

THE BODY OF THE FUTURE LIFE:

IS IT ELECTRICAL?

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THE thought that the body of the future life may be electrical was suggested to the writer by the wireless message and the flight of the angel Gabriel as mentioned in Daniel ix. 21. It is only a surmise. It does not amount to a conviction. How can we know? It is not within the mental scope of man to penetrate the realm of the unknowable. If science fail to support, and Bible revelation be rejected, what avenue to knowledge is left? How can the truth be known? Reason itself is shy.

At the same time it cannot be denied that Scripture seems to support the postulate here presented in a startling manner. There were a great many phenomena associated with the life of Christ as recorded by the Apostles which appear in evidence.

The Apostle Paul has made an imperfect attempt in Cor. xv. to define the substance and nature of the spiritual body which is to traverse celestial space after its transformation at the putative Resurrection: but psychology was a crude study in Paul's days, and his exposition does not satisfy. Modern science, however, does help to explain many phenomena which were formerly unaccountable, or accounted as miracles, and to give meaning to texts of Scripture which have hitherto seemed void of significance.

During all historic time a large proportion of mankind has believed in the immortality of the soul. Since Christ came many believe also in the resurrection of the body. What body? Our carnal natural body which is subject to decay and corruption? Which has been put away in the grave diseased, deformed, dismembered, or torn to shreds by explosions? Christ and his disciples say, "No." But we are told that when the final call shall come "we shall all be changed." And we are assured furthermore that "flesh

and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." [This postulate is diametrically opposite to Job's idea in the Old Testament times. Job xix. 26.]

Now, as man was "created in God's own image," and Christ, the divine emanation, "took upon himself the form of a man," and as "God is a spirit," and "his angels (who were created before the world was made) are they not all ministering spirits," the main split in the analogy seems to consist in the fact that human beings are at first mortal, and so subject to physical death and dissolution, whereas the Godhead and angels, archangels, seraphim, cherubim, and other celestial beings so often spoken of in the Scriptures, are immortal. But we are taught that in due time our "spirits shall return to God who gave them," and then we shall be like them. In what guise or substance, then, will they return? The transfiguration of the Saviour on the Mount gives an inkling.

All the angels who have ever had intercourse with man on earth resembled men, and we have Scripture record of one hundred and thirty of their visitations in Old and New Testament times; so that their form, behavior, features, missions, and characteristics are not altogether hypothetical. In the cases of Gabriel, Raphael, Michael, and some others, their visits were so frequent that their persons became familiar. Although these messengers usually appeared in human form, they often disguised themselves, just as Christ did during his last forty days (Matt. xxviii. 3; Luke xxiv. 37), or transformed themselves at pleasure (Mark xvi. 12). Quite frequently their faces were luminous (Rev. x. 1; Rev. i. 14, 15, 16). On occasions their effulgence was so dazzling as to terrify (Matt. xxviii. 3, 4). They seemed to eat, speak, taste, hear, see, feel, and assimilate food as mortals do. Three of them sat at meat with Abraham. Two ate with Lot. In some instances they ordered what should be served. One wrestled with Jacob, showing inherent athletic strength. But they manifested supernatural powers as well. They appeared and vanished at will. Obstacles did not intercept their passage or their vision. Distance did not limit their sight or hearing. Levitation in fire, air, and water was a personal endowment. One of them ascended in the flame of Manoah's altar and was not consumed. They had phenomenal powers delegated to them and were often employed on errands of mercy, or as nuncios, or as agents of destruction, armed with thunderbolts, to execute God's wrath. They seemed to possess in a modified degree the divine attributes. So likewise Christ ate and drank with his disciples and others *after his carnal body had been discarded*, par-

taking of bread, meat, honey, and fish at sundry times. At times he changed his features so that his intimate male and female associates did not recognise him (Mark xvi. 12; Luke xxiv, 16, 17). He walked on the water; he was caught up in the air: he appeared and vanished at will. At times his face was luminous, and at the transfiguration his whole body was aglow with incandescence. In like phase he vanished out of their sight at the last.

All this preamble is pertinent to the query: What shall be our future body in life immortal? The Scripture saith: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we shall be *like Him*." (1 John iii. 2.) And again: "When I wake up *after thy likeness*, I shall be satisfied with it." (Ps. xvii. 16.) Christ has said: "I and the Father are one." He has repeatedly declared his kinship with mankind. He assured his disciples of their oneness with the Father and with himself. Therefore we argue from analogy what our body will resemble, and we may gather by the same logical process what its substance will be.

Let us consider:

While the Saviour was "of the earth earthy," he was subject to physical limitations. After his resurrection he was exempt. His face was radiant. A halo of light at times encircled his head, and on occasion "his countenance shone like lightning." Were not these phenomena purely electrical? Was not his new body an electrical body peculiarly adapted to the realm of infinitude? Why not electrical? The idea is not preposterous. Modern science has discovered that electricity is not matter. (?) Can there not be entities which we wot not of, so different from our own that the Saviour himself would not attempt to describe them, simply because, as he declared, his disciples would not comprehend; any more, perhaps, than a fish (as some philosopher has cited) which has known only aquatic life can imagine a species of beings living out of water and breathing air?

What other substance than electricity is so subtle that solid bodies present no obstacle to its passage, and yet so potent that it can smash rocks to atoms? Christ's resurrected body possessed this nature. Its character was manifested by the aureola which enveloped him at his transfiguration and final ascension. He was electrically luminous when he walked on the water, and the sailors "thought it was a spirit." His electrical nature was manifested especially in his power of levitation. The same peculiarity invested the "shining ones" who sat by the Saviour's vacated tomb, and it has characterised the presence of all angels, "saints in light" (Col.

i. 12), who appeared in visions to Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and St. John, in their spiritual seances and interviews. The glare in almost every instance was blinding: its effect stunning. At the Pentecost the Holy Spirit showed itself in "tongues of fire." It blinded St. Paul on his way to Damascus. It was present in the "Shechina" of the inner tabernacle, in the "pillar of fire" which preceded the Israelitish vanguard like an *ignis fatuus* in their wilderness journey, and in the Ark of the Covenant. It was conspicuously manifested when Nahum inadvertently put out his hand to steady the ark and fell dead as if he had touched a live wire. It kindled the wood of Elijah's altar and licked up the water in its trench. It explains the transcendent glory of the New Jerusalem which was beyond the power of St. John to describe; it is ever present in the spectacular drama of the Revelation, sometimes in brilliant coruscations, and again accompanied by thunder and tremors. Presumably it will scintillate from the "crowns of glory" which are promised to the blessed.

This theory of the electrical body, if accepted, makes the visible phenomena of modern spiritualism possible and real. It makes the hypothesis of annihilation quite as possible, for lightning often consumes and leaves no trace behind. An agent so potential, if wielded by a Gabriel or a Raphael under divine direction, would eradicate all material things as easily and completely as they did Sodom and Gomorrah; if it so pleased the Almighty, rather than to exercise the divine fiat, which presumably can unmake as easily as it can create.

"I am the light of the world." God said: "Let there be light, and there was light." What kind of light? It could not have been of the planets, for suns, moons, and stars had not yet been created. Was it not electrical light like the aurora borealis, whose displays have at times within the past century lighted up a hemisphere simultaneously? "His lightnings gave shine unto the world." (Ps. xcvi. 4.) At creation the earth was given a physical light of its own, quite irrespective of the great "Light of lights." But in the future of immortality there will be no need of the sun, "for the Lord giveth them light." (Rev. xxv. 5.) "By his light we shall see light," just as by the solar light we see the sun.

The passage of man's spiritual body, the "vital *spark*," through space in the eternal hereafter, is certainly not more wonderful or mysterious than the transit of a wireless message through the terrestrial atmosphere. That appreciable time is occupied in its passage from the celestial realm to earth, or at least through the domain

of the stellar universe (beyond which, according to Wallace, all is infinity) is evident from the divine injunction to the angel Gabriel, on one occasion, to "fly *quickly*." In the terrestrial envelope flight would be retarded; in vacuity the duration of transit would probably be not appreciable. It might be as quick as thought itself! But the object of an electrical body is not to facilitate transit, but to serve as a visible medium of identification between those who have been acquainted on earth aforesaid. Our carnal faculties of perception and our ever changing bodies would be unreliable factors to depend on, indeed! Any soul that loves has a yearning for a visible and tangible presence. Telepathy does not satisfy; contact is desired. A living soul needs a vitalised body. Electrified, the spiritual body becomes the visible expression of a living soul. Its audible expression has been heard in the "still small voice," as well as in the thunders of Sinai!

If mortal man on earth can animate an electric spark, give it voice, and dispatch it from continent to continent in three seconds, God the all-Powerful can animate a "ministering spirit" of the same nature as His own and make its flight instantaneous. "He maketh his ministers a flaming fire." (Ps. civ. 4.) In like manner the human-divine being when translated can go where it will. No mortal body will clog or impede its passage. The law of gravitation will not confine it, but its flight will annihilate time and space. Its presence would be almost ubiquitous. Thereby we prove our kinship with the "Father of Lights."

"I have said, ye are gods!"

Taking this view of our oneness with the Trinity, as taught by the Saviour, we get rid of the skeptic's specious objection that man is too insignificant to engage the special interest of a Supreme Creator who deals with the infinite and illimitable; and that the idea of a vicarious sacrifice of the Divine Son for fallen man is preposterous. Is there anything more unique or improbable in the assumption that the ultimate purpose of the Deity in creating the universe was to subserve the production of a living soul to be developed in a perishable body, than there is in the scientific fact that the infinitesimal germ or protoplasm should enlarge into a creature so many million times its size as to be beyond mental or mathematical comprehension?