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Redeeming the Flesh

In the end, *flesh*. That has been the conviction of the Church's best theologians, who in their eschatological imagination have dared to populate the coming world with living humans, that is, bodies fully alive, rejoined and renewed in the coming world. According to this vision, nothing is lost at the resurrection. On the day of Christ's return the saints are made new, yet in this newness everything is strangely familiar: muscle and bones, skin and scars, all beautiful, and altogether the persons who once lived. Bodies which grew and acted and sickened and died are somehow identical with the bodies raised by God on the last day. *Credo in resurrectionem carnis*, says the Apostles Creed, representative of this holy imagination: *I believe in the resurrection of the flesh*.

Before examining Karl Barth's fresh and multifaceted view, one does well to know a bit about the development of the doctrine of the general resurrection through the centuries. This chapter provides part of that history, making two observations. First, every theologian within the bounds of the holy catholic Church felt a common burden to describe the resurrected person in physical, material, earthly terms. The earliest Christians articulated hope in that way, and later thinkers sought to do the same in more sophisticated ways. However—and this is the second point of the chapter—theologians from Origen to Thomas Aquinas came up with rather different descriptions of the future body. Specifically, I detect two basic trajectories of thought regarding the resurrection of the flesh. A sketch of the two paths serves as a valuable historical backdrop as I set up some parameters of conversation about Barth's own view.

THE EARLY CHURCH'S SCANDALOUS DOCTRINE

While Jewish thought had wide precedent for belief in the resurrection of the dead,[1] the uncircumcised were baffled over the idea of bodily resurrection. Mockery and curiosity typified the reception of the gospel in Paul's gentile mission. Various Platonists had immunized themselves against such an idea through their own doctrine of the immortality of the soul; blurry Stoical conceptions of semi-personal soul survival or cosmic reintegration hardly welcomed bodily renewal. Even the more materialistic philosophers of the period would have found the Christian hope inane at worst, curious at best,[2] exemplified by Paul's audience at the Areopagus: "When they heard about the resurrection of the dead some scoffed, but others said, 'We will hear you again on this'" (Acts 17:32). Their grounds for skepticism were quite simple: to the philosophical mind the flesh epitomized change, which in turn suggested the restlessness inherent in imperfection. Flesh is that which morphs, ages, sickens, dies, decays, disintegrates. For the Greco-Roman world which prized immutability so highly, it seemed unthinkable to entertain a gospel that vouchsafed a temporal, concrete, bodily future to humans.

We have no record of anyone in the primitive Church longing for simple resuscitation. The resurrection was *newness* of life, after all, the entrance into immortality. Yet for the early Christians the resurrection suggested something of a *re*-surrection, something of a coming back, a return of what was, a newness of the old. Had this not been the double affirmation of their Christ? Jesus "appeared" to the disciples in newness (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5–8)—yet the old tomb was emphatically empty (Matt 28:6; Mark 16:4–8; Luke 24:3,12; John 20:1–9).[3] In His newness He could circumvent locked doors, arriving and vanishing instantaneously (Luke 24:31, 35; John 20:26)—yet He proved Himself through physical demonstrations to be the same flesh and bone (Matt 28:9; Luke 24:13–31; 24:37–43; John 20:17; 21:12–13). The risen Jesus ascended into heaven

1. Of course, most Jews of the first century were scandalized not so much by the claim of a coming resurrection as with the idea that the eschaton had come in an unlikely messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. For the various views inherited by the first century AD and their political interpretations, see Setzer, "Resurrection of the Dead as Symbol and Strategy," 65–101. For the doctrine's development and its multifaceted significance as a Jewish doctrine, see Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*.

2. Cf. Croy, "Hellenistic Philosophies and the Preaching of the Resurrection," 21–39.

3. For a discussion of the language of the resurrection appearances see Harris, *From Grave to Glory*, 129–46.

to prepare a celestial house (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; John 14:1–4; 2 Cor 5:1–10)—yet that house was destined for the terrestrial setting (Matt 5:4; Rev 21:2; cf. Zech 14:6–11).

This fundamental juxtaposition of new and old, of discontinuity and continuity, is nowhere more concentrated than in the *locus classicus* of the resurrection doctrine, 1 Corinthians 15. There Paul entertains the question of the glorified body in images of similitude and dissimilitude.[4] The seed metaphor (vv.36–38, 42–44) depicts a body in radical alteration, passing beyond death to a new form of the person, wholly fructified, yet somehow identical with the original, pre-death seed. The differing fleshes of living organisms (v.39) suggest the possibility of different bodies, as do the disparate glories of heavenly orbs (vv.40–41). But it is really the seed-to-plant metaphor which best describes the change Paul has in mind: the seed is sown a "natural" body (*sōma psuchikon*) and raised a "spiritual" body (*sōma pneumatikon*). Identity-in-difference itself is governed by Christology in the form of a dialectic between the earthly and heavenly Man (vv.45–50). The first Adam, a "natural soul" (*psuchēn zōsan*), had to become the last Adam, Jesus Christ, a "lifegiving spirit" (*pneuma zōopoioun*). The logic extends to the general resurrection: just as the first Adam became the last Adam, our old body-self will become its new body-self. We will overcome death in this consummate *transformation*, though it will be *we* ourselves who "put on" immortality, imperishability, glory and power (vv.51–57). It is not my purpose to untangle Paul's semiotics, only to appreciate how themes of discontinuity and continuity converge dramatically in talk of eschatological flesh. We will live again—to the life which is and is not the life we had before. Our flesh will be raised—which will and will not be the flesh of our former existence. Both sides of the paradox must be upheld.

It is striking, then, how in the earliest records after the apostles we find defense after defense of the *continuity* of the body. Greek and Latin writers alike prefer to speak of the resurrection of the dead not in terms of the raising of the person (*prosōpon*; *persona*), or even of the body (*sōma*; *corpus*), but of the flesh (*sarx*; *caro*). While they utilize Pauline texts, the early apologists and ecclesiastical writers prefer to dialogue in the Johannine idiom: the Savior came "in the flesh" (John 1:14; 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7), suffered "in the flesh" (1 John 5:6–8) and rose again giving many corporeal

4. For the following, see the discussion of Paul's rhetorico-logical flow in the second *refutatio* and *confirmatio* of 1 Cor 15 in Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1176–78, 1257–1306.

proofs (John 20:19–31, 21:9–14; 1 John 1:1?). The early fathers take up residence in this kind of discourse. Better, one might say that in their prose and poetry they choose to abide in the Hebraic mindset: flesh *is* what is means to be human, what it means to be the creature of God, even the covenant-partner of YHWH, showered with all His material blessings. God is pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh—but flesh is flesh.

Since others have supplied exhaustive documentation of writings about the Christian hope in the second and early third centuries,[5] let me touch on some select examples of the robust, gritty sense with which the fathers spoke of the resurrection of the flesh. In a document that may be contemporaneous with the later New Testament writers, Clement of Rome writes that the resurrection of the dead is a concrete and credible future occurrence, as evidenced by the example of the (supposedly real) phoenix, which rises out of the same material in which it died.[6] Ignatius repeats the Johannine language when he says that Jesus after His resurrection "ate and drank as a fleshly one [*hōs sarkikos*], though He was spiritually united to the Father."[7] That kind of earthly continuity matters for the general resurrection too, according to the narrative of the second century *Epistula Apostolorum*, which can be read as a rebuke to spiritualizing eschatology. When the disciples state that it is the flesh that falls in death, Jesus responds, "What is fallen will arise, and what is ill will be sound, that my Father may be praised therein."[8] The site of death and decay will be the site of redemption. In this vein the writer of the pseudepigraphal 2 *Clement* teaches, "If Christ the Lord who saved us, though he was first a Spirit, became flesh and thus called us, so also shall we receive the reward in the same flesh [*en tautē tē sarki*]."[9] Examples like these demonstrate that many in the early Church embraced the resurrection in a straightforward sense, highlighting ontological continuity in the body-material that is raised.

Why did the primitive Church choose to state its position in such an abrasive form? Two functionalist explanations have been suggested. The

5. E.g., Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 480–552; Lona, *Über die Auferstehung des Fleisches*; Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity,* 200–1336, 21–58.

6. 1 *Clement* 24:1—26:3.

7. Ignatius, *Ad Smyrnaos* 3:3. Cf. *Barnabas* 5:6.

8. *Epistula Apostolorum* 25 (Coptic text), cited in Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 264. The epistle's attention to corporeality affirms the resurrection of the whole person at the very least, and may be quarreling openly with a dualistic anthropology (Lona, *Über die Auferstehung des Fleisches*, 88).

9. 2 *Clement* 9:5.

first draws attention to the clergy's desire to establish a stronger hierarchy by rebuffing the lawlessness entailed in a spiritualized eschatology of Gnostic groups. Gnosticism's claim that each person possesses (and is) a spiritual, divine spark came with an attendant disdain for the body, a belief system which culminated in the rejection of "apparent" earthly order and centralized ecclesiastical government. By rejecting the value of the physical body one also rejects the value of the political body. The eschatology of the second-century catholic writers, by intentional contrast, reinforced the goodness of Christians' present governed, physical lives by speaking of their future governed, physical lives.[10] A second social explanation says that the resurrection of the flesh addressed the problem of martyrdom.[11] Theologians used the doctrine to encourage the saints as they suffered brutal violence and degradation at the hands of their Roman oppressors. If Christians were tortured and slain in the body, God would raise up that selfsame body. Even if Christians were mutilated, devoured by beasts, and given over to defilement and decay, they would rise again utterly victorious in the exact flesh in which they were humiliated. God would triumph in that very place.

As helpful as these explanations are to providing a fuller picture of the early Church, one should not necessarily agree with Caroline Walker Bynum's assessment that the early Church's theological reasoning (the model of Jesus' own resurrection, the impact of millenarianism, refutation of the Gnostic threat, etc.) was mostly tautological.[12] Social factors certainly intensified theologians' witness to corporeality, but in their reductionistic form such explanations skim over the ways in which early Christians understood the integrity of the apostolic message to hang on the doctrine of the resurrection. Why not Docetism? Because if Christ only "appeared" to conquer death, the gospel story would be no more than a ruse. Why not Marcionitism? Because if the divine scorns materiality, then our created lives are worthless, Israel's God is demonic, and salvation itself is an impotent work of an impotent god. Why not the Gnostic option? Because in their account everything about Jesus Christ and His gospel evaporates into vacuous spirit. That is, all of these anti-corporealist options reject the heart of the apostolic message of *Emmanuel*: that God actually lived and actually died and actually lives forevermore with us. He

10. See the hypothesis of John G. Gager in "Body Symbols and Social Reality," 345–64.

11. Cf. Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, 21–58.

12. Ibid., 26.

saves by inhabiting the creation, redeeming it from the inside-out. For the early Church, only an eschatology that affirmed a concrete place for the created body could hope to stand with the gospel against such convenient Christianities.

Stated another way, second-century theologians championed the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh as a critical strategy to keep creation and re-creation united. Athenagoras in his *De resurrectione* makes pains to forge a bond between the two, doing it so strongly that a good portion of the treatise is necessarily devoted to dealing with the cannibalism objection (viz., If the created body and redeemed body are identical, what of the bits that are assimilated by other humans? To whom will they belong?). God as the Redeemer is no less God the Creator; therefore the redeemed body cannot be less than the created body. In this line of argumentation, a strident Tertullian enjoins his readers to embrace the pure message of Scripture and to scorn the "admixture of heretical subtleties" by affirming that "the flesh will rise again: it wholly [*omnis*], it identically [*ipsa*], it entirely [*integra*]."[13]

The unity of creation and re-creation in God's plans affected orthopraxy too, a point that was not lost on patristic writers. For example, Justin Martyr makes a splendid argument against spiritualizers by making them out to be bad worshipers. Such people believe that their naturally-good souls go on to immortality while their wicked bodies perish; but if this is the case, Justin deduces, they are also averring that nothing of themselves needs to be saved by God, and so they blasphemously assume that they owe Him no thanks and gratitude.[14] To them nature feels more and more like a burden, so much so that, disregarding the value of the body, they abandon themselves to extreme asceticism on one hand or flagrant libertinism on the other. In contrast, God will heal His good creation when "the flesh shall rise perfect and entire."[15] This is the reason why Christians must live holy lives in the present age, Justin teaches, for God will hold us responsible for all the acts done in the body and judge us accordingly.[16]

Faith statements developing in the early centuries of the Church reflect this sentiment. For instance, around 215 Hippolytus of Rome instructed that those being baptized must affirm, among other things, that they believe "in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Church and the resurrection

13. Tertullian, *De resurrectione carnis*, lxiii.

14. Justin Martyr, *De resurrectione*, viii.

15. Ibid., iv.

16. Ibid., x; Justin Martyr, *Apologia* viii.18; cf. Tertullian, *De resurrectione carnis*, xiv.

of the flesh."[17] Content and structure dating to the latter half of the second century informs the creed of Marcellus (c.340) when it espouses the "resurrection of the flesh."[18] Marcellus's creed takes on great importance when one considers how close it is to the received form of the Apostles Creed. On the point of eschatology the two documents are identical in their profession of belief in *sarkos anastasin* (equivalent to the Latin *carnis resurrectionem*). As for the Apostles Creed, the "apostolic" title may be misleading on its face, but J. N. D. Kelley concludes that the early version of the Old Roman Symbol represented "a compendium of popular theology," an accurate portrayal of "the faith and hope of the primitive Church."[19] All of this goes to say that the resurrection of the flesh was not some idiosyncratic belief held by a few, or a mere residue from Christianity's Hebraic inheritance. For all its obvious difficulties, the doctrine presented the chief hope of the Church.

To summarize, the early Church fathers were consistent in their teaching of a resurrection of the flesh, that the selfsame body (whatever that might mean) is reconstituted in the eschaton for judgment and salvation. Against those spiritualizers who would abstract or reject the tangible body, the fathers emphasized continuity amidst transformation in the resurrection. They asserted this for reasons of praxis as well as theological integrity. In the earliest Church context, the resurrection of the flesh was one of the best ways to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ in its received form, to link together creation and redemption under one God, and to commend personal, bodily holiness within the tangible, catholic Church. The uniform concern with a strong corporeal eschatology registered a loud testimony in the Apostles Creed: *credo . . . in carnis resurrectionem*. For all their glaring logical, theological and scientific loose ends, the earliest fathers were able to hold onto the physical body as the locus of redemption. They sought it out as the place of human identity, dignity, and responsibility. But many questions remained, leading later theologians to propose quite disparate models of interpretation for Christianity's scandalous tenet.

17. Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 21:17. For the absence of the phrase in one branch of its transmission, see Dix and Chadwick, ed., *The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome, Bishop and Martyr*, lxix.

18. See Boliek, *The Resurrection of the Flesh*, 13–21.

19. Kelley, *Early Christian Creeds*, 131.

TWO TRAJECTORIES OF THE DOCTRINE

From the third century onward theological accounts of the resurrection of the flesh grew more diverse. Christians in the 200s lightened their grip on the strong view of the corporeality of the resurrection, a trend evident in the forerunning documents of the Apostles Creed. Belief meant belief not only "in the resurrection of the flesh" but also in "life eternal [*vitam aeternum*]."[20] The waning threat from anti-materialistic heresies had something to do with this shift, no doubt. Less probably, the shift also stemmed from a diminished sense of urgency resulting from the delay of the parousia and periods of tolerance from the Roman government. The fourth century signaled a more considerable shift in eschatology. Toleration from Emperor Galerius, then religious privilege from Constantine, then official sanction from Theodosius and others utterly changed the status of Christianity in the Roman Empire. Over the same period, the Arian controversy dominated the theological mindset, so much so that the architects of the Nicene Creed around 381 moved quite naturally from a defense of materiality/humanity to a defense of Jesus Christ's deity. Their eschatological profession? The more generic belief in "the resurrection of the dead [*anastasin nekrōn*]." That phrase, "resurrection of the dead," with its uncontestable biblical pedigree, seemed a suitable statement for the widening catholic communion. Nevertheless, many circles of Christians retained the fleshy language of the earlier creeds; creeds that underscored creaturely dimensions and counterbalanced the realized eschatology of imperial Christendom.[21] It should come as no surprise, then, that from the third and fourth centuries theological explanation of the doctrine of the resurrection diversified.

I have taken the liberty of compiling two general views about the flesh. The two trajectories below represent families of theological thought with regard to what happens to the flesh at the resurrection. The two, which I will call "the collection view" and "the participation view," correspond roughly with the program of Western Christianity and the program of Eastern Christianity. For each trajectory I have diagrammed the thought of three theologians (two patristic and one medieval). While I am forced to paint in broad strokes, I believe the following categories help to

20. It may be that some developed the creed so as to preserve continuity through the *carnis resurrectionem* and discontinuity through the *vitam aeternum*, but Kattenbusch is probably right to conclude the latter clause is meant to explicate the resurrection itself (Kattenbusch, *Das apostolische Symbol*, Band II, 952).

21. Cf. Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (*100–600*)*, 127.

set the stage for how Karl Barth, truly an ecumenical theologian, grapples with the corporeal Christian hope.

The Collection of the Flesh

Christians had legitimate reasons to stress the discontinuity of the resurrected body, but they also had good reason to underscore the continuity between that which was and that which is to come. As described earlier in this chapter, the first Christian theologians had defended the identity, dignity, and responsibility of human beings by defending the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh. Lest Christianity evaporate into spiritualism, salvation had to be spoken of in the most concrete terms possible: the Savior became human flesh; He and many others, martyred in the flesh, had to be raised in the flesh; good and evil deeds alike were committed in the flesh. What better way than to express the concrete parallels between this life and the next than to draw a strict equation between the bodily material of this life and the bodily material of the next?

According to a first theological program, the resurrection of the flesh involves the wholesale collection and reassembly of the bits of one's flesh. The collection view posited a materialistic solution, keeping the matter and adjusting the form. Certain Church fathers found warrant in the Scriptures for this latter view, calling attention to the protection against bodily decay in Psalm 16 and the reanimated bones of Ezekiel 37. And did not Christ promise that "not one hair from your head will perish" (Luke 21:18)? Even without a wooden reading, many Christians in antiquity and the middle ages discerned that the Scriptures identified humans as undeniably physical, not just psychical, and that God intended to restore, judge, and honor the earthly vessel. The materialist sentiment—no doubt helped by the growing need to justify the use of relics[22]—led Christians to posit that continuity resided in the bodily material itself. The resurrection of the flesh, understood as a collection of a person's selfsame matter, was the dominant view in the West until the thirteenth century, though it gained expression in the third and fourth.[23]

22. Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, 92–94, 104–14.

23. Or perhaps the third century under Methodius of Olympus and his followers. Bynum's magnificent study recounts dozens of advocates of the collection view, a view which generated increasingly vivid images of regurgitation and reassembly (ibid., 59–225).

Jerome of Stridon (c. 345–420), following in the footsteps of Theophilus, Athenagoras, and Methodius, developed the collection view. In his eschatological vision, the raising of the dead entails the preservation of both the exact material of the present life. He describes the resurrection body in terms of reconstruction: it is a recast clay pot, constructed in such a way that every speck comes back together to form the whole. It is a ship fully mended, and "if you want to restore a ship after shipwreck, do you deny a single part [*singula*] of which the ship is constituted?"[24]

Going further, Jerome speaks of a continuity of the form of the resurrection body. For all its freedom from wicked desires, that body will be structured in the same way as before. Unlike his forebears, Jerome vociferates an amillennial position, one that moves earth toward heaven even as it lowers heaven toward earth; the Church is raised to God even as God is lowered to the Church. Earth mirrors heaven in such a way that heaven may be understood as a parallel to earth, so much so that when the future arrives, it will bring little that is surprising or new. Elizabeth Clark has explained how Jerome's doctrine of the resurrection buttressed his rigid social structure. That structure posited strict order between male and female, leader and follower, virgins and whores, even ascetic and non-ascetic—a full-scale "hierarchy of bodies."[25] The eschaton would not undo that which had been successfully ordered according to heavenly principles. To this end Jerome depicts the resurrection in terms of material *and* formal continuity, with the supernatural addition being only the "clothing" of immortality.[26]

It is not that Jerome loves creaturely patterns of growth and change. On the contrary. He detests fluctuation in the body. The collection view freezes the flux of this present age in anticipation of the age to come. For our second type, only a permanent collection of bones and breasts, teeth and testicles, all sorted out and permanently assembled as the right individuals, will solve the problem of corruptibility and change. Bodies

24. Cited in ibid., 88.

25. Clark, "New Perspectives on the Origenist Controversy," 162. Even before Jerome, Methodius of Olympus celebrated the fact that the chaste flesh could serve as the mediator of heaven and earth, so much so that "the bridge across the chasm between God and man passed through the bodies of his virgin girls" (Brown, *The Body and Society*, 384).

26. "Thus Jerome's stress was not so much on material continuity as on *integrity*," says Bynum, "on the reconstitution and hardening of the bodily vessel so that every organ is intact and eternally protected from amputation" (*The Resurrection of the Body*, 89).

must be gathered and made invincible, much like the hardened flesh of the monastic saints.

Augustine of Hippo (354–430) also promotes the idea of collection—though his theology consistently defaults to something more patently spiritualistic. Since Augustine associates mental properties (memory, intellect, and will) with the image of God, it comes as no surprise that he describes the hereafter in terms of soul-knowledge, of the contemplation of God. Glorification is no less than the *visio Dei*, the soul perfected and standing before the Almighty, beholding Him face to face. For Augustine, paradise will be a place where the enlightened saint perceives the invisible realities and experiences spiritual rest and eternal bliss. He or she has ascended beyond any bodily need. Being "suited for the assembly of the angels," the risen saint has surpassed all physical limitations; even with closed eyelids, the glorious vision stays before the person.[27]

Paradoxically, Augustine adds to this serene soul-future a resurrected body, and in terms every bit as materialistic as Jerome's. The resurrection body is a collection. Like a recast statue, Augustine says, all the fragments of the former body come together into a new one. Each atom is there, but it is now made perfectly beautiful, perfectly symmetrical, without defect.[28] Miscarried children and dead infants will be raised according to their "seminal principle," with God adding (but never subtracting) material from bodies to make them flawless. Does the risen flesh add anything to the glorified soul? Augustine appears to want to say something along this line, but his argument founders as he speculates about the physical body allowing greater perception of God's presence in visible bodies.[29] Despite the fact that the collection of the body is only an addendum to the soul's vision of God, Augustine takes up the refrain that the only true faith is that which preaches *carnis in aeternum resurrectio*,[30] by which he means precise continuity of both body and soul. Everything must be gathered; nothing can be lost.

On its face, the collectionist type takes the flesh most seriously. But Jerome and Augustine demonstrate how continuity of the person through

27. For this and the following, see Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 84–95; Augustine, *Civitatis Dei*, xxii.

28. Beauty (not ability) is Augustine's primary concern for eschatological corporeality: bodies molded to ideal proportions, though still marked by religiously significant scars (Upson-Saia, "Scars, Marks, and Deformities in Augustine's Resurrected Bodies").

29. Augustine, *Civitatis Dei*, xxii.29.

30. Ibid., xxii.9.

the flesh can, oddly enough, terminate all of the predicates associated with flesh. In being reconnected to their respective souls, resurrected bodies are sanitized, quarantined, sterilized, made into something auxiliary and aesthetic. Such bodies hardly carry out actual human life in eternity, one might argue. The body, far from being vivified, is sculpted and hardened. The resurrection eternally enshrines the present order, reinstating the panoply of saints and ascetics along with the ecclesiastical principalities and powers, giving them a permanent place before the throne of God. Equally concerning is the collection view's tendency (through Augustine) to speak of a collection of particles as a side-item of the true glorification, the beatific vision. Paradoxically, the materialistic nature of this type is subordinate to, if not subsumed within, the spiritual hope of psychic bliss in heaven.

The collection view as defined by Augustine (that is, a resurrection equally materialistic and spiritualistic) became the dominant perspective in the West through the middle ages and beyond,[31] though a fresh perspective emerged around the turn of the thirteenth century. This late-breaking variant of the collection view affirmed the gathering together of the exact particles of the former body, but with a different mechanism of glorification: the transmission of the soul's dignity to the body. More than just recollection of atoms, resurrection involved overflow, gift, and infusion—the *endowment* of the soul's celestial riches to its body.

Thomas Aquinas (c.1225–74), in the company of Albertus Magnus, Robert Grossteste, and Bonaventure, exploited the Aristotelian renaissance for new conceptions of soul and body. If form were to be conceived as the pattern within things, inherent within matter, rather than a transcendent archetype, soul could be seen as the underlying grid of the body, the blueprint which impresses and shapes and orders the body—a view known as hylomorphism. Like a painter who expresses his workmanship through his work, the soul produces a body representative of its own virtue.[32] When extended to the doctrine of the resurrection, hylomorphism operates in terms of endowment. Out of the abundance of its own perfection the soul shares glory with the body. As the soul becomes glorious in

31. Most of the Reformers perpetuated this line of thought, confessing the resurrection of the "selfsame flesh" even as they longed for disembodied existence in heaven. See the collation of Reformation documents in Darragh, *The Resurrection of the Flesh*, 213ff.

32. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Supplementum, q.80, a.1 (response).

its communion with God, it bestows its beauty upon the flesh, a transfer of glory. That endowment is resurrection.[33]

Thomas agrees with Augustine regarding the collection of bodily material at the Last Day. In the resurrection God can recall the old particles from the earth or from the stomachs of cannibals. Indeed, even bodily fluids re-gather: according to Thomas, Christ's own blood which was lost at the crucifixion gathered again to His body on Easter morning—"and the same holds good for all the particles which belong to the truth and integrity of human nature."[34] For many of the same reasons as his Western forebears—personal identity, integrity, reward and punishment—Thomas casts the resurrection of the flesh as a reconsolidation of bodily material.

The mechanism of glorification turns on a spiritual transfer, however. What really matters in the resurrection is that a person's collected atoms receive the ethereal qualities of a glorified soul. The postmortem soul, though blissfully beholding God, still desires to have a body with it. It longs to have the body with it in the state of glory, to bestow its endowment, to reconfigure flesh after its redeemed image.[35] In this life the (imperfect) soul blesses and shines through the body in part; in the coming life the (glorious) soul blesses and shines through the body in full.

To what effect? Thomas, speaking after William of Auxerre, describes the endowed resurrection body as possessing impassibility (*impassibilitas*), subtlety (*subtilitas*), agility (*agilitas*), and clarity (*claritas*).[36] One's body will be comprised of the same material as before, though it will have another form (*aliam dispositionem habebunt*).[37] The saints' bodies "are invested with an immortality coming from a divine strength which enables the soul so to dominate the body that corruption cannot enter."[38] More specifically,

> Entirely possessed by soul, the body will then be fine and spirited. Then also will it be endowed with the noble lightsomeness of beauty; it will be invulnerable, and no outside forces can

33. One might conclude that Thomas' conception operates along medieval patriarchal lines: just as a man disseminates wealth to his own household, the soul manages its resources and bestows them upon its body (Howell, *Women, Production and Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities*, 15).

34. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* III, q.54, art.3, reply obj. 3.

35. For the theology of desire as developed in Bonaventure and Thomas, see Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, 247ff.

36. Ibid., qq.82–85.

37. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, IV.lxxxv.

38. Quoted in Gilby, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, 408–9.

> damage it; it will be lissom and agile, entirely responsive to the soul, like an instrument in the hands of a skilled player.[39]

The flesh, formerly unexpressive and unsubmissive and retarding to the soul,[40] in the eschaton becomes responsive to the kingly psyche, thereby acquiring soul-like properties. The resurrection body, like a fine instrument, vibrates with the soul's qualities: impassibility, subtlety, agility, and clarity. How Thomas defines each quality is not so important as the fact that for him the flesh must be re-predicated with psychic attributes.

The spiritualizing tendency goes further as Thomas admits that the soul does not need the body, technically. The nobility of the soul permits it independence from the body in the instance of one's death. Physical matter relies on the soul's impress, but the soul itself does not rely upon matter for expression, for it of itself has "somatomorphic" qualities, to use Carol Zaleski's term.[41] It is capable of full sensation even apart from the flesh, a kind of proto-bodily mobility. After death souls may long for their bodies, but they are not in any significant way disabled or unhappy without them. Therefore, no hard distinction need be made between an individual's death and the final return of Christ to complete all things. One might very well permit the confusion of the individual eschaton at death and the cosmic consummation at Christ's return.[42]

In its modified form under Thomas, the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh seems to make a bit of progress. Soul and body are brought a step closer together. The relationship between glorified soul and glorified body is exposited more fully. Yet considerable difficulties exist in Thomas' presentation. Its exact recollection notwithstanding, the flesh's concrete qualities exist to be immobilized and dominated by its nobler counterpart, the soul. One strains to see any way in which the flesh operates as the actual locus of human life in the eschaton. In this respect, Thomas repeats the vexed legacy of the West.

39. Ibid., 409.

40. Cf. Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, 266.

41. Zaleski, *Otherworldly Journeys*, 51. For expression of this in the *Divine Comedy*, see Bynum, "Faith Imagining the Self," 83–106.

42. Such confusion is a feature of the thirteenth-century *Stabat Mater*. It also became dogma through Benedict XII's 1336 decree insisting that the soul's bliss is perfect at death, so that the resurrection of the body adds nothing in terms of beatification. For the fascinating papal debate leading to the pronouncement, see especially Douie, "John XXII and the Beatific Vision," 154–74, and Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, 279–85.

In retrospect, three things may be noted about the collection view. First, this view did the best job of preserving the testimony of the earliest fathers, insisting upon nothing less than flesh, the very flesh of its previous earthly existence, for the resurrection of the body. The West continued to answer questions of identity, integrity, and personal responsibility through a strikingly materialistic doctrine. Second, however, theologians of the collection view counteracted their own materialistic explanation through a pronounced body-soul dualism. At the heart of glorification lay the soul's beatification, the vision of God, the heavenly life in the presence of God. The addition of resurrected flesh to the perfected soul appeared to threaten the state of psychic perfection, leading theologians to speak all too often about the collected body as something auxiliary, sanitized, and even immutable to the point of being frozen. Such flesh hardly functions as the center of life! Third, the collection view increasingly drew off of themes of participation. By the time of Thomas Aquinas, the miracle of flesh-collection by God did not stick out so much as the miracle of participation: the soul participates in God's glory and the body participates in the soul's glory. That trend toward participation requires us to back up to the third century and consider the Church's other theological trajectory.

The Participation of the Flesh

Another broad trajectory can be detected in the history of the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh. Where the Church in the West started from the idea of the collection of the flesh, the Church in the East preferred to think in terms of the *participation* of the flesh. Instead of finding ways to guarantee the material identity between the flesh of this age and that in the age to come, Eastern theologians looked for ways to express a doctrine of glorification in terms of proximity to God. A person received salvation by participation in the divine nature, by communion with God, by intimacy with the Godhead. In this paradigm, the resurrection of the flesh comes to mean that even the flesh, the lowliest part of human existence, is raised up through participation in the divine life.

The development of the participation trajectory received its first real articulation at the hands of the great third-century monastic, Origen of Alexandria (c.185–254).[43] In his writings Origen clearly intends to honor the

43. Clement of Alexandria (c.150–c.215), the great Platonist apologist, alludes to a work of his entitled *On the Resurrection*, a piece, sadly, that was never penned or was lost.

gospel tradition even as he sets it in a fresh philosophical-theological matrix. His project revolves around connectivity with the Logos, Jesus Christ, the One who descended to humanity so that others might be participants in His divine rationality. Because of the superiority of the spiritual realm, Origen's cosmology looks like a parabola, wherein pre-existent (though created) souls are cast from heaven into bodies, then reconciled by the Logos so that a return to heaven is possible.[44] While the return of the soul to God is a constant feature of his theology, Origen admits that there will be a resurrection body too.

When Origen speaks of the resurrection, he means the resurrection of *a* body, something with a continuity of *form* though not a continuity of material. This form lies behind the matter and is non-identical with it. In an important fragment, he teaches that "although the form [*eidos*] is saved, we are going to put away nearly [every] earthly quality in the resurrection," meaning that "for the saint there will indeed be [a body] preserved by him who once endued the flesh with form, but [there will] no longer [be] flesh; yet the very thing which was once being characterized in the flesh will be characterized in the spiritual body."[45] Origen will not permit the redemption of the flesh as such, and therefore he separates out a mediating body-form with some of the properties of the soul.[46] This *eidos* is immortal and sacred, yet what it draws to the soul at the resurrection is very different stuff than its previous earthly attachments. In the place of flesh God puts spiritual matter. Why not the same flesh as before? Because that flesh is a river of change, Origen says, a flux of desire and imperfection. The fleshly material of the body must be exchanged for a new attending substance; the *eidos*-body must be raised (i.e., filled out) with something spiritual and tranquil. Elaborating Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 15, Origen sees the resurrection as the germination of a mediating principle, the spiritual realization of what once was fleshly but is now heavenly.

This substitution of the flesh, Origen's critics over the centuries have pointed out, conveys itself as an attempt to shirk bodiliness altogether.

44. For a summary of the controversial nature of *Peri Archon*, see Trigg, *Origen*, 29–32. Origen's parabola is explained in Pelikan, *The Shape of Death*, 77–97.

45. Origen, *Commentary on Psalm* 1, cited in Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity*, 375, bracketed words in original; cf. Methodius's longer quotation in *De resurrectione*, i.22.

46. See the work of Henri Crouzel ("La doctrine origenienne du corps réssuscité," 679–716), who describes the *eidos* as a substratum conceived along Platonic and Stoic lines. Origen can elsewhere refer to this form as a "seminal principle" or "underlying matter" (cf. Boliek, *The Resurrection of the Flesh*, 47–51, though one should bypass Boliek's assessment that the three terms can be distinguished as "elements" of continuity).

Since God swaps out the old for the new, who is to say that this new, upgraded commodity could not also be further upgraded, or disposed with altogether? Yes, Origen asserts that every being (God alone excepted) possesses bodily substance. But his infatuation with the return of the soul to primordial unity, lightness, and spirituality indicates that corporeality is a cumbersome addition to the metaphysical hierarchy. He makes strides towards a philosophically consistent position by developing a conception of participation, though, tellingly, participation applies only to the soul.[47] Lynn Boliek observes how Origen's train of thought seems to lead in the direction of the elimination of the body altogether, something akin to the Neo-Platonic astral body. The outer self is (en)lightened until all traces of corporeality become spiritual and luminous and weightless. Ultimately all remaining corporeality is either shed or converted into one's soul, which in turn is subsumed into God.[48]

To be fair, Origen never spelled out this otherworldly vision so far as to deny the bodily resurrection. His solution accorded with the biblical language of discontinuation: that what is raised is a different, "spiritual body." Yet Origen's creative rethinking of the problem was not enough to protect him from ecclesiastic censure. His ordination was revoked in 231 and his views posthumously condemned by a council in 400, by imperial decree in 543, and a decade thereafter by the fifth ecumenical council. In more recent years it has been suggested that Origen was constructing a far more sophisticated system than is reflected in the glossed manuscripts passed down to us. It is probably the case that his lost treatise on the resurrection was more in line with orthodoxy than the teachings of his disciples, who were not nearly so careful in safeguarding continuity in the resurrection.[49] Just as probable is the case that Origen, being aware of the ideological difficulties involved with marrying the doctrinal tradition with the philosophical currency of his day, sought out a fine line of congruence.

47. Though it seems that the soul has already positioned the glorified body under or within itself (Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 147–48). The lower parts of the human must be subsumed by the higher, soul, in order to make progress into deification, to become spiritual through the Holy Spirit, at which point one's spiritual soul may acquire the attributes of Logos by itself becoming logical (p.154).

48. Boliek, *The Resurrection of the Flesh*, 59–67. In our present (and likely corrupted) manuscripts, Origen is at odds with himself, foreseeing an end to bodily diversity (*De principiis*, III.vi.4) *and* making provision for some kind of diversification of bodies into eternity (II.iii.2–3).

49. E.g. Murphy, "Evagrius Ponticus and Origenism," 253–69.

In the substitutionist variety of the participationist view, flesh is swapped out for a spiritual substance. The resurrection discontinues the present composition of the body in order to build a better specimen, though the body continues with its underlying foundation. Ultimately, the view falls back not so much on its quasi-material identity as its formal identity, the "shape" lent to the body as it is reconstructed with spiritual building blocks. The flesh as such, this present body, is at best a shadow of what is to come, and has no real connection with the life to come. The "real" body lies beneath the body, as a germ, carried along with the soul in the upward arc of evolution and return to God, waiting to be stripped of flesh and reclothed in spiritual garments. Perhaps because it was too closely related to middle Platonism and Gnostic mystagogy, Origen's version of participatory resurrection was sidelined as a real option for the Church, though not entirely expunged.[50]

Most of the greatest thinkers, whether orthodox or heretical, continued to come out of Alexandria. That learned Egyptian city would continue to be the epicenter for concepts of salvation through participation. Indeed, Alexandria would be ultimately responsible for the genesis of the theologoumenon known as deification (*theōsis*).[51] At its heart, the doctrine of deification teaches that salvation has to do with participation in the divine life of God. In deification (or "divinization") humans are not made God, or made into a rival deity, or consubstantial with Him. Rather, they are transfigured into His likeness, made "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4). By participation in God through Christ by the Holy Spirit, believers receive the grace to enjoy some of God's own attributes. When applying this potent theological idea to the general resurrection, deification could mean that even human flesh could be transformed in its proximity to the divine. The resurrection of the flesh means something more and less than bodily reconstruction: it is the "raising" of the whole psychosomatic person into the life of God.

50. Origen may have been marginalized, but his ideas were not; a battery of important thinkers of Alexandria over the next centuries continued to dialogue with his work (see Schmemann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, 158ff.). Philosophical baggage of Alexandrian thinkers sometimes required their teachings to be reinterpreted and "inorthodoxed," as in the case of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (Kharlamov, "'The Beauty of the Unity and the Harmony of the Whole,'" 394). Origenism was therefore never confined to late antiquity or to the East, as illustrated by John Scotus Eriugena's program in the ninth century (see Cooper, *Panentheism*, 47–50).

51. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 115.

Athanasius of Alexandria (c.295–373) did much to expand the concept of deification,[52] and therewith to reinterpret the resurrection of the flesh. The central purpose of his writings as a bishop and theologian was to unite the Church in the belief of Jesus Christ's full deity, a task necessitated by Arianism's description of the Son as a being of inferior substance to the Father. Athanasius argues at length that only if Jesus Christ is of one being with the Father do we actually know God and receive His salvation. Yet Athanasius's fight for a high Christology is not without a contention for full humanity. The Word became *flesh*. That is the only way His deity could benefit our humanity. He in His highest being condescended to the lowest human place in order to sanctify us from the bottom up. What is naturally His must be united to what is naturally ours if His life is to be communicated to us. Put more forcefully: "He became human in order that we might become divine."[53]

Athanasius employs the scandalous word "flesh" to make sure that the whole human being is redeemed. His is a *sarx*-Christology from beginning to end, and his soteriology operates in and through the flesh. Flesh is the "deepest" and most representative medium of humanity, explains Khaled Anatolios, who describes Athanasius's allusions to *nous* (mind), *psuchē* (soul), and *sōma* (body) not as "parts" so much as "existential and relational" dimensions.[54] The body is certainly lower than the soul or the mind and has less similitude with God, but that is precisely why it of all things must be redeemed. In fact, while the soul pilots the body, the body is the place of action and transmission, "the crucial existential locus for the exercise of human freedom."[55] *Sarx* is a kind of conductive medium for internal and external relations.

If the Logos, the Son of God, has abased Himself and made Himself present to us in the flesh, then certainly the flesh will be the recipient of salvation. Athanasius involves the body in the *communicatio idiomatum*, i.e., the communication of predicates. Christ "deified" (*etheopoieito*) the body and "rendered it immortal."[56] He made it so that we might rise with-

52. He speaks more about deification than any previous writer and coins new terminology (Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 167–68).

53. *Autos gar enēnthrōpēsen, hina hēmeis theopoiēthōmen* (Athanasius, *De incarnatione*, liv).

54. Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 61.

55. Ibid., 62. Similarly, Athanasius takes up a kind of ascetic logic in his belief that only the fleshly body can bring salvation to the soul; the soul, hungry for God, requires a "steady" or "stabilized" body (Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology*, 146–47.

56. Athanasius, *De decretis*, xiv; cf. *De incarnatione verbi dei*, ix.

out a trace of corruption, just as His body showed none.[57] The flesh with the soul enjoys a glorious future in God.

The concept of deification bears obvious fruit in Athanasius's presentation, but something strange happens on the way to the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh: his writings downplay corporeality even as they place it front and center. The flesh is drawn into the divine life—but is this the same as saying that the flesh is *raised*? Rather, one gets the feeling that Athanasius has turned the doctrine into the *ascension* of the flesh:

> When the flesh was born from Mary the Theotokos, [the Logos] is said to have been born, who furnishes to others an origin of being, in order that he may transfer our nature into himself, and *we may no longer, as mere earth, return to earth, but as being joined to the Logos from heaven, may be carried to heaven by him*. In a similar manner he has therefore not unreasonably transferred to himself the other affections of the body also, that we, no longer as being men, but as proper to the Logos, may have a share in eternal life.[58]

The ascension of the whole person via the Logos is Athanasius's concern, a movement starting from earth but very definitely leaving it.[59] Resurrection has become a spiritual process initiated by the incarnation, played out in the spiritual life, and ultimately culminated in the drawing of the whole self to a final destination in heaven. The coming resurrection in its concrete, physical form becomes a rather insignificant event, having been overshadowed by the greater mystery of deification. Yes, Athanasius confesses the resurrection, resurrection of even of the frail aspects of human existence, but the deeper reality seems to be an overarching spiritual evolution in which, "from the beginning without ceasing, [Christ] raises up every human and speaks to every human in their heart."[60] There is a "raising" for Athanasius, yes. But has this participatory resurrection in any way reanimated the flesh?

If we permit ourselves to skip ahead to Maximus the Confessor (c.580–662), it is because he arrives at a creative synthesis of the thought of the Cappadocian fathers, Evagrius Ponticus, Cyril of Alexandria,

57. Athanasius, Festal Letter xi.14.

58. Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* xxxiii.3, cited in Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 183, emphasis added.

59. Tempering a more dualistic Platonic view, Athanasius has the flesh addressed so that the person may start "living away from a historical, material setting and moving toward the noetic, eternal world" (Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology*, 145).

60. Athanasius, Festal Letter xxvii.

Pseudo-Dionysius, and many others who precede him. What the Alexandrians did with Christology, Maximus applies to theological anthropology, giving the doctrine of deification "its greatest elaboration and most profound articulation."[61] While in many ways Maximus takes up the mantle of Origen, he pursues the participationist line toward a holistic, mystical view of body and soul, thereby "sifting out the more questionable metaphysics."[62]

Following Gregory of Nazianzus, Maximus teaches that the human being goes through three births: the natural in childbirth, the spiritual in baptism, and the final in the resurrection of the dead; one receives being (*einai*), well-being (*eu einai*), and, ultimately, eternal well-being (*aei eu einai*). Deification is the result of this relationship with God. While humans already possess being and even immortal being (of the soul) in their essential nature, goodness and wisdom can only be imparted to them by grace.

The communication of the divine nature happens through God's presence. Jesus Christ once condescended and came to earth to be with us, Maximus affirms, but the Lord also promised His proximity after His departure to heaven (Matt 28:20), an abiding presence which initiates the deification of us even here on earth. His presence is what secures our presence with Him in the age to come. When the Lord is "fully revealed" the saints will participate in Him; Christ's revealed presence is what it means to have the immortality of the resurrection. Like many before and after him, Maximus makes creative use of Neoplatonic hierarchies: the telos of all things is to return to a state of "simplicity," with the effects of various syzygies restored to their causes, and triads united into a whole.[63] But unlike some of his predecessors, Maximus rejects the preexistence of souls and withholds speculation about the *apokatastasis*. There is no parabola of Origen here; Maximus has a single escalating line moving from the humble, natural state to a lofty participation in the divine life. By contemplation and acts of love the believer makes an ascent into God's own kind of life, an ascent which culminates in the final resurrection-birth. In such a manner, resurrection and ascension come together in Maximus.

Despite occasional ascetic comments against flesh(liness), Maximus promotes a holistic view of the body with the soul. Soul does not antecede or succeed the body, for parts only exist with their respective counterparts. In fact, the flesh—everything about the human—is saved, for Christ's

61. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 262.

62. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 24.

63. See Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 270ff.

incarnation took place "in order to save the image and immortalize the flesh," says Maximus, albeit "to present nature pure again as from a *new* beginning, with an *additional* advantage through deification over the first creation."[64] In another place he adds that God fills Christians

> with his own glory and beatitude, giving them and granting them that life which is eternal and unutterable and in every way free from every mark constitutive of the present life, which is made up of decay, for it does not breathe air nor is it made up of blood vessels running from the liver. No, *the whole of God is participated by the whole of them*, and he becomes to their souls like a soul related to a body, and through the soul he affects the body, in a way that he himself knows, that the former might receive immutability and the latter immortality, and that *the whole man might be deified*, raised to the divine life (*theourgoumenos*) by the grace of the incarnate God, the *whole remaining man* in soul and body by nature, and *the whole becoming god* in soul and body by grace and by the divine brightness of that blessed glory altogether appropriate to him, than which nothing brighter or more exalted can be conceived.[65]

The soul obtains immutability in its deification, and the body, glorified with and through the soul, obtains immortality. This is its transformation out of decay. But the whole, which is and remains human by nature, "becomes god" by grace. Adam Cooper concludes his study of Maximus' view of the body recognizing that little is said about the resurrection body itself, though the Confessor has lots to say about how "the passible and corporeal become entirely transparent to divine glory." In this purview, "the very integrity of the material order lies in it being transcended."[66]

Strengths of such a mature doctrine of deification are many, not least that it depicts the whole person as the object of salvation. Deification softens anthropological dualism as both body and soul become partakers in the divine nature. I might raise three concerns, however. First, the Alexandrian emphasis on the unity of the divine and human natures tends to generate views that eliminate or absorb the flesh altogether. While Alexandrian theologians clamped down on more egregious Christological heresies (Apollinarianism, Eutycheanism, and other variations

64. Maximus, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, liv, cited in Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 289, emphasis added.

65. Maximus, *Ambiguum* vii, in Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, 276, emphasis added.

66. Cooper, *The Body in St. Maximus the Confessor*, 253.

of monophysitism), the slope of the theological field tended toward a mystical slip of the human into the divine. For theological anthropology, it would eventually require Gregory Palamas's fourteenth-century distinction between "essence" and "energies" to guard the line between Creator and creature; per Gregory, deification involves participation in the latter alone.[67] Second, in a related way, the view does not escape the Platonic priority of soul over body. Both are supposedly subject to deification, but the body is still treated as something to be contained and immobilized. Bodily living does not carry on into the eschaton. Rather, participationists such as Origen, Athanasius, and Maximus seem to desire to override the body with wholly new, pneumatic properties such as impassibility, immutability, and perhaps even invisibility.[68] Third, and most dire, the doctrine of deification effectively displaces the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh. In fact, *any* kind of doctrine of the general resurrection becomes a footnote in this type. Jesus Christ's resurrection may retain a central motif (as it does in Orthodox liturgies), being the revelation of His divine power and the bestowal of that victory to His people. Nevertheless, what matters to adherents of the participationist view is that *theōsis* has been initiated and is in process now. The movement of glorification will come to completion, yes, and that completion is resurrection. But for the second trajectory *ascension* has become the master-concept, and participation its beating heart.

Observations about the Two Trajectories

The Church, bound by apostolic tradition, was all along the way required to articulate its belief in the resurrection of the dead in bodily terms. Early theologians stated the corporeality of the resurrection body in stark terms, preferring the phrase "resurrection of the flesh" over "resurrection of the body" or "resurrection of the dead." Theologians from the third to the thirteenth centuries attempted to repackage the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh in more systematic ways. In moving beyond the primitive view they both added to and subtracted from the doctrine. Two trajectories,

67. For an explanation of the Palamite distinction and its legacy, see Olson, "Deification in Contemporary Theology," 186–200.

68. Even Maximus says that in the coming age "it is no longer a matter of humanity bearing or being born along existentially, since in this respect the economy of visible things comes to an end with the great and general resurrection wherein humanity is born into immortality in an unchanging state of being" (*Ambiguum* xlii, cited in Blowers and Wilken, ed., *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ*, 95).

largely divergent along West-East lines, emerged. Jerome and Augustine and Thomas championed the collecting-the-flesh type, preserving the doctrine in rather material ways even as spiritualist notions were added. Origin and Athanasius and Maximus developed the participation-of-the-flesh type, holding onto the doctrine in a roundabout way through the total-person transformation effected in deification. I might offer a couple of observations about the collectionist and participationist options.

First, the two trajectories disagree about the ordering of the themes of continuity and discontinuity in the resurrection. The collection view insists upon sameness of flesh before and after the resurrection, securing human identity by bringing together a person's exact particles on the last Day. The collection view tries secures a wholesale continuity of matter and form, and only after reconstitution looks to add the "clothing" of bodily transformation (i.e., immortality and immutability). The body is first gathered, then aerated; made the same, then made different; continuity leads into discontinuity. Conversely, the participation view begins with the theme of discontinuity. New life in Christ is fundamentally an ascension beyond fleshly identity. In salvation one is raised to a heavenly existence, a higher existence through participation in the divine. The transformation trickles down, however, reaching each part of earthly existence, seizing even the flesh, including it and preserving it in the divine life. Transformation has within itself a sense of preservation. The body is aerated, then preserved; made different, thus the same; discontinuity leads into continuity.

Second, it needs to be stated that both of these traditional views, at least in their classical articulations, are addicted to immutability. Without exception they hope for an escape from flux, from the processes of corporeal existence. Each one desires changelessness, and suspects in other views a perverse love of mutation. Time, space, and movement are treated as penultimate dimensions honorable only insofar as they come to termination and calcification. This may be the saddest inheritance of the Church with regard to the doctrine of the general resurrection. In the millennium of thought between third to thirteenth centuries, theologians approached the doctrine of the resurrection looking for ways to terminate or transcend the corporeal mode of existence rather than see it fulfilled in a temporal, tangible, and concrete existence. I do not mean to insinuate that a millennium of spiritualizing theologians destroyed a formerly pure doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh. But I am suggesting that these thinkers, trying to imagine bodies of flesh reanimated to live once again on the New Earth, flinched.

Barth and the Two Trajectories

At first glance Barth does not fit into any classical program in the collectionist family or the participationist family. His novel approach to the resurrection does not employ the same terminology or metaphysical categories. Yet, as is characteristic with Barth, beyond first appearance his doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh is deeply ecumenical. Champions of either of the two views could hypothetically claim Barth as an ally or, at the very least, a valuable dialogue partner. Western theologians can certainly find in Barth consonant language and ideas. I will argue, however, that his three favorite descriptions of the resurrection of the flesh—eternalization, manifestation, incorporation—resonate especially well with the more Eastern, participationist trajectory. To understand that strange harmony one must start at the beginning of Barth's own remarkable work.