

# Personal Persistence and Post-Mortem Survival

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**Abstract:** Can a materialist look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come? Dean Zimmerman's Falling Elevator Model is a speculative account of how persons, understood as material beings, might survive in a post-mortem resurrected state—a just-so story. It assumes endurantism, the doctrine that persons and other ordinary objects are three-dimensional beings which are wholly present at every time they exist. I argue that neither endurantism, nor perdurantism, according to which persons are four-dimensional 'worms' who have proper temporal parts at every time that they exist, provides a plausible account of personal survival. If you want to be a Christian materialist you should embrace exdurantism, the 'stage theory', according which persons are instantaneous stages and are not identical to their temporal successors either in this world or in any world to come. Exdurantism provides a plausible account of survival in ordinary cases and extraordinary cases of this-worldly fission, and of post-mortem survival.

**Keywords:** Personal identity, Fission, Stage theory, Afterlife, Zimmerman

Mind-body materialism is the doctrine persons are material beings, composed entirely of stuff that can be found in lifeless, unconscious forms. Can a materialist affirm the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come? Zimmerman's Falling Elevator Model is a speculative account of how those material beings who are persons might survive in a post-mortem resurrected state — a just-so story that purports to show their resurrection possible.

The Falling Elevator Model assumes endurantism, the doctrine that persons and other ordinary objects are three-dimensional beings which are wholly present at every time that they exist. I argue that neither endurantism, nor perdurantism, according to which persons are four-dimensional "worms" who have proper temporal parts at every time that they exist, provides a plausible account of personal survival in the next world — or in this one.

I suggest that if you want to be a Christian materialist or, like Zimmerman, an emergent dualist, you should embrace exdurantism, the "stage theory". Persons,

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**AW Chickering**



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