

NO HOPE IN THE DARK: PROBLEMS FOR FOUR-DIMENSIONALISM¹

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Abstract. If Christian hope is to be held coherently then life after death must be a metaphysical possibility for the one who holds it. Materialist accounts of human persons face serious problems in establishing this possibility. Hudson has defended a four-dimensional solution: If persons are a series of temporally scattered, gen-identical object stages then a living human organism could be a shared temporal part of *two* persons: one with a corpse as a further temporal part, and another with an imperishable body extending eternally from the Last Day. This solution suffers from the general problem of *counterpart hope*: that gen-identity does not provide sufficient unity to ground prudential future concern, and the specific problem of *quasi-hope*: that as a living organism I cannot know whether death is a metaphysical possibility for *me*, and I thus cannot possess coherent Christian hope.

I. INTRODUCTION

The New Testament concept of hope has been summarized as “trust in God, patient waiting and confidence in God’s future.”³ It is an important philosophical question whether such hope is veridical; whether placing confidence in God’s future is a coherent thing to do. The future in question is one in which death need not be the end of existence and so hope cannot be veridical if the survival of death is in fact a metaphysical impossibility.

The dominant Christian view of human nature that has endured across the centuries has affirmed the metaphysical possibility of survival as an entailment of the claim that the bearer of personal identity is an incorporeal soul.⁴ The soul view⁵ can also be reasonably considered the default pre-philosophical human

1 This paper develops and extends the first section of Jonathan J. Loose, “Hope for Christian Materialism? Problems of Too Many Thinkers”, in *Christian Physicalism: Philosophical Theological Criticisms*, ed. R. K. Loftin and Joshua R. Farris (Lexington, 2018), see 257-261. Some limited parts of that text are included by permission and with grateful thanks to the publisher.

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3 J. M. Everts, “Hope”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, G. F. Hawthorne and Daniel G. Reid (IVP Academic, 1993).

4 Christian materialists typically accept this point. For example, van Inwagen writes, “I have to admit that God has allowed dualism to become the dominant view of human nature among Christians. An essential part of my own contrary view of human nature and the afterlife—that “death is but a sleep”—was condemned at Trent, but no ecumenical council or denominational synod or inquisitorial office or faculty of theology, no Pope or archbishop or reformer, has, to my knowledge, condemned dualism *per se*.” Peter van Inwagen, “Dualism and Materialism: Athens and Jerusalem?”, *Faith and Philosophy* 12, no. 4 (1995); and Hud Hudson articulates a common view when he writes that: “Historically, the Church has been unwaveringly dualist.” Hud Hudson, *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person* (Cornell Univ. Press, 2001), 172. Both authors accept the common view that this dualism is the result of early Greek philosophical influence, but see Paul L. Gavrilyuk, “The Incorporeality of the Soul in Patristic Thought”, in *Christian Physicalism: Philosophical Theological Criticisms*, ed. R. K. Loftin and Joshua R. Farris (Lexington, 2018), for the view that there was no monolithic Greek dualism and the Fathers thus had to evaluate a range of corporeal and incorporeal Greek views, each with its attractions for the church. According to Gavrilyuk, the Fathers’ view is the product of careful and challenging theological and philosophical reflection within a diverse intellectual milieu.

5 The soul view refers to the generic view that there is a non-material substantial self (or soul) that is the bearer of personal identity. This view is compatible with various substance dualist views in Cartesian, Thomistic and emergentist traditions. See Jonathan J. Loose, Angus J.L. Menuge, and J.P. Moreland, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 1.

self-understanding throughout history and across societies⁶ and if it is incoherent or implausible then the survival of death becomes a serious problem: How can a human person survive the death and dissolution of that very material body with which he or she is identical?

Today, materialism is as popular inside the academy as it is unpopular outside it. Unsurprisingly, therefore, some Christian philosophers have departed from the ordinary person's long-standing belief in an immaterial soul and have embraced materialism about human persons,⁷ generating a significant dispute. The centerpiece of this dispute has been the question of whether materialism can accommodate the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body.⁸ As would be expected, Christian materialists have offered a number of accounts of the possibility of surviving death given materialism. These accounts typically entail the possibility of survival for *all* human persons, but a further problem would exist for any version of materialism on which the possibility of survival for one human entailed the impossibility of survival for another. This problem would be particularly acute if the question of who is in the privileged group of potential survivors is a question that no human person is in a position to answer. Such a view would be inconsistent with any individual having confidence about his or her post-mortem future and would thus be inconsistent with Christian hope. Hope requires more than knowing that survival is a logical possibility for an unidentifiable subset of human beings; it requires knowing that survival is a logical possibility for *me*.

Hud Hudson is one of those who has offered an account of the consistency of a materialist view of persons with the Christian doctrine of resurrection.⁹ His sophisticated materialist metaphysic involves the controversial claim that objects, including persons, have temporal parts. This implies that objects are not wholly present at a time, but rather consist in a series of object-stages extended over time. Hudson argues that by embracing temporal parts his account of the possibility of resurrection resolves issues that plague alternative versions of materialism such as animalism or the constitution view. This purported benefit might be thought sufficient to justify the controversial commitment to temporal parts. However, I will argue that it does not and Hudson's view suffers from two fatal problems of its own when accounting for Christian hope. I call these the problem of counterpart hope and the problem of quasi-hope. The problem of counterpart hope is a general consequence of Hudson's four-dimensional view (explained below), and it serves to illustrate a general problem for the four-dimensionalist. The problem of quasi-hope goes further, being a particular problem for the four-dimensionalist wanting to accommodate Christian hope. The problem of quasi-hope increases significantly the implausibility of Hudson's controversial view. Seemingly uniquely among metaphysical positions, four-dimensionalism leaves us incapable of hope even if it is able to explain how some people might survive death.

6 Evidence of the ubiquity of soul-belief includes: (i) experimental work of cognitive scientists such as Jesse M. Bering, "The Folk Psychology of souls", *The Behavioral and brain sciences* 29, no. 5 (2006) and Paul Bloom, "Religious Belief as an Evolutionary Accident", in *The Believing Primate: Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Reflections on the Origin of Religion*, ed. Michael J. Murray (OUP, 2009). (ii) The extent to which the afterlife beliefs of adherents of major world religions entail dualism. (iii) The assumed coherence (rather than truth) of claims of veridical out of body and near-death experiences. See Gary R. Habermas, "Evidential Near-Death Experiences", in *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, ed. Jonathan J. Loose, Angus J.L. Menuge and J.P. Moreland (Wiley Blackwell, 2018) and Michael N. Marsh, "The Phenomenology of Near-Death Experiences", in *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, ed. Jonathan J. Loose, Angus J.L. Menuge and J.P. Moreland (Wiley Blackwell, 2018).

7 This is a "local" materialism, since no orthodox Christian theist would be a "global" materialist given belief in an immaterial personal God.

8 Hudson, *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person*, 148.

9 Important examples of Christian materialist accounts of resurrection include Lynne R. Baker, "Constitutionalism: Alternative to Substance Dualism", in *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, ed. Jonathan J. Loose, Angus J.L. Menuge and J.P. Moreland (Wiley Blackwell, 2018); Hudson, *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person*; Peter van Inwagen, "The Possibility of Resurrection", in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology, Volume 2*, ed. Michael C. Rea (OUP, 2009); Dean Zimmerman, "The Compatibility of Materialism and Survival: The 'Falling Elevator' Model", *Faith and Philosophy* 16, no. 2 (1999).

II. THE APPEAL OF FOUR-DIMENSIONALISM

Various reasons have been given in favor of adopting the view that material objects (and not just events) have temporal as well as spatial parts (a four-dimensionalist ontology, explained in more detail in the next two sections).¹⁰ Hudson focuses specifically on the way in which four-dimensionalism can resolve certain paradoxes that seem intractable given a more commonsense, three-dimensional view.¹¹ The puzzles he highlights include thought experiments involving the removal and transplantation of brain hemispheres. The challenge in these fission scenarios is to determine whether or not a pre-transplant human person would survive the (physically successful) procedures they involve.¹² Hudson shows that by understanding a person as a series of person-stages (temporal parts) each of which is not identical to but closely related to the others, these puzzle cases can be resolved. In order to address further puzzle cases, Hudson adds to four-dimensionalism a counterpart theory of *de re* modal relations.¹³ These are controversial metaphysical commitments because of their counter-intuitive consequences, as we will see. Hudson nevertheless considers these commitments worth making because they offer solutions to problems that seem intractable otherwise, such as the problem of accounting for the possible survival of death. In what follows I outline the temporal parts view and these purported benefits before arguing that they are in fact illusory.

III. FOUR-DIMENSIONALISM

The idea that *events* have temporal parts is uncontroversial (a soccer match is literally a game of two halves), but the central and controversial claim of the temporal parts view is that objects have them too. On this view, *objects* have temporal location and extension in virtue of having temporal parts spread out across regions of time in the same way that they have spatial location and extension in virtue of having spatial parts spread out across regions of space. A temporal part incorporates all of an object's spatial parts at the times that it exists. Hudson explains the principal idea that:

necessarily, for each way of exhaustively dividing the lifetime of any object, *x*, into two parts, there is a corresponding way of dividing *x* itself into two parts, each of which is present throughout, but not outside of, the corresponding part of *x*'s lifetime.¹⁴

10 For a helpful introduction to four dimensionalism, see, e.g. Eric T. Olson, *What Are We? A Study in Personal Ontology* (OUP, 2007), chap. 5.

11 Thus Hudson is not motivated by the problem of how identity is preserved through change; the so-called Problem of Temporary Intrinsic, see David Lewis, *The Plurality of Worlds* (Blackwell, 1986), 202–5. Nor is he motivated by compatibility with Special Relativity, or considerations about vagueness.

12 For the problem of fission, see Derek Parfit, "Personal Identity", in *Personal Identity*, ed. John Perry (Univ. of California Press, 1975); David Lewis, "Survival and Identity and Postscripts". In *Philosophical Papers Vol. 1* (Oxford: OUP, 1983). The other important puzzle that Hudson discusses is Wiggins' case of Tibbles and Tib. See David Wiggins, "On Being in the Same Place at the Same Time", *The Philosophical Review* 77, no. 1 (1968). If two objects cannot be co-located without being identical then consider Tibbles the cat and Tib. Tib is a proper part of Tibbles consisting of all of Tibbles except her tail. If Tibbles loses her tail, Tibbles and Tib are now co-located and both seem to survive. Are Tibbles and Tib identical after all? The four-dimensionalist says that Tibbles and Tib are four-dimensional continuants that overlap by sharing a temporal part that begins at the point that the tail is lost.

13 Hudson asks how two objects—such as a particular statue "David" and the lump of clay from which it is formed, "Lump"—that are perfectly coincident at every moment of their existence can be distinct without accepting that they are co-located objects. See Allan Gibbard, "Contingent Identity", *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 4, no. 2 (1975). Four-Dimensionalism allows that two objects can be distinct in virtue of having one or more non-shared parts. However, if all parts are shared then another way to accommodate the distinctiveness of the objects is required and this is why Hudson turns to a counterpart theory of *de re* modal properties. See Lewis, *The Plurality of Worlds*. According to this, Lump and David are labels that pick out distinct sets of counterparts (distinct counterpart relations) reflecting distinct *de re* modal properties (e.g. Lump could survive being re-shaped into a sphere, David could not). The labels thus refer to a single object in the actual world but distinct sets of counterparts in other possible worlds. The distinctiveness of these sets grounds the distinction between the terms.

14 Hudson, *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person*, 58.

On this view, objects (including human beings) may be visualized as space-time worms and therefore it is important to note that persons do not exist as wholes at any given moment. Those who adopt the temporal parts view of human persons typically agree with Hudson that we are wholly material; that extended temporal parts are fusions of momentary ones; and that a universalist view of composition is correct.¹⁵

It is important to see that person-stages (the temporal parts of human persons) are distinct entities so that an individual existing at a particular moment is a person-stage associated with a large number of other person-stages that are its counterparts located at other times. Just as one spatial part is not numerically identical to another, so one temporal part is not numerically identical to another. On this view, then, there is not a single continuant; a self-identical person who continues to exist from moment to moment (that would be to return to three-dimensional endurantism) but a series of person-stages existing at different times. To the extent that these person-stages are unified, they are connected not by a relation of personal *identity* but by a weaker relation of *gen-identity*. Hudson adopts the common view that *gen-identity* is a relation of psychological continuity grounded in “similarity of mental content including facts about memories, beliefs, desires, intentions, and goals; or perhaps it would also invoke certain facts about basic mental capacities, dispositions, and character.”¹⁶ He rightly makes the important point that:

...it is somewhat misleading to engage in the practice of referring to analyses of this relation as discussions of the relation of identity.¹⁷

Persons are not identical over time on this view. In short, Hudson believes that an individual human person consists in a number of non-identical, psychologically continuous person-stages. With this view of material human persons in mind we must clarify the problem of fission that Hudson takes to be an important reason for its adoption, and which has a direct consequence for his account of resurrection and Christian hope.

IV. FOUR-DIMENSIONAL FISSION

Imagine that my brain is removed from my skull and the hemispheres are separated (fissioned). The rest of my body is then destroyed. Now compare two alternative scenarios: In the first, *non-branching* scenario just one hemisphere is successfully transplanted into a waiting, brainless body while the other hemisphere is destroyed. One living human person results. In the second, *branching* scenario, both of the hemispheres are transplanted into different brainless bodies and two living human persons result.

The puzzling question is what happens to *me* in each case? First, consider this question from a three-dimensionalist’s perspective. The intuitive answer in the non-branching fission case is that I would survive. However, the branching fission case is more difficult. It can be understood as two parallel instances of the intuitively survivable non-branching case and so the difficulty arises from the fact that the result of branching fission is *two* human persons each equally qualified to be me. Since identity is a transitive relation I cannot claim to be identical with two persons (since in that case the two distinct individuals would need to be numerically identical with each other, which they clearly are not). Furthermore, since the two persons resulting from the fission are equally qualified to be me, there is no non-arbitrary way to distinguish them and thus to hold that I survive as one rather than the other. The reasonable conclusion seems to be that in the branching case I do not survive; I fission out of existence. However, even this conclusion is not trouble free. If non-branching fission is survivable while branching fission is not, and given that branching fission is simply two cases of non-branching fission, it seems that whether or not I survive depends not only on whether or not one of my hemispheres is successfully transplanted into a waiting brainless body but also on whether or not the same happens to my other hemisphere and thus

¹⁵ The universalist accepts that, as David Lewis put it, “any old class of things has a mereological sum. Whenever there are some things, no matter how disparate and unrelated, there is something composed of just those things” Lewis, *The Plurality of Worlds*, 211.

¹⁶ Hudson, *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person*, 131.

¹⁷ Hudson, *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person*, 130, n18.

whether or not there is a competitor for my identity. However the identity of one hemisphere cannot be dependent on the presence or absence of another. So the situation is reduced to absurdity.¹⁸

Four-dimensionalism offers a new and different way to resolve the puzzle of fission that does not deny classical identity or hold that the identity of two things depends on the presence or absence of a third. Nor does it require arbitrary decisions about which of two equally qualified fission products is me. Instead it explains the situation in a wholly different way, by holding that there were two persons present all along.

Recall that on four-dimensionalism objects do not endure from moment to moment as wholes but are space/time worms spread across time and composed of temporal parts. Temporal parts, like spatial parts, can be shared between objects. Since the whole is spread across time, two temporally extended objects that share a temporal part remain distinct at all times but they will nevertheless be indistinguishable within the temporal region in which that shared part is located. Hence, branching fission simply reveals that I have a temporal part that is shared with another person, being located temporally from the moment I began to exist until the moment of fission. The other person and I each have later temporal parts that we do not share and so at later moments we are observable as the distinct individuals that in fact we are at all times. Visualized as space/time worms, the two persons are clearly distinct objects that share parts at one point, just as two different railway lines might share a single piece of track for part of their length. Given that these fission puzzles are now puzzles about two persons from start to finish, the problems faced by the three-dimensionalist do not arise.

V. FOUR-DIMENSIONAL RESURRECTION

Turning to the possibility of resurrection, Hudson argues that materialism does not rule out the possibility that the same person could be present at different times that are temporally located on opposite sides of the bridge of death.¹⁹ He argues that the doctrine of temporal parts enables this in a way that avoids the difficulties faced by three-dimensionalist alternatives.

The problems for three-dimensional accounts of resurrection are by now well known. Constitution views seem to run into difficulty well before an account of resurrection is considered²⁰ and more immediately appealing animalist views seem to face intractable problems in accounting for resurrection as divine reassembly.²¹ However, of most interest to Hudson is van Inwagen's animalist alternative to reassembly. Van Inwagen holds that resurrection is a metaphysical possibility on animalism, since God could preserve corpses for the Last Day by instantaneous body-switching at the moment of each person's death so that what is buried or cremated is not a corpse but a simulacrum. The oft-repeated objection to this view is that it is unacceptable that God should be the systematic deceiver of the bereaved and so an alternative has been offered by Zimmerman that seeks to avoid this consequence.²² Zimmerman suggested that the simples that compose a body might have the power to *fission* (or to "bud") at the last moment of earthly life so that the body becomes immanent-causally connected with two others: a fission product that leaps the temporal gap to a subsequent embodied afterlife and another fission product (which is truly one's corpse)

18 See Harold W. Noonan, *Personal Identity* (Routledge, 2003).

19 See Trenton Merricks, "There Are No Criteria of Identity Over Time", *Noûs* 32, no. 1 (1998); Dean W. Zimmerman, "Criteria of Identity and the 'Identity Mystics'", *Erkenntnis* 48, no. 2/3 (1998).

20 Hudson argues that the Constitution View is "insufficiently motivated, its commitment to co-location an impossibility, and its constitution relation a mystery." Hudson, "Multiple Location and Single Location Resurrection", in *Personal Identity and Resurrection: How Do We Survive Our Death?*, ed. Georg Gasser (Ashgate, 2010), 91; see Baker, "Constitutionalism".

21 If the same matter is shared by successive individuals, most strikingly by the cannibal and his victim, then this ensures that the raw materials are unavailable for God to reassemble everyone on the Last Day.

22 van Inwagen, "The Possibility of Resurrection"; Zimmerman, "The Compatibility of Materialism and Survival". For a detailed review, see Jonathan J. Loose, "Materialism Most Miserable: The Prospects for Dualist and Physicalist Accounts of Resurrection", in *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, ed. Jonathan J. Loose, Angus J.L. Menuge and J.P. Moreland (Wiley Blackwell, 2018).

left on earth.²³ The question of whether I remain on earth as the corpse or continue to exist in the next life is determined by a closest-continuer account of personal identity. However, it is a significant weakness of closest-continuer accounts of personal identity that, as in the fission case considered above, the identity of “two” things is dependent on the non-existence of a third. On this view I am identical to the person who is my “closest continuer”. Thus, whether or not a particular person in the next life who is similar to me is also identical to me will depend on the absence of any other person in the next life whose similarity to me is even greater. The implausibility of making the identity of “two” things dependent on the non-existence of a third is a significant weakness of closest continuer views. Thus, one advantage of four-dimensionalism is that it offers a materialist account of resurrection that does not require either van Inwagen’s divine deception or Zimmerman’s closest-continuer theories. (It also avoids the need to claim that constitution is not identity or that resurrection requires reassembly.)

What, then, is this four-dimensional account of resurrection? It follows from the solution to the branching fission problem described above. In order to accommodate resurrection, the four-dimensionalist “simply applies his solution to standard fission cases by recognizing overlapping (but non co-located) continuants.”²⁴ Resurrection becomes possible since the resources of four-dimensionalism allow us to consider three entities: (i) a human organism, which includes both the *living* human organism that we will name “Perishable”, and the corpse that exists from the moment of death until its dissolution; (ii) an imperishable spiritual body, “Imperishable”, which extends eternally from the Last Day, and (iii) a human person (me) composed of both Perishable and Imperishable. Since Perishable is a temporal part of a larger human organism, I am a *human* person and since Imperishable does not exist before the Last Day I am composed of temporally scattered parts. (This latter point is unproblematic given a universalist view of composition.) I am “an extended (earlier) temporal part which mereologically overlaps a human animal and an extended (later) temporal part which, in the words of St Paul, is a new and imperishable spiritual body.”²⁵

The result of all this is something like Zimmerman’s fissioning account, but without a problematic closest-continuer theory of personal identity. To hold that Perishable and Imperishable are parts of me such that I can exist in the next world we need only establish that they are linked by a psychological gen-identity relation in the way that temporal parts should be if we are to understand them to compose persons.²⁶ Many of the difficulties faced by other views then simply fail to apply. Reassembly of the same thing at a later time is meaningless on the temporal parts view, and given the possibility of shared temporal parts we can explain co-extensive entities at a time while holding that constitution *is* identity.

A word about the corpse: This view seems to be an improvement over van Inwagen’s because it does not involve body-snatching and so there is no divinely introduced artificial corpse to deceive the bereaved. Nevertheless, the absence of an artificial substitute does not mean that what remains is *my* corpse in the way it would be on a three-dimensionalist animalist account without body-switching, or on a dualist view. This is because, on the temporal parts view, the body that is buried or cremated is not that which previously embodied me. Instead it is a temporal part of an organism that is distinct from me and a temporal part that that organism does not share with me. So, if I survive, then that dead body is not my body, since there is no dead body that is a (temporal) part of me. Thus, although this view offers the

23 For the claim that Zimmerman’s model merely changes the method of divine deception rather than removing it, see William Hasker, “Materialism and the Resurrection: Are the Prospects Improving?”, *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3, no. 1 (2011).

24 Hudson, *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person*, 189.

25 Hud Hudson, “The Resurrection and Hypertime”, in *Paradise Understood: New Philosophical Essays About Heaven*, ed. T. R. Byerly and Eric J. Silverman (OUP, 2017), 266; see also, Hudson, “Multiple Location and Single Location Resurrection”, 94–95; Hudson, *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person*, chap. 7.

26 See Hudson, “Multiple Location and Single Location Resurrection”, 94–95.

advantage that the bereaved do not grieve over a simulacrum, it remains the case that they do not grieve over the body of the deceased either.²⁷

Hudson believes his view stands “head and shoulders above” the others.²⁸ However, without rehearsing serious objections to four-dimensionalist metaphysics and counterpart theory *per se*,²⁹ or the likely inadequacy of Hudson’s theological account of the intermediate state and resurrection in comparison to the most authoritative treatments,³⁰ we can consider what relation his account of afterlife has to the possibility of Christian hope.

Two questions must be distinguished as we consider the possibility of hope given this four-dimensional understanding of resurrection: First, is the nature of a human person as described by the temporal parts view consistent with the possibility of hope in post-mortem existence? Second, is an individual human person capable of possessing the requisite knowledge in order to have hope in this future possibility? I will argue that the answer to both of these questions is “no” because the first faces the problem of counterpart hope and the second the problem of quasi-hope.

VI. TWO PROBLEMS: COUNTERPART HOPE AND QUASI-HOPE

VI.1 Counterpart Hope

The first problem derives from a general concern about the claim of four-dimensional metaphysics that a person is a gen-identical set of numerically non-identical person-stages. Given this, if Christian hope in the present depends on the possibility that a numerically identical individual could exist on the Last Day then such hope is a metaphysical impossibility.

A space-time worm is a series of interconnected but non-identical person-stages and the psychological gen-identity relation that holds them together is neither numerical identity nor a unity relation of equivalent depth. On this view, for me to care today about what will happen to me on the Last Day is for one of my temporal parts (person-stages) to care about another in virtue of the links of psychological continuity that exist between them. There is, therefore, a distinction between the extent to which a person-stage can rationally have concern for itself (an instantaneous thing with which it is self-identical) and the extent to which it can have concern for other person-stages (counterparts with which it is not identical and to which it is related by gen-identity understood as psychological continuity). This, then, is a general concern about whether the temporal parts view can accommodate prudential concern for a future self.

To continue the analogy between spatial and temporal parts, consider two spatial parts of a body at a particular time, *t*. These parts are united to one another because they are members of the same body, but they occupy different spatial regions and are not numerically identical. Each body part has an essential interest in events that occur to it at *t* because it is numerically identical to the subject of those events. For example, the right big toe has an essential interest in the event of its being stubbed at *t*. The interest a given part has in events happening to other, non-numerically identical parts is insignificant by comparison. For example, it is of no obvious interest to the right big toe at *t* that its counterpart on the left foot is not stubbed at *t*.

²⁷ The reason that Hudson cannot simply hold that the organism’s corpse is also a temporal part that is shared with me is that presumably a psychological gen-identity relation cannot be established between a living organism and a dead one because the latter has no psychological life.

²⁸ Hudson, *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person*, 189.

²⁹ For example, Hudson notes that the theory of temporal parts has been charged with “incoherency, declared unmotivated, and criticized for the company it keeps (i.e., for its close association with counterpart theory Hudson, “The Resurrection and Hypertime”, 266–67.

³⁰ See Hudson, *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person*, chap. 7; cf. John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul and the Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Eerdman, 2000); N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (SPCK, 2003).

Since what is hoped for is the future of the one who hopes, veridical hope depends on numerical identity. Just as in the spatial case there is limited reason for the right toe to have an interest in the fact that its counterpart on the left foot is not stubbed (even though they are spatial parts of the same human being), so in the temporal case there is little reason for an earlier person-stage to have an interest in the fact that there will exist a particular person-stage later on. It is important to reiterate that this depends on the two person-stages not being numerically identical, which must be the case on the temporal parts view (even though these stages are temporal parts of the same person understood as a space-time worm united by gen-identity). If the thing that I am today will be present at the Resurrection (and if I can know that), then I have every reason for hope, but if not then the Resurrection gives at best a limited reason for the thing I am today to have hope. Since numerical identity is a relation of maximal unity it thus offers a deeper unity than gen-identity, which consists in a desire for the flourishing of a future counterpart with which I am gen-identical. It is a desire for the flourishing of the thing with which I am numerically identical that properly reflects Christian hope.

The serious problem of counterpart hope has been recognized by others who reject four-dimensionalism.³¹ However, the problem is unlikely to trouble those already committed to the existence of temporal parts since the problem of counterpart hope applies throughout earthly life and not only across the bridge of death. The committed four-dimensionalist believes it is reasonable to understand persons as a series of gen-identical counterpart person-stages and to understand hope as a reaction to a confident belief about what will happen to a future counterpart person-stage. Thus the committed four-dimensionalist does not have a further difficulty to face before accepting the possibility that resurrection can be understood as the existence of a counterpart in the future. Hope for resurrection is in this respect no more difficult to accept than hope for a happy retirement. The four-dimensionalist believes that *both* of these objects of hope can be accommodated on his view, while his opponent adopts what is a more reasonable position — given the argument above — that *neither* can be. However, there is another problem — the problem of quasi-hope — that applies only across the bridge of death and thus does present a further, significant problem even for those already comfortable with a commitment to four-dimensionalism.

VI.2 Quasi-Hope

The most important question to ask of the four-dimensionalist's account of resurrection is not whether it can provide for the existence of the future circumstances that might legitimately be hoped for, but whether it entails that one is always fully in the dark about whether or not those circumstances will arise. More specifically, the question is whether the person who experiences hope can be confident that she is experiencing something more than *quasi-hope*, where quasi-hope is an experience of hope in a future that belongs *not to the experient but to another*. Can I know whether or not the object of my hope is my own future or whether it is a future belonging to someone else?³² If I am necessarily in the dark about this then I cannot have veridical confidence in God's future and hence my experience of hope cannot be genuine. This unlikely question presents a serious problem for Hudson's view of resurrection.

The four-dimensional account that purports to demonstrate that it is *possible* that I will stand again on the Last Day also renders me incapable of knowing if it will be *me* who will do so. To understand why this is the case, first consider again the puzzle of branching fission. Given Four-Dimensionalism I know prior to fission that I will later be one of the fission products (and that I cannot be both), but I do not know *which* of the fission products I will be and thus which of the two persons I presently am. This is because *I am entirely indistinguishable from the other person during the period in which we share a temporal part*. It is not only that others cannot distinguish me from the organism with which I am sharing a part, but I also have no way to know which I am "from the inside". During this period neither I nor anyone else can know if I am Jonathan or someone else. This matters greatly if the futures of the two persons are to be significantly different post-

31 For example, see R. K. Loftin and R.T. Mullins, "Physicalism, Divine Eternality, and Life Everlasting", in *Christian Physicalism: Philosophical Theological Criticisms*, ed. R. K. Loftin and Joshua R. Farris (Lexington, 2018).

32 It is important to see that we are not now talking merely about distinct person-stages, but two distinct persons.

fission. For example, if Jonathan is to be rewarded while the other is to be tortured then it will be a matter of great concern to me to know who I am. The reason I cannot know this is clarified by the illustration of two railway lines that share a piece of track for part of their length. While it is on the shared *track*, we have no idea on which *line* an unmarked train is traveling (and thus what its destination will be). For that information we must wait until it reaches a location at which the lines are once again on separate tracks.

Next consider the resurrection case, noting that the two objects of which Perishable is a temporal part — me and the larger human organism — are both *thinkers*. If Perishable thinks and is a temporal part shared by both a human organism and a person (Jonathan) then both Jonathan and the human organism think.³³ Furthermore, the futures of Jonathan and the human organism could not be more different. The human organism will become a corpse, while Jonathan will go on to resurrection life. So it should be a matter of serious concern to me as I write these words to be able to answer this question: Am I Jonathan or the thinking human organism with which Jonathan currently shares a temporal part? Given the ontology of temporal parts, I simply cannot know and thus cannot know whether what I experience is hope that will not disappoint (because I am Jonathan) or quasi-hope that will (because I am the human organism). I cannot know the answer to this troubling question until I am located temporally at the point at which the human organism and Jonathan do not have an overlapping temporal part and by then, if I am the human organism, I will know nothing at all, since I will be a corpse.³⁴

So it does indeed seem that the very four-dimensional metaphysic introduced to demonstrate the possibility of my standing again at the Last Day renders me necessarily incapable on this day of knowing whether it will be me who will do so. This is because there are at least two thinkers in my chair where there seems to be but one human body. The situation for the friend of temporal parts seems, quite literally, hopeless, and this view of resurrection is at least as problematic as the other materialist views to which Hudson objects, albeit for its own reasons.

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33 Even if our concept of human person does not include the human animal (as Hudson’s does not), the problem rests only on the claim that there are two thinkers present, and it is clear that the human organism is at least a thinking non-person and this is sufficient for the problem to arise.

34 To object that someone can hold in *faith* that he or she will survive despite not knowing whether survival is possible in his or her case is to misunderstand faith as a non-cognitive attitude. To have faith in something is to place one’s trust in it, and one must have the requisite knowledge in order to do so. A number of Bible passages illustrate the importance of occurrent knowledge that it is I who would be involved in some future event in order to have faith that I will be (e.g. Job 19:25-27, esp. v. 27), and the New Testament metaphor of being clothed with a new body (1 Cor 15:51-53, 2 Cor 5:2-4) do not express the exchanging of temporal parts but profound change to a single continuant. (I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for raising and dealing with this point.)

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