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## I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body

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measure of our gratitude. We must warn against the vain repetition of the Lord's Prayer and against the disdainful criticism offered by the vainglorious Pharisee against the brevity of the model prayer, which punctures and deflates his airy and breezy verbiage. We must warn against the complaint that the Lord's Prayer is too comprehensive for concentration on the desire to be expressed. We must warn against the errorists who hold that prayer is a means of grace by which God imparts to us His mercies. We must rather remind our congregations that prayer is our sacrifice and offering to God and our means of exercising power with God.

Power with God! In gratitude for grace and mercy received, in view of the world's needs and the Church's wants, in the conviction of our utter dependence on the Father, for the solution of our pastoral and personal problems, let us pray, let us pray more than we ever prayed before. It is not a new thought that the world is ruled by the Christian through his fervent prayer. Who, then, should be most powerful but the pastor? You pray the First Petition, and what happens? God's name is hallowed! Is not this wonderful? You pray the Second Petition, and what happens? God's kingdom comes! Is not this amazing? You pray the Third Petition, and what happens? God's will is done. Is not this glorious? Most certainly, your prayer influences the course of this world and the progress of your congregation and the affairs of your home. Our prayer is the solution to the mystery of history everywhere. Power with God!

G. H. SMUKAL

(To be continued)

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## I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body

The upper house of the Convocation of Canterbury, Church of England, has decided to delete the phrase "resurrection of the body" at cremation ceremonies. One bishop said that young people scientifically trained are "not so much indignant as amused at the phrase." Whenever they reach these words in the Apostles' Creed, they must experience a limp in the tongue.

A similar expression of doubt in regard to the resurrection of the body appeared last Easter within the American Lutheran Conference. It was issued by C. J. Soedergren, D.D., "author of a number of books on exegesis, former professor at Augustana Theological Seminary," in an article, "*Resurrectio Carnis*," in the *Augustana Quarterly*, April, 1944, pp. 111—126. (This article will be referred to here as S.) Soedergren speaks of the resurrection of the flesh as a "'doctrine' frightful in content and fateful in consequence," "the 'eschatology' of thousands to this very day" (S:112). "the materialistic doctrine espoused even now" (S:113). It is due



to a "traditional bias" (S:121). He raises the question "But is not the resurrection of the 'flesh' possible?" and answers it: "All things are possible with God which are in harmony with His nature and in line with His will. But is it necessary? Is it reasonable? To both questions we answer, 'No.' And is it Scriptural?" He urges that the truth is likely to be hidden from "the theologians and Bible teachers"; "whether . . . the disembodied soul misses 'this muddy vesture of decay' and must come back for the remains, is an open question today. . . . The things that are seen are temporal; only the things that are not seen are eternal. Matter is not reality. Only spirit is substantial" (S:123). "Many passages point in the direction of at least a new surmise" (S:124).

The partial statement in Eccl. 12:7 is quoted: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (S:126). If this is to disprove the resurrection of the body, it is only by an *argumentum e silentio*. We might with equal validity argue from the verdict of God in Gen. 3:19: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," that both soul and body will turn to dust and never become alive again.

Our bodies, when we die, do turn to dust. They seem to crumble back into the same indistinguishable elements, principally the atoms of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen; these approximate neutrality, that is, they are undifferentiated by their origin in this or that human individual. Human bodies may be much like snowflakes: Not any two of billions of them, we are told, are alike; yet when they melt, they become drops of water, not one of which can be shown to differ from the other. Isn't this what God means when He says, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19)?

And what is matter? All matter is nowadays said to be electronic in its substructure and essentially the same. According to physical theory the human body in its ultimate elements may be as intangible as diffused electricity. "Eddington says that if the adult human being could be compressed to its actual extent, it would form a spot so tiny that we should need a microscope to see it. And physicists think that even this all but vanishing remnant of extension can be resolved into totally nonexistent force." (*Common Sense about Religion*. McVeigh Harrison, 1931. P. 321.)

But God breathed into our particular dust "the breath of life." And there is the difference. God has put eternity into the hearts of these forms of clay (Eccl. 3:11). They dread death. Huxley, the skeptic, wrote, "I find my dislike to the thought of extinction increasing as I get older. It flashes across me at all sorts of times with a sort of horror that in 1900 I shall probably know no more than I did in 1800. I had rather be in hell." The inner being of



man rebels at the prospect that in a few years, perhaps in a few days, his warm body will be dead, loathsome, immovable, rotting in darkness. Olin Alfred Curtis says, "I will in my thinking and feeling make no terms with death. I hate death; I hate it everywhere—in garden, and meadow, and swamp, and forest—everywhere; it violates every noble thing in me; I long for a world where there will be no dead thing, where every created thing will just live, live, live forever!"

If we think clearly, we shall not speak slightingly of the body: "That which is in the grave is only the slough that has been cast off by the liberated soul" (S:114). We shall look in vain for approval for this estimate of the body in such words as these of Paul: "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). The Bible also says, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6), and it calls the body of the Christian the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 6:19).

This body is more than an accident, a garment, a temporary prison house of the soul. Michael, the archangel, contended with the devil over the body of Moses (Jude 9). Would he have struggled for that body if that body had no value, if it was to be only the food of worms, if it was to be scattered to the four winds and never to be restored again?

From the beginning it was not God's intention to have the soul live permanently without the body. God intended man to be both soul and body. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Man is soul and body, not just soul. Alone, the soul stands there like the man of the house who calls himself "my family." There is something essentially incomplete about the soul until it is united with the body. Adam and Eve had both body and soul; death was injected into both; Jesus redeemed both. To complete God's plan of salvation, it is necessary for the body to be raised and to be established with the soul in glory. That is why "even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23). Not only the spirit of man, that "vital spark of heavenly flame," is to shine in heaven, but the censer, too, from which there rises the incense of worship, is holy to the Lord and is to be preserved forever.

The truth about our bodies in heaven has elements of mystery in it (1 Cor. 15:51) that will not be solved by human thinking. Nature knows no real resurrection. Despite all medical efforts at resuscitation, no organism once really dead is ever revived. The seventeen-year locust and the butterfly are only analogies, not



examples. But the resurrection of the body is one of the elementary truths of Christianity (Heb. 6:2). And elements of mystery in this doctrine should not obscure clear Biblical statements in regard to the resurrection of the body.

#### **"Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit the Kingdom of God"**

The meaning of "flesh" is given in Rom. 7: "When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the Law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. . . . I am carnal [=fleshly], sold under sin. . . . I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing. . . . I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, then, with the mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." "Flesh" is the bearer of the sinful impulse. "Blood" is a synonym since it mobilizes the energy of the flesh in the hot pursuit of sin. Our flesh is sinful by birth (John 3:6). It is opposed to God and destroys itself: "To be carnally minded is death. . . . The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:6-8). That is why "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. 15:50). These words of Paul do not deny the resurrection of the body, but merely the possibility of the entrance of our sinful body into the heavenly kingdom.

We put off "the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in Baptism" (Col. 2:11, 12). Now, we are born of the Spirit (John 3:6). And "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). Those who are in Christ Jesus "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. . . . Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. 8:1, 9).

#### **"A Spiritual Body"**

"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:44). Soedergren (S:120, 121) says on this passage: "This spiritual body inhabits our material body in this life, is conterminous with it, but also independent of it, leaving it at death and continuing to serve as the habitation and medium of the immortal self. Early writers called it the 'astral body.' . . . It was these disembodied celestial bodies in which Moses and Elijah appeared and conversed with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. These



were the bodies of Abraham, Lazarus, and 'Dives' in Hades, the body in which the penitent robber joined Jesus in Paradise, and the body in which Paul, 'absent from' his body of flesh, hoped to 'be at home with the Lord.'" Replying to these statements, we have to say that according to them the resurrection takes place at death. Then it is something already past. We let the Scriptures speak: "Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:17, 18).

The exegesis of other passages on the resurrection is forced by Soedergren to harmonize with this *Tendenz*: "The hour cometh when all that are in tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:29). The passage may refer to a resurrection out of Hades. This possibility merits further attention. In such case it would have no reference to the decomposed bodies. And again—as in the quotation from Daniel—"they" are not in any earthly tomb. Only 'the handful of dust.' . . . We are at least not compelled (unless it be by warped predilection) by these words of Christ to bury our faith with a dead body in the grave" (S:115). The "resurrection out of Hades" is "the final resurrection of immortal souls" (S:116). "If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:11). . . . The words contain no reference to any material body" (S:116). The other passages, such as Rom. 8:10, 11, are interpreted in the same way. "Scripture teaches clearly: . . . (3) a resurrection of the soul at the dissolution of the material body; (4) a final resurrection of the dead in Hades—possibly a resurrection at the end of each dispensation—for judgment" (S:111). This number (4) leaves us reaching into thin air for meaning.

The meaning which Soedergren assigns to "spiritual" we see more clearly in the following: "But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Gehenna).' Matt. 10:28. This *can* mean the spiritual or celestial body of 1 Cor. 15" (S:116). "There is no Scripture to the effect that the physical body or our present form of existence is to be the object of future punishment" (S:124). "Spiritual" in the words "it is raised a spiritual body" accordingly means "bodiless." The adjective in "spiritual body" has completely crowded the noun out of its tent. The word "body" is abused to mean an airy, immaterial variety of spirit without flesh and blood. "The true 'body' is not this temporary garment of 'dust,' but the invisible body, the 'celestial body' of 1 Cor. 15" (S:124). Could we face Paul with such an interpretation? Would he have used "body" if he didn't mean "body"?



A σώμα ψυχικόν is a body filled and controlled by the ψυχή, the sensory and earthly life. A σώμα πνευματικόν is a body filled and controlled by the Πνεῦμα, the Holy Spirit. For in 1 Cor. 2:14 the ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος is one who does not receive the things of the Spirit of God; the opposite is one who examines things πνευματικῶς, or according to the Spirit. In Jude 19 the ψυχικοὶ are those who do not have the Spirit, Πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες. "It is raised a spiritual body" therefore means that our heavenly bodies will have in them a life that is controlled and shaped by and according to the Spirit. The words cannot mean a disembodied "body."

This life in the risen body may well be something supersensory, as Luther in his exegesis of 1 Pet. 3:18 states it (Walch, IX:1242 and 1243): "Und ist getoedtet nach dem Fleisch, aber lebendig gemacht nach dem Geist."

"Das Woertlein Fleisch ist gemein in der Schrift, wie auch Geist, und die Apostel halten gemeiniglich die zwei gegen einander. Ist nun dies hie die Meinung, dass Christus durch sein Leiden genommen ist von dem Leben, das Fleisch und Blut ist; wie ein Mensch auf Erden, der in Fleisch und Blut lebt, geht und steht, isset, trinkt, schlaeft, wacht, sieht, hoert, greift und fuehlt, und kuerzlich, was der Leib thut, das da vergaenglich ist, demselben ist Christus gestorben. Das nennt St. Paulus *corpus animale*, das ist, wie ein Thier lebt, im Fleisch, nicht nach dem Fleisch, das ist, in natuerlichen Werken, die der Leib hat; solchem Leben ist er gestorben, also, dass es mit ihm aufgehoert hat und er nun in ein ander Leben gesetzt ist. Darum spricht er, er sei lebendig gemacht nach dem Geist, das ist, getreten in ein geistlich und uebernaturlich Leben, das mit sich begreift das Leben ganz, das Christus jetzund hat an Seele und Leib, also, dass er nicht mehr einen fleischlichen Leib, sondern geistlichen Leib hat. Also drueckt es St. Paulus aus.

"Also wird's mit uns auch zugehen am juengsten Tage: wir werden aus natuerlichen Menschen geistliche werden, das ist, mein und dein Leib wird leben ohne Essen und Trinken, wird nicht Kinder zeugen, nicht verdauen, nicht auswerfen, und dergleichen, sondern wird inwendig nach dem Geist leben, und der Leib verklaert werden, gleichwie jetzund die Sonne, und noch viel klarer; wird kein natuerlich Fleisch und Blut sein, keine natuerlichen noch leiblichen Werke auch thun, so die Thiere gemein mit uns haben. Also redet auch St. Paulus davon 1 Cor. 15:45: 'Der erste Mensch, Adam, ist gemacht ins natuerliche Leben, und der lezte Adam ins geistliche Leben'; item, V. 49: 'Wie wir getragen haben das Bild des irdischen, also werden wir auch tragen das Bild des himmlischen.' Von Adam haben wir alle natuerlichen Werke, wie die unvernueftigen Thiere nach den fuenf Sinnen; aber Christus ist geistlich Fleisch und Blut, nicht nach aeusserlichen Sinnen,



schlaeft nicht, wacht nicht, und weiss dennoch alle Dinge, und ist an allen Enden. Also werden wir auch sein, denn er ist der Erstling des geistlichen Lebens, das ist, er ist der Erste, der da auferstanden ist, und in ein geistlich Leben kommen. Also lebt Christus jetzt nach dem Geist, das ist, er ist wahrhaftig Mensch, hat aber einen geistlichen Leib.

“Darum soll man die Worte hie nicht also nehmen, wie man Geist und Fleisch von einander scheidet, sondern, dass der Leib und Fleisch geistlich sei, und der Geist im Leib und mit dem Leibe sei. Denn St. Peter will hie nicht also davon reden, dass der Heilige Geist Christum habe auferweckt, sondern ingemein, als wenn ich spreche: ‘der Geist,’ ‘das Fleisch,’ meine ich nicht den Heiligen Geist, sondern das Innerliche, das der Geist anrichtet, und das vom Geist herkommt.”

#### “A Spirit Hath Not Flesh and Bones as Ye See Me Have”

Jesus “was made flesh” (John 1:14). Of His flesh in the grave Jesus says (Ps. 16:9): “My flesh also shall rest *safely*” (Hebrew), or “in hope” (LXX, Acts 2:26). “Neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted . . . God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:31-36). The flesh of Jesus was raised. “They were terrified and affrighted and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet.” And He took some broiled fish and a honeycomb and ate it before them (Luke 24:37-43). This was the “spiritual body” (1 Cor. 15:44) of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:45; 1 Pet. 3:18).

Soedergren feels compelled to grant: “Scripture teaches clearly: (1) a physical resurrection of Christ”; but in a footnote he adds: “Let us not, however, overlook the well-nigh infinite difference between the vulnerable body in which He spent His life here on earth and the glorified body of His resurrection” (S:111). What is this “infinite difference”? Is the difference between the State of Humiliation and that of Exaltation thought of? That difference is real, but does not prove that Jesus in the State of Exaltation lacks a true body.

“Come, see the place where the Lord lay” (Matt. 28:6). You will see there — nothing. That nothing is the world-shaking fact. His body is gone; there is nothing for Mary to carry away. The whole body is gone. All of it arose. Not a particle remains. And



no one is to suppose a substitution of particle for particle, for there was no corruption. The worms did not scurry off with some of it, which had to be replaced by the creative power of God. Death sat by and looked at his captive but did not dare to touch Him (Acts 2:24). The same body that was born of Mary, glorified on the Mount, nailed to the Cross, laid in the grave, came out of the grave again. Jesus did not operate with two "models," one in His suffering and another on the Mount of Transfiguration and after His resurrection. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . But He spake of the temple of His body" (John 2:19, 21). His risen body was His own from the previous life; it was not the body of the malefactor or of anyone else. His body has in it the traces of the Crucifixion, the marks of the spear and of the nails. Men could see and touch these. He ate and drank with them. In His body He was seen during forty days in the morning, in the daytime, in the evening, at night; in the city, on the highway, on the seashore, on a mountain; by one, by two, by eleven, by five hundred at once.

#### "We Shall Be Like Him"

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2). "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy" (that is, we are like Adam); "and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (that is, we shall be like Jesus) (1 Cor. 15:48). Jesus "shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3:21).

Flesh as it is, sinful and earthly-minded, cannot go to heaven. But flesh that is cleansed and glorified by Christ shall live forever. There is no contradiction here for those who know the power of the blood of Christ. Such a double, before-and-after, meaning is common in Scripture. Peter is "Satan" and a "rock" in one chapter (Matt. 16:23, 18). "In Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. 143:2). But God "is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4:10).  $\Psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  means the life of an animal (Rev. 8:9), of an unchristian (Luke 12:20), of a saint (1 Pet. 1:22), or even of God (Matt. 12:18).  $\Pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  means an evil spirit (Matt. 12:43) or a good spirit (Heb. 1:14); it is used of the ungodly (1 Pet. 3:19) and of the children of God (Luke 1:47). A  $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$  is sinful (Rom. 6:6) or glorified (Phil. 3:21). "By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. 3:20). Yet "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6).

#### "He . . . Shall Quicken Your Mortal Bodies"

What elements of the "dust" will be in the risen body of an individual? Some have looked for the answer in 1 Cor. 15:37, 38: "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be,



but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him and to every seed his own body." According to their explanation a certain vital germ in the dead body would slough off all the rest of the body, which turns to dust, and this germ would select *ad libitum* from the elements whatever may be needed for the construction of the new body. The identity of a seed with its fruit does not require the retention of the elements of the seed in the fruit. A seed which does not weigh the hundredth part of an ounce falls to the earth and springs up and produces a tree that weighs several tons. Only a millionth part, or something less than that, of the original seed is in the tree. Yet we say the tree is the seed. In the new wheat there may not be a single particle of the seed that was placed into the ground. Identity in these cases is preserved without the same atoms.

We must guard against a possible verbalism in the term "identity." Its meaning is variable. In a certain sense a seed and its fruit, a parent and his child, can be called identical. But does Scripture mean this kind of identity when it speaks of the resurrection of the body? Carefully considered, the passage in 1 Cor. 15:37, 38 does not prove such an identity. Paul intends to say that the risen body will be different from the buried body. He does not mean to say that the new body will arise by the power of a germ in the old one nor that the degree of difference between a seed and its fruit will be the same for the buried and the risen body. These things are parts of the picture, not of the Apostle's intended meaning. Such elements in this analogy add emphasis, but do not give us factual details in regard to the resurrection of the body.

What will be raised? Soedergren quotes, apparently with approval, "it is nowhere asserted in the New Testament that we shall rise again with our bodies" (S:122). He says, "The phrase 'resurrection of the body' does not occur anywhere in the Scriptures" (S:124). This is a jarring assertion over against the Biblical phrase "the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:42). What are the νεκροί that will rise? James (2:26) defines them: "The body without the spirit is dead." The dead body of Jesus, which Joseph of Arimathea laid into the tomb, arose on Easter morning. And our bodies are to rise like His body.

When the Bible speaks of the raising of the dead, it uses the verbs ἀνίστημι and ἐγείρω, both of which assert that the body which is laid away in the ground will return. Ἀνίστημι means the "standing up" of a person who is either sitting (Luke 5:27, 28) or lying (Mark 9:26, 27). It is used of the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:24) in many passages, of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:42), of Laza-



rus (John 11:23 ff.), and of the resurrection on the Last Day (John 6:40, 44, 54). 'Εγείρω means an awakening from sleep (Matt. 8:25; Acts 5:30; 26:8). The Bible speaks of the dead body as sleeping (Job 3:13; 14:12; Ps. 17:15; Jer. 51:39; Matt. 9:24; John 11:11, 14; 1 Thess. 4:13-16; 5:10). When, after a long winter of waiting, our cemetery, that is, our sleeping chamber, will in answer to the voice of the risen Savior be thrown open, and our bodies will wake from their sleep, new life will pulse through their restored forms, and they will walk forth in immortality.

Those who are living when Jesus comes will only be changed. And that which is laid away in the grave will return, and nothing essential to the body of man will be left behind. "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth: They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28, 29). "The sea gave up the dead which were in it" (Rev. 20:13). The body in which the unchristian sinned will be the body in which he suffers in hell (Matt. 10:28). And the body which was Christ's temple here on earth will live forever in heaven (Rom. 8:11, 23). This is also stated in Phil. 3:21: "Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." In each of the other three places in the New Testament where μετασχηματίζω (=change) is used, it does not imply a change of substance. In 1 Cor. 4:6: "These things, brethren, I have . . . transferred to myself and to Apollos" (Paul has given the truth a concrete form). In 2 Cor. 11:13: "False apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ"; v. 14: "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." The change is that of the σχῆμα, the form, or appearance. When our body will be clothed in glory, the substance of our body will be retained or renewed. For this is Christ's victory over death, not that the old body will be eliminated and a new one created, but that the old body will reappear unharmed in the new form.

The ancient Christian Church, especially when the resurrection of the body was under discussion, used to add a phrase to the creed and say, "I believe in the resurrection of the dead, of this very flesh and blood." Augustine insisted that everything that had been a part of the body, shorn-off locks and cut nails, would be restored in a new form; Jerome, that teeth and hair will be raised. There is a certain counterpart of the resurrection of the body in the principle of science that nothing is ever annihilated; it is merely changed.

Our bodies change from day to day as they waste away and food is taken to replace the waste. The bodies we have now are not the bodies we had some years ago, although we are the same



persons. It is argued that the body which a man has at any time of his life is as much his own body as that which he has at his death. And those who die of sickness or old age are usually mere skeletons when they die, the last being the worst and most imperfect body of them all. Which of these bodies will God take up into the new, or will a portion of several of them be used? Is a child's body incomplete, and will it be completed in the hereafter? From the resurrection of Jesus (in whose form on the Cross there also was "no beauty that we should desire Him") and from the fact that a man's faith or unbelief at the hour of death will determine his eternal destiny (Matt. 24:13) we would infer that the body in which a person dies will be the one which is clothed with immortality (1 Cor. 15:43, 53). Yet this risen body is guaranteed to be better than that which a person had at the zenith of his life, not sickly as it may have been at death, but strong and beautiful like the first man when he came from the hand of God.

A part of a human body may well have become the part of another human body by cannibalism or by the ordinary consumption of food which was grown in ground into which men have turned. The same particle may have belonged to two or more different persons. Adopting the wording of the Sadducees, we may ask, "In the resurrection whose wife shall she be?" (Matt. 22:28.) The answer, too, will be: Ye do not know the power of God. He is not limited as we are. And there is much beyond our ways of thinking, infinitely much, in the resurrection of the body to be left to the wisdom of Him who has wonderfully made us, to the decision of Him whose Word has never failed us in one iota, to the creative power of Him "who quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17).

#### **"Ye Know Not . . . the Power of God"**

The resurrection of Jesus seemed impossible to the disciples. And when it had happened, they were unable to grasp the fact. The thought that Jesus lived overwhelmed them.

Our fears in regard to our own resurrection are no different. But Christ's resurrection in the past gives full assurance of our resurrection in the future. As Thomas through intimate contact was convinced that Jesus lived, so shall we one day at the sight and touch of our own risen selves know "the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10).

Even now "why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8.) Pascal said, "I see no greater difficulty in believing the resurrection of the dead than the creation of the world. Is it less easy to reproduce a human body than it was to produce it at first?" Skeptics among



the scientists accept facts just as incomprehensible as any doctrine of resurrection. Stretching out the creative process over millions of years has made it appear simpler only to the superficial mind which thinks of divine efforts as anthropomorphic and laborious; it has not reduced the miraculous in the creation. The conception of a child and the development of a body along a pattern of genes in a microscopic cell is at least as wonderful as the creation of the risen body from the earthly body. The difference between the embryonic ovum and the completed human form is great, astonishingly great; why, then, balk at the difference between the dead body and the raised body! It is no harder to believe that the human body will return than that it existed the first time.

The task will not be ours. Omnipotence and omniscience have assumed it; they will do it, and they will do it well.

An Army surgeon after the battle of Bull Run amputated limbs, throwing them out of the window until the pile reached up to the window sill. These, like the bodies of many soldiers in war, were buried in a common grave. Will the resurrection power separately reconstruct them all?—Peter Martyr, the reformer, had died. When his enemies could not reach his body, they took the body of his wife after she was dead and buried it in a dung hill. Later, friends removed the body from its hiding place and reduced it to ashes. And in order that the Romanists, if they should ever be in power again, might never dishonor the body, they took these ashes and mixed them with the reputed ashes of a Catholic saint. To defile the body, the Romanists would have to desecrate the relics of their own saint.—“We realize — as indeed some ‘infidels’ have reminded us — that some bodies have been eaten and digested by wild beasts and sharks, and that other bodies have been burned and the ashes strewn on rivers to be carried to the far shores of the ocean” (S:123).—Bombs have blown groups of soldiers to irrecognizable bits.

For each particle to disentangle itself from the strange particle and to find all its original partners again seems difficult to our thinking. But if a bookkeeper can keep apart two and many more treasuries in one bank account, if even an inorganic magnet can draw iron filings out of sand, shall not the God who made us and preserves us as individuals today be able to keep record of men in the dust and guide the molecular structure of both men and dust in such a way as to recreate each one separately and completely for endless life?

“If a piece of silver be immersed in diluted nitric acid, the affinity of the acid to the metal will occasion them to unite; a brisk action will ensue, and in a short time the silver will be entirely dissolved. The liquid will remain as liquid as before and will



present no difference in its appearance to indicate a change. What, then, has become of the solid piece of silver that was placed in the liquid? Its hardness, its luster, its tenacity, its great specific gravity, all the characteristics that distinguish it as a metal, are gone; its very form has vanished, and the hard, splendid, ponderous and opaque metal that but a few minutes since was immersed in the mixture is apparently annihilated. Must we conclude that the metal is destroyed because its presence is inappreciable by our senses?

"Now drop into the solution some pieces of copper. The acid has a stronger affinity for copper than for silver, and the latter will consequently be disengaged and fall to the bottom in small, brilliant, metallic crystals. The quantity thus deposited will be found to correspond exactly with the weight of the metal dissolved; and, if the minute particles be melted and cast into the same shape that the piece of silver presented before solution, it will be reproduced, not only the same in substance, and endued with the same properties it possessed before its disappearance in the acid, but even in its pristine form." (*Jerusalem the Golden*, A. W. Hewitt, 1944, pp. 58, 59.)

Faraday, a great scientist and Christian, would demonstrate the two chemical reactions and then, lifting up the silver and showing it to faculty and students, would ask, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?"

The bodies we now have are made up of rice from China, cashews from tropical America, fish from the ocean, oranges from California — elements from all parts of the earth. If somehow after death some of them should become scattered abroad and diffused again through all the elements of earth, air, and water, passing through the most complicated machinery of nature, and become entangled with plants and animals and even with the bodies of other men, it is easily within the range of God's knowledge to know where every atom is, within the range of His might to recall every atom from its wandering and to restore it to its intended everlasting function in glory by rebuilding the body of which it was a part. More than this. What the laws of nature and of economics accomplish in their lumbering ways in our daily earthly life will (like the healing of the sick by our Savior) be done by the God of nature and the Lord of economics on the resurrection morning with the speed of the glance of an eye (1 Cor. 15:52).

Pious people used to meditate among the tombs. It need not hurt our faith to do the same. Here in the caskets that outlive their tenants are the bodies given over to decomposition, to dust and ashes. But that voice which once called, "Lazarus, come



forth!" will ring through tombs, marble mausoleums, and monuments of bronze. It will sound beneath green sods in churchyards and on battlefields and in the depths of the sea. Then there will be the billionfold reconstruction of the human form and the rebirth of countless personalities.

#### **"Like unto His Glorious Body"**

The risen Jesus was different. He did not return to social life as Lazarus did, who came back to live with Mary and Martha. Jesus says to Mary Magdalene, "Touch Me not" (John 20:17). He "showed Himself to His disciples" (John 24:14), and "He vanished out of their sight" (Luke 24:31). He passed through the stone of the sepulcher (the angel did not remove it for His sake) and through the closed door (John 20:19). He ate food, not for nourishment, but to prove His resurrection (Luke 24:41-43). The disciples failed to recognize Him (John 20:14; 21:4), because their eyes were held (Luke 24:16; Mark 16:12), because they did not believe it was He (Luke 24:41), but perhaps also because His body had changed from lowliness to glory (Phil. 2:5-11; 3:21).

Our bodies will be "like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3:21). But we have in our Savior an intermingling of divine and human glory. Just where the dividing line is between the Godhead which dwells in Him bodily (Col. 2:9) and the body of His glory (Phil. 3:21), we are not told. "We shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2) (*ὁμοιούσαι*); we are "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4); but we shall not be equal (*ὁμοούσαι*) to Him. Will our bodies pass through stone and doors? Will they move through space without effort and with the speed of light? Will they be free from gravitation in a new heaven and a new earth (2 Pet. 3:13)? We may speculate, but a Biblical Christian will be cautious in his assertions.

To describe the heavenly body in terms of our experience of sin and sorrow, God is compelled to speak in negatives. It will be delivered from all evil, as we prayed, from sin and all its consequences. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more" (Rev. 7:16). "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption" (1 Cor. 15:43). The seed of death in our bodies, the liability to injury, the need of repair, will be removed. Our whole body is now in a continuous process of metabolism, which consists of catabolism, the breaking down of old cells, and anabolism, the building of new cells by the nourishment supplied in the blood stream. Since there will be no waste or catabolism, there will be no need of food. "It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power"



(1 Cor. 15:43). Helplessness and weariness will be replaced by powers the extent of which we can only guess at. Perhaps the eye will have the vision to see that for which it now needs a 200-inch telescope. Luther borrowed the thought from Anselm that the saints shall have the gigantic force of angels who in battle pluck up the hills, rivers, and trees, and hurl them at the fallen spirits and that, if they choose, they could shake the world, pull up the islands by their roots, or hurl mountains into the air. There will be no aging. A white-haired woman of sixty-eight found her husband, who had been overwhelmed by an avalanche thirty-five years earlier, encased in the ice of a glacier. His was still the form of a young man with all the freshness of youth. As she wept over him, people said, "It is his mother." Youthfulness will be preserved in similar way in heaven. "Neither can they die any more" (Luke 20:36; cp. 1 Cor. 15:53). No condition like "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17) will hang over our life.

"It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory" (1 Cor. 15:43). We shall not only reflect the glory of God (Ex. 34:29-35). Jesus has given us His glory here (John 17:22). "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). The fullness of this glory will be revealed then. "Then the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43; see also Dan. 12:3; Matt. 17:2; Luke 9:29; Rev. 2:28). For we shall publicly be manifested to be the sons of God (1 John 3:2; Col. 3:4; Rom. 8:23).

#### "Then Face to Face"

The human body is sharply individualistic. We are told that it contains, on an average, twenty-six trillion cells. And just as every cell, due to the chromosomes, in a man is a male cell, and in a woman a female cell, so, Dr. Carrel asserted, the cells of no two persons are exactly alike. He was convinced that of all the billions of people who have inhabited the earth since the beginning of time there have never been two persons exactly alike in this respect. And the cells of no two persons seem to mix very well. "A man has a surface flesh wound. The skin taken from some other part of his own body and grafted to the wound normally adheres. It grows; it was, as it is, a part of the man's self. The skin from another person may be grafted on to a wound. It may adhere and help to heal the wound. But after the wound is healed, this alien grafted skin grows less and less and eventually disappears. Only in very exceptional cases is this not true. It helps to show that a man even to the extent of his ever changing epidermis is, and remains, himself, a separate being." The same



thing happens in the transplanting of a kidney. (*Life Forever*, R. E. Golladay, 1940, p. 68.) Brought up to date (*Principles and Practice of Surgery*, W. Wayne Babcock, M. D., 1944, p. 292): "It is believed that homologous transplantation (with tissue taken from another person) is possible only between twins or to a limited degree with tissue conditioned by an artificial intermediate growth in the serum of the recipient." The difficulty may be largely in the technical tie-up between the foreign tissue and the recipient's tissue, but evidence of cellular individuality remains. Similar differences in the skeletal and autonomic nervous systems of a person, strategically significant for the life of the individual, have escaped the minute measurements of science.

This individual body is the counterpart of an individual personality. The whole individuality is known to God (Ps. 34:21; 139; John 2:24). His name is or is not written in the Book of Life (Rev. 3:5). God deals with this individual in His Word, in Baptism, and in the Lord's Supper. God judges, pardons, and glorifies this individual.

Individuals in heaven will be correspondingly distinct from one another in body and in soul. Jesus says (Matt. 8:11): "Many shall come from the East and West and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." These three, who will sit down as in a friendly gathering will not be three vague, unknown spirits, as alike as three pins. They will be Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Each one's personality will be preserved. David will be "the sweet psalmist of Israel," and Paul the fiery Apostle. Peter even in his flesh will not be like John. Everyone is going to be himself.

As such individuals, having characteristic features of body and of personality, we shall know one another in heaven. Christians are sometimes troubled by conceptions, common in the religions of men, of a vague impersonal existence in the other world. "John," a woman asked her husband, "will you know me in heaven?" He replied, "Betty, I have known you well here, and I shall not be a bigger fool in heaven than I am now; therefore I shall certainly know you there." Like the other powers of body and of mind, the power to recognize one another may be expected to be more penetrating there than it is here on earth. "I shall know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12). David seems to expect to know his dead child: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23). The rich man, Lazarus, and Abraham know one another (Luke 16:23-31). In the Transfiguration "there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him. Then answered Peter and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here. If Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one



for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias" (Matt. 17:3, 4). The disciples knew Moses and Elijah, when they saw them, by name. Likewise we shall know Adam, Noah, Isaiah, Paul, Augustine, Luther, Walther, and countless others.

After the resurrection of Jesus "they knew Him" (Luke 24:31). Jesus "showed them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." (John 20:20.) When Jesus said, "Mary," she evidently recognized Him by His voice. When He spoke to them at length, they could recognize the speaker as the same person who spoke chapters fourteen to seventeen of John on Maundy Thursday evening. His actions in preparing breakfast on the shore of the Sea of Galilee were similar to those they had seen when He washed their feet. We shall live and speak with one another as the risen Savior did with His disciples and as He now intercedes with the Father. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

On February 17, 1546, the day before he died, Luther said: "What did Adam do? He had never seen Eve; he lay there and slept. But when he woke up, he didn't say, 'Where do you come from? What are you?' but 'This is flesh of my flesh.' How did he know that the woman had not sprung from a stone? He knew it because he was full of the Holy Spirit and had a true knowledge of God. According to this knowledge we shall similarly know Father and Mother and learn to know one another face to face better than Adam and Eve."

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## Sermon Study on Heb. 12:1-6

### Eisenach Epistle for Palm Sunday

The Eisenach Epistle for Palm Sunday is taken from the second, or exhortatory, section of the Letter to the Hebrews. The writer pleads with his readers to remain loyal to their great High Priest, whose person and work he had presented in the first section, 1:1 to 10:8. At the same time he points out in what manner such loyalty is to be manifested in their lives. And always he motivates his exhortation by recalling to their mind the exalted person and the glorious work of Him whose disciples they profess to be. As we enter Holy Week to see the Son of God go forth to war against the enemies of our salvation in the last and fiercest and the decisive battle, the contemplation of this Scripture text will help to put us in the proper Lenten spirit.

*V. 1. "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the*