

teristic forms the new material, whatever it may be, which may be placed within its reach. And so it will build itself a new body—or possibly, if such body in any way wastes away there, as ours do on earth—a succession of new bodies.

If the materials thus given to it are what St. Paul calls “spiritual,” “celestial,” “incorruptible,” “immortal,” then the body it will form out of them will have these qualities also. So will it be “a glorious body” fitted to the glorious world in which it is to live.”

The meaning of this is, that just as the soul, while on earth, forms out of the materials here a body for itself to dwell in, so when at death it passes to heaven it will, from the material it finds there, fashion for itself a body suited for that higher sphere. This is a view advanced by Dr. Lange, and supported by him with a fascinating mixture of logic and fancy. Nothing could be said about it but that it is simple, beautiful, and plausible, were it not the Bible asserts a doctrine the very contrary.

The question to be settled here is this one,—Do the Scriptures teach that the body which is laid in the grave rises again? The Bible is a plain book, written for plain men, and has been understood in its plain sense by the Christian Church in all ages to teach that in some sense or other, (what that sense is we may not be able to answer) the resurrection body is the same body that was laid in the grave. It was the same body that was laid in the tomb of Joseph, that came forth as the risen Saviour to be the first fruit from the dead and a type of the general resurrection. At the same time the graves were opened and the bodies of the saints that slept arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection. The whole discourse of Paul (1 Cor. xv.), after granting some points that only encumbered his argument, turns on the body which dies, which is buried, and which will rise again. It is all about the body and its relation to a future life. And to show

how deeply the thought of a literal resurrection lay embodied in his mind he says, in a passing way, writing to the Romans (viii.) “He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” And in another letter he says that it is “our vile body” or our “humiliated body” which is to be fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body. From these things it is clear that the Bible means what it says when it tells us that the same body which is sown in the grave is the very one that rises again in a new dress.

But if we are asked the question in what does this sameness consist? we may not be able to answer this. This sameness does not depend upon all the matter of the old body being in the new one, nor on the new body being in all respects like the old body, no more than the sameness of the grain of wheat in harvest and in spring hang on such conditions as these. It is enough for us to know the following glorious fact which should in our poor dying state never be very long absent from our thoughts:—

1. That our future bodies, although the same as the present bodies, will excel the present bodies in glory as much as the glory of the sun excels the glory of the stars. This is the scope of the apostle’s reasoning (1 Cor. xv. 40-42), though the passage is generally quoted as teaching that some saints will excel other saints as much as one star excels another, or the sun the brightest star. This may be true: but this passage meddles not with that point, being concerned only with the weightier truth stated above.

2. That the heavenly body will still retain so much of its identity as to be a glorified likeness of what it was on earth. It was so with Moses and Elias when the three disciples knew them on the mount of transfiguration. And on this ground of knowing each other in heaven Paul administers comfort to the