

Irenaeus reading and notes:

5.6.1. Now God shall be glorified in His handiwork,  
fixing it so as to be conformable to,  
and modelled after,  
His own Son.

For by the hands of the Father,  
that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
man,  
and not [merely] a part of man,  
was made in the likeness of God....

Now the soul and the spirit are certainly a part of the man, but certainly not  
the man;

for the perfect man consists  
in the commingling  
and the union  
of the soul  
receiving the spirit of the Father,  
and the admixture of that fleshly nature  
which was moulded after the image of God...

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Question:

Are our bodies part of our being made in the image of God?

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Jesus Rose Bodily from the Dead

5.31.1. "Since, again, some who are reckoned among the orthodox go  
beyond the  
pre-arranged plan for the exaltation of the just, and are ignorant of the  
methods  
by which they are disciplined beforehand for incorruption, they thus  
entertain  
heretical opinions..."

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Comments:

Before we read about the “heretical opinions”, two further threads appear here and reappear throughout the fathers:

- "Pre-arranged plan": Human transformation through Christ is not God's “plan B” enacted because of humanity's sin, it was God's plan from the beginning. (Eph 1:4, 5, 9, 10)

- "Disciplined for incorruption". All of our life and suffering in life is meant to prepare us for incorruption, the image of God, glory. (Roman 8:18-21, 28-30; 1 Cor. 4:16-5:2)

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"For the heretics,  
despising the handiwork of God,  
and not admitting the salvation of their flesh,  
while they also treat the promise of God contemptuously,  
and pass beyond God altogether in the sentiments they form,  
affirm that immediately upon their death they shall pass above the  
heavens...

For they do not choose to understand, that if these things are as they say,  
the Lord Himself,  
in whom they profess to believe,  
did not rise again upon the third day;  
but immediately upon His expiring on the cross,  
undoubtedly departed on high,  
leaving His body to the earth.

But the case was,  
that for three days He dwelt in the place where the dead were  
as the prophet says concerning Him: “  
And the Lord remembered His dead saints who slept formerly in the  
land of sepulture;  
and He descended to them, to rescue and save them.”

If, then, the Lord observed the law of the dead,  
that He might become the first-begotten from the dead,  
and tarried until the third day “in the lower parts of the earth;”  
then afterwards rising in the flesh,  
    so that He even showed the print of the nails to His disciples,  
He thus ascended to the Father...

it is manifest that  
the souls of His disciples also,  
    upon whose account the Lord underwent these things,  
shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God,  
and there remain until the resurrection,  
awaiting that event;  
then receiving their bodies,  
and rising  
    in their entirety,  
    that is bodily,  
        just as the Lord arose,  
they shall come thus into the presence of God...”

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Comment: We sing “rich wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified.”  
When we speak to Jesus in our prayers today, do we think of him as having  
a physical body now?

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The Resurrection of the Body

5.2.3 "And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in  
its  
season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming  
decomposed,  
rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things,  
and

then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ; so also our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God, even the Father, who freely gives to this mortal immortality, and to this corruptible incorruption, because the strength of God is made perfect in weakness, in order that we may never become puffed up, as if we had life from ourselves, and exalted against God, our minds becoming ungrateful; but learning by experience that we possess eternal duration from the excelling power of this Being, not from our own nature, we may neither undervalue that glory which surrounds God as He is, nor be ignorant of our own nature, but that we may know what God can effect, and what benefits man receives, and thus never wander from the true comprehension of things as they are, that is, both with regard to God and with regard to man."

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Comments:

Irenaeus alludes to 1 Corinthians 15, "a seed sown in the earth." This is another thread in the teaching and pastoral care of the fathers: we must die.

We may be uncomfortable with Irenaeus' view of the communion meal, but setting that aside, his point is that just as a wheat seed dies in the ground, grows into a plant, and is made into bread which is able to take on Christ, so also our bodies *must* die to rise and take on divinity.

We are meant to learn that our life, now and in eternity, depends on God. To know God, to see God, is eternal life. (John 17:3) Conversely, disobedience leads away from the only source of life, and therefore, leads to death.

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Summing up - A “recap”

The Word/God the Son/the Wisdom of God became fully human

- obedience where Adam and Eve were disobedient, even through death: defeating sin
- dying a human death, rising to life: defeating death
- reconciling God and humanity/creation in himself as he is both fully God and fully human
- making God visible, and to know God is to have life

Irenaeus’ affirmation of the incarnation’s importance for salvation in one sentence:

In His immeasurable love, He became what we are in order to make us what He is. 3.20.2