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## MATERIAL PERSONS AND THE DOCTRINE OF RESURRECTION

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Many Christians assume that there are only two possibilities for what a human person is: either Animalism (the view that we are fundamentally animals) or Immaterialism (the view that we are fundamentally immaterial souls). I set out a third possibility: the Constitution View (the view that we are material beings, constituted by bodies but not identical to the bodies that now constitute us.) After setting out and briefly defending the Constitution View, I apply it to the doctrine of resurrection. I conclude by giving reasons for Christians to prefer the Constitution View of human persons to both Animalism and Immaterialism.

Many Christians almost instinctively believe that they have immaterial souls—souls that, they hope, will survive their bodily death. One reason for this belief is the assumption that the idea of an immaterial soul is required to make sense of the Christian doctrine of life after death. Christians typically think that there is no possibility of life after death unless human persons have immaterial souls that can exist independently of any body whatever. Almost every major thinker in Christian history has held this view. Let us give the name ‘Immaterialism’ to the thesis that a human person most fundamentally is (or has) an immaterial soul.

It is natural—though mistaken, I believe—to assume that if human persons do not have immaterial souls, then they must have the persistence conditions of animals. (Something’s persistence conditions specify the changes that the thing could survive and the changes that would destroy the thing.) To say that human persons have the persistence conditions of animals is to say that whatever would make an animal go out of existence would make a human person go out of existence. Indeed, I believe that one major incentive to Immaterialism is the assumption that the only alternative to belief in immaterial souls is a thesis that has been called

‘Animalism.’<sup>1</sup> Animalism is the view that human persons most fundamentally are animals. According to Animalism, if the animal that you are is gone forever, so are you. Animalism entails that any change that permanently destroys your body permanently destroys you. If Animalism is the correct view of human persons, then a human person is identical to an animal, a biological organism: human persons most fundamentally are organisms.

Suppose that Animalism is correct and that a human person has the persistence conditions of an organism. Then, a human person lives after death if and only if a particular organism lives after death. The Christian view is that there will be a general resurrection at the end of time at some point indefinitely in the future. Even assuming that the organism was not obliterated at death, the many different things that can happen to human organisms after death—burning, or, at best, decay—do not leave one sanguine about the possibility that thousands of years after the death of an organism, that very organism could live again. No doubt God could reassemble all the atoms that once made up a living human animal and “breathe life” back into them. But would such a reassembled organism be the same one that had been destroyed? Peter van Inwagen has argued that it could not. An organism miraculously assembled from the dust of a decayed organism (or the ashes of a burned organism) cannot be the same organism as the one that decayed or burned.<sup>2</sup> Not even God could make it the case that the later-assembled organism was identical to the decayed or burned organism. Therefore, although God could make an organism out of dust or ashes, that later organism would not be the original organism. So, even if Animalism is correct—and a human person is identical to a human organism—the later organism would not be the original person. Thus, the doctrine of bodily resurrection presents a *prima facie* problem for Animalists—a *prima facie* problem, but if Peter van Inwagen and Dean Zimmerman are right, not an insurmountable problem.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, if Animalism is the only alternative to Immaterialism, it is no surprise that Christians tend to be Immaterialists.<sup>4</sup>

Whether or not Animalism is ultimately incompatible with Christian doctrine,<sup>5</sup> I want to argue that the Animalism/Immaterialism dichotomy is a false one. Both the Immaterialist and the Animalist, in effect, accept the following conditional:<sup>6</sup>

If human persons do not have immaterial souls, then they have the persistence conditions of animals.

On the one hand, the Animalist performs a modus ponens on the conditional and concludes that human persons have the persistence conditions of animals. On the other hand, the Immaterialist performs a modus tollens on the conditional and concludes that human persons have immaterial souls. By contrast, I want to say “a pox on both your houses” and reject the conditional altogether.

Before turning to presentation of my own view—the Constitution View—let me mention another alternative—a kind of hybrid of Immaterialism and Animalism. I take Thomas Aquinas’s view to be such a hybrid. Following Aristotle, Aquinas took human persons to be rational animals. Unlike Aristotle, Aquinas thought that the soul, the form of the body, was separated from the body at death. He regarded the soul to be an incorporeal and subsistent form that could exist without a body between a person’s death and the general resurrection.<sup>7</sup> The soul itself is not the person, but is a kind of placeholder for the person. At the general resurrection, a person’s soul is reunited to her animal body, and the person lives again. So, Aquinas shares with the Immaterialist the view that human persons have immaterial souls that can exist independently of any body and shares with the Animalist the view that human persons are animals; but he is neither an Immaterialist nor an Animalist as I have defined them. A human person, on Aquinas’s view, is an animal informed by a rational (i.e., immaterial) soul. However, since Aquinas supposes that a human’s rational soul can exist apart from any body whatever, I count him with the Immaterialists.<sup>8</sup>

The Constitution View offers an alternative not only to the thesis that human persons are most fundamentally immaterial souls, but also to the thesis, endorsed by Thomas Aquinas, that human persons have immaterial souls at all. Hence, I take the Constitution View to offer an alternative to Thomas Aquinas’s hybrid Immaterialism, as well as to both the more straightforward Immaterialism and Animalism, as I have defined them.

My argument will consist in putting forth a view of human persons that avoids both Animalism and Immaterialism. Neither are we most fundamentally animals, nor do we have immaterial souls that can exist apart from any body. As I have urged elsewhere,<sup>9</sup> the Christian doctrine of resurrection does not require Immaterialism—or any kind of dualism that takes human persons to have immaterial souls. Here I want to set out a materialistic alternative to both

Immaterialism and Animalism. I call this alternative ‘the Constitution View.’ The Constitution View gives persistence conditions of human persons that differ from the persistence conditions of organisms, without requiring that human persons have immaterial souls. After setting out the Constitution View and pointing out how it avoids both Immaterialism and Animalism, I’ll defend it from criticisms, and then apply it to the doctrine of resurrection. I’ll conclude by giving reasons for Christians to prefer the Constitution View of human persons to both Animalism and Immaterialism.

### The Constitution View of Human Persons

According to Animalism, human persons are most fundamentally organisms, and thus have the persistence conditions of organisms. According to the Constitution View, our persistence conditions are not those of organisms. Nevertheless, we are embodied, and our bodies are indeed organisms. The reason that we do not have the persistence conditions of organisms is that, according to the Constitution View, we are not identical to our bodies; we are not most fundamentally organisms. Rather we are most fundamentally persons, and a person is a being with a first-person perspective. A human person is a person (i.e., a being with a first-person perspective) who is constituted by a human body. A first-person perspective, or even a physical capacity for supporting one, is irrelevant for the existence of an organism; it is essential for the existence of a person.

The relation between a human person and her body is not one of identity, but of constitution. Constitution is a relation intermediate between identity and separate existence.<sup>10</sup> I have gone to some lengths elsewhere to give a technical account of the notion that absolves it of charges of incoherence and obscurity.<sup>11</sup> Here I just want to give an informal description. On the one hand, we need constitution to be similar to identity in order to account for the fact that if  $x$  constitutes  $y$  at  $t$ , then  $x$  and  $y$  are spatially coincident at  $t$  and have many of the same properties at  $t$ . For example, if a particular 6-foot piece of pink marble constitutes a statue, then the statue and the piece of marble are located in exactly the same place; and the statue, as well as the piece of marble, is 6-foot and pink. If the statue is worth a million dollars, then so is the piece of marble. On the other hand, we need constitution not to be the same relation as identity in order to account for the fact that  $x$  might not have constituted  $y$  even if  $x$  does in fact constitute  $y$ .

The piece of marble might have remained in the quarry and never have constituted a statue, even if in fact it does constitute a statue. Identity, classically understood, is a necessary relation; constitution is a contingent relation. In short, constitution is not identity, but is, nevertheless, a relation of sameness or unity.

According to the Constitution View, the relation between a human person and her body (the relation that I am calling ‘constitution’) is exactly the same as the relation between a statue and the piece of marble that makes it up, or between Betsy Ross’s first U.S. flag and the piece of cloth that makes it up, or between a river and all the aggregates of molecules that make it up. As these examples suggest, the relation between a human person and a particular human animal—the relation of constitution—is itself an instance of a very general relation. The underlying idea of the general relation of constitution is this: when a thing of a certain kind is in certain circumstances, then a new thing of a different kind comes into being. For example, when a piece of plastic of a certain kind is imprinted in a certain way during a government-sanctioned process, then a new thing, an Australian twenty-dollar bill, comes into existence. A piece of money is a fundamentally different kind of thing from a piece of plastic. The political and economic institutions and conventions that make it the case that a piece of money exists are not required for a piece of plastic to exist. A piece of money has different kinds of causal powers from a piece of plastic that does not constitute a piece of money.

Here is an example that illustrates the fact that constitution is not identity. The reasoning here is controversial, but I have defended it elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> Consider Betsy Ross’s first U.S. flag; call it ‘Flag 1.’ It was made by Ms. Ross out of a particular piece of cloth; call that piece of cloth, ‘Cloth 1.’ No national flag could exist in a world without certain intentions and political conventions. A national flag is a different kind of thing from a piece of cloth. (Some people consider national flags and other symbols sacred; nobody considers a piece of cloth sacred unless it constitutes a symbol. Laws are made to protect flags and other symbols, not to protect pieces of cloth per se.) So, Flag 1 could not exist in a world without certain intentions and political conventions. But something that is a piece of cloth could exist in a world without the intentions and political conventions necessary for something to be a flag. Since there is a world in which Cloth 1 exists but Flag 1 does not, Cloth 1 is not identical to Flag 1.

Let me make this point in a slightly different way: Being a flag and being a piece of cloth are of distinct primary-kind properties.<sup>13</sup> Each thing has its primary-kind essentially. Therefore, Flag 1 (which is of the primary kind, flag) has a property that Cloth 1 (which is not of the primary kind, flag) lacks. Flag 1 has the property of being a flag whenever and wherever it exists. Cloth 1, which might have remained in Betsy Ross's sewing basket and never have constituted a flag at all, does not have the property of being a flag whenever and wherever it exists. Therefore, on the classical conception of identity, Cloth 1 is not identical to Flag 1.

Constitution explains the diversity of kinds of things. If x constitutes y at t, then x and y are of different fundamental or primary kinds—as a piece of marble is a fundamentally different kind of thing from a statue. As I have said, things are members of their primary kinds essentially. If y's primary kind is statue, then y could not exist without being a statue.<sup>14</sup> An inventory of the world that mentioned pieces of marble, pieces of brass, etc., but omitted mention of statues would be incomplete—as would an inventory of the world that mentioned pieces of plastic, pieces of paper, etc., but omitted mention of pieces of money or an inventory of the world that mentioned aggregates of molecules but not rivers. Constitution is the vehicle by which new kinds of things come into existence.

Even though constitution is not identity, it is a relation of genuine unity. It is not just a fluke that x and y are at the same places at the same times when they are constitutionally related. The unity is so tight—as tight as possible short of identity—that if x constitutes y at t, then each derives or borrows properties from the other at t. Omitting reference to time, on the one hand, if x constitutes y, there are some properties that x could have had whether it had constituted y or not, and some properties that y could have had whether it had been constituted by x or not. These are properties that x and y have nonderivatively. On the other hand, there are other properties that x (or y) has only in virtue of its constitution relations to something that has those properties nonderivatively. These are properties that x and y have derivatively. So, there are two ways to have a property: derivatively or nonderivatively.

Here is an example. Consider my U.S. driver's license, constituted by a rectangular piece of plastic. The piece of plastic has the property of being rectangular nonderivatively (it could have had that property without constituting anything); the driver's license has the property of being rectangular derivatively (it has the property wholly in virtue of being constituted by

something that has the property of being rectangular nonderivatively). On the other hand, the driver's license has the property of allowing you to drive legally nonderivatively (its having that property does not depend on what constitutes it); but the piece of plastic has the property of allowing you to drive legally derivatively (it has that property wholly in virtue of constituting a driver's license).

Again, I'll skip the technical account of the idea of having a property derivatively, but I want to mention two features of the account. First, not every property (e.g., the property of being a statue essentially) is a property that can be had derivatively.<sup>15</sup> Second, primary-kind properties, like the property of being a statue, may be had either nonderivatively (by anything whose primary kind is designated by the property) or derivatively (by something constitutionally-related to something whose primary kind is designated by the property). For example, Cloth 1 is a piece of cloth nonderivatively; Flag 1 is a piece of cloth derivatively. Flag 1 is a national flag nonderivatively; Cloth 1 is a national flag derivatively (as long as it constitutes a flag).

Since constitution is a relation of unity, when *x* constitutes *y*, there is a unitary thing—*y*, as constituted by *x*—which is a single thing. As long as *x* constitutes *y*, *x* has no independent existence. If *x* continues to exist after the demise of *y*, then *x* comes into its own, existing independently. But during the period that *x* constitutes *y*, “what the thing really is”—*y*, constituted by *x*—is determined by the identity of *y*. So, what is in front of you when you go to a museum is a statue (constituted, perhaps, by a piece of marble).<sup>16</sup> You know what the thing is if you see that it is a statue; you do not know what it is if you see only that it is a piece of marble.<sup>17</sup> This sort of homegrown anti-reductionism seems to me to be part of our commonsense conception of the world: What the thing most fundamentally is is a statue; but it is constituted by a piece of marble.

Let us now turn to persons. Under what circumstances does an organism constitute a person? As I mentioned, what makes it the case that something is a person is a first-person perspective or a narrowly-construed physical capacity to support one. So, the circumstances under which an organism constitutes a person are the organismic and environmental conditions

conducive to development and maintenance of a first-person perspective. So, we need to see what it means to have a first-person perspective.

A first-person perspective is the ability to conceive of oneself as oneself. This is not just the ability to use the first-person pronoun; rather, it requires that one can *conceive of* oneself as the referent of the first-person pronoun independently of any name or description of oneself. In English, this ability is manifested in the use of a first-person pronoun embedded in a clause introduced by a psychological or linguistic verb in a first-person sentence. For example, “I wish that I were a movie star,” or “I said that I would do it” or “I wonder how I’ll die” all illustrate a first-person perspective. The second occurrence of ‘I’ in each of those sentences shows that the speaker is conceiving of herself in the first-person, without the need for any name or description. Even if you had total amnesia—and didn’t know your name or anything at all about your past—you could still think of yourself as yourself. Any being whatever with the ability to think of itself as itself—whether a divine being, an artificially manufactured being (like a computer), a human clone, a Martian, anything that has a first-person perspective—is a person. A *human* person is a person (i.e., a being with a first-person perspective) that is constituted (at least at the beginning of his or her existence) by a human body.

For a human person, the first-person perspective includes a first-person relation to her body. Smith has a first-person relation to her body if she can conceive of its properties as her own. For example, even if she is totally paralyzed, Smith has a first-person relation to her body if she can entertain the thought, “I wonder if I’ll ever walk again.” Or again: Smith makes first-person reference to her body as herself when she thinks about how beautiful she looks in the yearbook, or worries about how she might be injured skydiving--thoughts that she would express with first-person pronouns. As we have seen, constitution is a very intimate relation. Since a human person is constituted by a body, a first-person reference to one’s body is *ipso facto* a first-person reference to oneself.

A human body that permanently loses the ability to support a first-person perspective ceases to constitute a person. Suppose that Smith is in an automobile accident and goes into what is called ‘a persistent vegetative state,’ in which the parts of her brain that support the higher functions are destroyed. Suppose that it is physically impossible that the brain ever again support the thought that Smith would express by saying, “I exist.” Then, on the Constitution

View, Smith is no longer there. The organism is still alive, but it no longer constitutes a person. On the other end, a human organism (e.g., an embryo) that cannot support a first-person perspective does not constitute a person.

The relation between a statue and the piece of marble that makes it up also satisfies the same general conditions as does the relation between a human person and her body. That piece of marble constitutes the statue in exactly the same sense that a human body constitutes a person. The difference between the two cases is what is required for the existence of the ontologically higher thing. What is required for the existence of a statue is a relation to an artwork; and what is required for the existence of a person is a first-person perspective (or a narrowly-defined capacity for one). So, human persons are part of the natural world in the same way that statues are. There's no special pleading for human persons.

Although human persons are part of the natural world, they are a distinctive part. The first-person perspective that human persons have—whether it evolved by natural selection, or was specially introduced by God, or came into existence in some other way—is a genuine novelty. A world without beings that have first-person perspectives (i.e., a world without persons) would not have in it the same beings as our world, even if that personless world had human organisms in it. This is to say that persons make an ontological difference. Persons are fundamentally a different kind of being from other things. The difference that a first-person perspective makes cannot be overestimated. The first-person perspective ties what is distinctive about us and what matters most deeply to us to what we most fundamentally are.

What is distinctive about us is that we, alone among the creatures, have a conception of ourselves as beings with futures. Only persons can conceive of having a future, for which they have hopes and fears; only persons can make plans to try to control their futures. Only persons can entertain the thought, "What kind of being am I?" Only those who can think of themselves as themselves (i.e., only persons) can think of themselves as having values that they can assess. Animals that do not constitute persons can attempt to survive and reproduce, but—being unable to conceive of themselves in the uniquely first-personal way—they cannot try to change their natural behavior. Things that matter deeply to us—our values, our futures, our ultimate destinies—could matter only to beings with first-person perspectives. No animal that lacked a

first-person perspective could find these things important. That is the reason, I believe, that we, alone among creatures, have religion, science, art, and government.

So persons matter to themselves in a way that nonpersons cannot matter to themselves. But the importance and distinctiveness of persons is not just a parochial business of mattering to ourselves. Persons are important in the scheme of things as bearers of normativity—in at least two ways. Only persons, who can appreciate that they have done things in the past, can be called morally into account. And only persons, who can know that they have goals and subject them to scrutiny, can be called rationally into account. Only persons can be rational agents and moral agents. The appearance of persons in the natural world is the appearance of a genuinely new kind of being.

Another way to put this point is that persons qua persons have ontological significance. Being a person is not just a contingent and temporary property that some essentially nonpersonal beings (like organisms) have. When an organism comes to have a first-person perspective, it does not just acquire new property; it comes to constitute a new thing—a person.

I have now set out in cursory fashion my view of human persons. A human person most fundamentally is a person, a being with a first-person perspective. The Constitution View offers an alternative to both Immaterialism and Animalism. Obviously, on the Constitution View, a human person most fundamentally is neither an immaterial soul nor an animal. It should be clear that the Constitution View is also an alternative to Aquinas's hybrid view. Thus, the widely assumed conditional—If human persons do not have immaterial souls, then they have the persistence conditions of animals—is false. According to the Constitution View, human persons neither have immaterial souls, nor do they have the persistence conditions of animals.

Before moving on to the Christian doctrine of resurrection, I'd like to address an objection to the Constitution View of human persons. (I have replied to many objections in detail elsewhere.) I'll cast the objection in the form of a dilemma. Suppose that Jones, a human person, is constituted by an organism that we'll call 'Body.' Either Body is a person or Body is not a person. If Body is not a person, then the Constitution View is convicted of arbitrariness. Since Body is psychologically and physically exactly like Jones, it would be arbitrary to hold Jones to be a person and not Body. But if Body is a person, then since the Constitution View

holds that Body is not identical to Jones, there are two persons where Jones is—Jones and Body. Both alternatives are untenable.

Here is my reply: The Constitution View denies the second horn of the dilemma. Body most certainly is a person, but there are not thereby two persons where Jones is. This is so, because Body is derivatively a person. Jones is nonderivatively a person, and Body's being a person depends wholly on Body's relation to Jones. Body is not a separate person on her own, so to speak, or a different person from Jones.

In general, you can't add a derivative to a nonderivative instance of being an F to get two Fs. The fact that y is an F derivatively just is the fact that y is constitutionally related to something that is an F nonderivatively. Continuing to omit reference to time, if x constitutes y, and x is an F nonderivatively and y is an F derivatively, then there are not thereby two Fs. Typically, we count not by identity, but by identity-or-constitution:<sup>18</sup> For many properties,

(S) x is the same F as y if and only if [(x = y or x constitutes y or y constitutes x) and x is an F].

So, Body is the same person as Jones. Similar reasoning shows that Jones is an animal, but there are not two animals where Jones is. Jones is an animal derivatively, wholly in virtue of being constituted by something that is an animal nonderivatively. So, Jones is not a separate or different animal from Body. Jones is the same animal as Body.

Now I want to show that this conception of a human person is compatible with the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body.

### The Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead

For any conception of person, the question of whether it is compatible with the doctrine of resurrection concerns the conditions for identity over time for persons, as held by that conception. For Immaterialists, x is the same person as y only if x is the same immaterial soul as y. For Animalists, x is the same person as y only if x is the same organism as y. For Constitutionists, x is the same person as y only if x has the same first-person perspective as y. So, the question of compatibility with the doctrine of resurrection can be asked for each view

like this: Let  $x$  be a human person alive and well in 1900, and let  $y$  be a resurrected person in heaven at some later time; is it possible on the view in question that  $x$  is identical to  $y$ ? Immaterialism is compatible with the doctrine of resurrection only if it allows that  $x$  and  $y$  can be the same soul; Animalism is compatible with the doctrine of resurrection only if it allows that  $x$  and  $y$  can be the same organism. The Constitution View is compatible with the doctrine of resurrection only if it allows that  $x$  and  $y$  can have the same first-person perspective.

To show that the Constitution View is compatible with the doctrine of resurrection, let me begin with some comments about the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection of the dead. The doctrine is sketchy, pieced together out of hints and metaphors in Scripture. Perhaps the most specific account of an afterlife in the New Testament is in I Corinthians 15, but this passage is notoriously open to several interpretations. There is not even unanimity about whether there is immediate resurrection at the instant of death, or whether there is a temporary mode of existence before the general resurrection at the end of time.<sup>19</sup> However, let me say three things about the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

First, the doctrine concerns some kind of bodily life after death. Resurrection bodies are different from earthly bodies in that they are said to be spiritual bodies, glorified bodies, incorruptible bodies. Even if there is an “intermediate state” between death and a general resurrection, those who ultimately live after death will be embodied, according to Christian doctrine. So, Christian resurrection requires some kind of a body.

Second, according to the doctrine of Resurrection of the Body, individuals exist after death, not in some undifferentiated state merged with the universe, but as individuals. Not only is there to be individual existence in the Resurrection, but the same individuals are to exist both now and in an afterlife. So, the relation between a person here and now and a person in the Resurrection must be identity. “Survival” in some weaker sense is not enough. It must be possible that the very same individuals that exist now will exist long after their deaths. It must be possible that some person with a resurrection body be identical to you. Resurrection requires identity of earthly persons and resurrected persons.

Third, life after death, according to Christian doctrine, is a gift from God. The Christian doctrine thus contrasts with the Greek idea of the immortality of the soul. According to the

Greeks (e.g., Plato in the *Phaedo*), the soul is naturally immortal and without any outside intervention persists after the death of the body. (In addition, the soul subsequently returns to earth in a different body.) The Christian, whether or not she believes in an immaterial soul, does not take an afterlife to be part of the natural course of events. Rather, it is part of God's gracious bounty. The idea of miracle is built into the Christian doctrine of life after death at the beginning.

So, there are three points to keep in mind: First, the doctrine of Christian resurrection requires bodily life after death. Second, it requires identity between an ordinary flesh-and-blood person and a resurrected person. And third, according to Christian doctrine, resurrection is miraculous. Now consider how the Constitution View accommodates these three features of resurrection.

First, according to the Constitution View, I am essentially embodied; although I do not necessarily have the body that I in fact have now, I never can exist without any body at all. So, the fact that Christian resurrection is bodily resurrection is no problem for the Constitution View. The Immaterialist, who thinks that a human person is identical to an immaterial soul, is left with a question of why resurrection should be bodily at all. The Constitutionalist has an easy answer: we could not exist without bodies of some kind or other. So, if we are to exist in an afterlife, we will be embodied. But the fact that, according to the Constitution View, I cannot exist without some body or other does not take us very far. What is needed is to make sense of the idea that some future person is identical with me.

So, second, we need a criterion for sameness of person over time. On the Constitution View, sameness of person is sameness of first-person perspective. Person  $P_1$  at  $t_1$  is identical to person  $P_2$  at  $t_2$  if and only if  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  have the same first-person perspective. Again, fine, but what is the criterion for sameness of first-person perspective? I doubt that there is any such noncircular and informative criterion to be stated.<sup>20</sup> It is a primitive fact that some future person with a body different from mine is I; but there is a fact of the matter nonetheless.

Although no conditions for sameness of first-person perspective over time will be forthcoming, if I exist at some future time, I shall know it. This is an odd, even unique, feature of the first-person perspective, and the one place where Descartes was on the right track: I can

know, with certainty, that I exist. I know that I exist without having to identify myself in any way. I wake up in the morning, and without checking the mirror or consulting my memories, I know that I exist. The person I know to be waking up is I, is identical to me. Since I do not have to identify myself (say, by my appearance or my mental states), there is no possibility of misidentifying myself. I may have complete amnesia; I may have been in a totally disfiguring automobile accident; I may be covered with bandages and unable to move. Still, I can be certain that I exist.

Consider an extreme case. The envisaged case may be impossible, but if the Constitution View can show in this case that there is a fact of the matter as to whether a particular person is identical to me, then I don't think that it has any conceptual problems with supposing that some resurrected person is identical to me.

Suppose that a mad scientist managed to duplicate me overnight using a brain-state transfer device, and that he cleverly fashioned bodies, so that now there are 100 physical and psychological replicas of me—each sincerely claiming to be Lynne Baker, each reporting past events that only I knew about before I was duplicated, each looking just like me. Notice that the Constitution View, unlike other materialistic views, does not have the untenable consequence that they are all Lynne Baker. All 100 of the duplicates are psychologically continuous with me when I went to bed, but the Constitution View does not hold that psychological continuity is sufficient for personal identity over time. What is required is sameness of first-person perspective. The 100 duplicates all have different first-person perspectives—even if each of the first-person perspectives is “qualitatively indistinguishable” from mine. They have different first-person perspectives (and hence are different persons), in virtue of the fact that they have first-person relations to completely different bodies. A sufficient condition for there to be 101 persons, according to the Constitution View, is that there be 101 first-person relations to 101 bodies. The fact that each claims to be Lynne Baker, and the fact that each has apparent memories qualitatively similar to Lynne Baker's, and the fact that each looks like Lynne Baker are all irrelevant to whether any of them is actually Lynne Baker. At most, one of them can have my first-person perspective. So, the first point is that Constitution View does not have the untenable consequence that more than one future person is I.

The second point is that there is a fact of the matter whether one of the future persons is I, and if so, which one. There is not only a fact of the matter which one is I, but also I will know which one is I. There is also a fact of the matter which one is Lynne Baker, but it is possible that no one (not even I, Lynne Baker) will know which one is Lynne Baker. To see this, consider a continuation of the fantasy: After mixing me (Lynne Baker) into the crowd of duplicates, not even the mad scientist can tell which one is really Lynne Baker. I may not know which one is Lynne Baker; the claims of all the others to be Lynne Baker may shake my confidence, or I may mistakenly think that I have amnesia. Although I may not know which one is Lynne Baker, I still know which one is me. (This is the peculiarity of the first-person perspective: I know that I exist, and that I am this one; knowing which one is Lynne Baker is another matter.) And each of the others who thinks that she is Lynne Baker knows which one is she. For any one of us, she may be mistaken that she is Lynne Baker, but she is not mistaken that she exists (and that she is distinct from all the others).

Therefore, there is a fact of the matter about which future person is I, and I shall know it. (If no future person is I, then of course I will not know that; in that case, I won't be around to know anything.) There is also a fact of the matter about which future person is Lynne Baker, but it is possible that nobody will know it—not even me. There is a fact about which person last night was Lynne Baker, and she was I. Any future person who is I is Lynne Baker. There is a fact of the matter about which future person is I. Therefore, there is a fact of the matter about which future person is Lynne Baker, even if no mortal (including Lynne Baker) knows it.

We can apply these points to the case of resurrection. The Constitution View of human persons is compatible with several interpretations of the doctrine of resurrection. On the interpretation according to which a human person exists in some intermediate state between her death and a general resurrection in the future, the Constitution View would postulate an intermediate body. (Alternatively, the Constitution View is compatible with there being a temporal gap in the person's existence). And on the interpretation according to which resurrection is an eschatological event outside of time altogether, Smith acquires a resurrection body at death and passes directly into eternity. The Constitution View is compatible with either of these interpretations of the doctrine of resurrection. Although there are no doubt difficulties with any interpretation of the doctrine, the Constitution View does not make the difficulties any

more intractable than they already were. On the Constitution View, it is possible that a future person with a resurrected body is identical to me, and there is a fact of the matter about which, if any, such future person is I.

Now turn to the third feature of the Christian doctrine of resurrection. Resurrection is a gift from God. Any resurrection is a miracle. The Constitution View can use this feature to show its compatibility with the doctrine of resurrection. Recall that although a human person is essentially embodied, it is not necessary that she have the body that she in fact has. Therefore, Smith, say, might have had a different body. So, ‘Smith is the person with body 1’ is contingently true if true at all. Now, according to the traditional doctrine of Providence, God has two kinds of knowledge—free knowledge and natural knowledge. God’s free knowledge is knowledge of contingent truths, and his natural knowledge is knowledge of logical and metaphysical necessities. (I’m disregarding the possibility of middle knowledge here.) Again, according to the traditional doctrine of Providence, the obtaining of any contingent state of affairs depends on God’s free decree. Whether the person with resurrected body 1, or body 2, or some other body is Smith is a contingent state of affairs. Therefore, which if any of these states of affairs obtains depends on God’s free decree. No immaterial soul is needed for there to be a fact of the matter as to whether Smith is the person with resurrected body 1. All that is needed is God’s free decree that brings about one contingent state of affairs rather than another. If God decrees that the person with body 1 have Smith’s first-person perspective, then Smith is the person with body 1.<sup>21</sup> So, there is a fact of the matter as to which, if any, of the persons in the Resurrection is Smith, even if we creatures cannot know it.

A by-product of this use of the doctrine of God’s Providence is that it also provides for the metaphysical impossibility of Smith’s being identical to both the person with body 1 and the person with body 2. For it is part of God’s natural knowledge that it is metaphysically impossible for one person to be identical to two persons. And according to the notion of God’s natural knowledge, what is metaphysically impossible is not within God’s power to bring about.

Without appeal to an immaterial soul, then, a Christian can tell a theologically acceptable story that renders it determinate whether Smith is identical to any given resurrected person. God’s natural knowledge rules out the possibility that the person with body 1 and the person with

body 2 are both Smith, and his free knowledge guarantees that there is a fact of the matter about which (if either) is Smith. So, I don't think that the difficulties raised by the doctrine of resurrection are any more serious for a Christian proponent of the Constitution View than they are for any other Christian.

To sum up: I started with three features of the Christian doctrine of resurrection, and then I showed how the Constitution View fit in with each one: The Constitution View is clearly compatible with bodily resurrection. The Constitution View allows for there being a fact of the matter as to which, if any, future person is I. The Constitution View can exploit the fact that, according to Christian doctrine (sketchy as it is), resurrection is miraculous. Given a Christian idea of Providence, it is well within God's power to bring it about that a certain resurrected person is identical to Smith. Therefore, on the Constitution View of human persons, resurrection is metaphysically possible.

#### Why Christians Should Prefer the Constitution View

The Constitution View, then, is a materialistic conception of human persons that is compatible with the Christian doctrine of resurrection. Let me conclude by saying why I think that Christians should endorse the Constitution View over both Immaterialism and Animalism.

First, Immaterialism. As I argued elsewhere, if a Christian does not need to be a Substance Dualist, then she should not be.<sup>22</sup> There are well-known intractable difficulties with the notion of an immaterial soul and its relation to a human body. Moreover, the Constitution View can give the Immaterialist almost all that he wants without invoking immaterial souls. For example, the Constitutionalist can agree with the Dualist on many important points: Constitutionalist and Dualists agree that the identity conditions of persons are different from the identity conditions of animals, that identity (and not just psychological similarity) matters for survival, that it is possible for a human person to have a different body from the one that she actually has, and that there is a fact of the matter (perhaps not ascertainable by us) as to whether or not a particular person in the future is I. Since the Constitutionalist can give the Immaterialist almost all of what she wants without recourse to immaterial souls, I see nothing to recommend Immaterialism over the Constitution View.

Now consider Animalism. (I'll confine my comments on Animalism to the variety that takes human animals to be identical to human bodies and human persons to be identical to human animals.)<sup>23</sup> There are several reasons for a Christian not to be an Animalist, even if Animalism is not logically incompatible with the doctrine of resurrection. First, Animalism splits off what we most fundamentally are from what is most distinctive and important about us. If Animalism is correct, then our having first-person perspectives is entirely irrelevant to what we most fundamentally are. Animalists are explicit on this point: As one Animalist put it recently, "psychology is completely irrelevant to personal identity."<sup>24</sup> Or as he put it in another place, "[Y]ou can continue to exist without being a person, just as you could continue to exist without being a philosopher, or a student or a fancier of fast cars."<sup>25</sup> On the Animalist View, my being a person is metaphysically on a par with my "being a philosopher, or a student or a fancier of fast cars." That is, from an Animalist point of view, our having first-person perspectives (or any mental states at all) simply doesn't matter to the kind of beings that we are.

However, the Christian story could not get off the ground without presupposing first-person perspectives. On the human side, without first-person perspectives, there would be no sinners and no penitents. Since a person's repentance requires that she realize that she herself has offended, nothing lacking a first-person perspective could possibly repent. On the divine side: Christ's atonement required that he suffer, and an important aspect of his suffering was his anticipation of his death (e.g., the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane); and his anticipation of his death would have been impossible without a first-person perspective. This part of Christ's mission specifically required a first-person perspective. What is important about us (and Christ) according to the Christian story is that we have first-person perspectives. Given how important the first-person perspective is to the Christian story, Christians have good reason to take our having first-person perspectives to be central to the kind of being that we are.

The second reason for a Christian to endorse the Constitution View over Animalism is that the Constitution View allows that a person's resurrection body may be nonidentical with her earthly biological body. According to the Constitution View, it is logically possible that a person have different bodies at different times; whether anyone ever changes bodies or not, the logical possibility is built into the Constitution View. By contrast, on the Animalist View, a person just is—is identical to—an organism. Whatever happens to the organism happens to the person. On an Animalist View, it is logically impossible for you to survive the destruction of

your body. So, on an Animalist View, if Smith, say, is resurrected, then the organism that was Smith on earth must persist in heaven. The resurrection body must be that very organism.<sup>26</sup> In that case, any Animalist View compatible with Christian resurrection will have implausible features about the identity conditions for organisms.

Let me elaborate. If, as on the Animalist View, a person's resurrection body were identical to her mortal body, then we would have new questions about the identity conditions for bodies: NonChristian Animalists understand our identity conditions in terms of continued biological functioning. But Christian Animalists who believe in resurrection cannot construe our identity conditions biologically unless they think that resurrected persons are maintained by digestion, respiration and so on as earthly persons are. Since the bodies of resurrected persons are incorruptible, it seems unlikely that they are maintained by biological processes (like digestion, etc.) as ours are. But if biological processes are irrelevant to the identity conditions of resurrected persons, and if, as Animalism has it, biological processes are essential to our identity conditions, then how is it even logically possible for a resurrected person to be identical to any of us? Something whose identity conditions are biological cannot be identical to something whose identity conditions are not.

To put it another way, a Christian Animalist who believes in resurrection must hold that earthly bodies, which are corruptible, are identical to resurrection bodies, which are incorruptible. Since I think that biological organisms are essentially corruptible, I do not believe that a resurrection body, which is incorruptible, could be identical to a biological organism. Even if I'm wrong about the essential corruptibility of organisms, however, the fact remains that on Christian Animalism, the identity conditions for organisms would be beyond the purview of biology.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, death would have to be conceived of in a very unusual way by an Animalist who is a Christian: On a Christian Animalist view, a person/organism does not really die (e.g., God snatches it away immediately before death and replaces it with a simulacrum that dies). Platonists would say that the body dies, but the soul never dies; it lives straight on through the body's death. Christian Animalists would have to say something even stranger: the body of a resurrected person does not die either, if by 'die' we mean cease functioning permanently. Death

for human persons who will be resurrected, on this view, would just be an illusion. I do not think that that conception of death comports well with the story of the Crucifixion, which suggests that death is horrendous and not at all illusory.

So, there are several reasons why a Christian should prefer the Constitution View to Animalism. In order to make Animalism compatible with the doctrine of resurrection, the Christian Animalist would have to make two unpalatable moves: She would have to conceive of identity conditions for organisms to be at least partly nonbiological, and she would have to reconceive the death of a human person in a way that did not involve demise of the organism to which the person is allegedly identical. Perhaps even more important is the fact that, according to Animalism, the property of being a person or of having a first-person perspective is just a contingent and temporary property of essentially nonpersonal beings: Animalism severs what is most distinctive about us from what we most fundamentally are. On the Animalist View, persons qua persons have no ontological significance. I think that these are all good reasons for a Christian to prefer the Constitution View to Animalism.

### Conclusion

I hope to have shown three things: First, Animalism is not the only materialistic alternative to Immaterialism. The Constitution View of human persons is fully materialistic and can be worked out in detail. Second, the Constitution View of human persons is compatible with the doctrine of resurrection. Third, the Constitution View of human persons is preferable to its main rivals, Immaterialism and Animalism. So, with respect to the doctrine of resurrection, a Christian need not choose between Immaterialism and Animalism. The Constitution View is waiting in the wings.<sup>28</sup>

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The label comes from Paul Snowden, one of the proponents of Animalism. P.F. Snowden, “Persons, Animals, and Ourselves” in The Person and the Human Mind, Christopher Gill, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990): 83-107.

<sup>2</sup> See Peter van Inwagen’s “The Possibility of Resurrection” in Immortality, Paul Edwards, ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992): 242-46. Reprinted from The International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion 9 (1978).

<sup>3</sup> The doctrine of resurrection casts doubt on Animalism, but does not logically preclude it. Van Inwagen (*op. cit.*) points out that even if human persons are identical to animals, a human person could have life after death if God miraculously preserved the original animal. But after dissolution, that very organism (and hence the person) could not live again. Also see Dean Zimmerman, “The Compatibility of Materialism and Survival: The ‘Falling Elevator’ Model,” Faith and Philosophy 16 (1999): 194-212.

<sup>4</sup> Whatever problems arise for Animalists with respect to life after death would also arise for those Immaterialists who (like the majority of Christians through the ages) believe that in the Resurrection one’s soul is reunited with the same body that died and decayed (or was burned, or whatever).

<sup>5</sup> See Dean Zimmerman, *op. cit.*, for a view of how Animalists can believe in life after death.

<sup>6</sup> Contemporary Christians who are materialists (e.g., Peter van Inwagen) seem to accept this conditional as well as contemporary immaterialists (e.g., Dean Zimmerman).

<sup>7</sup> See Marilyn McCord Adams, “The Resurrection of the Body According to Three Medieval Aristotelians: Thomas Aquinas, John Duns, Scotus, William Ockham,” Philosophical Topics 20 (1992): 1-33.

<sup>8</sup> There is another variety of dualism, recently developed by William Hasker in The Emergent Self (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999) and promoted by Dean Zimmerman and Ted Warfield in “We Are Not Animals” delivered in a Plenary Session of the Pacific Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, March 24, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> “Need a Christian be a Mind/Body Dualist?” Faith and Philosophy 12 (1995): 489-504.

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<sup>10</sup> Any believer in the Christian Trinity is committed to there being some such relation. I'm not suggesting that a believer in the Christian Trinity will endorse constitution as I construe it; rather, a Christian is in no position to reject my view on the grounds that the idea of a relation between identity and separate existence is incoherent.

<sup>11</sup> In Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and in "Unity Without Identity: A New Look at Material Constitution," New Directions in Philosophy, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 23, Peter A. French and Howard K. Wettstein, eds. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1999): 144-165, I have given a completely general definition of 'x constitutes y at t.' Here I'll drop the reference to time when no confusion will ensue.

<sup>12</sup> See "Why Constitution is Not Identity," Journal of Philosophy 94 (1997): 599-621.

<sup>13</sup> It is only in virtue of its primary-kind property that something can enter into a constitution-relation. So, we would not want to say that a chair constituted an antique. Being an antique is a property that the chair may have if it is old; it is not a primary-kind property.

<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed exposition of constitution, see Ch. 2 of Persons and Bodies, or "Unity Without Identity."

<sup>15</sup> 'Having a property derivatively' is not defined for any properties of the following types: (a) properties expressed in English by the locutions 'essentially' or 'necessarily' or 'primary kind' (as in 'has F has its primary-kind property'), or variants of such terms ("alethic properties"); (b) properties expressed in English by the locutions 'is identical to' or 'constitutes' or 'exists' or variants of such terms ("identity/constitution/existence properties"); (c) properties of any sort such that necessarily, x has one at t only if x exists at some time other than t ("properties rooted outside the times at which they are had"—Roderick Chisholm's term); (d) properties that are conjunctions of two or more properties that either entail or are entailed by two or more primary-kind properties ("hybrid properties"). For more detail, see Persons and Bodies, Ch. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Although "what the thing really is" is a statue, the constituting piece of marble itself does not have the persistence conditions of a statue. The persistence conditions of x do not change; the piece of marble is essentially a piece of marble, whether it constitutes a statue or not.

<sup>17</sup> In "Preserving the Principle of One Object to a Place: A Novel Account of the relations Among Objects, Sorts, Sortals and Persistence Conditions" (Philosophy and Phenomenological

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Research 54 (1994): 591-624), Michael Burke offers a view that seems to fit parts of this description. As I understand it, Burke's account, applied to the relation between persons and bodies, has the following as a consequence: Human-body 1 (a fetus, when it is not a person) is not the same human body as Human-body 2 (an adult, who is a person spatiotemporally continuous with Human-body 1). This consequence seems implausible. Whatever we say about persons and bodies, surely there is only one human body throughout—from fetus to corpse. My view of persons and bodies allows that there is a single human body, and at times it constitutes a person and at other times, it does not.

<sup>18</sup> This discussion is very sketchy. For fuller discussion and defense of the Constitution View, see Persons and Bodies.

<sup>19</sup> See John W. Cooper, Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989).

<sup>20</sup> cf. Trenton Merricks, "There Are No Criteria of Identity Over Time," Noûs 32 (1998): 106-124.

<sup>21</sup> cf. Stephen T. Davis, Risen Indeed: Making Sense of the Resurrection (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993: 119-121.

<sup>22</sup> "Need a Christian be a Mind/Body Dualist?" Faith and Philosophy.

<sup>23</sup> Another kind of animalism, endorsed by David Wiggins, holds that human persons are identical to human animals, but that human animals are not identical to human bodies.

<sup>24</sup> Eric T. Olson, "Was I Ever a Fetus?" Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 57 (1997): 97.

<sup>25</sup> Eric T. Olson, The Human Animal (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997): 17.

<sup>26</sup> Since I am persuaded by Peter van Inwagen's argument against the identity of an organism that is destroyed now and any future organism, I do not believe that an Animalist can countenance the total destruction or disintegration of a person/organism who is to have an afterlife.

<sup>27</sup> Moreover, a Christian Animalist who believed in resurrection would have to allow that organisms can undergo physically impossible changes without ceasing to exist. For example, organisms would disappear at one place (on earth at the place where the death certificate says that they died) and reappear at some other place.

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<sup>28</sup> Thanks are due to Katherine A. Sonderegger, Gareth B. Matthews, and Dean Zimmerman for comments on versions of this paper.