though possibly incoherently, argues from Aristotelian principles that a disembodied human soul cannot remain disembodied; it must be joined again to its numerically same body at resurrection (Aquinas 1975, 299; Aquinas 1952, 473 – 484).

More recently, N. T. Wright has purposed to refocus Christian theology toward God's putting "everything to rights" in *this* cosmos (Wright, 2008, 142). Toward this end, Wright gleans much from I Cor. 15, Romans 8, Revelation 21, and elsewhere, to argue that the New Testament expressly tells the story about how the God of Israel makes good on his promises to correct everything that went wrong in The Fall. Eschatological afterlife, then, is not a denial of the material world; it is not an affirmation of the jettisoning of physical bodies upon death. Instead, eschatological afterlife is shaped in and through the qualitative reshaping of this very cosmos, affirming the goodness of God's creation while removing the evil that once encroached.

Viewed through this lens, Jesus' bodily resurrection is the beginning of this New Creation. This 'New' Creation is not numerically new; rather, it differs qualitatively from the way it once was. That is to say, it undergoes change. It is not abandoned or thrown away; neither are humans and humanity more generally. Instead, God renews human beings because they are image bearers; he puts humans the way he intended them to be (Farrow 2007, 216). This is the hope of the bodily resurrection (Wright 2008, 142-143, 153). Murray Harris puts it this way: "The Christian's desire and destiny is not for release from embodiment, but for the redemption of the body through resurrection (Rom. 8:23)" (Harris 1998, 168). We agree with this reading.⁸

Christian theology, in all orthodox traditions, affirms a corporeal eschatological state. That is, Christian tradition and the New Testament affirm the eschatological bodily resurrection of the dead. Lynne Rudder Baker (2007a, 2007b), who argues that her constitutionism fits well with the doctrine of the resurrection, identifies three components of the doctrine:

1. Embodiment: "resurrection requires some kind of bodily life after death" (2007a, 368).
2. Identity: "the very same person who exists on earth is to exist in an afterlife" (2007a, 368). <p class=JATBlockText>

⁶ See, for example, Polycarp's harsh pronouncement that whoever "says that [there is no] resurrection...is the first-born of Satan" (Polycarp 2004, 35). See also Wright (2008, 43 and 148) and Willis (2006, 190-191).

⁷ In particular Irenaeus (2004, 560 – 561); Hill (1992, 188).

⁸ Another text advancing this sort of view that's gaining rapid traction in the biblical theology literature is Middleton (2014).

3. Miracle: the afterlife is a gift from God.

We agree with these three components. Now, 3 is supposed to contrast with afterlife metaphysics according to which a person's continued post-mortem existence is completely natural, an event that requires no special act on the part of God. We agree with Baker that Miracle is theologically well grounded. But, we further think that given the textual evidence above (and more below), we can add a logically stronger version of 1:

- 1.* Identical Embodiment: resurrection requires post-mortem life in a body numerically identical to one's pre-mortem body.

Baker denies 1*, and has an argument against it. We have more to say in support of Identical Embodiment in the sequel. We'll further press objections against her constitution view with respect to Identical Embodiment in [§2.2]. Notice that we speak of resurrection of the body, rather than resurrection of the person. This difference is important, as we will see when considering Baker's views.

We think that 1*, 2, and 3 are desiderata for an account of the human person for those endorsing the Christian doctrine of the resurrection. An account of the human person should explain the necessity of the resurrection of the body for the eschatological existence of the human person; it should explain why Identical Embodiment is true.⁹

Before arguing for Identical Embodiment, we wish to say a few words about the Doctrine of the Intermediate State. Turner (2015) explains that this doctrine includes two claims:

- A. "There is a state of existence following human biological death in which a believing human (e.g. Jones) exists without her body (i.e., as a substantial soul/mind)" (406).
- B. "There is a state of existence following a human's biological death that is paradisiacal in quality" (407).

Many, such as Cooper (2000) and Harris (1983), have claimed that the dead are "living together with Christ in an intermediate state" (Cooper 2000, 140). We think B is true, but that A is false. Turner (2015), following Martin Luther and William Tyndale, argues that if there is a paradisiacal intermediary state, then the resurrection is superfluous. However, the resurrection is not superfluous, as we see in 1 Cor. 15:12-19. Thus, there is not a paradisiacal intermediary state. Either A or B must go. Since B is more clearly supported in scripture, A should be discarded. For this reason, we leave aside discussion

⁹ Merricks adds that the doctrine of the resurrection is a central doctrine of Christianity, and says that "if we were not identical with our bodies...the importance of the doctrine that, on the Day of Resurrection, one gets a body *identical with the body one had in this life* would be difficult to explain" (2009, 483 - 484). Our argument is similar in form, but we specify which aspects of the doctrine are in tension with which alternatives to animalism.

of disembodied souls existing between death and resurrection (but see Turner (2015) for the full argument and extended discussion with Cooper and Harris's arguments).¹⁰

2.1 Biblical Support for Identical Embodiment

Here, then, we make a further defense of Identical Embodiment. Now, Baker claims that I Cor. 15, especially verse 50, "clearly suggest[s] that resurrection bodies are not identical to earthly bodies" (2007b, 342). This non-identity is purportedly 'clear' in Paul's contrast between natural and spiritual bodies. Additionally, the resurrected Jesus seems to have a new body, since he can walk through walls. We will deal with these purported counter examples to 1* in turn.

In I Cor. 15:44, Paul says that the sown body (i.e., that which is laid in the grave) is a *sōma psychikon* (often translated 'natural' or 'physical' body) and raised a *sōma pneumatikon* (often translated 'spiritual' body). Wright comments: "Had Paul wanted in any way to produce the kind of contrast suggested to a modern reader by 'physical' and 'spiritual,' not only would *pneumatikos* have been an unhelpful word to have used for the latter idea, but *psychikos* would have been exactly the wrong word to use for the former" (2003, 351). Furthermore, Wright, claims that Greek "adjectives formed with the ending *-ikos* have ethical or functional meanings rather than referring to the material or substance of which something is composed" (Wright 2003, 351). Murray Harris also affirms this understanding of 'ikos' adjectives (1983, 120; 1998, 153). So, too, Anthony Thiselton states: "In the biblical writings the adjective *spiritual* (Greek, *pneumatikos*) nearly always denotes the quality of being animated, led, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (2012, 112). The idea, then, is that the spiritual body is not a body *made* of spirit, but a body *powered* by the Spirit. Moreover, this gloss on 'ikos' adjectives lines up well with the way St. Paul uses *pneumatikos* elsewhere in the epistle (e.g., I Cor. 2:15). To wit, we take the pronouncement of these exegetes as sufficient to establish that, minimally, contra Baker, it is not at all *clear* that Paul has in mind a numerical distinction between the bodies sown and raised. Indeed, it seems Paul does *not* have this sort of thing in mind at all. Instead, he claims that: "...'*this* mortal body' is destined to 'put on' immortality (1 Cor. 15:53-54)..." (Harris 1998, 165).¹¹

Baker also attacks Identical Embodiment based on her understanding of the qualitative differences between Jesus' pre-mortem and resurrected body [on her view: 'bodies']. Her attack is a nonstarter. Now, it is true that a traditional way to read the testimony of at least two of the Gospels (e.g., Luke, and John) suggests that his resurrection body has new properties (e.g., it can suddenly appear and disappear from locations). With this traditional reading in hand, Baker suggests that Jesus' resurrection body is *numerically* distinct from his pre-mortem body. This move is too quick for a number of reasons. First, as we highlight in §2, the purpose of resurrection is to set things right, a purpose which is lost if a new body is created from brand new cloth. Thus Polkinghorne: "...the new creation arises *ex vetere*, as the redeemed transformation of

¹⁰ We also do not believe that this commits us to 'soul sleep' theory. We suspect a way between denial of the Doctrine of the Intermediate State and 'soul sleep' theory lies in a re-evaluation of the nature of time and eternity. See Turner (2015b) for a solution to this effect.

¹¹ Emphasis ours.

the old creation, and not as a second, totally new, creation *ex nihilo*" (Polkinghorne 2002, 50).¹² The same, we submit, is true of Jesus' body according to the theological claim that *it* is the firstfruits—the first in-breaking part—of new creation. Obliterating Jesus' dead body and replacing it with a numerically distinct new body is not putting the dead body to rights; it is removing it from existence. If this is correct, Baker's position, given Christian theology, looks untenable.

Further, according to traditional Christianity, because of Jesus' resurrection, his tomb was found empty. In other words, the numerically same body that was crucified, died, and was buried is the one that, once resurrected, walked out of the tomb. The Gospel writers report that the empty tomb created a stir among Jesus' disciples, the chief priests, and the elders (Matt. 28:2-15; Mark 16:2-8; Luke 24:2-12; John 20:2-18). If one assumes that Matthew's report is correct, then the chief priests' men paid Roman soldiers to pass around a story to explain the body's disappearance from the tomb. They gave the false report that Jesus' disciples stole the body (Matt. 28:12-13). Given that this story is set in the context of the resurrection, Matthew is making the implied point that the *resurrection* explains the body's absence. The body has not been obliterated or stolen. It has been restored to new life. To suggest anything else is to tacitly agree with those who denied the resurrection, viz., that there is *another* explanation for the empty tomb.¹³ In sum, we agree with Stephen T. Davis—a dualist—when he asserts:

As to the nature of Jesus' resurrection body, I believe that this much can be affirmed and confidently taught within the Christian community: it was numerically identical with his pre-resurrection body (i.e., it was one and the same body) but not qualitatively identical with it (some of the old properties were still there, but it possessed several new ones as well). (Davis, 1993, 58)

Note that Davis affirms this numerical identity of body for the general resurrection as well (1993, 50). Again, Baker's position looks unpromising given Christian theology.

Importantly, Baker recognizes that her proof-texts might be outliers. She admits that "there is scriptural basis for the view that resurrection bodies will be identical to human biological bodies" (2007b, 344) and that tradition holds to Identical Embodiment. We take it that the tradition's claim in this regard is seen in, for example, the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in...the resurrection of *the body*..." It is hard to see how Baker can endorse this part of the Creed. There is eschatological life on her account, and it is bodily life, at that; but it is in no way *resurrection* life, in the Christian sense.

We submit that Baker's exegetical evidence against the dominant understanding of the resurrection does not hold up under scrutiny. Scriptural evidence, in keeping with Christian tradition, counts in favor of Identical Embodiment.

Because we will be relying so heavily on 1* in this paper, we wish to note that we are not alone in thinking that scripture clearly teaches that eschatological existence is

¹² See also Fergusson (2000, 3).

¹³ A view consistent with Baker's Constitutionalism is that Jesus, *qua* embodied person, walked out of the tomb leaving behind his dead human organism. But, as David Fergusson notes: "At the very least we have to reckon with the fact that nowhere in the New Testament is there any trace of an attempt to explain the compatibility of the resurrection with an extant corpse" (Fergusson 1985, 303).

embodiment in the bodies we had while we lived on earth. Indeed, as Merricks rightly puts it,

...until quite recently no self-styled believer in the resurrection would have raised the following objection: ‘What is the *point* of reassembly? Why even *try* to account for the identity of a resurrection body with a body had in this life? After all, resurrection bodies need not be numerically identical with bodies had in this life.’ Virtually no one would have thus objected because debates among believers in resurrection have been over *how* (not *whether*) a body that has ceased to exist will secure identity with a resurrection body. (Merricks 2009, 487 footnote 3)

Outside of the Bible, the very first recorded defense of the resurrection assumes the numerical identity between the dead and rising body. For example, Athenagoras (1956) defends 1*, even though he is what we’d call a dualist. Athenagoras writes: “now the same soul cannot recover the *same* body in any other way than by resurrection” (116, emphasis ours). The Christian tradition continued to affirm and defend 1* much later. Thus, Aquinas:

For we cannot call it resurrection unless the soul return to the same body, since resurrection is a second rising, and the same thing rises that falls; therefore resurrection regards the body which after death falls, rather than the soul which after death lives. And consequently if it is not the same body which the soul resumes, it will not be a resurrection, but rather the assuming of a new body. (1952, 952)

Indeed, traditionally, Christian dualists have endorsed 1*. Adams (2012), in her treatment of Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Scotus notes that all of them are interested in the following question, which presupposes the truth of 1*: “even if bodies have been functional partners in our antemortem careers, why resurrect them if they play no essential role in what we do after death?” (264). Adams, along with Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Scotus, think this is a perfectly good question to which Christians ought to have an answer. Given the tradition’s consensus of 1*, even if readers are unconvinced by our arguments, they can think of the remainder of the paper as a conditional: if 1* is true, then animalism must make less assumptions than dualism or constitutionalism.

2.2 Baker’s Philosophical Objection to Identical Embodiment

Baker (2007a, 2007b, 2011) has an argument that Identical Embodiment is metaphysically impossible. If Identical Embodiment is impossible, then our exegesis above must be faulty. Baker’s argument is:

4. Biological organisms are essentially corruptible.
5. The resurrected body is essentially incorruptible (i.e. not corruptible).

6. Therefore, the resurrected body is not biological. (2007a, 388, 2007b, 342-343, and 2011, 52).

If she is right, “then no view of human persons (like animalism or Thomism) that construes a person’s corruptible body to be essential to her is consistent with the doctrine of bodily resurrection” (2007b, 343).¹⁴ The upshot is that the resurrected body, whatever it is, could not be numerically identical with the earthly body, which is essentially biological.

Those endorsing Identical Embodiment should deny 4: biological organisms can be incorruptible. We offer Jesus’ resurrected body as an example. Jesus’ resurrected body is incorruptible. On this, Baker and we agree. Now, according to the Lukan and Johannine accounts, Jesus ate food after his resurrection, which he presumably digested. We can think of few actions as biological as eating. Further, Luke insists that, following his resurrection, Jesus claimed: “See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39). Thus, his body was biological. Thus, Jesus’ body was biological and incorruptible, contra premise 6. Given that Jesus’ resurrected body was biological, we claim that earthly bodies, which are biological and corruptible, can remain biological and become incorruptible. Baker agrees that it is possible that *this* body become incorruptible. However, she claims that “the incorruptible body would not be identical to the corruptible body from whence it came” because corruptible and incorruptible bodies would differ in their persistence conditions (2007b, 342), and an object possesses its persistence conditions essentially.¹⁵

There are at least two senses of ‘incorruptible.’ It can mean ‘not subject to decay,’ or it can mean ‘cannot be destroyed.’ Call the former sense incorruptible₁ and the latter incorruptible₂, and call the opposite of each corruptible₁ and corruptible₂, respectively. Premise 4 in the above argument is false when read as: biological organisms are essentially corruptible₁. Consider the species *Hydra vulgaris*. Members of this species are collections of stem cells shaped like a small intestine with tentacles. Because of the way they replace their cells, *Hydra vulgaris* do not seem to age. The organism can, of course, be destroyed, but that does not count against the organism being incorruptible₁ (or, as Martínez and Bridge put it, “potentially immortal” (2012, 458), since the organism could be destroyed. Thus, premise 4 should be:

- 4*. Biological organisms are essentially corruptible₂.

Premise 5 is surely true in the incorruptible₁ sense. Resurrected bodies will not be subject to age and decay. However, when read in the incorruptible₂ sense, it is false. Suppose that resurrection bodies are incorruptible₂, that is, that it is metaphysically impossible that they can be destroyed. If resurrected bodies cannot be destroyed, then not even God could destroy them. However, it is an odd consequence that God cannot

¹⁴ This argument generalizes to Jesus’ body as well. If Baker is right, then Jesus’ resurrected body was neither biological nor numerically identical to the body that was crucified.

¹⁵ Baker admits that four-dimensionalists can solve the problem easily: the body is a four-dimensional object with time slices possessing differing persistence conditions. However, she thinks that Christians should reject four-dimensionalism (see Baker 2013).

destroy resurrected bodies—God would have made an object so strong that even he cannot destroy it. Standard accounts of omnipotence deny that God can do such things (e.g., make a boulder so great he cannot lift it). Furthermore, it is part of the Christian tradition that the reason the new creation will not and cannot be destroyed is seated in God's *promises* that in the new creation there will be neither death nor destruction. So, we should deny that the resurrected body *qua* resurrected body is incorruptible in this strong sense. It is *metaphysically* possible that resurrected bodies *qua* resurrected bodies could be destroyed.¹⁶ Thus, premise 5 should read:

5*. The resurrected body is essentially incorruptible₁ (i.e. not corruptible₁).

Since premise 4 is true only on a corruptible₂ reading and premise 5 is true only on a corruptible₁ reading, the argument is invalid. Thus, resurrected bodies may be biological and we may preserve Identical Embodiment. We conclude that Baker's objection is no threat to Identical Embodiment.

3. Implications for the mind-body problem

We survey three views on the mind-body relation that have been applied to the doctrine of the resurrection: Baker's constitutionism, substance dualism, and animalism. We argue that animalism naturally explains all three of the conditions above. And, of central importance, animalism alone can best answer the question: why is it necessary that the resurrection body be numerically identical to the pre-mortem body? Note that this question is metaphysical, rather than epistemic. We are not asking for what *justifies* the *belief* that the doctrine of the resurrection is true. We are asking for the best available *explanation* as to *why* 1*, 2, and 3 are true. Thus, mere appeals to scripture to explain 1*, 2, and 3 are not satisfactory. Assuming that scripture is veridical, 1*, 2, and 3 are not true *because* scripture teaches 1*, 2, and 3. Rather, assuming that scripture is veridical, the scripture teaches 1*, 2, and 3 *because* 1*, 2, and 3 are true (see Adams 2012, 264).

3.1 Constitutionalism

Since Baker has, so far, been our primary foil, we turn now to address her metaphysics of resurrection. On Baker's account of personhood, 'human organism' and 'person' are both primary kinds, and human organisms, under certain circumstances, *constitute* persons. The relation between one's body and one's person is the same relation that obtains between the statue David and the co-located marble. In contrast to others (e.g. Gibbard 1975, Lewis 1986), Baker claims that constitution is not identity, since identity is necessary and symmetrical, whereas constitution is contingent and

¹⁶ Ryan Mullins (in personal correspondence) objects that since God promises not to destroy the new creation, God cannot destroy it (since he cannot fail to carry out his will). Supposing this is right, the indestructibility bestowed on resurrected bodies is a Cambridge property: the glorified body is indestructible simply because God declares it thus.

asymmetrical (2007a, 383). Instead, “constitution is as close to identity as a relation can get without being identity” (2000, 55). The primary-kind property of persons—the answer to the question “what is most fundamental about persons?”—is first-person perspective taking, and “each thing has its primary-kind property essentially” (2007a, 382). Thus, what is essential to a person is the first-person perspective that it has (2011, 49).

Baker has been clear about the implications of her account for bodily resurrection. First, human persons are embodied creatures on her account (2011, 50). Consider that, while the marble constituting David can exist without David, David cannot exist without *some* marble existing. Likewise, one cannot exist without *some* body. Thus, her account provides some account for embodiment.¹⁷ Second, Baker claims that, at the resurrection, God decrees that a new body (which is not identical to the human body) has the first-person perspective that the person being resurrected had while alive. Thus, the resurrection is a miracle, since God must endow a body with the proper first-person perspective. Finally, the resurrected person will be identical to the corresponding earthly person, since they share the same first-person perspective (2007b, 346). Thus, Baker provides an account of Identity, 2.

However, Baker’s account fails to explain 1*, Identical Embodiment, that resurrection *requires* post-mortem life in a body numerically identical to one’s pre-mortem body, and consequently, her account has three theologically problematic consequences.

3.1.1 Theological worries for Constitutionalism when combined with denial of Identical Embodiment

According to Baker, resurrected persons are not *human* persons. She writes “a person is a *human* person in virtue of being constituted by a human body. (I do not distinguish between human organisms and human bodies.)” (2007a, 381). However, if the post-resurrection bodies constituting human persons are non-biological as she claims (2007b, 343), then these future persons are not human. Thus, on Baker’s account, God allows humanity (as a kind) to become extinct, since no resurrected persons are human persons. However, this is theologically problematic because Christian theology insists that the resurrection is closely tied with restoration and redemption of humanity (see §2 above and Wright 2003, 204;). Indeed, a restored *imago Dei* is central to resurrection hope. Thus Middleton:

[The initial vision for God’s image bearers is that] God’s own generous exercise of power for the benefit of creatures thus provides a model for the human exercise of power in the world. Perhaps most significant of all is that the biblical God does not hoard power as sovereign ruler of the cosmos; instead, he gladly assigns *humanity* a share in ruling the earth as

¹⁷ But as Turner (2014) rightly points out, it’s not at all clear that persons must have some body or other to exist, since not all persons are embodied. Baker and we agree that there are some persons that are *not* embodied. God the Father and God the Spirit are two such persons. They are divine persons, of course, but, on Baker’s view, no persons are essentially the *kind* of person they in fact are.

his representatives (Gen. 1:26-18). God does not micro-manage the world, but instead fully expects *human* beings, made in the divine image, to contribute to the developing beauty and complexity of earthly life. (Middleton 2014, 51)¹⁸

And

[The final vision for God's image bearer is that]...the redeemed *human* race will once again utilize their God-given power and agency to rule the earth as God intended—a renewal of the human cultural task, but this time without sin. The initial narrative sequence of the biblical story will finally be fulfilled. Far from being the end or cessation of history, this is history's true beginning, free from the constraints of *human* violation vis-à-vis God or other *humans* or the earth itself. The climax of the biblical story, which many have called the “eternal state,” is fundamentally this-worldly. When God brings his original purposes to fruition, we find not escape from creation, but rather new (or renewed) creation (Middleton 2014, 70).¹⁹

It's hard to see how Baker's view might accommodate the sort of biblical theological conclusions Middleton here proposes. By our lights, Baker's view is consistent with bodily afterlife only if her view is divorced from a biblical theology of resurrection.

Second, Baker must reject Chalcedonian Christology— that Christ is one person in two natures. According to Chalcedon, Christ is a *human* being, even in his exalted state.²⁰ If persons resurrected in a glorified state cannot be human, then neither can Jesus be resurrected *qua* human.²¹ He could only be resurrected *qua* person. And here's the problem: according to the Definition of Chalcedon:

...our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same [Person], that he is perfect in Godhead and perfect in *manhood*, very God and very *man*, of a reasonable soul and [human] body consisting, consubstantial with the Father as touching his Godhead, and consubstantial *with us* as touching *his manhood*...This one and the same Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son [of God] must be confessed *to be* in two natures, unconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly, inseparably [united]...²² (Schaff and Wace 2004, 264-265)

We read ‘man’ in the above citation to be shorthand for ‘human’. That seems to us a fair and obvious reading of the text. Unfortunately, on Baker's view, humans don't resurrect.

¹⁸ Our insert and emphasis.

¹⁹ Our insert and emphasis.

²⁰ Baker endorses Chalcedonian Christology, even though she finds it “fundamentally mysterious.” However, she goes on to say that “as far as [she] can understand the Incarnation...Constitutionalism, with an amendment, is congenial to the Chalcedonian ‘two natures’ doctrine” (2011, 53).

²¹ A constitutionist like Kevin Corcoran can escape this worry (Corcoran, 1999). But, there are other problems afoot with the constitution view. See, for example, Moreland (2009, 133), Toner (2007, 641), and Turner (2014).

²² Emphases ours. Brackets belong to Schaff and Wace.

So, Baker can't account for the post-resurrection *humanity* of Jesus. However, according to Chalcedonian Christology, she needs to (Crisp 2007a, 133; Crisp 2007b, 161; Torrance 1976, 127 – 152).²³

Finally, Baker's view courts reincarnation, a view she suggests Christians must reject. Baker explains that "the Christian doctrine of resurrection of the body suggests that personal identity, at least in part, consists of bodily identity. If personal identity consists in bodily identity, even in part, then reincarnation is ruled out..." (2007a, 372). According to Baker, there are two ways to understand sameness of body: mereologically and "spatiotemporal continuity of ever-changing constituent cells" (2007a, 373). Since Baker claims that "a mereological approach to the material world is deeply wrongheaded" (2011, 50), Baker opts for the latter approach. However, it is unclear that Constitutionalism can accommodate spatiotemporal continuity. Baker explains that she doubts "that one and the same body...can be corruptible during part of its existence and incorruptible during another part of its existence" (2007a, 378). She explains that "this difficulty could be overcome by not requiring that the (incorruptible) resurrected body be the very same body as the (corruptible) earthly body" (378). That is, one could simply deny Identical Embodiment. In addition to the two problems with this argument outlined above (section 2.2), if "the bodies on earth and in heaven are not the same" (385) as Baker claims, then Baker is advocating a version of reincarnation rather than resurrection of the body. Indeed, on her account the *body* is not resurrected at all; only the *person* is resurrected.²⁴ Her account looks even more like reincarnation when she considers the intermediate state. She explains, "for all we know, persons in the intermediate state (assuming there is one) are constituted by intermediate-state bodies...If God can so transform or replace our bodies once, he can do it twice." (2011, 55). On this suggestion, we inhabit one body on earth, a different one in the intermediate-state, and then another after glorification. This looks like reincarnation, with the caveat that the last body we inhabit will be permanent. It also raises the specter of a physically located and locatable intermediate state, since there are bodies.

We have already argued that neither Baker's exegetical evidence nor her philosophical argument against the dominant understanding of the resurrection hold up under scrutiny. Scriptural evidence, in keeping with Christian tradition, counts in favor of Identical Embodiment. We have here further argued that there are three theological implications of Baker's rejection of Identical Embodiment, which many Christians would find problematic: God will not redeem, rescue, or save humanity as a kind; Baker's account cannot uphold Chalcedonian Christology; and Baker's account courts reincarnation.

²³ One small, but important, note is that the Chalcedonian Formula does not put Christ's human incarnation in the *past* tense. For a helpful and pellucid reformatting of the Chalcedonian Definition see McGuckin (2008, 256 – 257).

²⁴ We suspect this is why she always talks of 'bodily resurrection' instead of 'resurrection of the body'. Perhaps part of the problem is in thinking of the eschatological state as 'heaven', in which, we admit, it is hard to see how there could be *bodies*. In any case, the resurrection state is a new heaven *and a new earth*; it is an earthly existence. Heaven *comes down* to earth (Revelation 21:2); indeed, is wedded with it. This is a point that many NT theologians are now wont to make, and analytic theologians would do well to follow suit. We leave for homework whether there are any biblical references to 'heaven' as the eschatological state.

3.2 Substance Dualism

Substance dualism, as we are using the term, is a class of views consistent with the claim that human beings are made up of two substances: an immaterial mind/soul and a physical organism (a body).²⁵ We will argue that dualism does not have a ready explanation for the resurrection, understood as 1*, 2, and 3. In particular, dualism does not have a ready answer for why God will resurrect the numerically identical body.²⁶ The dualist can explain this data only by making additional commitments to her overall theory. On a Bayesian account, this renders the overall account less likely than an account that need not make additional assumptions.

Let us first focus on two well-known substance dualists who purportedly endorse the doctrine of the resurrection: Alvin Plantinga and Richard Swinburne.²⁷ According to their accounts, sameness of immaterial soul is necessary and sufficient for a person's continued existence (Swinburne 1997, 311 and Plantinga 2007, 119). We begin with Plantinga's dualism, which is a garden-variety form of interactive dualism. The following question arises: if the immaterial soul continues to exist separately from the body after death, why does the soul need to be reunited with its body in the afterlife? Given only Plantinga's dualism, it is unclear why Identical Embodiment would be true. It might also be unclear why the mere requirement of Embodiment is true on this account (as pointed out by Baker 2007a, 376). Why is eschatological human afterlife corporeal if humans are (or can be) immaterial things?

Now Plantinga (or the Plantingian) might make further commitments. One such suggestion is that, while the soul can exist apart from the body, it is better that the soul exists with a body. He might say, with Aquinas, that the soul without a body is a subsistent soul, but not a *human person*.²⁸ Thus, the resurrection is needed to make the *subsistent* soul once more a human person. As Plantinga puts it: "I can flourish only if embodied" (2007, 99, see also Taliaferro 2001). At best, this explains Embodiment—it is a good thing for the soul to be united to *some* body (specifically some *human* body). However, this response is insufficient to explain why, on Plantinga's sort of substance dualist account, Identical Embodiment is true.²⁹ All that Plantinga (or the Plantingian)

²⁵ Admittedly there are some who would call themselves dualists who do not fit this definition. We confine ourselves to this way of understanding dualism because 1) at least two prominent Christian philosophers hold it and 2) we think this is a widely held version of dualism. We suspect that versions of dualism denying that the mind is immaterial (e.g. E. J. Lowe's 'non-Cartesian dualism') will suffer similar theological problems as Baker's constitutionism.

²⁶ In her treatment of the resurrection and its implications for the mind-body problem, Baker offers two criticisms of substance dualism, which, as it happens, have nothing to do with the resurrection. First, she objects that souls "would be surds" (2007b, 341). Second, she references the causal interaction problem with substance dualism.

²⁷ We say 'purportedly' because it's not clear, in our view, that these two figures do, in fact, endorse the doctrine of resurrection, given its requirement for Identical Embodiment.

²⁸ Contra Stump, we find Aquinas absolutely clear on this score. See, for example, Aquinas (1952, 381 – 382). See Stump (2012, 458 – 462). It's worth noting that Stump places a heavy emphasis on a Baker-sort of constitutionism. We take Baker-style constitutionism to be false. One of us has discussed this elsewhere (Turner 2014).

²⁹ Here again we clarify that the Christian tradition rises and falls on whether or not there is a resurrection of the body. If there's no resurrection of the dead, Christian theism is false. (Cf. 1 Cor. 15:13-

can say is that an embodied afterlife is *better* than a disembodied one. He might, in addition, claim that the eschatological afterlife is the best kind of existence (an additional assumption), and thus it would necessarily be embodied (since embodied existence is superior to disembodied existence).³⁰ However, the response leaves our question unanswered: why will God resurrect *the body that died*? Plantinga's interactive substance dualism does not offer an easy explanation.³¹

Richard Swinburne is an emergent dualist³² and, consequently, might fare better in explaining Identical Embodiment. According to Swinburne, when living on earth, the human person is a composite entity consisting of two parts: the (physical) body and the (non-physical) soul. However, persons have their bodies contingently while the soul "is the necessary core which must continue if I am to continue" (1997, 146). Swinburne draws a distinction between the soul's existence and functioning. A soul functions whenever it "has conscious episodes" (1997, 174). Swinburne offers an analogy: the soul is like a lightbulb and the brain like a light socket. If the light socket is too badly damaged, the lightbulb will not work (though it might still exist). Although Swinburne agrees that it is *physically* impossible for my soul to exist apart from some brain functioning, perhaps *my* brain functioning, it is *metaphysically* possible that the soul "may still function without being embodied" and can function in some other body (Swinburne 1997, 308). In this respect, Swinburne is similar to dualists espousing functional holism, according to which a human person doesn't function correctly without being a unit of body and soul (see Cooper 2000).

Emergent dualism and functional holists might be able to explain Identical Embodiment because, on emergent dualism, the soul is causally dependent on the body or (in Swinburne's account) the brain. If the soul is dependent on the body for its existence or functioning, then it must be embodied to exist or function. Thus, emergent dualism explains why human souls are embodied. However, what kind of dependence obtains between the body (or brain) and the soul? On Swinburne's account, the brain is only physically necessary for the continued existence and functioning of the soul. Thus, since God can do the physically impossible, God need not resurrect one's brain (let alone one's body) in order for one's soul to exist in the eschatological afterlife. This may look like a *prima facie* defeater for Swinburne-style emergent dualism vis-à-vis Christian eschatology; however, we think a Swinburnian might well respond as the Plantingian does above: the eschatological state is the best of all states. As such, a soul—which works best with a body—would not be in such a state denuded of some body or other. As with Plantinga's dualism, Swinburne's emergent dualism succeeds in offering an explanation only by making additional assumptions, thereby lowering the probability of the truth of

19). Our investigation doesn't at all concern what ontology of human persons best explains afterlife *simpliciter*. Our investigation concerns Christian theism's claims concerning afterlife.

³⁰ There are good reasons to doubt that this response works. See Turner (2015a and 2015b) for arguments against substance dualist views consistent with Plantinga, Swinburne, John Cooper, and others.

³¹ In fact, Plantinga's modal argument for dualism would seem to require that the specific body one has is not at all important to one's identity.

³² How it is that the soul emerges from the physical "remains a mystery" (1997, 195), and Swinburne claims that God "brings it about that there is linked to the brain of an animal or man a soul which interacts with it in a regular and predictable way" (1997, 198).

dualism. However, even with the added assumptions, we are skeptical that Swinburne's emergent dualism does explain the doctrine of the resurrection.

Even if the emergent dualist (of the Swinburne sort) can explain why the eschatological afterlife is embodied, she will likely struggle to explain Identical Embodiment: why it is that God would resurrect the body that died. While pointing out that existing without a body is an undesirable state (potentially) explains why the soul should be reunited to *some* body, it does not explain why it will be reunited with *the body it once inhabited*. Here the emergent dualist could make a similar move as in the above paragraph: while God could decree that we will inhabit any human body, it is best if God decrees that we inhabit that body we inhabited pre-mortem (altered into a glorified state). However, on this account why embodiment in a glorified version of one's *earthly body* is better than disembodied existence or embodiment in some *other* glorified human body remains unclear.³³ Again, it seems the dualist would be adding commitments to their theory, thereby lowering the probability that their view is true.

Composite dualists (we have in mind Davis (1993), (2001) and Conn (2008)) might have an easier time explaining 1*. According to combinatorial dualism, the person consists of an immaterial part (the soul) and a physical part (the body). As Conn puts it:

If the composite theory is true, and you are partly composed of an immaterial soul and partly composed of a living body, then you are no more identical with your soul than you are identical with your left arm. And so even if your soul continues to exist...this is a far cry from saying that *you* will exist... (143)

Suppose that we interpret the composite dualist as saying that the human person is composed of a particular soul and a particular body. Since that particular body is necessary for one to exist, God must resurrect that body in order for one to exist in an afterlife. Notice that according to this kind of composite dualism, a disembodied state is impossible, and modal arguments seem undercut (e.g. a person who is currently a human could not exist in a cockroach body, since a human body is necessary for one's existence). We think this kind of dualism—according to which a particular human body is *necessary* for the existence of a human person, could explain the doctrine of the resurrection. Unfortunately, composite dualists, such as Davis and Conn, do not hold to it, instead affirming the possibility (indeed, the actuality) of disembodied states. Conn ends up claiming that the soul is more essential to the person than the body: “our souls are central to our existence in a manner which our bodily parts are not” (2008, 145). As such, they deny that a *specific* body is necessary for existence. Instead, what is necessary, at best, is *some* body. However, that the person requires *some* body does not explain why God would resurrect the antemortem body. Composite dualism leaves 1* unexplained.

³³ One might argue that dualism cannot accommodate 3, ‘Miracle,’ since the soul continues to exist apart from the body (they have differing persistent conditions). However, on Swinburne's account, the soul cannot (physical possibility) continue apart from the brain's functioning. However, God can sustain the soul's existence and functioning apart from the body (see Swinburne 1997, 309 and chapter 10). Thus, Swinburne's account preserves Miracle. Plantinga could similarly say that, under normal circumstances, the soul ceases to exist apart from the body, but that God (miraculously) causes it to continue to exist even after the destruction of the body.

Thus undercutting the explanation their account could have offered. Caught between affirming a disembodied state or explaining 1*, Davis and Conn affirm a disembodied state.

The dualist might claim that God's resurrecting the pre-mortem body is not an additional commitment because it is natural for God to resurrect the numerically original body rather than create a numerically new one. Since many Christians are already committed to the view that existence is good as such, resurrecting that body would be good.³⁴ However, that it is natural for God to re-embody that disembodied human person in her pre-mortem body is itself an additional assumption. Unfortunately, the view that 'being is good as such' does not help either, since a brand new body created *ex nihilo* would also exist and therefore be good. Consequently, the claim that it is natural for God to resurrect the body does require additional commitments for the dualist.

The dualist might use an alternative strategy, given that humans gain and lose parts of their bodies all the time. To see this strategy, let A be the body of some individual and let B be that same body 21 years later. Suppose that all the atoms composing a person's body are replaced over the course of 21 years. Unless one affirms mereological essentialism (we do not), there is no problem in affirming that A is numerically identical to B. Now suppose that centuries after the death of this person, God creates, out of completely different material, body C. Since we have denied mereological essentialism, there is no barrier to saying that C is identical to A and B. Thus, 1* could be true even if God created body C *ex nihilo* (see Conn 2008, 145-146 for a similar argument). But all of our arguments suggesting that dualism fails to explain 1* presuppose that, if God created the body *ex nihilo*, then it would not be the same body. Thus, our argument is undercut.

Although we deny mereological essentialism, it does not follow that a body C could be identical to bodies A and B. A specific human body could not be resurrected as a coffee mug. This is not the place to give a detailed solution to the problem of persistence through change and ship-of-Theseus-type problems. However, we will mention one solution that falls between mereological essentialism and total disregard for mereology: that there must be *some* kind of continuity of matter from the body in the first year to the body in the second year and so forth. Even if the body at year 21 lacks any parts of the body from the first year, it does have parts that the body at year 20 had, and the body at year 20 had parts that the body at year 19 had, and so forth to the body at year one. Since body C, in the above objection, shares no such connection to body A, C would not be identical to A.

Note that we do not claim here that God could not have created beings that are partly physical and partly immaterial, nor do we claim here that God could not have chosen some different plan of redemption. What is clear from scripture is that the renewed cosmos and renewed micro-cosmoi (i.e. human beings) mirror each other in important ways. Whether God *could* renew the cosmoi in a different way is irrelevant to our project. Our project is to begin with what we know from scripture—that we will exist in the very bodies we inhabited while alive, and see which views of the mind and body can best explain why God would go through that trouble. As we have seen in this section, dualism does not provide a ready-answer. This is not to say that it is impossible for the dualist to explain why God would resurrect bodies. Indeed, many Christian dualists have

³⁴ Thanks to Trent Dougherty for this explanation.

attempted to explain the doctrine of the resurrection by appealing to extra-metaphysical explanations (e.g. soteriological and divine justice). However, these explanations require additional assumptions, decreasing the likelihood that dualism is true.³⁵

3.3 Animalism

According to animalism, the human person is identical to the human organism (what we have been calling the 'body'). Here we pause for a brief clarification. In the animalist literature, there's no settled agreement as to whether it is appropriate to use the terms 'body' and 'human animal/organism' interchangeably. Eric Olson, in his (1999), eschews the use of the term 'body', since he thinks that 'body' as a term of philosophical art is too vague. He further claims that even if it is not vague, the use of 'body' and 'animal' interchangeably invites suspicions that the 'animal' and 'body' aren't numerically identical, since there's some reason(s) to think that, whatever a 'body' and 'animal' are, plausibly they have different persistence conditions (149 – 150). Thus, they would not be identical. This raises the supposed 'Corpse Problem' for animalism. However, by his (2004), Olson seems to have softened his worries about whether or not 'body' and 'animal' might be harmlessly interchanged, particularly with respect to the 'Corpse Problem'. On the other hand, animalists of a hylemorphic stripe, for example, do not seem to affirm similar worries (cf. Toner (2011), Oderberg (2007)).³⁶ We side with this latter group (though making no commitment to hylemorphic metaphysics), and we take it that there are reasoned philosophical defenses for the interchangeable use of 'body' and 'animal/organism', though we do not have space to make a defense for that here.³⁷ Moreover, we take it that we have good *theological* reasons for suspecting that Identical Embodiment (§2, 2.1, 3.1.1) is true. If 'human animal/organism' and 'human body' can be reasonably interchanged, then we take it that animalism and Identical Embodiment are consistent.

Now, a number of Christian philosophers have recently defended animalist accounts and its coherence with the Christian doctrine of resurrection (e.g., van Inwagen (1978) and Merricks (2008, 2009)).³⁸ If each human person is *identical* to his or her body, then it is not possible that a human person should exist without *his or her body*. Thus, animalism easily explains Identical Embodiment, 1*. That is, animalism explains why it is that God will resurrect the very body that died: doing so is necessary for that person to exist at all. As Merricks (2009) puts it, if you are your body, then the miracle

³⁵ In our view, these alternative explanations do not even succeed in establishing why God would resurrect the bodies we inhabited while we were alive. See chapter 1 in Turner (2015b).

³⁶ Of course, 'body' in this sense wouldn't be 'body' in the often used shorthand for hylemorphic dualist renderings of a human being, viz., 'soul/body'; rather, 'body' in the sense we mean and in which some hylemorphists find no fault in equating 'animal' with 'body', would be a unit of form and prime-matter. So, the animal/body/human being is a substantial form/prime-matter composite. (Cf. Oderberg (2007, 248 – 250), Pasnau (2002, 37 – 44), Aquinas (1999, 123).)

³⁷ For an ironic defense, see Olson (2004).

³⁸ Note that, though Merricks and van Inwagen are physicalists, we (jointly) make no commitment to physicalism. We think that animalism is consistent with a number of views, including hylemorphism, physicalism, and emergent (non-substance) dualism. Any view that insists that human persons are identical with human organisms is, in our view, an animalist view.

of resurrection “will not be merely some sort of spooky sideshow. Instead, it will be your only shot at life after death” (483).³⁹ Furthermore, since the natural course of a human body is for it to decay and never exist again, it takes a special act on God’s part to resurrect the body. Thus, animalism explains Miracle, 3.

To be clear: our argument is one of shifting the burden of proof. We are well aware, with John Cooper (2000, xv), that the Christian tradition has—almost universally—agreed that some form of substance dualism is the case.⁴⁰ There are likely numerous reasons for this historical agreement, but we have no space to investigate them here.⁴¹ Instead, we propose, as we’ve been implying thus far, that Christians begin their thinking about the metaphysics of human persons with 1*, 2, and 3 in mind. Since it has been neglected in thinking about the mind-body relation, and given its support outlined in §2 and §2.1, we particularly highlight 1*.

Once we shift to understanding the centrality of 1* as an integral part of the doctrine of the resurrection, it becomes clear that animalism best accommodates this shift. Animalism *best* explains why it is that God will resurrect the numerically same body that dies. While we agree that substance dualists can give all sorts of theological reasons for explaining why the self-same body must rise again,⁴² we deny that substance dualism, *qua* metaphysical thesis, can proffer an explanation for 1*. Again, dualism can explain 1* only by making additional claims—such as that eternal life in the body one inhabited while alive is better than life in any other body and that eschatological life is the best life, or that God must judge the person while they inhabit their pre-mortem body. Again, these additional assumptions lower the probability that dualism is true. In contrast, animalism offers a parsimonious explanation.

Now, this shift of burden raises a worry, a worry one might call ‘the resurrection problem.’ This problem can be put in the form of a question: Given that human bodies decay, how is it possible that God can resurrect *this very body* (rather than recreating an exactly similar replica)? And so one might answer this question thusly: the resurrection problem is a fatal blow to animalism, for animalists cannot provide adequate identity/persistence conditions for bodies through death and resurrection (see Taliaferro and Goetz (2008), Hasker (2011), and Mavrodes (1977)). We’ll not offer an animalist rejoinder to this worry here. We note, merely, three things. First: various thinkers (working with views consistent with animalism) have offered explanations for how animalism and 1* are compatible.⁴³

³⁹ Notice that animalism is stronger than what is required to explain Identical Embodiment. Animalism says that bodily identity is necessary *and sufficient* for personal identity. However, all that is needed is necessity.

⁴⁰ We need to be clear though: Cooper advances a ‘functional holism’ account of substance dualism. This is a view in which a human person doesn’t function correctly without being a unit of body and soul (in this, it’s quite similar to Swinburne’s view). Moreover, Cooper acknowledges vis-à-vis the metaphysics of human persons that “that a large portion of the [Christian] tradition is uncritically Platonistic is beyond dispute.” (2000, 94)

⁴¹ One of us has written at length out this historical development. See Turner (2015b).

⁴² In the earliest recorded defense of the bodily resurrection, for example, Athenagoras advances an argument for the self-same body given retributive accounts of justice. The body that committed bodily sins must be punished; the body that committed bodily righteous actions must be rewarded. Athenagoras (1956, 100-113)

⁴³ Cf. van Inwagen (1978), Merricks (2001) and (2009), Zimmerman (1999), and one of us (Turner 2015b), but see Hasker (2011), Taliaferro and Goetz (2008) for replies.

Second, though we admit that this is a challenge to the view we are advancing, we do not think it is insurmountable, and, in fact, it does not bear on the present dialectic. This is because the resurrection problem is not a problem for the animalist in particular. It is a problem for *anyone* who endorses Identical Embodiment. Since we have argued above that Identical Embodiment is part of the doctrine of the resurrection, the dualist and constitutionist will also have to deal with this problem, if they wish to endorse the doctrine of the resurrection. In other words, if the doctrine of the resurrection includes the claim that God will resurrect *the very same body*, those endorsing the doctrine of the resurrection cannot attack animalism for a present inability to provide persistence conditions of the body through death and resurrection—they themselves would need to do so too.⁴⁴ As such, it does not count against animalism in the present dialectic.

Third, the literature that advances resurrection problems against views consistent with animalism do so against views that are, in our opinion, materialist/physicalist views. William Hasker, for example, notes that, “...there are notorious difficulties for materialistic doctrines of resurrection, mainly over the question of personal identity” (2011, 83).⁴⁵ Taliaferro and Goetz (2008), following Baker (2007a), suggest that animalism cannot account for bodily identity through death and resurrection because “[o]n typical animalist views, persistence as the numerically same individual in this life involves continued biological functioning” (317). And, so they think, since these sorts of things don’t continue in death, the animalist view implies that death brings about a human person’s annihilation. But we make neither commitment to materialism/physicalism nor to what Olson (1999) calls ‘The Biological Approach’ to personal identity (a view of personal identity we take to be consistent with Peter van Inwagen’s (what we might call) ‘Life-Storm’ thesis (van Inwagen, 1990)). Animalism, in our view, is consistent with other non-materialist/physicalist views, views neither susceptible to nor the subject of these critiques (e.g., hylemorphism).⁴⁶

4. Conclusion

While many philosophers have argued that Christianity is compatible with physicalism about the person, we have provided a positive argument that they should be Animalists about human persons (physicalists or not). Animalism offers a natural explanation for why the resurrection is a miracle and, importantly, why God will raise the self-same body that dies. Animalism implies that if a person exists after death, her body does as well. On the other hand, dualism and constitutionism must make additional commitments in order to explain why God would go through the trouble of resurrecting the self-same body, thus rendering dualism less likely. We suggest, then, that Christians think further about human persons as animals.

⁴⁴ Not everyone agrees that animalism needs to provide such conditions. See Merricks’s (1998), (1999), and (2001).

⁴⁵ As his paper bears out, this is a brief gloss on what we have been calling ‘the resurrection problem’.

⁴⁶ For animalist presentations that provide non-biological approaches to personal identity, see, for example, Bailey (2015) and Toner (2011).

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