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THE RESURRECTION

A SYMPOSIUM

BY

Alexander MacLaren, Charles H. Spurgeon, D. L. Moody,
T. DeWitt Talmage and Canon Liddon

"As in Adam all die, et en so in Christ shall all be made a.ive." 1 Cor. 15: 22.

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY
NEW YORK ; : CHICAGO : : TORONTO
Publishers of Evangelical Literature

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THE GENERAL RESURRECTION.

BY T. DEWITT TALMAGE.

"The hour is coming in the which 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.

Philosophic speculation has gone through heaven, and told us there is no gold there; and through hell, and told us there is no fire there; and through Christ, and told us there is no God there; and through the grave, and told us there is no resurrection; and has left hanging over all the future one great, thick London fog.

If I were to call on you to give the names of the world's great conquerors, you would say: Cæsar, Alexander, Philip, and the first Napoleon. You have missed the greatest! The men whose names have just been mentioned were not worthy of the name of Corporal when compared with him. He rode on the black horse that crossed the fields of Waterloo and Atlanta, and his bloody hoofs have been set on the crushed hearts of the race. He has conquered every land and besieged every city, and to-day, Paris, London, St. Petersburg, New York, and Brooklyn are going down under his fierce and long-continued assault.

That conqueror is DEATH. He carries a black flag and takes no prisoners. He digs a trench across the hemispheres and fills it with carcasses. Had not God kept creating new men, the world, fifty times over,

would have swung lifeless through the air; not a foot stirring in the cities—not a heart beating—a depopulated world—a ship without a helmsman at the wheel, or a captain on deck, or crew in the rigging. Herod of old slew only those of two years old and under, but this monster strikes all ages. Genghis Khan sent five millions into the dust; but this, hundreds of thousands of millions. Other kings sometimes fall back and surrender territory once gained; but this king has kept all he won, save Christ, who escaped by Omnipotent power. What a cruel conqueror! What a bloody king! His palace is a huge sepulchre; his flowers the faded garlands that lie on coffin-lids; his music the cry of desolate households; the chalice of his banquet a skull; his pleasure-fountains the falling tears of a world.

But that throne shall come down; that sceptre shall break; that palace shall fall under bombardment. "For the hour is coming in the which 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."

Heathen philosophers guessed at the immortality of the soul, but never dreamed that the body would get up and join it. This idea is exclusively scriptural, and beyond reasoning. Indeed, all analogies fail. You say—as the wheat is put in the ground and comes up, so will our bodies. I reply—if the wheat entirely dies, as in the case of long protracted wet weather, there is no resurrection of it. So the analogy fails. You say that the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, and so our dead bodies may take on a splendid exaltation. I reply that there is no interregnum of life between the caterpillar and

the butterfly; and therefore the analogy fails. You say that there is a perfect type of the resurrection in the trees in springtime. I reply that the tree does not die in the winter, it is simply dormant; and therefore the analogy fails. The body, though cut up by dissecting-knives, and burned in the furnace, shall come together.

There must forever be mysteries about this, and the mystery increases as science progresses. We find that comparatively a small part of the body is reduced to dust. There is very little earthy substance in it. It is largely composed of fluids and gases, which evaporate or separate themselves, leaving but very little for the dust, so that the body becomes widely scattered through earth and air; and how it can be re-organized is a question before which the chemist stands confounded. But while there are in this theory of the resurrection many things above reasoning, there is nothing contrary to reason.

OBJECTIONS.

The objectors say that the body is scattered to such great distance it can never be gathered. For instance, a man went into the Mexican war and lost a foot. He came to New York, and by accident lost a finger. He afterward went as a missionary to China, and there died. Will the foot come from Mexico, and the finger from New York, and join the body in China? I answer, it is no harder for God to do that than to do the things that He has already done. Your body is already made up from all the zones of the earth—made up of raisins from Italy, of bananas from Florida, of birds from the prairie, and of sugar from the far South; made up from Russia, Brazil, and Oregon; fruits and plants from all these localities have become a part of your body.

The objector says, "Suppose a man be eaten by cannibals, how can his body be brought back?" I answer, that that there is no proof that the earthy part of a human body ever can be absorbed in another body. I suppose God has power to keep these bodies everlastingly distinct. But suppose that a part of the body was absorbed in another body—could not God make a substitute for the part that had been absorbed in another body? The resurrected part of a good man would rather have a substituted portion of body given it than that part of the body which a cannibal had eaten and digested.

But the objectors say again that a man's body entirely changes every seven or ten years, so that a man at seventy years of age has had seven distinct bodies! At the last day, this idea would imply that the man should have seven heads, and fourteen feet, and other parts of the body corresponding! But we answer that the Bible distinctly states that it is the body that goes down into the grave that will come up again, and not those portions that for many years were being sloughed off.

THE MISTS CLEARED AWAY.

But come, let us get out of this. I stood on the top of the Catskills one bright morning. On the top of the mountain was a crown of flashing gold, while all beneath was rolling, writhing, contorted cloud. But after a while the arrows of light, shot from heaven, began to make the glooms of the valley strike tent. The mists went skurrying up and down, like horsemen in wild retreat. The fogs were lifted, and dashed, and whirled. Then the whole valley became one whole illumination, and there were horses of fire, and chariots of fire, and

thrones of fire, and the flapping of angels of fire. Gradually, without a sound of trumpet or roll of wheel, they moved off. The green valleys looked up. Then the long flash of the Hudson unsheathed itself, and there were the white flocks of the villages lying amid the rich pastures, golden grain-fields, and the soft radiant cradle of the valley, in which a young empire might sleep.

So there hangs over all the graves and sepulchres, and mausoleums of the ages a darkness that no earthly lamp can lift; but from above the Sun of Righteousness shines, and the dense fogs of scepticism having lifted, the valleys of the dead stand in the full gush of the morning of the resurrection.

AT THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET.

Various scriptural accounts say that the work of grave-breaking will begin with the blast of trumpets and shoutings; whence I take it that the first intimation of the day will be a sound from heaven such as has never before been heard. It may not be so very loud, but it will be penetrating. There are mausoleums so deep that undisturbed silence has slept there ever since the day when the sleepers were left in them. The great noise shall strike through them. Among the corals of the sea, miles deep, where the shipwrecked rest, the sound will strike. No one shall mistake it for thunder, or the blast of earthly minstrelsy. There will be heard the voice of the uncounted millions of the dead, who come rushing out of the gates of eternity, flying toward the tomb, crying, "Make way! O grave, give us back our body! We gave it to you in corruption. Surrender it now in incorruption." Thousands of bodies

arising from the field of Waterloo, and from among the rocks of Gettysburg, and from among the passes of South Mountain. A hundred thousand are crowding Greenwood Cemetery. On this grave three spirits meet, for there were three bodies in that tomb. Over that family vault twenty spirits hover, for there were twenty bodies. From New York to Liverpool, at every few miles on the sea route, a group of hundreds of spirits coming down to the water to meet their bodies. See that multitude!—That is where the 'Central American' sank. And yonder multitude!—that is where the 'Pacific' went down. Found at last! That is where the 'City of Boston' sank. And yonder the 'President' went down. A solitary spirit alights on yonder prairie—that is where a traveller perished in the snow. The whole air is full of spirits—spirits flying north, spirits flying south, spirits flying east, spirits flying west. Crash! goes Westminster Abbey, as all its dead kings, and orators, and poets go up. Strange commingling of spirits searching among the ruins. William Wilberforce, the good, and Queen Elizabeth, the bad. Crash! go the pyramids, and the monarchs of Egypt rise out of the heart of the desert. Snap! go the gates of modern vaults. The country graveyards will look like a rough-plowed field as the mounds break open. All the kings of the earth; all the senators; all the great men; all the beggars; all the armies—victors and vanquished; all the ages—barbaric and civilized; all those who were chopped by guillotine, or simmered in the fire, or rotted in dungeons; all the infants of a day, all the octogenarians—All! All! not one straggler left behind.

A surgeon told me that after the battle of Bull Run

he amputated limbs, throwing them out of the window, until the pile reached up to the window-sill. All those fragments will have to take their places. Those who were born blind shall have eyes divinely kindled; those who were lame shall have a limb substituted. In all of the host of the resurrected not one eye missing; not one foot clogged; not one arm palsied; not one tongue dumb; not one ear deaf.

WHAT WILL THESE BODIES BE?

But how will these bodies look? The bodies of the righteous, in the first place, will be *glorious*. The most perfectly-formed body, indeed, is a mere skeleton to what it would have been had not sin come. God's model of a face, of a hand, of a foot, of a body, we know not. If, after an exquisite statue has been finished, you should take a chisel and clip it, and clip it, and set the statue in an out-of-door exposure, its beauty would nearly all be gone. Yet the human body has been clipped, and blasted, and battered for thousands of years. Physical defects have been handed down from generation to generation for six thousand years, and we have inherited all the bodily infelicities of all the past. But when God takes the righteous out of their graves, He will re-fashion, and improve, and adorn according to the original model, until the difference between a gymnast and the emaciated wretch in the lazaretto is not so great as that between our present bodily structures and our gloriously reconstructed forms. Then you will see the perfected eye, out of which, by waters of death, has been washed the last trace of tears and study. Then you will see the perfected hand—the knots on the

knuckles of toil untied. No more stoop of the shoulders from burden-bearing and the weight of years, but all of us erect, elastic—the life of God in all the frame. The most striking and impressive thing on earth now is a human face: yet it is veiled in the black veil of a thousand griefs. But when God on the resurrection morn shall put aside the veil, I suppose that the face of the sun in the sky is dull and stupid compared with the outflaming glories of the countenances of the saved. I suppose that when those faces shall turn to look toward the gate or up toward the throne, it will be like the dawn of a new morning on the bosom of everlasting day.

The body will be *immortal*. The physical system is perpetually wasting away. It is only because we keep putting in the fuel that the furnace does not go entirely out. Blood-vessels are only canals to carry bread-stuffs to the different parts. If these supplies fail, we die. Sickness and Death lurk around to see if they cannot get a pry under the tenement, and at a slight push we tumble off the embankment of the grave. But the righteous, arisen, shall have an immortal body. It will be incapable of disease. You will hear no cough or groan. There will be no miasma or fever in the air. There will be no rough steep down which to fall, no fracturing a limb. People cross the sea for their health; but that voyage over the sea of death will cure the last Christian invalid. There grows an herb on that hill that will cure the last snake-bite of earthly poison. No hospital there, no dispensary, no medicines, no ambulances, no invalid chair, no crutches, no emaciation, no spectacles for poor sight, no listing of win-

dows to keep out the cold blasts, but health immortal for resurrected bodies of the righteous.

Again: The body will be *powerful*. Walking ten or fifteen miles, we are weary. Lifting a few hundred pounds makes us pant. Unarmed, meeting a wild beast, we must climb, run, dodge, or somehow get out of the way. Eight hours' work makes any man tired. But the resurrected body shall be mighty. God always will have great projects to carry on, and will want the righteous to help. We know not what journeys the resurrected may have to take, or what heavenly enterprises they may have to carry on. I suppose the heavenly city is more busy than any earthly city, and that Broadway at noonday is quiet compared with the business of Heaven. Yea, it is noonday all the time, and all heaven is coming and going. They rest not day or night, in the lazy sense of resting. They have so many victories to celebrate! so many songs to sing! so many high days to keep! They need no night, for their eyes are never weary. They need no sleep, for there is no call for physical renovation. If they sit down under the tree of life, it is not to rest, but with some resurrected soul of earth to talk over old times, and rehearse the battles in which they fought shoulder to shoulder. Jacob wrestled with the angel, but was not thrown, because the angel favored him; but Jacob once resurrected, an angel could not throw him. There would be no such thing as wrestling down the giants of heaven. They are strong, supple, unconquerable, immortal athletes.

That kind of a body I want. There is so much of work to be done that I now begrudge the hours for

sleep and necessary recreation. I sometimes have such views of the glorious work of preaching the Gospel that I wish from the first day of January to the last day of December, without pausing for food, or sleep, or rest, I could tell men of Christ and Heaven. Thanks be to God for the prospect of a resurrected body that shall never weary, and for a service of love and activity that shall never pause and never end!

Oh, glorious day of resurrection! Gladly will I fling into the grave this poor, sinful frame, if at Thy call I may rise up a body tireless, and pure, and glorious, and immortal! That was a blessed resurrection-hymn sung at my father's burial:

"So Jesus slept: God's dying Son
Passed through the grave, and blessed the bed.
Rest here, blessed saint, till from His throne
The morning break and pierce the shade."

THE RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION.

But my text speaks of *the resurrection of damnation*. The Bible says but little about it; yet it is probable that as the wicked are, in the last day, to be opposite in character, so will they be in many respects, opposite in body. Are the bodies of the righteous glorious—those of the wicked will be repelling. You know how bad passions flatten the skull and disfigure the body. There he comes up out of the grave-yard—the drunkard; the blotches on his body flaming out in worse disfigurement, and his tongue bitten by an all-consuming thirst for drink—which he cannot get, for there are no dram-shops in hell. There comes up the lascivious and unclean wretch, reeking with filth which made him the horror of the hospital, now wriggling across the ceme-

tery lots—the consternation of the devils. Here are all the faces of the unpardonable dead. The last line of attractiveness is dashed out, and the eye is wild, malignant, fierce, infernal; the cheek aflame; the mouth distorted with blasphemies. If the glance of the faces of the righteous was like a new morning, the glance of the faces of the lost will be like another night falling on midnight. If, after the close of a night's debauch, a man gets up and sits on the side of the bed, sick, exhausted and horrified with the review of his past; or rouses up with delirium tremens, and sees serpents crawling over him or devils dancing about him—what will be the feeling of a man who gets up out of his bed on the last morning of earth, and reviews an unpardoned past, and, instead of imaginary evils crawling over him and flitting before him, finds the real frights and pains and woes of the resurrection of damnation?

Between the styles of rising, choose you. I set before you, in God's name, two resurrected bodies. The one radiant, glorious, Christ-like; the other worn, blasted, infernal. I commend you to the Lord of the resurrection. Confiding in Him, Death will be to you only the black servant that opens the door, and the grave will be to you only the toilet-room where you dress for glory.

THE RESURRECTION CREDIBLE.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Acts 26:8.

Concerning the souls of our believing friends who have departed this life we suffer no distress. We feel sure that they are where Jesus is, and behold His glory, according to our Lord's own memorable prayer. We know but very little of the disembodied state, but we know quite enough to rest certain beyond all doubt that—

"They are supremely blest,
Have done with sin, and care, and woe,
And with their Savior rest."

Our main trouble is about their bodies, which we have committed to the dark and lonesome grave. We cannot reconcile ourselves to the fact that their dear faces are being stripped of all their beauty by the fingers of decay, and that all the insignia of their manhood should be fading into corruption. It seems hard that the hands and feet, and all the goodly fabric of their noble forms, should be dissolved into dust, and broken into an utter ruin. We cannot stand at the grave without tears; even the perfect Man could not restrain His weeping at Lazarus' tomb. We still regret, and feel it natural to do so, that so dreadful a ban has fallen upon our race as that it should be "appointed unto all men once to die." God sent it as a penalty, and we cannot rejoice in it.