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THE CHURCHMAN

A Monthly Magazine and Review

CONDUCTED BY
CLERGYMEN AND LAYMEN OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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PUBLICATIONS OF THE MONTH.

LONDON: ROBERT SCOTT
ROXBURGHE HOUSE, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
PRICE SIXPENCE NET.

The Resurrection of the Body.

THIS paper does not attempt to criticize recent criticism of the Creeds; it merely offers a suggestion about a phrase in our Book of Common Prayer. It is not generally known that the Apostles' Creed in the Baptismal Office and the "Visitation of the Sick" has "resurrection of the flesh," which in Morning and Evening Prayer was changed to "resurrection of the body." The suggestion offered is that the change to "body" be made universal in order to make the Prayer Book uniform, and to remove a word which implies a belief that few, if any, educated Christians of the present day entertain.

We have no hesitation in making this suggestion, seeing that the "resurrection of the flesh," though held by many noble Christians of the early centuries—Ignatius, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Augustine—in the most literal manner, is not a scriptural phrase at all. The very passage in Job (xix. 26) quoted in its support means the direct opposite in the Hebrew original, *i.e.* "without (apart from) my flesh shall I see God." "A spirit," saith our Lord (Luke xxiv. 29), "hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." But He was emphasizing the reality of His resurrection. He also showed that He had a new power over His body, entering through closed doors, not being recognized save by whom and as He wished, and appearing in "another form" (Mark xvi. 12) to two of His disciples. Moreover, St. Peter, one of the witnesses of the Resurrection, quoted Psalm xvi, "His body saw no corruption,"¹ indicating a different condition from that which befalls our bodies. The vision of Ezekiel (xxxvii.) implies only the resurgence of a nation.

On the other hand, "the resurrection of the body," although not found exactly as it stands in Scripture, is firmly based upon it. See 1 Corinthians xv. 37 f.: "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be (*i.e.* the stately plant of bladed stem clothed with ears of corn), but naked grain, it may chance of wheat

¹ Psal. xvi. 10, quoted in Acts ii. 27. The Hebrew is: "Thou shalt not suffer thine holy one to see the pit." The pit implies death and the state of the dead. Our Lord's resurrection grace stayed the corruption and changed His flesh into His glorious resurrection body by a short and summary process, just as the water which does become wine in time became so at once by His order.

or some other grain, but *God giveth it a body*, as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed His own body." Such was St. Paul's view—the gift of a new body, absorbing and superseding the old. He states the difference between the present and the future body in a series of striking antitheses: "There is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts. . . . There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial." When commenting on this passage in his "De Fide et Symbolo" Augustine, who expressed a different view in his "De Civitate," said: "He did not say, 'And there is flesh celestial,' but he said, 'And there are celestial and terrestrial bodies,' for all flesh is also body, but not all body is flesh."

In 2 Corinthians v. 2, St. Paul speaks of a "being clothed upon with our home (*οἰκητήριον*) which is from heaven." He longs to put on this new body. This is the change he hopes for. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 51). "To be clothed upon" (2 Cor. v. 4) is another expression of his. For as he has explained in 1 Cor. xv. 44, "if there is a psychical (*ψυχικόν*) body, there is also a spiritual body." As the *ψυχή* requires an organism for its expression, so does the *πνεῦμα* or spirit. The former body is a material body of flesh and blood adapted to its material environment, palpable, visible, and frequently the instrument of the passions. But the latter is also an organism, adapted to its environment, and unlike the former body, being completely controlled by the spirit and always the willing instrument of its aspirations. The former St. Paul described as a tabernacle (*σκήνος*); the latter as a house (*οἰκία*) (2 Cor. v. 1). For the former is fragile, weak and temporary, a makeshift, as it were. The latter is "made without hands, eternal in the heavens." The former is "the body of our humiliation" (Phil. iii. 21), not "vile body"; the latter is our body so changed as to be transfigured and made conformable to the body of His glory. This change by which the spiritual body absorbs the psychical body is called by St. Paul the "redemption of the body" (Rom. viii. 23), and the "transfiguration" of the body (Phil. iii. 21).

It is interesting to note that Irenaeus, who held such strong materialistic views on the Resurrection, seems purposely to have omitted the verses 1 Cor. xv. 37-40, in which St. Paul discusses the body that God will give us, although he has thirty-five quotations from this very chapter. He expounds at some pains and

length the transfiguration (*μετασχηματισμός*) of the body described in Philippians iii. 21. "This transfiguration," he says, "will not be of its own substance, but according to the working of the Lord" ("Adv. Haer," v. 13, 3), meaning that the substance of the flesh will still remain but, by a miracle, will be changed in form. This was a curious position to hold. It was his controversy with the Docetics who denied that our Lord was really and truly a Man in the flesh, and with Gnostics who denied a bodily resurrection, that made him insist more vigorously perhaps than wisely on the resuscitation of the actual limbs, bones, nerves, etc., that make up the human body. It is really the converse case of transubstantiation, and equally impossible because equally improper. According to the Roman doctrine of the Sacrament, the substance is changed but the accidents remain. All that is *real* is altered, all that is phenomenal is unchanged. But according to Irenaeus' view of the Resurrection the substance is unchanged but its accidents are altered. The former attempts to establish a change where there is none; the latter to minimize a change where there is one. How much nobler a doctrine of the Resurrection could have been developed had St. Paul's lead in 1 Corinthians xv. 37-40 been followed! St. Paul, too, had had his controversies with those who denied that there was any resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 12), and with those who said that the resurrection had already taken place (2 Tim. ii. 18), perhaps through regarding the newness of life in Romans vi. 1-4 as a resurrection. But his answer to all such was: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50), and his argument about the new body developed in that chapter. Irenaeus explains away those words "flesh and blood" as meaning those who through living a carnal life are debarred from heaven. How many pitfalls had he saved himself and his followers from had he accepted St. Paul's doctrine of the new body?

Likewise in the case of Augustine and many others, the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh led to many weird and improper speculations. In the "De Civitate" xxii. c. 12 f. he discusses all sorts of grotesque questions about abortions, amputated limbs, hair that had fallen out, fat and lean persons, bodies eaten by birds, animals, or men, in which latter case he gravely considers to whom the eaten part shall belong, and the supreme question of all—sex.

He debates seriously whether larger bodies are to be reduced and smaller bodies are to be enlarged to the stature of Christ. He held that men and women would be still men and women (without descending to the coarseness of Tertullian), and that all the scattered particles would be completely restored. Such questions must inevitably be faced by one who takes up such a position on the resurrection of the actual flesh. But such a position cannot recommend itself to those who know that the particles of the human body are in a state of perpetual change, and are aware that personal identity does not depend upon the permanence of the substance of the flesh or the continuance of any one material substance. By such the expression "resurrection of the body" is infinitely preferred.

St. Paul's correlative doctrine of the body of saints as a shrine (*ναός*) of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19) is not to be held as supporting the view that this present flesh will share in the Resurrection, but as suggesting a motive for holiness and pureness of living here in the world. This "body of our humiliation" is to pass through a wonderful change by which all that is mortal and corruptible in it shall be shed, even as the decayed grain from which the stately corn rises is left in the ground. The temporary habitation or shrine or tabernacle of the Spirit must not be disregarded or treated with contempt or violated by shame or excess, for it contains that out of which the grace of the Resurrection will educe and build up the spiritual body. The purer the instrument of the soul has been kept, the purer the soul itself will be, and the purer will be that out of which the immortal fabric will be woven. It was Origen who brought Churchmen back to St. Paul's doctrine of a spiritual body. "It is out of the animal body," he said, "that the very power and grace of the resurrection will educe the spiritual body when it transmutes it from a condition of indignity to one of glory."

Furthermore, the word "body" is less open to materialistic conceptions and superstitious practices than the word "flesh," and we have shown that it is more scriptural. Even Luther, who in his "Drey Symbola," 1539, has "*Auferstehung des Fleisches*," and kept the word "flesh" in his long catechism, said that this is not well expressed in German. "In good German," he says, "we should speak of the resurrection of the body or of the corpse,

but this is of no great importance so long as we understand the word rightly."¹ This practically means that it is of no importance whether we say "resurrection of the flesh" or "resurrection of the body," provided that when we say the former we mean the latter! It is interesting to trace the appearance of "body" in the English Church. It first appears unofficially in Bishop Hilsey's Primer of 1539. About the same time Cranmer's "Annotations" on Henry VIII's corrections of the "Institution of a Christian Man" came out, which are assigned by Lewis to 1538. Here "body" appears in the Apostles' Creed. The "Necessary Education" of 1543, the King's Primer of 1545, Cranmer's Catechism of 1548, the Prayer Books of 1549, 1552, and 1559 (except in the Baptismal Services), have the change, which seems due to Cranmer's influence, who probably preferred a term that was more in keeping with scriptural use.

Two further considerations remain. The first is that the proper scriptural expression which bears the imprimatur of our Lord² is "resurrection of the dead." This is used in the Constantinopolitan Creed (381). Professor Zahn remarked that it was quite possible that this was the original expression, and was only later explained by the plainer expression "resurrection of the flesh."³ It is also found in the third century work—the "Didascalia." On the other hand, the Western creeds, which are very old, with one consent read "Carnis resurrectionem." In the creed of Ruffinus used by the Church of Aquileia "hujus carnis resurrectionem" makes the statement more definite and personal. Jerome objected to the use of the word "body," as it was open, he alleged, to the equivocation of the heretics: "For when the word 'body' is mentioned an orthodox person will understand 'flesh,' but a heretic 'spirit.'" ⁴ This does not say much for the intelligence of his day.

The second fact to be considered is this, that the New Testament use of "flesh," apart from a few passages where the context shows it is to be taken in a carnal sense, means humanity.⁵ The only occa-

¹ "De Principiis" ii. 10.

² Matt. xxii. 31. See concordance for a list of passages containing this phrase in the New Testament.

³ Apostles' Creed, *Expositor*, October, 1898.

⁴ Ep. lxxv.

⁵ "The Word became flesh" (complete man), John i. 14; "all flesh shall see the glory of God," Luke iii. 6; "no flesh should be saved," Matt. xxiv. 22; "flesh and blood hath not revealed it . . . but my Father," Matt. xvi. 17; "I shall pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," Acts. ii. 17; "provoke them which are of my flesh" (lit., provoke my flesh), Rom. xi. 14; "no flesh shall be justified by the works of the law," Rom. iii. 20.

sion on which "flesh" is used with the verb "raise up" in the New Testament refers to the incarnation of Christ: "to raise up Christ according to the flesh," Acts ii. 30.

In view of these arguments and considerations few will agree with the opinion of the late Bishop Dowden that the introduction of the word "body" into the Creed "is an error for which there is no excuse," or echo his wish that "resurrection of the flesh" should in all places be restored.¹ At the present time the change suggested to "body" in the Baptismal Service would be a distinct relief to the clergy, who have to ask the sponsors, "Do you believe in the resurrection of the *flesh*?" And this knowing that no sensible or thoughtful person of our time could possibly believe that that which includes hair, teeth, nerves, tendons, blood, skin, bone, etc., can partake of resurrection. For these carnal parts and material particles are ever in a perpetual state of change and could not possibly be adaptable to a heavenly existence. The issue has been confused by Pearson and other writers like him, for it is not a case of *power* but of *propriety*. The secret of our personal identity and continuity lies with the spirit. It is the immortality of the spirit, therefore, that is our chief concern. We believe that it will be sufficiently provided for by the Divine Father in the next world.

F. R. MONTGOMERY HITCHCOCK.

¹ "Workmanship of the Prayer Book," p. 101.

