

The Resurrection or Spiritual Body

by T. Austin-Sparks

The consummation of spiritual life is found in a spiritual body, which is sinless and incorruptible, and is sustained by the Spirit, not by blood.

Scripture: John 3:6, John 6:57

Topics: "Resurrection", "Spiritual Life"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes that the life of a child of God is fundamentally spiritual, originating from the Spirit and sustained by spiritual nourishment through Christ. He explains that while our physical bodies are subject to corruption, the resurrection body will be spiritual and free from the limitations of our current existence. Sparks highlights the distinction between the soul and spirit, asserting that true spirituality comes from Christ within, and that resurrection signifies a transformative experience beyond mere physicality. He warns against the deception of Satan regarding resurrection and underscores the importance of understanding the power of Christ's resurrection in the believer's life. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper recognition of the spiritual body that awaits believers, which is a culmination of their spiritual life in Christ.

Transcript

The origin of the life of a child of God as such is spiritual--"that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). The sustenance also of the life of such is spiritual. "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven... he that eateth this bread shall live for ever... the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" (John 6:57,58,63).

So also, the consummation of this life is spiritual, and is found in a spiritual body. We are not allowed to take the resurrection of Christ as a type of our resurrection physically, but we are allowed to take the nature of His resurrection body as the type of our resurrection body. There was something different from all others in Christ's resurrection. His body was sinless, and it therefore did not see corruption. "Thou wilt not... give thy Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 2:27). His, in its particles, was preserved and resuscitated, so that it was recognizable as the same body after resurrection, bearing the marks of His crucifixion. And yet so other! Our bodies will see corruption, for they are already corrupted. "This corruptible must put on incorruption" (1 Cor 15:53). But there is that difference about the pre- and post-resurrection body which is in keeping with the whole principle of the believer's life. This principle is

set forth in the following familiar words:

"That which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain;... but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and TO EACH SEED a body of its own... it is sown a natural (soulical) body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual... Howbeit that is not first which is Spirit, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual... we shall bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor 15:37-49).

By the Spirit were we first quickened and made spiritually alive. By the Spirit of life were we made free from the law of sin and death. So, by the Spirit of life is the consummation brought about when what is mortal is swallowed up of life.

In some way the human soul-life is bound up with the blood. So that body and soul have a special or peculiar relationship. The Old Testament statement, with repeated emphasis, is "The life (or soul) is in the blood". This is also seen in the interchange of "life" and "soul" in the New Testament, especially in John's Gospel (eg. 12:25). Thus the present body of man is a physio-soulical, or a psycho-physical, body having a spirit. But the statement is that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor 15:50). Any physician will say that the blood is the seat of disease. This is only another point of evidence in what we have been saying, that corruption lies ever in the soul. In Christ's resurrection body, there is no blood. "Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39).

This is, in the first place, the proof and vindication of His Sonship, and of His having lived and triumphed in His spirit, and having not yielded to the soul or self-life.

"Declared to be the SON OF GOD with power, according to the SPIRIT OF HOLINESS, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1:4).

The resurrection body therefore is not a blood-soul body, but a spirit body. This is the consummation of the spiritual life. Paul refers to this when he says,

"Whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom 8:29).

This follows his earlier words:

"The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the SONS of God... ourselves also, who have the FIRSTFRUITS OF THE SPIRIT... groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption (majority) to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom 8:19,23).

We are totally unable to understand what a spiritual body is, but we see that it is free from many of the limitations of our present form of existence. Our present purpose is not to attempt a description of life beyond the present order, but just to point out and emphasize the principle. There is all the difference between a bodiless spirit and a spiritual body, between a disembodied spirit and a spiritualized body. It is here that our mentality breaks down.

Then, again, all resurrection is not this resurrection. Our Lord has said that some will be raised unto a judgment resurrection; others unto a life resurrection. The life resurrection is that of a spiritual body, the consummation or full fruit of a spiritual life. In the light of this, how important it is to know the difference

between soul and spirit; between religion as a thing of the soul, and true spirituality as from the Christ within, Who alone is the "hope of glory".

"Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed..."

It is, indeed, a mystery how a physical body can exist without all the features of this blood system. But we are told that it is so, and certain other statements in this connection indicate that it is so. For instance, in the resurrection they "neither marry, nor are given in marriage" (Luke 20:35). This does away with a very great deal in soul and body. The whole procreative power and system as to this order of life will have gone.

But we have seen that the spirit has its own faculties and functions for knowing and doing, for sustaining and energizing.

There is one thing very evident; that Satan hates resurrection. He would obscure it by spreading a false report as to that of Christ. The one pre-eminent testimony and attestation of God is resurrection. The supreme note in the apostolic proclamation was "God raised him!" The supreme note in a believer's experience is resurrection. Hence Satan is allowed to bring a servant of God into "deaths off" (2 Cor 11:23), and we are suffered to have "the sentence of death within ourselves, that we should... trust in God who raiseth the dead" (2 Cor 1:9).

This is not the evidence in which the soul rejoices. It prefers success, achievement, progress, reputation etc., according to man's standards. But heaven's standard measure of power is the resurrection of Christ. Hence Paul will cry, "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection" (Phil 3:10). "The fellowship of his sufferings" and "becoming conformed unto his death" are the platform upon which this supreme power is demonstrated. But it takes a spiritual man to see this, and much more to desire it!

We have "the earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor 1:22); yes, the earnest of our resurrection body. This earnest is even in our mortal bodies. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom 8:11). There is possible a present testimony in prospect of the resurrection of the body, even in mortal bodies.

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