

Redeemer OPC, Hawaii

Adult Sunday School

The Apostles' Creed (13)

“Eleventh Article - Resurrection of the Body”

- I. Introduction. Review: We last looked at the tenth article dealing with the forgiveness of sins. We found that the reason it was placed in the Holy Spirit's section of the creed, even though it is by Christ's Person and work that forgiveness is secured for us, is that the ministry of the Holy Spirit applies the saving work to regenerate our hearts and instill faith in us. It is through faith in Christ that we receive the pardon of our sins by God's grace. We found that this is the height of the Spirit's self-effacing ministry that directs us to Christ. We also found that the reason that article appears after the article on the church is that the Spirit uses the church as His instrument to regenerate the heart and instill faith in Christ by the church's function to preach the gospel. We spoke about the effects of forgiveness, that we are released from guilt through the payment of our sin-debt in full, and released from liability to the penalty through Christ's satisfaction of divine justice on our behalf. So, every aspect of our guilt and all of our sins are washed away, and we can have the relief, peace of conscience, and joy that it brings. Now, we examine the eleventh article of the Apostles' Creed, “[I believe in] the resurrection of the body.”
- II. The Connection and Context in the Creed. As with the last article, a question regarding the placement of this article comes up. It is more understandable why this article appears near the end of the creed because the resurrection of our bodies comes near the consummation of the redemptive plan of God. But the question is, Why does it immediately follow “the forgiveness of sins”?
  - A. Forgiveness as the Foundation. In a sense, the forgiveness of sins is foundational to all of the saving benefits that we have by the blood of Christ. We still acknowledge

that forgiveness is an effect that is caused by other saving benefits that God bestows on us, such as regeneration of the heart, the gift of faith, the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, etc. But what we mean is that forgiveness is a crucial and essential co-occurrence to the imputation of righteousness in our justification, and is necessary to our adoption, sanctification, and glorification (which includes the resurrection of the body), as well as to the benefits that flow from them: peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace, and perseverance therein. So, forgiveness of sins acts in the creed as sort of a shorthand for all of the benefits we have by the blood of Christ because it is foundational to them. The resurrection of the body is the Christian's final hope leading into eternal life in glory. It is the consummation of the salvation that was given to him at the moment that forgiveness of sins was laid up to his account and benefit, along with all that follows it.

- B. Forgiveness Required for Resurrection. Death entered the world through sin. Sin must be dealt with and its guilt done away for the reversal of death, so that resurrection to life may then occur. Christ dealt with our sin, and removed our guilt. The result is forgiveness of the sins that put the body in the grave, and the way is therefore cleared for the resurrection.

### III. The Certainty of the Resurrection of the Body.

- A. The Resurrection of Our Body. The creed refers in this article to our resurrection, not Christ's; we hope that has been made clear. But our resurrection is grounded in Christ's resurrection and made possible only by His (1 Cor. 15:20-23).

- B. Scripture's Testimony.

- 1. OT Testimony.

- a. God said to Moses, "I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

By Christ's own interpretation, this proves that there is life after death

and proves the promised resurrection from the dead. His point was that if there were not eternal life and the resurrection from the dead, God would have had to say, "I WAS the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." But since He said what He did, it must mean that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive with eternal life in glory, and their bodies will be raised from the dead to enjoy eternal life in glory as complete, re-integrated beings according to God's promise.

- b. Job 19:25ff. (READ.) Job will not be able to see Christ his Redeemer with his own eyes and in his own flesh unless Christ raises him from the dead when He returns. Job had to know and be confident of the resurrection of his own body in order to say and write what he did.
- c. Isa. 26:19. (READ.) How much more clear could God's promise to His people possible be?? And there are many other passages, such as Ezek. 37:1-10. Note the role of the preaching of God's Word in the first resurrection unto life that is the new birth. If God's people will be raised from death in trespasses and sins to newness of life with regenerate hearts (cf. Ezek. 36:25-27) and Spirit-instilled justifying faith, surely they will be raised from the death of their bodies to resurrected eternal life, too. There is also Dan. 12:2-3, 13. Again, how much plainer could God's promise possibly be??

## 2. NT Testimony.

- a. John 5:28-29. In the context, Jesus speaks of what Revelation will later call the first and second resurrection. The first is the same first resurrection to which Ezek. 37:1-10 speaks, the new birth by the

Spirit's work through the Word of God. The second is the resurrection of the body when Christ returns.

- b. Rom. 8:11, 23. This shows the Spirit's involvement in the resurrection of Christ's body, and reasons that He will therefore have a role in the resurrection of the Christian's body. Vs. 23 then identifies it as our "hope."
- c. 1 Cor. 15. The resurrection chapter. And many more texts could be brought forward to testify to God's promise to raise our bodies from the dead.

### 3. Biblical Arguments.

- a. God's character. With His power, wisdom, goodness, and justice, what He applies to man is to the whole man, body and soul, whether perishing or life. This principle is essential to understanding the miracles of healing, raising the dead, etc. Christ showed by healing the body of the physical effects of the curse of sin, that He was able to heal the spiritual effects of sin and save both soul and body from the condemnation that man brought upon himself by sin. So, the miracles themselves also prove this principle.
- b. What was promised to Adam in the covenant of works cannot be greater than what is promised to us in Christ in the covenant of grace. Adam was promised life, body and soul; we must be promised the same.
- c. The resurrection of Christ makes our resurrection certain. Christ was the first-fruits, so the entire harvest is consecrated to God. As Adam and sin were the cause of death to the whole man, so Christ is the

cause of life to the whole man. Christ's resurrection demonstrated that He had made a complete atonement and satisfaction of divine justice for us. So, our justification must finally issue in our resurrection. Christ conquered the enemy, death; we must therefore be raised from death. Christ's resurrection provided the pattern and power for ours (John 11; Rom. 6); we cannot fail to be raised. Union with Christ guarantees that the pattern and power will be applied to us. Christ will not count Himself complete until His body, federally represented and redeemed by Him, is complete through both vital union and glorification (Eph. 1:22-23).

- d. The Holy Spirit indwells and sanctifies us; the same Spirit is the pledge of our eternal inheritance, including resurrection from the dead (Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:1-6), and will apply Christ's power to us (Rom. 8:11).

#### IV. The Object and Manner of the Resurrection.

A. The Object. The same body that died will be raised, but with changes.

1. Proven by Job 19:26-27; 1 Cor. 15:42-44.
2. Herman Witsius. "...subject to no infirmity or decay." "Includes the highest degrees of loveliness, beauty, and majesty." "Without the least fatigue, it [will] afford the most prompt and perfect service to the soul in the glorious exercises of the celestial life." "It required meat, drink, and sleep for its support...it will stand in no need of anything necessary to human sustenance."

B. The Manner of the Resurrection. It will be one general resurrection. For the purpose of full understanding: at the last day there will be a general resurrection of all people, just and unjust (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Dan. 12:2). The distinction between the

saved and the unsaved is clear: the saved are righteous by virtue of Christ's righteousness imputed to them, which then produces the evidence of the fruit of righteousness in their lives. It comes from a changed nature that loves righteousness. The unsaved are guilty and condemned by virtue of Adam's sin and guilt imputed to them, have a wicked sin nature as a result of and in keeping with the guilt, which produces the evidence of the fruit of wickedness in their lives. We have been speaking of the resurrection of the just, which is the Christian's hope.

- V. Two Lessons. These are among many that could be learned.
  - A. Acts 24:16, following vs. 15. Keep a clear conscience in the living of your Christian life to give you assurance that you have justifying faith in Christ and shall therefore be raised in the resurrection of the just.
  - B. 1 Cor. 15:58. Abound in the work of the Lord, in obedience and sanctification, and service.