

practiced. Today our nation's colleges and universities are notorious for stealing the health of our youth. College is known as a time to throw off discipline and engage in gluttony, binge drinking, and promiscuity. The result is often a visible decline in physical health, but also spiritual carnage. Countless youth who were raised in our churches have fallen away while at college, and this is a trend which needs to be reversed. An education that looks to both body and soul is what we need, an education that confesses the Creator of the visible and the invisible, an education that is devoted to the God who joined His creation to redeem us body and soul, so that we can serve Him in body and soul now and forever. God continue to bless the founding of Luther Classical College!

*Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent: Part IV*, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 265.

†Adolf Koeberle, *The Quest for Holiness*, trans. John C. Mattes (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004), 191.

‡Kurt Marquart, *Marquart's Works - Popular Writings*, ed. Herman J. Otten (New Haven, MO: Lutheran News, Inc., 2014), 56.

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AD FONTES

November, 2023



BODY, SOUL, AND COLLEGE

BY REV. RYAN L. LOESLIE

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WE KNOW THAT THE BODY AND SOUL ARE DISTINCT.

Jesus himself says, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Look also at the basic Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Death results in the separation of body and soul. At death the Christian soul goes to reside with God in heaven, while the body goes to the grave. There it will rest until Judgment Day, when Christ will raise it again, and it will be reunited with the soul forever. Body and soul are distinct. Practicing Christians recognize this distinction every day.

While Christians recognize this distinction, we know it was God himself who created us to be body and soul, and it is only the most violent consequence of sin that pulls the two apart. It should be evident then to the Christian that body and soul were meant to coexist, and that the care for one should entail care for the other. But living in a sinful and fallen world, we see how people are negligent to care for both equally. Not surprisingly the world has a preoccupation with the body. The preoccupation with the body can take different forms. Some treat it with great care (feeding it well, exercising, etc.), while others indulge its every appetite. The result is the same. The preoccupation with the body results in a sickly soul which does not fear God, and

this will eventually bring the body down also. As all bodies must finally die as a result of sin, living preoccupied with the body is a game that no one can win.

Christians are supposed to be more spiritually-minded, but this too can have pitfalls if they are one-sided in their outlook. Prioritizing the needs of the soul is difficult to maintain when there is indifference to the body's health. Deterioration in the body's health threatens our ability to focus on spiritual things like Bible reading, prayer, and worship.

Our Lutheran teachers have always recognized this. Martin Chemnitz wrote,

*Scripture wants such moderation employed in the use of food and drink, and of the things that pertain to the care of the body, that the body, as the vehicle of the soul, as the ancients call it, may not overwhelm the mind because it has been made coarse and fat by too much fulness and too much delicate treatment (Deut. 32:15).**

Chemnitz calls the body the vehicle of the soul, and so what affects the body affects the soul also. If we overwhelm the body through over-indulgence, the soul is affected also. This is easy to perceive through the effects of something like alcohol, but the truth is that our bodies have a delicate balance which is affected by any type of consumption. When the body is overwhelmed through excessive consumption, the mind cannot operate at peak capacity because we are made tired or sluggish. The soul suffers from this, as it requires a clear mind for its own spiritual exercises.

Adolf Koeberle wrote,

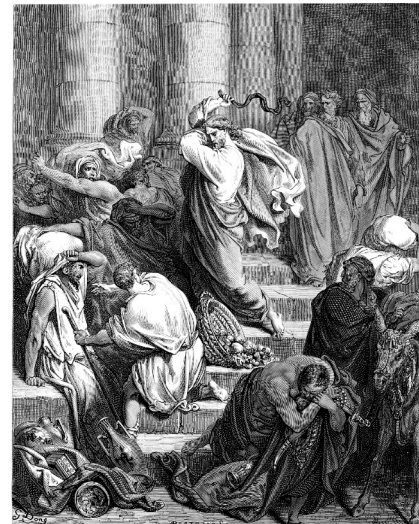
It is impossible to serve God with the soul "as such," and at the same time exercise no restraint in bodily affairs...Both parts, the external as well as the internal, will avenge themselves on each other, until the indissoluble unity of our corporeal-spiritual is recognized and our discipline unites the two.†

Koeberle sees discipline as uniting the body and the soul. We shouldn't be surprised by this. When we see the breakdown of the world all around us both physically and spiritually, it is in large part the breakdown of discipline in our culture. As

Christians we are called to practice both bodily and spiritual disciplines. As bodily disciplines we can count eating a healthy diet and getting good physical activity. As spiritual disciplines we can count prayer and almsgiving (Matthew 6). Fasting is a discipline which affects (or should affect) both body and soul. When we are cognizant of both, positive bodily and spiritual disciplines enhance each other. God uses them to keep us healthy in body and soul.

Kurt Marquart put it this way:

Gluttony, or over-indulgence in food or drink, makes an idol of our bodily appetites. Giving in to the craving for self-indulgence has the most serious, spiritual consequences. It deadens our interest in God's Word and Sacrament, and in spiritual, heavenly things generally. It makes people selfish and worldly. It means turning the body, God's Temple (1 Cor. 6:19), more and more into a pig-sty, where laziness and lust and every other vice can grow fat and strong, and trampling underfoot the Pearl of Great Price!‡



Cleansing the Temple. Gustave Doré, 1832-1883.

Marquart calls over-indulgence idolatry. When we fail to maintain the proper discipline of body and soul, this goes to the heart of the First Commandment. We need the Gospel, through which God has forgiven us these sins on account of Jesus' bitter suffering and death. We need wise discipline to help us move forward in this life, making us happier and healthier in body and soul.

It is good to reflect on this as we establish a new Lutheran college. Luther Classical

College will be a positive environment for our children when they leave the structure and discipline of our homes, a place where the biblical teaching of body and soul is confessed and