

On the Resurrection of the Dead

Modern English version · SermonIndex

Athenagoras of Athens (attributed) · c. AD 177-200

A reasoned defense of the resurrection of the body, argued from God's power, his justice and the purpose for which people were made. It is attributed to Athenagoras, though some scholars doubt he wrote it.

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Chapter 1

1a Every doctrine and argument that holds to the truth about reality has some falsehood growing up beside it. This falsehood does not arise naturally from any underlying principle, nor from the cause that belongs to each thing as it is. It is promoted by people who have valued a lawless sowing of seed in order to corrupt the truth. We can see this first from those who long ago devoted themselves to these questions, and from how they disagreed with their elders and their contemporaries. We see it no less in the confusion of the debates going on today. For such people have left no truth free from slander. They have attacked the being of God, his knowledge and his working. They have also attacked the things that follow from these in order and set out for us the teaching of true piety.

Translator's note. The Greek says "lawless sowing" (ἐκθεσμον σποράν), not merely "seed," and the closing phrase has no word for "books"; it says only "the things that follow in sequence."

1b Some of them reject the truth about these matters completely and once for all. Others twist it to suit their own opinion. Others make a practice of professing doubt even about things that are plain. So I think those who labor at these subjects need two kinds of argument: one on behalf of the truth, and one about the truth. The argument on behalf of the truth is for those who disbelieve or

doubt. The argument about the truth is for those who are fair-minded and receive the truth with goodwill. Therefore, those who want to examine these questions must consider what the need is at the time and measure their arguments by it. They must adjust the order of treatment to what is required. They must not neglect what is fitting, and the proper place of each point, merely to seem to keep always the same starting point.

1c As for proof and the natural order of things, the arguments about the truth always come before those on behalf of it. But as for usefulness, the order is reversed, and the arguments on behalf of the truth come before those about it. A farmer cannot properly sow seed in the ground unless he first removes the wild growth that harms the cultivated seed being sown. A physician cannot put healing medicines into a body that needs treatment unless he first cleans out the sickness already there, or checks what is flowing in. In the same way, a person who wants to teach the truth by speaking about it cannot persuade anyone while some false opinion lurks in the hearers' minds and stands against his words. So, looking to what is more useful, we sometimes put the arguments on behalf of the truth ahead of those about the truth. For those who consider what is needed, it seems not unhelpful to do the same now in the discussion of the resurrection.

1d For here too we find some who disbelieve completely and some who doubt. Even among those who have accepted the first premises, some are as perplexed as the doubters. The most senseless thing of all is that they feel this way without having any starting point for their unbelief in the facts themselves. They cannot even find a reasonable cause to give for why they disbelieve or are perplexed.

Chapter 2

2a Let us consider it this way. Suppose all unbelief arose in people not offhand, from some unexamined opinion, but with a strong reason and with the soundness that belongs to truth. For unbelief is reasonable only when the very thing people disbelieve really does seem unbelievable. But to disbelieve what is not unbelievable is the act of people who do not use sound judgment about the truth. So those who disbelieve or doubt the resurrection must not give their opinion on it carelessly, according to what merely seems right to them and pleases the undisciplined. They must do one of two things. Either they must attach the origin of human beings to no cause at all, which is very easy to refute. Or they must assign the cause of all that exists to God, look to the foundation on which this teaching rests, and from that foundation show that the resurrection has no credibility at all.

Translator's note. The Greek sentence beginning "If all unbelief..." is never completed (an anacoluthon), and the translation leaves it

| unfinished, as the Greek has it.

2b They will do this if they can show that it is either impossible for God, or against his will, to reunite and bring together bodies that have died, or even been completely broken up, so that they form the same human beings again. If they cannot show this, let them stop this godless unbelief and this forbidden blasphemy. What I am about to say will make it clear that they are wrong both when they call it impossible and when they call it against God's will. A thing is truly known to be impossible for someone in one of two cases: either he does not know what is to come about, or he does not have power enough to carry out well what he knows. A person who does not know something that needs to be done could never attempt it or do it at all, since he does not know it. And a person who knows well what is to be made, and from what and how it could be made, but has either no power at all to do what he knows, or not enough, would not even attempt it, if he is sensible and takes stock of his own power. If he attempted it without thinking, he would not finish what he had decided on.

2c But God cannot be ignorant of the nature of the bodies that are to be raised, either of each whole member or of each particle. Nor can he be ignorant where each dissolved part goes, or which of the elements has received what was broken down and has passed into what is akin to it. This holds even though, to men, what has been naturally joined back into the whole may seem entirely indistinguishable from it. Before each body was formed, God was not ignorant of the nature of the elements from which human bodies would be made. Nor was he ignorant of the parts of those elements from which he was going to take what he chose for forming the human body. So it is plain that after the whole has been dissolved, he will not be ignorant where each part has gone that he took to complete each body. By the present order of things among us, and by the way we judge in other matters, it is the greater thing to know in advance what has not yet come into being. But in light of God's dignity and wisdom, both are natural to him. It is just as easy for him to know things that have been dissolved as to know in advance things that have not yet come to be.

Chapter 3

3a Moreover, the very creation of human bodies shows that God's power is sufficient to raise them. If at their first formation God made the bodies of men and their first elements when they did not exist, then he will raise them again with the same ease after they are dissolved, however that may happen. For this is equally possible for him. It also does no harm to the argument if some suppose that the first beginnings come from matter, or that human bodies come from the elements as their first constituents, or from seeds. Consider the power that can give shape to what they regard as shapeless matter, and adorn with many different forms what had no

form or order. This power can gather the parts of the elements into one, divide the seed, which is one and simple, into many parts, give structure to what had none, and give life to what did not live. That same power can reunite what has been dissolved, raise up what lies fallen, make the dead alive again, and change the corruptible into incorruption.

Translator's note. "Change the corruptible into incorruption" echoes Paul's language in [1 Corinthians 15:42](#), 53.

3b It belongs to the same power and wisdom to deal with a body that has been torn to pieces by a multitude of animals of every kind, such as usually attack such bodies and feed their hunger on them. God can separate it from them and join it again to its own parts and members. It makes no difference whether it has passed into one animal or into many, or from these into others, or whether, dissolved along with those animals, it has been carried back to the first elements by the natural breaking down into them. This is the very point that has seemed to trouble some people most, even some who are admired for their wisdom. For some reason I cannot understand, they thought that the objections commonly raised by the crowd were strong.

Chapter 4

4a These people say that many bodies of those who died miserably in shipwrecks and rivers became food for fish. Many others died in wars, or from some other harsh cause or turn of events, and were left without burial; these lie exposed as food for whatever animals come upon them. So bodies are consumed in this way, and the members and parts that make them up are broken into pieces and spread among a great multitude of animals. Through nourishment these parts are united with the bodies of the creatures that feed on them. In the first place, they say, it is impossible to separate these parts again. And on top of this they raise a second point, which they think still harder. Some of the animals that have fed on human bodies are of the kind that people use for food. When these pass through the stomach of those who eat them, they become united with the bodies of the eaters. They say it is then entirely unavoidable that the parts of the first men, which became food for those animals, should pass into the bodies of other men. For the animals in between carry the nourishment they received from the first men over into the men for whom they themselves become food.

4b Next they dramatize all this by adding the cases of children eaten in famines and in fits of madness, and children eaten by their own parents through the plotting of enemies. They add the famous Median banquet and the tragic feast of Thyestes, and they string together other unheard-of horrors of this kind that have happened among Greeks and barbarians. From these they argue, as they suppose, that the resurrection is impossible. Their reasoning is that

the same parts cannot rise again with one body and with another as well. Either the bodies of the earlier owners cannot be put together again, because the parts that made them up have passed over into others; or, if those parts are given back to the earlier owners, the bodies of the later owners will be left incomplete.

Translator's note. The "Median banquet" refers to the story in Herodotus (Histories 1.119) of the Median king Astyages, who served Harpagus the flesh of his own son. In Greek legend, Thyestes was likewise tricked by his brother Atreus into eating his own sons. Both are examples of children eaten by their parents through an enemy's plot.

Chapter 5

5 It seems to me that such people, first of all, do not understand the power and wisdom of the One who made and governs this whole universe. He fitted to the nature and kind of each living creature the food that is natural and suited to it. He did not decide that every nature should go into union or mixture with every body, nor is he at a loss to separate what has been united. He allows the nature of each created thing to do or to undergo what it naturally does, but at other times he also hinders it. He permits anything he wishes, or turns it toward whatever he wishes. Besides this, they have not considered the power and nature of each of the creatures that feed or are fed. Otherwise they would have known that not everything a creature takes in, under the pressure of outward necessity, becomes suitable nourishment for it. Some things are naturally destroyed as soon as they touch the folds of the stomach. They are vomited up, or passed out, or got rid of in some other way, so that they do not even undergo the first, natural digestion for a little while, much less become blended into the creature being fed. In the same way, not everything that has been digested and has undergone the first change reaches the parts being nourished. Some of it is separated off from the nourishing power in the stomach itself. Some is separated in the second change, the digestion that takes place in the liver, and passes into something else that has no power to nourish. Even the change that takes place in the liver does not all go to nourish people; part of it is separated off as waste, as nature intends. And the nourishment that is left in the parts and members being fed sometimes changes into something else, depending on which element is present in excess and tends to destroy, or to turn into itself, whatever comes near it.

Translator's note. The author follows the medical theory of his time, which held that food is digested in stages: first in the stomach, then in the liver, and finally in the parts of the body.

Chapter 6

6a There is great natural difference among all living creatures. Even the food that suits each kind of creature varies along with the

body being fed. In the feeding of every creature there is a threefold cleansing and separating. So whatever is foreign to the creature's nourishment must be destroyed and passed out in the natural way, or changed into something else, since it cannot be mixed in. The power of the food must be in agreement with the nature and powers of the creature fed. When it has passed through the filters appointed by nature and been thoroughly purified by the natural cleansings, it becomes the purest intake into the creature's substance. This alone, if one speaks truly of the matter, could be called nourishment. It throws off everything that is foreign and harmful to the makeup of the creature fed, and that great bulk of material taken in merely to fill the stomach and satisfy the appetite.

6b No one could dispute that proper nourishment is united with the body that is fed. It is woven together with all the parts and members of that body and molded around them. The other kind, which is contrary to nature, is quickly destroyed if it mixes with a stronger power. If it overpowers a weaker one, it easily destroys it. It also turns into bad humors and poisonous qualities, since it brings nothing that is akin or friendly to the body being fed. The strongest proof is that many living creatures suffer pain, danger or death from such things. This happens when a too-eager appetite draws in something poisonous and contrary to nature, mixed in with the food. That would certainly destroy the body being fed, since living things are nourished by what is proper and natural to them and destroyed by what is opposite.

6c Natural food is distinguished according to the natural differences among living creatures. Even then, not everything an animal takes in, and not just any part of it, is blended with the body being fed. Only what has been purified through the whole process of digestion is blended. That food has been thoroughly changed for union with the particular body, and it fits the parts being nourished. It is therefore clear that nothing contrary to nature can ever be united with bodies for which it is not suitable and fitting food. Instead, one of two things happens. Either it passes out of the belly itself before it produces some other humor that is raw and spoiled. Or it stays longer and produces suffering, or a disease that is hard to cure. That disease also destroys the natural nourishment, or even the very flesh that needs feeding. Even if it is finally driven out, overcome by some medicines, by better food or by the body's natural powers, it leaves only after doing considerable harm. It brings nothing peaceful to what is natural, because it cannot be blended with nature.

Chapter 7

7a Even if someone were to grant that the food entering from these sources is, though contrary to nature, separated out and changed into one of the moistening, drying, warming or cooling elements, our opponents still gain nothing from the concession. (Let it be

called “food,” as that is the usual word.) The bodies that rise are put together again from their own proper parts. None of the things just mentioned is a part, nor does it hold the position or order of a part. Nor does it always remain with the parts of the body that are fed, or rise again with the parts that rise. For neither blood, nor phlegm, nor bile, nor breath will any longer contribute anything to life. The bodies that were once fed will also not need then what they needed before. When the bodies themselves are no longer in need and no longer perishing, the need for what fed them is removed as well.

Translator’s note. “Breath” translates *pneuma*, which can also mean “spirit” or “wind.” Here it refers to a bodily element.

7b Next, suppose someone were to assume that the change from such food reaches as far as flesh. Even so, there would be no necessity that flesh newly changed from such food, once it joined the body of some other man, should again serve as a part to complete that body. The flesh that takes it in does not always keep what it has taken in. Nor is the flesh joined to it lasting, so as to remain ... [the Greek text appears to have a gap here; see note] ... to remain with the parts, namely those things that are fitted by nature to bind together, cover or warm the flesh that nature has chosen. That flesh has grown onto the parts with which it lived out its natural life and the labors of that life. So the points just examined may be judged as they ought to be, or the further arguments built on them may be granted as a concession. Either way, what our opponents say cannot be shown to be true. Human bodies could never be blended with other bodies of the same nature. This holds even if men have been tricked without knowing it and have eaten such a body through someone else. It also holds if they have knowingly defiled themselves with a body of their own kind through need or madness. That is, unless there are beasts in human form that have escaped our notice, or creatures of mixed nature, part man and part beast, of the sort the bolder poets like to invent.

Translator’s note. The Greek reads “unless some beasts in human form have escaped our notice,” an ironic hint that those who eat human flesh are such beasts.

Chapter 8

8 And why should I speak about bodies that were not assigned as food to any living creature? They are set apart only for burial in the earth, as an honor to nature. Indeed, the Maker has not assigned any kind of animal as food for creatures of its own kind, though among some different kinds one does naturally serve as food for another. Suppose, then, that they could show that human flesh was assigned to human beings to eat. Then nothing would stop cannibalism from being natural, like anything else that nature allows. Nothing would stop those who dare to say such things from

feasting on the bodies of their dearest friends as something closer to themselves, or from serving these same bodies to their most devoted friends. But it is impious even to say such a thing. For men to share in the flesh of men is utterly hateful and abominable, and more defiling than any other lawless or unnatural food or deed. What is against nature could never become nourishment for the parts and members that need nourishing. What does not become nourishment could never be united with those parts, which it was never made to feed. So human bodies could never be built into other, similar bodies, for which they are unnatural food. This is so even if they should pass many times through those bodies' stomachs by some most bitter misfortune. Instead, they escape the nourishing power and are scattered back into the things from which they were first formed. They stay united with those things for whatever length of time falls to each. Then they are separated from them again by the wisdom and power of him who put together the whole nature of every living creature with its own proper powers. Each part is then joined fittingly to its own part. This holds whether the body was burned by fire, rotted by water, devoured by wild beasts or whatever other animals happened by, or cut off from the whole body and dissolved before the other parts. When the parts are united with one another again, they take the same place in the harmony and structure of the same body. So the one who had died, or had even been completely dissolved, rises and lives again. It is not the right moment to spend longer on these matters. The judgment on them is agreed, at least among those who are not half-beasts.

Translator's note. "Half-beasts" renders an uncommon Greek word (mixothēroi), meaning those of mixed human and animal nature. It picks up the creatures "part man and part beast" mentioned at the end of 7.b.

Chapter 9

9 There are many points more useful to the inquiry before us. So for now I decline to answer those who take refuge in the works of men and in the men who make them. These craftsmen cannot make new again their works that have been smashed, or worn out by age, or ruined in some other way. The objectors then reason from potters and carpenters and try to show that God would not want to raise a body that has died or been dissolved, or that if he wanted to, he could not. They do not realize that by this they commit the worst insult against God. They put on the same level the powers of beings that are altogether different, or rather the very natures of those who use those powers, and they treat things made by craft as if they were things made by nature. It is not free from blame to take such arguments seriously, for it really is foolish to argue against shallow and empty objections. It is far more reputable, and the truest thing of all, to say that what is impossible with men is possible with God. The argument has shown that the resurrection is possible, both by these very statements, taken as reputable ones,

and by everything we examined a little earlier. If so, it is plain that it is not impossible. Neither is it something God would not will.

Translator's note. "Reputable" renders a Greek word used in philosophical argument for views that are widely accepted or held by respected authorities.

Scripture: [Luke 18:27](#)

Chapter 10

10a For what God does not will, he does not will either because it is unjust or because it is unworthy of him. Again, injustice would concern either the one who is to be raised or someone else besides him. But it is quite plain that no one outside him, among those counted as existing, is wronged. The spiritual beings could not be wronged by the resurrection of men. It is no obstacle to their existing, and it is no harm or insult to them. The same holds for the nature of irrational creatures and of lifeless things. They will not exist after the resurrection, and nothing can be unjust toward what does not exist. But suppose someone assumes that they do exist forever. Even then they would not be wronged by the renewal of human bodies. Now they give way to human nature and serve human needs while humans are in need. They are brought under the yoke and every kind of slavery, and still they are not wronged. How much less will they be wronged when human beings have become imperishable and free from need and no longer require their service, and when they themselves have been set free from all slavery.

Translator's note. "Spiritual beings" translates a Greek phrase meaning "intelligible natures," that is, beings known by the mind rather than the senses. The author probably means angels and similar beings, though he does not name them here.

10b If irrational creatures and lifeless things could speak, they would not accuse the Creator of treating them unjustly by making them lower than human beings, on the ground that they did not receive the same resurrection. Those whose nature is not equal are not given an equal end by the Just One. Besides, where there is no judgment of what is just, there is no complaint of injustice either. Nor can anyone say that some injustice is done to the human being who is raised. He is made of soul and body, and he is wronged in neither soul nor body. No one in his right mind will say that the soul is wronged, because by saying so he would, without realizing it, be rejecting the present life as well. If the soul suffers no wrong now, while it lives in a body that is perishable and subject to suffering, then much less will it be wronged when it shares its life with a body that is imperishable and free from suffering.

10c Nor is the body wronged. If a perishable body is not wronged now, while it is joined to a soul that is imperishable, then clearly an imperishable body will not be wronged when joined to an

imperishable soul. Nor could anyone say that it is a work unworthy of God to raise up a body that has been dissolved and to bring it together again. If the lesser thing was not unworthy of him, namely making a body that is perishable and subject to suffering, then much more is the greater thing not unworthy, namely making one that is imperishable and free from suffering.

Translator's note. The Greek says only “perishable joined to imperishable” and “imperishable joined to imperishable.” The word “soul” is not in the text, but it is clearly meant, and I have supplied it.

Chapter 11

11a Each of the points we have examined has been shown from the things that come first by nature and from what follows from them. So it is plain that the resurrection of dissolved bodies is a work that is possible, that is willed, and that is worthy of the Creator. By these arguments the opposite view has been shown to be false, and the position of the unbelievers has been shown to be unreasonable. Why should I speak of how each of these points implies each of the others, and how they are linked together? We may not even need to speak of a link, as though they were separated by some difference. Should we not rather say that what is possible is also willed, that what God wills is altogether possible, and that it fits the worth of the one who wills it? I have already said, adequately, that an argument about the truth is one thing and an argument in defense of the truth is another. I explained how each differs from the other, and when and toward whom each is useful. But perhaps nothing prevents us from making a fresh start from these same points and from those that belong with them. This will make the whole argument secure and connect what has been said with what remains.

Translator's note. The distinction between an argument about the truth and one in defense of the truth refers back to the opening chapter of this treatise.

11b It is fitting that one kind of argument should hold first place by nature, and that the other should act as its bodyguard: making the road for the first and clearing away beforehand everything that stands in the way or is hostile to it. The argument about the truth is necessary for all people, for their security and salvation, and it takes the lead in nature, in order and in usefulness. It leads in nature because it gives knowledge of the realities. It leads in order because it exists in and along with the very things it makes known. It leads in usefulness because it brings security and salvation to those who come to know it. The argument in defense of the truth is lower in nature and in power, because refuting falsehood is less than establishing truth. It is also second in order, because its strength is directed against those who hold false opinions, and false opinion has grown up from a later sowing and from corruption.

Translator's note. The word for “later sowing” (episorá) may echo the parable of the weeds, where an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat after the good seed was planted ([Matthew 13:25](#)).

11c Yet even though this is so, the defensive argument is often put first, and sometimes it becomes the more useful. It removes and clears away beforehand the unbelief that troubles some people, and the doubt or false opinion of those who are just now coming to the faith. Both arguments are directed to one end. The one that refutes falsehood and the one that strengthens truth both aim at piety. But they are not altogether one and the same. The argument for the truth is necessary, as I said, for all who believe, and for those who care about the truth and their own salvation. The defensive argument is sometimes more useful for certain people and in dealing with certain people. Let this be said briefly by way of summary, to remind us of what has already been said. Now we must go on to our subject and show that the teaching about the resurrection is true. We will argue first from the cause itself, according to which and for the sake of which the first man was made, and those after him as well, even though they were not made in the same way. Second, we will argue from the common nature of all human beings as human beings. Third, we will argue from the judgment which their Maker passes on them, concerning the whole time each one lived and the laws by which each one conducted his life. No one could dispute that this judgment is just.

Translator's note. “Piety” translates eusebeia, which means right reverence toward God and a godly way of life.

Chapter 12

12a The argument from the cause goes like this. We ask whether man was made without reason and for nothing, or for some purpose. If for some purpose, was he made just to live and to remain in the nature in which he was created, or to serve someone's need? And if to serve a need, was it the need of the Maker himself, or of some other being who belongs to him and is thought worthy of greater care? Let us look at this in a more general way. We find that everyone of sound mind who is moved by reasoned judgment to make something does nothing he deliberately undertakes for nothing. He does it either for his own use, or for the need of someone else he cares for, or for the sake of the thing made, moved by a natural attraction and affection toward its coming into being. Take an illustration, so that the point is clear. A man builds a house for his own use. He also builds, for oxen and camels and other animals he needs, the shelter that suits each of them. To all appearance he does not do this for his own use, though in the end it is for that. The immediate reason is his care for the animals he looks after. He also has children. He does not have them for his own use or for the sake of anything else that belongs to him. He has them so that those he fathers may exist and last as long as

possible. By the succession of children and grandchildren he consoles himself for his own death, and in this way he thinks he makes the mortal immortal.

12b That is how men act. But God would not have made man for nothing, because he is wise, and no work of wisdom is empty. Nor would he have made him for his own use, because he needs nothing. For one who needs nothing at all, nothing that he has made could serve his own use. Nor did he make man for the sake of any other work of his. For nothing that has reason and judgment, whether greater or lesser, has been or is made for another's use. It exists for the sake of its own life and continuing. Reason can find no need that could be the cause of man's creation. The immortals lack nothing and need no contribution from men in order to exist. The creatures without reason are by nature under rule, and they supply men with the services each is suited to give, but they are not made to use men in return. It was never right, and is not right, to bring what rules and leads down to the use of its inferiors, or to subject the rational to the irrational, which is unfit to rule.

12c So if man was not made without cause and for nothing (for nothing God has made is pointless, at least as far as its Maker's intention goes), and was not made to meet a need of the Maker himself or of any other work of God, then it is clear what follows. On the first and more general account, God made man for himself and for the goodness and wisdom seen in all his creation. But on the account that comes closer to the creatures themselves, he made man for the sake of their own life. That life is not lit for a little while and then put out altogether. To creeping things, I think, and birds and fish, or to speak more generally all creatures without reason, God gave a life of that kind. But to those who carry the Maker himself as an image within them, who bring with them a mind and share in rational judgment, the Maker assigned lasting existence for ever. He did this so that they might know their Maker, his power and his wisdom, and follow law and justice. In this way they might live through the ages, free from toil, together with the things by which they strengthened their former life, even though they lived in perishable, earthly bodies.

Translator's note. The last clause is difficult; the Greek says "together with those things by which they strengthened their former life," which probably refers to what has just been named: knowledge of their Maker, and law and justice.

Scripture: [Genesis 1:26-27](#)

12d Whatever has been made for the sake of something else will naturally cease to exist once the thing it was made for has ceased. It would not go on existing in vain, since nothing useless has a place among the works of God. But things made for the sake of existing and living according to their nature are different. Their purpose is bound up with their nature and is seen only in their very existence, so they could never admit any cause that would wipe out

their existence altogether. And since this purpose is always seen in existing, the living being that has been made must be preserved without fail, doing and experiencing what is natural to it. Each of the two parts of which it was made contributes its own share. The soul exists and remains unchanged in the nature in which it was made, and does the work natural to it. It is natural for the soul to govern the impulses of the body, and to judge and measure whatever comes upon it by the proper standards and measures. The body moves according to nature toward the things natural to it, and undergoes the changes allotted to it. These include changes of age, of appearance and of size, and along with them the resurrection. For the resurrection is a kind of change, and the last of all. So too is the change for the better of those who are still alive at that time.

Translator's note. The last sentence names two final changes: the resurrection of the dead, and the transformation of those still living when it happens; this echoes Paul in [1 Corinthians 15:51-52](#) ("we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed") and [1 Thessalonians 4:15-17](#).

Scripture: [1 Corinthians 15:51-52](#)

Chapter 13

13a Confident of these things, no less than of what has already happened, and looking at our own nature, we accept a life of want and decay as fitting for our present existence. And we firmly hope for a life that continues in incorruption. We do not idly make up this hope out of human ideas, deceiving ourselves with false hopes. We believe it on a guarantee that cannot mislead: the purpose of the one who made us. According to that purpose he made man from an immortal soul and a body. He fitted him with a mind and an innate law, to save and guard the gifts he had given, which belong to a sensible way of life and a rational existence. We know well that he would not have made such a living being, and adorned him with everything needed for lasting, unless he wanted what he made to last. So the maker of this whole universe made man to share in a life of understanding. Having become an observer of God's magnificence and of his wisdom in all things, man was to remain always in the contemplation of them. If that is so, then, in keeping with God's purpose and with the nature man has received, the reason for man's creation guarantees that he will last forever. And his lasting forever guarantees the resurrection, without which man could not last.

13b From what has been said it is quite clear that the resurrection is plainly shown by the reason for man's creation and by the purpose of the one who made him. Since this is the reason for which man was brought into this world, the next step is to examine the argument that follows from it, either by nature or in sequence. In our inquiry, the nature of the human beings who were born comes after the reason for their creation. The just judgment of their maker upon them comes after the nature of those he made. And the

end of life comes after all of these. Now that we have examined the point placed first, we must next look at the nature of human beings.

Chapter 14

14a The proof of the teachings of the truth, or of any matter put forward for examination, is what brings unwavering confidence in what is said. It does not begin from anywhere outside, nor from what some people think or have decided. It begins from the common and natural understanding of the matter, or from the way later points follow from the first ones. For the question concerns either first principles, and then all that is needed is a reminder that stirs up the natural understanding. Or it concerns what naturally follows from the first principles, and their natural sequence, and then we need proper order in dealing with them. We must show what truly follows from the first points, or from those placed first. In this way we neither neglect the truth and our certainty about it, nor confuse what nature has arranged and distinguished, nor break up the natural chain of reasoning.

14b For this reason I think that those who take the matter seriously and fairly, and who want to judge sensibly whether there is a resurrection of human bodies or not, should first consider carefully the force of the arguments that help to prove it, and what place each one holds: which is first, which second, which third, and which last. When they have put these in order, they should place first the cause of the creation of human beings, that is, the purpose of the Creator in making man. Next they should fittingly join to this the nature of the human beings who were made. They do not join it because it is second in order. They join it because we cannot pass judgment on both at once, even though the two very much exist together and carry equal weight for the question before us.

14c These first arguments, which have their starting point in creation, clearly demonstrate the resurrection. Even so, we can also gain confidence about it from the arguments about providence. I mean the honor or penalty owed to each person by a just judgment, and the end of human life. Many who discuss the resurrection have rested the whole case on the third argument alone, supposing that judgment is the cause of the resurrection. But this is plainly shown to be false, because all people who die rise again, yet not all who rise are judged. If the justice of judgment were the only cause of the resurrection, then surely those who have done neither wrong nor right, that is, very young children, ought not to rise at all. But all are to rise, including those who died in earliest childhood. So these children themselves show that the resurrection does not happen first of all because of the judgment. It happens because of the purpose of the Creator and the nature of the creatures he made.

Chapter 15

15a The cause seen in the creation of human beings is by itself enough to show that resurrection follows, by natural sequence, on the dissolving of bodies. Still, it is perhaps right not to hesitate over any of the points proposed. In keeping with what has been said, we should also point out the starting points that each of the following arguments provides, for those who cannot see them for themselves. First of all comes the nature of the human beings who were made. It leads to the same conclusion and gives the same assurance about the resurrection. Consider this. Human nature as a whole consists of an immortal soul and the body fitted to it at creation. God did not assign this kind of origin, or life, or whole course of existence to the soul's nature by itself, or to the body's nature apart from the soul. He assigned it to the human beings made from the two. He did this so that, when they have lived out their lives, they might come to one common end, made up of the same parts from which they are born and by which they live. The human being is one living creature made of both. It undergoes all the experiences of the soul and all those of the body. It acts and does whatever calls for judgment by the senses or by reason. So the whole chain of things that comes from these must be referred to one end. All of them, through every part, must come together into one harmony and one shared experience: man's origin, man's nature, man's life, man's actions and sufferings, his course of life, and the end that fits his nature.

15b But suppose there is one harmony and one shared experience for the whole living creature, covering what grows out of the soul and what is carried out through the body. Then the end of all these things must also be one. The end will be truly one if the living creature whose end it is remains the same in its makeup. The creature will be strictly the same if all the parts of which it consists are the same. And those parts will be the same, in their own proper union, if the parts that were dissolved are united again to form the creature. The reconstitution of these same human beings necessarily shows that the resurrection of dead and dissolved bodies follows. Without it, the same parts could not be united with one another according to nature, and the nature of these same human beings could not be reconstituted.

Translator's note. "Makeup" and "reconstitution" render the Greek word *sustasis*, literally a "standing together." Here it means the way the whole human being, body and soul, is put together.

15c Human beings have also been given mind and reason, so that they can discern things grasped by the mind. These include not only what exists but also the goodness, wisdom and justice of the One who gave these gifts. Now the things for which rational judgment was given continue to exist. So the judgment given for them must continue too. But this judgment cannot continue unless the nature that received it, the nature in which it dwells, continues. The one who received both mind and reason is the human being, not the soul by itself. So the human being, who consists of both, must continue forever. But a human being cannot continue unless he

risers again. If there is no resurrection, human nature as human nature would not continue. And if human nature does not continue, then the soul has been joined in vain to the body's needs and experiences. In vain the body has been held back from getting what it craves, yielding to the soul's reins and guided by its bridle. In vain is the mind, in vain is wisdom, in vain the keeping of justice and the practice of every virtue, in vain the making and ordering of laws. In short, everything good that is in human beings or done for their sake is in vain, and even more, the very creation and nature of human beings. But emptiness has been driven out entirely, in every way, from all God's works and from the gifts he gives. So the body must last forever, according to its own nature, together with the soul's endless existence.

Chapter 16

16a Let no one be surprised that we call a life that is cut off by death and decay a "continuance." Consider that this word does not have only one meaning, and that there is not only one measure of continuing, because the nature of the things that continue is not one. Each thing that continues has its continuance according to its own nature. So the continuance of the purely incorruptible and immortal beings is not equal to that of beings below them, since the natures of higher beings are not put on the same level as those that stand lower. Nor is it right to look among human beings for that even, unchanging kind of continuance. The immortal beings were made immortal from the beginning and continue without end by the will of their Maker alone. Human beings, on the other hand, have an unchanging continuance in the soul from their birth, but in the body they receive incorruption through a change. This is what the doctrine of the resurrection means. With this in view, we expect the body to be dissolved, since that follows a life of want and decay. After this we hope for a continuance in incorruption. We do not put our death on a level with the death of the irrational animals, nor the continuance of human beings with the continuance of immortal beings. Otherwise we would unknowingly put human nature and life on a level with things that do not belong with it.

16b So we should not be troubled if some unevenness is seen in the continuance of human beings. Nor should we give up hope of the resurrection because the soul's separation from the parts of the body, and the breaking up of its members, cuts off continuous life. For the loss of sensation and of natural powers that happens naturally in sleep seems to cut off the life of conscious awareness. People sleep at regular intervals of time and in a way come back to life again. Yet we do not refuse to call it the same life. For this reason, I think, some call sleep the brother of death. They do not mean that the two come from the same ancestors or fathers. They mean that like conditions come upon the dead and the sleeping, because of the stillness and because they feel nothing of what is

present or happening, or rather not even their own existence and life.

Translator's note. Calling sleep the brother of death goes back to Greek poetry. Homer calls Sleep "the brother of Death" (Iliad 14.231), and Hesiod makes both children of Night (Theogony 211–212). That is why the author says he does not mean they share the same parents.

16c So if we do not refuse to call the life of human beings the same life, though it is full of such unevenness from birth to dissolution and is interrupted by all the things we have mentioned, then we must not give up hope of the life beyond dissolution. That life brings the resurrection with it, even if for a time it is interrupted by the soul's separation from the body.

Chapter 17

17a Human nature has had this inequality assigned to it from the beginning, according to the purpose of its Maker. So human life and its duration are uneven. Life is broken off sometimes by sleep and sometimes by death. It is also broken by the changes of each stage of life, and what comes later is not plainly visible in the earlier stages. Who would have believed, unless experience had taught him, that so many great powers lie stored in seed that is soft and uniform? Or that so many different masses form and harden from it: bones, sinews and cartilage, and also muscles, flesh, internal organs and the other parts of the body? For none of these can be seen while the seed is still fluid. Nor does an infant show anything of what belongs to the grown person, nor the grown person anything of what belongs to those past their prime, nor these anything of what belongs to the old.

Translator's note. "Soft and uniform" renders two Greek words meaning "of like parts" and "moldable." The point is that the seed looks the same throughout and shows no visible structure.

17b Some of the things just mentioned give no sign at all of the natural order of events and of the changes that come upon human nature, and others give only a faint sign. Even so, everyone who is not blinded by vice or laziness in judging these things knows how it goes. First the seed must be sown. When it has been formed in every member and part and the child has come out into the light, there follows the growth of early life and the full maturity that growth leads to. After maturity the natural powers decline until old age, and then, when the body is worn out, it dissolves. Now the seed does not have written in it the life or form of the human being. Nor does life have written in it its dissolution back into its first elements. Yet in this case the sequence of natural events makes believable things that the appearances themselves do not make believable. Much more, then, does reason establish the resurrection when it traces out the truth from this natural order. Reason is a safer guide to the truth than experience, and stronger.

Chapter 18

18a The arguments we set out for examination a little while ago, which give assurance of the resurrection, all belong to one family, because they spring from one source. That source is the creation of the first human beings. But some of them draw their strength from that first source itself, from which they grew. Others follow the nature and the life of human beings and draw their credibility from God's providence over us. The cause according to which and for the sake of which human beings were made is joined to human nature, and it has its strength from creation. But the argument from justice, by which God judges people who have lived well or badly, takes its strength from the end of human life. These arguments do spring from creation, but they depend more on providence.

Translator's note. The Greek verb for "spring" (phyontai) repeats the verb used earlier in this section for the arguments springing and growing from their source, so the last sentence most naturally refers to the arguments from justice.

18b Now that we have shown the first of these as well as we could, it is fitting to prove our proposition from the later ones as well. I mean the honor or penalty owed to each person under a just judgment, and the end of human life. Of these I will put first the one that comes first by nature, and examine first the argument about the judgment. I will say only this much beforehand, for the sake of the proper starting point and order of our subject. Those who accept God as the Maker of this universe must attribute the keeping and care of everything made to his wisdom and justice, if they want to stay true to their own first principles. Holding this view, they must think that nothing on earth or in heaven is left without oversight or providence. They must recognize instead that the Creator's care reaches to everything, unseen and seen alike, small and great.

18c For everything that has come into being needs the care of its Maker, and each thing needs it in its own way, according to what it is by nature and what it is naturally for. I think it would be a pointless show of effort to go through the list now, or to sort the cases out one by one, or to say what suits each kind of creature. But man, whom we are now to speak about, needs food because he is needy, needs succession (offspring) because he is mortal, and needs judgment because he is rational. Now suppose each of these belongs to man by nature. He needs food for the sake of life, he needs succession for the continuing of the race, and he needs judgment so that food and succession may be lawful. Then it must follow that, since food and succession apply to the two parts together, judgment must apply to them as well. By "the two together" I mean the man who is made of soul and body. Such a man must be held answerable for everything he has done, and must receive either honor or punishment for it.

Translator's note. "Succession" translates the Greek *diadochē*, meaning the passing on of life to a next generation, that is, offspring or posterity.

18d Now just judgment brings its penalty for deeds done upon the two together, soul and body. The soul alone should not receive the wages for what was done with the body, for by itself the soul is not drawn to the faults that arise from bodily pleasures, food and care. Nor should the body alone receive them, for by itself it cannot judge law or justice. Instead, the man made of both receives judgment for each thing he has done. Yet reason finds that this does not happen in this life. In the present life people do not get what they deserve. Many godless people practice every lawlessness and wickedness and go on to the end of life untouched by troubles. On the other hand, those who have shown a life tested in every virtue live in pain, in abuse, in slander, in beatings and in every kind of suffering. Nor does it happen after death. For the two together no longer exist: the soul is parted from the body, and the body itself is scattered back into the things it was gathered from. It keeps nothing of its former build or shape, much less any memory of what was done. So what remains is plain to everyone. As the apostle says, this perishable thing, which can be scattered, must put on imperishability. This must happen so that the dead may be made alive by resurrection, and what was separated or even wholly dissolved may be joined together again. Then each person may justly receive what he did through the body, whether good or bad.

Translator's note. The apostle is Paul; see [1 Corinthians 15:53](#), "this perishable must put on imperishability." The words "which can be scattered" (Greek *skedaston*) are the author's own addition to Paul's wording. The last clause echoes [2 Corinthians 5:10](#).

Scripture: [1 Corinthians 15:53](#); [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)

Chapter 19

19a Against those who admit providence and accept the same first principles as we do, but then somehow fall away from their own position, one could use arguments like these, and many more, if he wished to expand what has been said briefly and in passing. But against those who dispute the first principles, it may be well to set down another starting point before these. We would share their doubts about what they believe and examine it together with them. Is the life of men, their whole existence, completely overlooked? Has a deep darkness been poured over the earth, hiding in ignorance and silence both the people and their actions? Or is it far safer to believe that the Maker stands over his own creations, overseeing everything that exists or comes to be in any way, and judging both deeds and purposes?

19b For if there were no judgment anywhere on what people have done, men would have no advantage over the animals without reason. In fact, those who keep their passions under control and

care about godliness, justice and the other virtues would fare worse than the animals. The life of beasts would be the best life, virtue would be foolishness, the threat of judgment would be a big joke, and indulging every pleasure would be the greatest good. The shared creed of all such people, and their one law, would be the saying so dear to the undisciplined and lustful: “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” For the end of such a life is not even pleasure, as some say, but total absence of feeling. But suppose the Maker of men does care about his own creations, and the distinction between those who have lived well and those who have lived badly is kept somewhere. Then it must happen either in the present life, while those who have lived in virtue or vice are still alive, or after death, when they have been separated and dissolved.

Translator’s note. The saying “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” is also found in [1 Corinthians 15:32](#) (quoting [Isaiah 22:13](#)).

Scripture: [1 Corinthians 15:32](#); [Isaiah 22:13](#)

19c But we cannot find a just judgment preserved on either of these suppositions. In the present life the good do not receive the reward of virtue, and the wicked do not receive the wages of vice. I will not even press the point that, if the nature we now have is kept as it is, mortal nature cannot bear a penalty proportionate to offenses that are many or heavy. A robber, a ruler or a tyrant who has unjustly killed ten thousand upon ten thousand could not pay for those deeds with a single death. Consider also a man who holds no true belief about God and lives in every kind of insolence and blasphemy. He disregards divine things and overthrows laws. He abuses children and women alike, razes cities unjustly, burns houses along with the people living in them, and ravages the countryside. Along with these things he wipes out whole communities and peoples, or even an entire nation. How could such a man, in a perishable body, suffer a penalty proportionate to these things? Death forestalls the punishment he deserves, and mortal nature is not equal even to any one of his crimes. So a judgment according to desert is shown to take place neither in the present life nor after death.

Chapter 20

20a Death is either the complete extinguishing of life, with the soul dissolved and destroyed along with the body, or else the soul remains by itself, indissoluble, undispersed and incorruptible, while the body decays and is dissolved. In that second case the body no longer keeps any memory of what it has done, or any sense of what it experienced together with the soul. If human life is utterly extinguished, then no concern will be shown for people who are no longer alive, and there will be no judgment of those who lived in virtue or in vice. Instead the lawless life will come rolling back, with the whole swarm of absurdities that follow it, and the height of that lawlessness, atheism. Suppose instead that the body is destroyed

and each of its parts goes to the element it is related to, while the soul remains by itself as incorruptible. Even so, a judgment against the soul would have no place, because justice would be missing from it. It is not right to suppose that any judgment coming from God and given by God could lack justice.

20b Justice is missing from the judgment if the one who practiced righteousness or lawlessness is not preserved. For the one who did each of the things in life for which judgment is passed was the human being, not the soul by itself. To put it in a word, this view does not preserve justice in any case.

Chapter 21

21a For if good deeds are honored, the body will clearly be wronged. It shared with the soul in the labors of its earnest efforts, but it will not share in the honor given for what was done rightly. Often the soul gets pardon for certain faults because of the body's need and want, yet the body itself is shut out from any share in the good deeds for which it bore its part of the labors in life. Again, if faults are judged, justice is not kept toward the soul either, if it alone pays the penalty for faults it committed while the body troubled it and dragged it toward its own appetites and impulses. Sometimes the soul was seized and carried off by stealth. Sometimes it was dragged along more forcefully. At other times it went along with the body as a kindness, out of care for keeping the body alive.

21b How could it be anything but unjust for the soul to be judged by itself for things toward which, in its own nature, it has no appetite, no movement, no impulse at all, such as lust, violence, greed, injustice, and the wrongs that follow from these? Most such evils come about because people do not master the passions that trouble them. And they are troubled by the body's neediness and want, and by the care and attention it demands. For the sake of these come all acquiring of property, and, prior to that, all use of things, and also marriage and all the actions of life, in which and around which faultiness, or the lack of it, is seen. Where, then, is the justice in having the soul alone judged? In all these matters the body is the first to be affected, and it draws the soul into sympathy and partnership in actions aimed at what the body needs. The appetites and pleasures, and also the fears and griefs, in which anything beyond moderation is liable to judgment, get their movement from the body. Yet the sins that come from them, and the punishments for the sins committed, would fall on the soul alone. The soul has no need of any such thing. It does not desire or fear, and of itself it does not suffer anything of the kind that a human being naturally suffers.

21c Suppose we grant that these passions belong not to the body alone but to the human being. We would be right to say so, because

a person's life is one life made up of both. Still, we surely will not claim that these passions belong to the soul when we consider its own nature strictly by itself. If the soul needs no food at all, it could never desire things it does not need in order to exist. Nor could it feel an impulse toward things it is not made to use. It could not even be grieved by a lack of money or possessions, since these have nothing to do with it. And if it is also stronger than corruption, it fears nothing at all as able to destroy it. It dreads neither hunger nor disease, neither crippling nor disfigurement, neither fire nor sword. It cannot suffer any harm or pain from these, because neither bodies nor the powers of bodies touch it at all. Now if it is absurd to attach the passions to souls as their own, then it is unjust beyond measure, and unworthy of God's judgment, to lay the sins that come from those passions, and the punishments for those sins, on souls alone.

Chapter 22

22a There is more to add. Is it not absurd that virtue and vice cannot even be conceived of in the soul apart from the body, yet the reward or punishment for them is assigned to the soul alone? We recognize the virtues as the virtues of a human being, and likewise the vice opposed to them. They do not belong to a soul separated from the body and existing by itself. How could anyone even conceive of courage or endurance in the soul alone? It has no fear of death, wounds, maiming, loss or ill-treatment, and no pain from these or hardship resulting from them. And how could there be self-control or temperance, when no desire draws the soul toward food, sexual union or other pleasures and delights, and nothing else troubles it from within or provokes it from outside?

22b How could there be practical wisdom, when there are no things to be done or not done, nothing to choose or avoid? Rather, the soul would have no movement at all, and no natural impulse toward any action. And where would justice toward one another, or toward anything else of the same or a different kind, naturally belong to souls at all? They would have no source from which, no means by which, and no way in which to give out what is equal according to merit or proportion, apart from the honor owed to God. Nor would they have any impulse or movement toward using what is their own or keeping away from what belongs to others. The use of natural goods, or abstaining from them, is observed in beings that are made to use them. But the soul needs nothing, and is not made to use anything. For this reason, what is called "each part doing its own work" could not be found in a soul of that kind.

Translator's note. "Each part doing its own work" translates the Greek idiopragia; the idea goes back to Plato's Republic, where justice is each part of the soul, or of the city, doing its own work.

Chapter 23

23a Here is the most irrational thing of all: laws are given to human beings, yet the penalty for what is done lawfully or unlawfully is turned over to souls alone. The one who received the laws is the one who would justly receive the penalty for breaking them. It was the human being who received the laws, not the soul by itself. So it must be the human being who answers for the sins, not the soul by itself. For God did not command souls to abstain from things that have nothing to do with them, such as adultery, murder, theft, robbery, dishonoring parents, and in general every desire that aims at wronging or harming one's neighbors. Take the command "Honor your father and your mother." It does not fit souls alone, because such names do not belong to them. Souls do not beget souls and so take on the title of father or mother; human beings beget human beings. Nor could "You shall not commit adultery" ever be properly said of souls, or even be thought of in that way. Souls have no difference of male and female, no fitness for intercourse, and no desire for it.

Translator's note. The two commands quoted are from the Ten Commandments ([Exodus 20:12](#), 14; [Deuteronomy 5:16](#), 18).

Scripture: [Exodus 20:12](#); [Exodus 20:14](#)

23b Where there is no such desire, intercourse is not possible either. Where there is no intercourse at all, there is no lawful intercourse, which is what marriage is. Where there is no lawful intercourse, there cannot be unlawful desire or intercourse with another man's wife, and that is what adultery is. Nor is the prohibition of theft, or of the desire to have more, suited to souls. They do not need the things that people in natural want or need are accustomed to steal or rob, such as gold, silver, an animal, or anything else useful for food, shelter, or use. For an immortal nature, everything that needy people desire as useful is useless. But let a fuller discussion of these matters be left to those who want to examine each point more carefully, or to argue more eagerly against opponents.

23c For us, what has just been said is enough, together with the arguments that agree with it in establishing the resurrection. It would no longer be the right time to spend longer on the same points. Our aim has not been to say everything that could be said. It has been to show in summary form, to those who have gathered here, what ought to be thought about the resurrection, and to fit the arguments leading to it to the ability of those present.

Chapter 24

24a Now that the matters proposed have been examined to some extent, what remains is to consider the argument from the end, or purpose. It has already shown itself in what has been said, and it needs only a little more attention and addition. That way I will not

seem to have left unmentioned anything I touched on briefly, or to have damaged the subject or the division of topics made at the beginning. For the sake of these points, and of what will be set out after them, it is fitting simply to point out this much: everything that comes into being by nature, and everything made by skill, must have its own proper end. The common understanding of all people teaches us this, and the things going on before our eyes bear witness to it. Do we not see that farmers have one end in view and physicians another? And again, that the things that grow from the earth have one end, and the animals that are nourished on it and born in a natural sequence have another?

Translator's note. "End" translates telos, which means both the final point and the purpose a thing exists for.

24b If this is plain, and the natural or skilled powers, and the activities that come from them, must always be followed by an end that fits their nature, then the end of human beings must of necessity be set apart from what the rest have in common, since theirs is a distinct nature. It is not right to assume the same end for creatures with no share in rational judgment and for those who act according to the innate law and reason, and who live a thoughtful life and practice justice. So freedom from pain cannot be the proper end for human beings, because even creatures with no sensation at all would share in that. Nor can it be the enjoyment of things that feed or please the body, or an abundance of pleasures. If it were, the life of beasts would have to take first place, and the life of virtue would be without an end. This kind of end, I think, belongs to cattle and livestock, not to human beings, who have an immortal soul and rational judgment.

Chapter 25

25a Nor is the end of man the happiness of a soul separated from the body. We are not examining the life or end of just one of the two parts of which a human being is made, but of the being made of both together. Every man who has been given this present life is of that kind, and this life must have some end of its own. Now if the end belongs to the two together, it cannot be found while they are still alive in this present life, for the reasons we have often given already. Nor can it be found when the soul is separated, because such a man no longer exists once the body is dissolved or entirely scattered, even if the soul continues to exist by itself. So the end of human beings must appear in some other constitution of the two together, as the same living being.

25b Since this follows of necessity, there must be a resurrection of bodies that have died or even been completely broken down, and the very same people must be formed again. For the law of nature sets the end not for people in general, or for just any people, but for those same people who lived the earlier life. And it is impossible for

the same people to be formed again unless the same bodies are given back to the same souls. For the same body to receive the same soul is impossible in any other way. It is possible only through the resurrection, for if that takes place, the end that suits human nature follows. One would not be wrong to say that the end of an intelligent life and rational judgment is to live on forever, without distraction, with those things to which natural reason is first and chiefly fitted, and to rejoice without ceasing in the contemplation of him who is, and of his decrees. This is so even though most people, who are more strongly and passionately attached to the things of this world, never reach it. The great number who fall short of the end that belongs to them does not cancel the common lot of humanity. Each person is examined individually, and honor or punishment is measured out to each according to how well or badly he has lived.

Translator's note. "Him who is" translates *ton ontos*, which could also be read as "that which is" (true Being). The masculine reading recalls [Exodus 3:14](#) in the Greek Old Testament, where God names himself "he who is."

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