

SHORT PAPER NO. 5

STUDIES UPON CHRIST'S NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL BODY

In this short paper, I hope to make special mention of the following:

1. The difference between *essential* and *derived or communicated glory*;
2. The difference between Christ's *natural* and *spiritual* bodies;
3. The difference between the *natural* and the *spiritual* body;
4. The glory Christ returned unto at His resurrection and ascension.

As we study the humanity of Jesus Christ, we must differentiate between His natural body and His spiritual body. Paul made a very clear distinction in I Cor. 15:

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

45 *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam is a quickening spirit.*

46 Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 *The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.*

48 *As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.*

49 *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

50 *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

Please note that when a body is placed into the ground, or the grave, it is sown as a natural body. When it comes forth out of the ground, it is raised as a spiritual body.

Christ in His Federal Headship as the Second Adam

At this time, I will *not* discuss Christ as the heavenly man, in His Federal Headship as the Second Adam. I will deal with this later as I consider the reasons for maintaining that Christ's flesh is heavenly and not earthly from Mary. But at this time I want to reflect a bit on the general position of so many of our older Brethren dealing with the Spiritual-Natural-Spiritual body of Jesus Christ.

Position of Many of the Older Brethren

In the Trinity debates I am reading from the early 1800s, it seems that the majority opinion is that Jesus Christ, in His Antiquity as the God-Man, did possess a human spirit or soul before creation. Most of them called this Christ's rational soul. The brethren then stopped short of saying that He possessed a physical body because they did not all believe in the heavenly origin of Christ's flesh. They did hold that He was clothed with a type of glorious garment showing forth the glory of His Person as God's Only Begotten Son. They did not say this

was a physical or fleshly body, but a glorious enrobing. It is strange to me that the brethren would attribute so much to the word *soul*, and fail to understand properly the differences between a natural and a spiritual body.

Christ's Prayers

Most of the brethren also understood that when Jesus prayed to the Father and asked to return to the same glory He had with the Father before the world was, that Christ was referring to His spiritual glory as a Man. I agree with this conclusion. The glory Christ asked to return unto was and is a communicated glory, or a derived glory from the Father. The Divine Being of God the Word has no need for the Father to communicate to Him any such glory anymore than the Father needs for the Word or the Holy Spirit to communicate to Him any such glory.

Communicated Glory and Uncommunicated Glory

There is a distinct difference between communicated glory and essential glory. God the Father communicated both *glory and life* to Christ Jesus, as a Man, before all creation, when He generated His Human Person into Being. When we realize the difference between communicated or derived glory from that of uncommunicated or underived glory, known as *essential glory from His essential nature or essence*, we can understand better Christ's prayers and His desires as recorded in John 17.

Christ Received a Natural Body in the Incarnation

So far as timely creation is concerned, in this visible world, Christ came forth from Mary with a NATURAL BODY. While a fetus within Mary's womb, Christ created or made His own blood. His spiritual body became united with the Blood of God, His own blood, and came forth in the form of sinful flesh, but without the fallen nature and any actual sins. However, this does not mean that Christ did not have a spiritual body before all creation.

Christ's Glorified Body after the Resurrection

Does Christ have a spiritual body now? Certainly He does. Did He not return to the same communicated glory He received from His Father before creation? Yes. Did He have this glory as God the Word, or as Jesus Christ, the Man, the Mediator? God the Word has no communicated or derived glory, but His own essential glory arising from His Divine Nature. This divine nature gives glory to His Divine Being as God the Word. The same is true of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

When the disciples and the women buried Christ, they placed a natural body into the tomb. However, when the Holy Spirit raised Jesus out from the dead ones, He came forth with a spiritual body. Let us remember that Paul said:

It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

The Timely Order Contrasted with the Eternal Order

I trust that we can all agree that this one body can be both a natural body and a spiritual body, but not at the same time. In the order of time the natural is first,

just as in the order of time calling is first and then election. Because of our experience in this temporal world, we are to make our calling and election sure. As far as the eternal order is concerned, election comes first and then effectual calling. Even so, from the order of eternity, Christ prayed to return to the communicated glory He had with the Father before the world was.

Christ's Resurrection Body

When Christ came from the tomb, He came forth in His Spiritual body. I hold that this is the same body the Father generated unto Him in pre-creative eternity. Did Christ have a spiritual body after His resurrection? Yes. Did He return to the same glory He had from the Father before Creation? Yes. Did He show this spiritual body briefly on the Mount of Transfiguration? Yes.

Communicated Glory Belongs to the Human and not the Divine

Let us remind ourselves that communicated glory belongs to the Man, Christ Jesus, in His *humanity*. In the pre-creation state, He did dwell in His spiritual body. When the Holy Spirit placed Christ's person into the womb of Mary, Christ went into a mystical tomb like existence. In His resurrection, He was laid into the tomb with a natural body and came forth with a spiritual body again. On the Mount Christ showed briefly this same spiritual body. He then did show His glory, but only by measure as no man could behold His essential and underived glory as Divine and His pre-creative derived glory as the Man Christ Jesus.

Christ Received a Double Portion

Christ is the First-born of all creation. He is the First-Born of the Church of the Redeemed, the elect of God, and He is the First-born and Head of all the Angels, Principalities, and Powers. The Law of the First-Born, in the Old Covenant, a type of the true and spiritual Covenant, calls for the First-Born to receive a double portion of the inheritance in order that he may provide not only for himself and his family, but for the widow and orphans, and other needs involved in maintaining and continuing the family estate.

Even so Christ, as the First-Born, received a double portion of glory and ability in order for Him to maintain His Father's estate or creation. His first portion was the Father's communicated glory and life. His Second or double portion was God's the Word's essential glory by the mystery of the Eternal, Hypostatic Union. Christ is indeed the First-born of all creation, and by Him, all things consist, are upheld, and maintained.

The Mystery of the Incarnation

Christ underwent two different experiences during the mystery of the incarnation. The *first* was His *humility* during which He laid aside His pre-creative glory of dwelling within a spiritual body. He came forth in a natural body of flesh and blood. The *second* was while within Mary's womb, He created or formed His own blood, the very blood of God, by His already existing eternal, hypostatic union with God the Word. When Christ appeared in the Old Testament unto the ancients, He was in His spiritual body and had no blood. Isaiah and many others saw Him in this spiritual body and *Behold His Glory*, but only in part. Christ's human blood, even His divine blood by hypostatic union, existed only during the body of His Humiliation, His incarnate body.

Christ is Again in His Eternal, Spiritual Body

Christ is now within His eternal, spiritual body. This body is made of flesh and bone, but not flesh and blood. He said as much to His disciples after the resurrection. *It is spiritual and not natural because the Spirit sustains it rather than blood.* This was and is Christ's original state as a man.

The Experience of God's Elect

The elect experience much of the same as Christ did except I do not believe they possessed any type of bodies before creation. I do however hold they had an eternal and vital union with Christ before creation. The Father's little children were first within Him as His seed. Then the Father separated them out and gave to Christ, as they existed in their pure, spiritual state, all before creation. Even as the Holy Spirit placed Christ, in His glorious person, into Mary's womb, so the Hand of God places our spirit into the womb at our conception. It is there that the little children partake of the First Adam and receive their bodies from the succession of this earth. Upon death, the little children are placed into the grave with a natural body and have the hope to come forth with a spiritual body.

We are Adopted but not Generated Sons and Daughters in our Body

Because we are not the Begotten Sons or Daughters of God in our natural state, but only adopted, *Christ alone being such*, we did not have the pre-creative spiritual body as Christ did have and now has. At the general resurrection, we will be raised up with our spiritual body and it will come from Christ's spiritual body. At that time, we shall then be *flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone*.

Older Writers Did Not Often Understand the Distinction Between Christ's Spiritual and Natural Bodies

Because so many of the older writers did not understand the distinction between Christ's *spiritual body*, and His *natural body*, and His return to His *spiritual body*, they said He existed from pre-creative eternity in *His rational soul*. I would say He existed from pre-creation in His spiritual body already in union the Divine Word, considered as the Second Divine Being in the Holy Trinity. Christ returned to this state at His resurrection and His ascension back to where He was before as God-Man.

Important points to remember:

**The difference between essential and derived or communicated glory;
The difference between Christ's natural and spiritual body;
The difference between a natural and a spiritual body;
The glory Christ returned unto at His resurrection and ascension.**

May we dwell often upon Christ's humiliation and often be blessed to have the same mind as Christ had when He made Himself of no reputation.