

AFTER THE RESURRECTION WHAT?

by

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CHAPTER SIX

OUR ETERNAL BODIES

PAUL tells us in that famous chapter of I Corinthians 15, in the thirty-fifth verse, **“But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?”** and he answers in verse thirty-eight, **“But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.”** In the fortieth and forty-second verses he says: **“There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.”** Then he goes on with a further description of our bodies, which will be discussed later.

The beloved John in his First Epistle tells us, **“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”** (3:2).

No light from two translations—that of Enoch and Elijah, no help from the transfiguration visit of Moses and Elias, no light from other resurrections, such as the widow’s son, the Shunammite boy, Lazarus, Jairus’ daughter, nor from the man Paul healed, nor from the description of Dives or Lazarus in the other world in Luke 16, nor from the dead who were raised about the time of Christ’s resurrection, has been thrown upon this vital question concerning our eternal bodies.

None of the surveys of history, philosophy, psychology, medicine, or from any of the sciences, have cast any illuminating gleam on the subject we now face: **“With what body do they come?”**

Paul is one of our best accredited witnesses and writers. He had some spiritual credentials. He saw the risen Saviour. His whole nature, purpose, plan and destiny were changed by what he saw. He was closest to the risen Christ and is Christ’s best interpreter. His knowledge, as shown in I Corinthians 15, makes him God’s greatest human authority on resurrection bodies. We shall see what he says there.

A STUDY IN RESURRECTION BODIES

I Corinthians 15 is the basis of the study. There is the threefold heart of the gospel concerning Christ.

Paul says, “**Christ died for our sins,**” “**And that he was buried,**” and “**he rose again the third day.**”

Look at Paul’s comparison of the two bodies, the body of the flesh and the eternal body. He said:

- One is terrestrial, one is celestial;
- One is corruptible and the other incorruptible;
- One is sown in dishonor and the other is raised in glory;
- The one is a body of weakness, the other a body of power;
- The one is a natural, the other a spiritual body;
- The one is earthy and the other heavenly; the one mortal and the other immortal.

HINGES ON CHRIST’S RESURRECTION

What are the things of value that hinge on the resurrection of Christ’s body? This is an important assizement. It is an eternal invoice of vital values.

- The resurrection of our bodies. If Christ did not rise, we will not rise.
- The value of our preaching. If Christ did not rise we are false witnesses.
- The assurance of the forgiveness of our sins: If Christ is still in Joseph’s tomb, we are still in the pit of corruption, unforgiven and unpardoned.
- The very existence and destiny of all who are dead. If Christ arose not, all the dead are perished forever.
- The very joy of Christian living. If He did not rise, we are of all men most miserable, utterly lost.
- The final triumph of Christ’s kingdom. If Christ arose from the dead, He must reign and conquer. If f He did not arise from the dead, then Satan will reign and conquer. The resurrection of Christ’s body from the grave is God’s perpetual rainbow. And, if Joseph’s tomb is not empty there are no rainbows in the heavenly horizons of night and darkness and death.

TWOFOLD COMFORTS

The facts about Christ’s resurrection comfort us in two particulars. One is a steady, immovable, optimistic labor in Christ’s service. “**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**” And the other comfort is final triumph for all who trust the Saviour “**if they faint not.**” Then we can confidently trust Him, enthusiastically work for Him, labor in hard places and under difficult horizons, watching, waiting, and loving His appearing, knowing that He is at the right hand of God and that surely He is coming back to take us home.

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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