

# The Catholic Record.

"Christianus mihi nomen est, Catholicus vero Cognomen."—Christian is my Name, but Catholic my Surname.—St. Pacian, 4th Century.

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## ON THE RESURRECTION.

Father Searle, of the Paulists, Answers Dr. Newton.

The following able article, which appears in the *Catholic World* magazine for June, is from the pen of the Rev. George M. Searle, of the Paulists, professor of mathematics and astronomy at the Catholic University, Washington:

Rev. Dr. Hober Newton, in a sermon preached a few weeks ago, expressed some opinions about the Resurrection which created quite a sensation and have been quite widely discussed and commented on. They seem, strangely enough, to have been considered as original with him; in point of fact, however, they are quite familiar to any one acquainted with modern liberal Christianity, so-called, though it is probable that those who entertained them a few years ago have now, by a natural progress, arrived at a complete disbelief in the fundamental point of faith which they attack. Similar notions were also entertained, and condemned as heresies, in the early ages of the Church. The only reason or excuse which can be given for noticing them now is the attention which they have so undeservedly attracted.

The principal idea broached by Dr. Newton is that the body of Christ did not really rise from the tomb, but in which He showed Himself to His apostles being only something made in its likeness. As to what became of the body which was laid in the sepulchre, the doctor is prudently non-committal. It would appear that he holds the Christian faith so far as to believe that the body there deposited was a real human body like our own; but of course any belief of a thinker of this progressive type might vary from Sunday to Sunday, so that it hardly seems necessary to be very particular on this point. At any rate, he is reported to have said: "Some one will ask me what, then, became of the body? But I am too reverent to speculate about what became of that sacred temple of the Divine Spirit. I leave all such irreverent speculations to higher ecclesiastical authorities."

It must be confessed that it is rather hard to see at first just where the irreverence in this speculation comes in. If the original theory is not irreverent, it is not very evident why irreverence should be involved in the examination of questions so intimately connected with it. But it is no doubt an excellent plan to thus ward off criticism. Here at least, if nowhere else, our reverend—and reverent—theorist may indeed lay some claim to originality.

If we look squarely at the matter, undeterred by this warning, we see of course that the theory that Christ did not raise His body from the tomb, assuming it again to Himself, implies—since it is not held that it remained there—either that it was removed thence by some human agency, or that it was disposed of by the power or direction of God in some miraculous way. We may safely say by the power of God, for we are talking to Christians, and for such no other power outside of the natural order can be admissible in this case.

The first of these is the most obvious supposition, and was the one adopted for us at the time by the enemies of Christ. He had, as we all know, distinctly predicted His resurrection; the chief priests and the Pharisees were aware of this, and knew also that what was understood by this among the Jews was a resurrection, like that in the case of Lazarus, of the actual body which had died. Assuming them to have really believed that this was impossible, or indeed even in the interests of truth itself—though they were not much in earnest about that—it was reasonable enough for them to take the precautions which they did to prevent the abstraction of Christ's body from the tomb by His disciples. If they could keep it there, His prediction was a failure.

When they found they could not keep it there, in spite of their precautions, there was but one resource, which they of course adopted. They bribed the guards which had been set to watch at the sepulchre to say that they had fallen asleep. Of course they could not, without absurdity, testify positively that the body had been stolen while they slept; but such an explanation of its disappearance had then all the probability which was needed.

Obviously, this explanation cannot be given by any Christian without what would very rightly be called irreverence. For certainly it would be such to suspect the disciples of a trick like this, and still more to imagine Christ as having directed them, or any one of them, to perform it. And it seems to be this which Dr. Newton is shirking when he says he is too reverent to speculate about the matter. It may not be too much, however, taking into account his general proclivities, to suspect that he really inclines to this view of the case; for, if he did not, it would naturally occur to him to suggest the only other available alternative, mentioned above. Probably what he really means is that he is too reverent to the "higher ecclesiastical authorities" to speculate about it out aloud. Enough has already been said to

show that we cannot, if we wish to remain Christians in any proper sense of the term, doubt that Christ actually raised His body, the one in which He had lived and was crucified, from the tomb. If the Apostles abstracted it themselves their whole preaching was an imposture; if it were taken by some one else without their knowledge, or otherwise disposed of by the power of God, Christ would certainly have instructed them about it, and not allowed them to preach a lie to the world. We simply have to reject Christianity as a divine revelation if the Resurrection is not true in the sense the Church has held and taught it; that is plain enough; though it must be acknowledged in behalf of Dr. Newton that he is not the first who has failed to acknowledge this; and perhaps many have failed even to see it.

He took special care that they should understand that there was no mistake about the identity of His risen body with that which had suffered on the cross. No one can rationally put any other interpretation on His words as recorded by St. Luke, on the occasion of His appearance to the Apostles on the evening of the first Easter. They did not at first believe it was really His body which they saw; "they being troubled and affrighted," supposed that they saw a spirit. And He said to them: "Why are you troubled and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; feel and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have" (Luke xxiv., 37-39). And St. John, as we all know, tells us how, as St. Thomas was not present on the occasion just mentioned, Christ took special pains to assure him on the next Sunday that it was really His crucified body which had now risen. "Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side" (John xx., 21).

A most remarkable statement of Dr. Newton, and one far from creditable to him, must now be noticed. Our attention is often drawn to statements by Protestants having some considerable claims to learning and a fair general reputation for honesty, which are inconsistent with either one or the other of these qualities. But really this seems almost to surpass all hitherto uttered; we cannot tell whether in the line of astounding ignorance or of unblushing effrontery. The doctor is quoted as saying: "No one believes that He (Christ) entered into the higher life which we call heaven in the physical body. Some time or other, after what we call the resurrection, that physical body was dropped, and in His spiritual body Jesus Christ passed into the heavenly sphere."

It is not almost inconceivable that any sane person, pretending to know anything about Christianity, could make such a statement as this? "No one," forsooth, believes what over three hundred millions of Christians believe: no one believes what the Church has held without question from the beginning! Is it possible that the learned doctor does not know that it is the Catholic faith that the body of Christ which was buried and which rose from the dead, is now in heaven? O, knowing this, does he have the effrontery to call the whole of Christendom, with the exception of some isolated geniuses like himself, "no one"? For Protestants have made no general protest on this point, and if they say the Apostles' Creed, they express their belief in just this very thing. Really, this is unequalled; it stands out quite by itself among its kind.

But to proceed on the main line. Dr. Newton acknowledges that the actual statements of the evangelists support the belief in Christ's physical resurrection, and alleges no definite quotation from them against it. Would it be believed that he pretends to have a sufficient proof of his theory in St. Paul's words (I. Cor. xv., 50), that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"? But this is not to be wondered at. Heretics have always used the Bible in this way; they choose a text or set of texts which can be made to support their opinion and ignore what is inconvenient. Eymologically a heretic means a "chooser"; and Dr. Newton is an admirable specimen of the class. He will not even look three verses below, and read (v. 53) "this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality."

The sense is obvious, and must be so even to Dr. Newton himself. "Flesh and blood," as it is in this mortal life, cannot inherit the kingdom of God; it must be raised to a higher state, and endowed with glorious qualities, corresponding to that state, before it can do so. These qualities are well understood and defined by theologians. The chief of these are impassibility, brightness, agility and subtility.

That we might realize these qualities more fully God has been pleased to give us numerous examples of them in the lives of His chosen servants. As to the first, that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—to use the names familiar to Protestants—in the fiery furnace, is by no means unique. The same thing, in one form or another, is recorded frequently in the acts of the martyrs, and to magical arts. It has also been noted on various occasions in more recent days, one instance being familiar to those who have read the

well attested accounts of the apparition at Lourdes. The true character of these phenomena is manifest by the preservation of the body not only from pain but from physical injury, as in the case of Bernadette just referred to.

The quality of brightness has also numerous illustrations. To show that it cannot be attributed to imagination, one instance out of many will suffice; that, namely, of St. Andrew Avellino, who on one occasion when returning from a sick call in a storm of wind and rain which extinguished the torches of the attendants, shed a light from his body, which lit up the way.

Elevation in the air and flight through it is so well known an occurrence in the lives of holy persons that in many instances it has hardly occasioned any surprise in the spectators, especially in the case of saints like St. Joseph of Cupertino (1603-1663), with whom it was, we may say, habitual.

The very quality which in Christ's risen life excites our greatest wonder, that of passing through closed doors, is not without examples among the saints, those of St. Dominic and St. Raymond of Penafort being perhaps the most notable.

It would be unprofitable to dilate more on this subject, as the evidence cannot be made convincing without a very extended treatment. The mass of it is immense; but a great deal of it has stood the test of most rigorous examination.

Of course it is quite possible for any one so disposed to close his eyes and ears, to abandon reason and common sense, and absolutely deny all this evidence, and everything else which does not come within the range of his everyday experience. But obviously no one can, consistently with this, hold to his belief in the miracles of Christ, or form any theories based on the Gospel records; especially as Christ Himself predicted that His followers should show in their lives marvels similar to, and even greater than, His own.

And now one point especially deserves to be noted.

It is this: As has been said, there is perhaps room for doubt whether Dr. Newton holds, like some ancient heretics, that Christ's body was a mere illusion, not a physical body at all, both before and after the resurrection, or keeps to the usual and correct, as well as natural, belief that it was a true physical and human body, at any rate in the first of these periods. If he adopts the first view the whole matter has no application to us, as Christ ceases to be a man, and no conclusions as to any resurrection for us can be drawn from his. We ought charitably to presume that he has the sense to see this; and therefore give what is also otherwise the most probable meaning to his words, and consider him to hold that Christ had during His mortal life a real human body. And now we must ask him to notice a noteworthy matter, namely, that phenomena similar to those which were observable after the resurrection were occasionally manifested during the previous periods, as, for example, in His walking on the water (Matt. xiv.); in His disappearance when the Nazarenes were about to cast Him from the precipice, (Luke iv., 30); and similar occurrences, (John viii., 59, and x., 39); and especially in His transfiguration. Now, if such qualities as lightness, invisibility and splendor were possible in a physical and material body similar to our own why should not the risen body also be physical and material?

The simple fact of the matter is that qualities of this description do not belong of right to a mortal body, but may be and often have been—as in these cases of our Lord Himself, and in those of the saints which have been referred to—conferred on it temporarily in a special and miraculous way. But they do belong of right and continuously to a risen body, whether that of Christ or of any one who has part in His resurrection, though they may not be continuously manifested.

The whole ground or excuse for vagaries such as those of Dr. Newton therefore absolutely disappears.

It only remains to inquire whether there are any necessary and unchangeable physical laws which shut out the hypothesis of a material body in any occurrence observed in Christ's risen life. To this no scientific man who cares for his reputation will presume to give an affirmative answer. He may say, indeed, that it is contrary to his scientific experience, and to that of the world at large, that one piece of solid matter can pass through another without visible disturbance of either; and this—really the passing through closed doors—is really the only case presenting special difficulty. But if asked for a reason why this should be so he will probably say that the strength of the forces binding the particles of a solid together would be the obstacle. He must, however, acknowledge that these forces might be modified so that such penetration would be possible; for, as regards mere space or room, even the usual theories of matter allow plenty.

And it is quite to the point to remember that the corpuscular theory of light, proposed by Dr. Newton's great namesake, though now abandoned, was never considered absurd, and was not rejected on any such grounds; just as electricity is even now commonly treated of as a fluid

passing through solids with great rapidity. To say that these substances were regarded as imponderable is a futile objection; for weight, or in other words, subjection to and exercise of the action of gravity, is not the real test for discerning matter from spirit. Should any one wish, however, to assert that this action is inseparable from material substances, such an assertion, however groundless, is not to the purpose; for the mass may be diminished, so as to be practically imperceptible. It was indeed Sir Isaac's theory that the particles of light were subject to gravitational action, but from their small mass incapable of exerting it perceptibly.

It would evidently be simply ridiculous for any one of us, with our very rudimentary notions of the constitution of matter, to say or to hold that a material universe is impossible except on the laws which we have observed, or that material substances could not exist in the present universe exhibiting phenomena which would require a modification of the laws so far ascertained. Even in the case of gravitation, the best known of all, no sensible astronomer felt any absolute confidence that it would be found to apply to the orbits of the double stars.

Let us now look, to show the remarkable contrast between the scientific and the non-scientific mind, at the ground—really the only ground—on which Dr. Newton bases his objections to the Christian dogma of the resurrection. He says that in "the language of the records, it is said"—and seemingly he asserts to this—"implicitly implies the resurrection of Christ's physical body." But he remarks that over against any such language there is a general tenor of the description of the appearance of Jesus. Those descriptions are of a body wholly differing in its powers from the body which we now know. Our bodies cannot appear and disappear at will. They cannot pass through closed doors." It may be remarked that he does not seem to notice that the appearing and disappearing at will was, as has been shown, observed in Christ during His mortal life. But the principal thing to be noticed is that he assumes that because Christ's risen body exhibited qualities different from what we observe in material bodies, it could not be a material body or at any rate not the same which He had before. As if, forsooth, new qualities could not be given to that body, even had they never been previously manifested.

We all remember how the great Sir Isaac Newton confessed after his astonishing discoveries that he was but a child, picking up pebbles on the beach, while the great ocean of truth lay unexplored beyond. But Dr. Hober Newton is a much superior man, and knows it all.

In what has been said some injustice may have been done to him; for his words have been taken from reports, not from any document bearing his signature. But still these reports are probably not far astray; and it really seems as if he had not at all understood what the dogma is that he is combating; at least that is the most favorable supposition that can be made. He does not see that what Christians believe is that Christ's body and the bodies of those who share His resurrection have glorious qualities assigned to them which no one pretends they habitually possessed in their mortal life; how far those qualities follow laws divinely established, or how far they are under the control of the soul with which the risen body is reunited, is of course unknown.

The risen body, with its new qualities or gifts, is called the spiritual body. "It is sown," says St. Paul, "an animal body" ("a natural body," the Protestant version has it); "it shall rise a spiritual body." Dr. Newton uses the term "spiritual body," but does not seem to attach any very definite idea to it. It would appear from some subsequent remarks of his that he imagines this body to be one that we carry about with us through life, or that it is formed in some way at the moment of death. "It may," he is reported as saying, "draw around itself from the body which it leaves, or from the spiritual elements in the encompassing ether, the elements for a new and finer material body." This is certainly a truly scientific idea. One would think that "spiritual elements in the ether" were quite well understood and recognized.

It is really too much to expect of us that we should try to make sense out of such crude and random notions. As to the Christian dogma, the sense of which is quite clear, any one can see that the material substance of a body may remain precisely the same, though new qualities are conferred. The difficulties as to the reconstruction of a body out of the particles composing it at the time of death, as well as other considerations, have given rise to a good deal of discussion as to just what is meant in this matter by identity; and certainly we do not need to use the term in its most absolute sense, in which our living bodies do not remain the same from hour to hour. But we have no space to enter on this subject, and this is not the issue which Dr. Newton raises.

Those who govern others must take care to be kind listeners, or else they will soon offend God and fall into secret sins.—Father Faber.

## THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

The *Liverpool Catholic Times* says that the Anglican Bishop of Salisbury has been dealing with the important question: What is to be the Church of the future in English speaking countries? His Lordship has avoided the still greater question: What is to be the Church of the future for the entire world? Herein he has shown his wisdom. He is aware, no doubt, that the only Church which can now, as at all times, claim to be the Church of humanity without distinction of race, is the great Catholic Church, and he perceives likewise that there is no probability that she will ever lose that position. There is no other Church which can for a moment bear comparison with her in this respect. The fact should, it might be imagined, have suggested to the Bishop of Salisbury the absurdity of delivering an address which, inferentially at least, would lead his hearers to believe that the Established Church is the Church which Our Lord founded for the salvation of the human race. Apart from this, we cannot be surprised if his Lordship endeavored to persuade himself and the gentlemen who listened to him that the prospects of the communion of which he is a distinguished member are bright and encouraging. Such an attitude on the part of a religious leader speaking on an occasion when it is deemed advisable to inspire hope and encouragement is to be expected. But, at the same time, in addresses of that kind we look for sobriety and judgment, and at least an approach to a recognition of affairs as they exist. We look, too, to a dignitary such as the Bishop of Salisbury for a display of broad-mindedness and charity in referring to the Church of the majority of Christians. When we fail to find these evidences of analytic power and of kindness we are much disappointed, and our disappointment is all the greater because on a former occasion his Lordship gave very decided proofs of good-will towards Catholics. His letters, which were published in our own columns at the time, were conspicuous for good taste and friendliness, and we did not hesitate to describe them as models worthy of imitation. It is, therefore, with no little surprise we read the language in which, adopting the tone of the antiquated Exeter Hall controversialist, he speaks of the "superstitions" of "Romanism," and hints, that for purposes of expediency, they are "much kept in the background." His Lordship does not see eye to eye with us; his beliefs are not ours; but is that any reason why our tenets should be steeped in superstition and his free from it? We can only say that the language he has used—the mere clap-net of the bigot—is unworthy of the Bishop.

But when we come to the assertions of the Bishop with regard to the condition and prospects of the Church of England and the position of the Catholic Church in the colonies, our astonishment is greatly increased. His Lordship has recently paid visits to New Zealand, a number of the seaports in the Australian colonies, and some parts of North America. Judging from the character of some of his remarks it would seem to us that whilst in the States he must have been seized by a love for the art of indulging in amusing paradox which is cultivated with no little success across the Atlantic. Treating of the "mission" of the Church of England, His Lordship says: "What is the distinctive character of the Anglican communion? It is no doubt the combination of respect for authority and repose upon revelation and tradition, with the utmost possible amount of freedom and pliability to meet changing needs." In reading these words we cannot help asking is the good Bishop really serious? It seems to us that if there is any single religious body in which respect for authority is at a discount it is the Church of England. Even the Congregationalists and Presbyterians, who do not profess to believe in apostolic succession, are far more amenable to discipline. They manage their religious affairs as they manage their business and their politics, submitting to the verdict of the majority. But in every branch and section of the Church of England there appear to be continual bickerings and quarrels, simply because each unit is not ready to acknowledge a higher religious authority than himself. As to revelation, it is preserved in such forms as the individual conscience accepts it with scarcely any reference to a living authority; and with regard to tradition, we always believed that the greater number of Protestants considered it one of the Roman "superstitions." The strain of paradox or humor, or whatever it be, is well kept up throughout His Lordship's address. "Romanism," he declares, "is not suited to the democratic temper which prevails in the Colonies. It is too much everywhere of an *Imperium in imperio*, and as such it is not looked upon with confidence. Politicians may seek alliance with its solid vote in times when parties are evenly balanced, but they do it with a bad conscience and a sense of weakness. The general good sense of the community is against allowing what is usually a minority to have

advantages which it has not earned by superiority either in morals or intelligence, but only by the fact of its subservience to priestly direction in voting. As individual Roman Catholics become more enlightened they are less inclined to separate themselves from their neighbors or to submit to direction from the local priesthood or to control from Rome. It will be a long time, humbly speaking, before this change is effected; and God has, I believe, work for Roman Catholics to do in protesting against the miserable system of secular education which prevails in most of the colonies, and in stimulating themselves and others to greater devotion. I do not think this work will or can be done in a short time, and I believe that His Providence, therefore, will preserve their organization for this salutary purpose. But I also hope and believe that He will open and enlighten their eyes in the process, and enable them to approach in many ways nearer to ourselves. If ever the Church of Rome is reformed in Europe—as God grant it may be!—the stimulus will come, I believe, from its own adherents in the English-speaking colonies and the United States who have learnt to see the true ideal of a Christian Church represented in the polity of the Church of England." Anything more highly ludicrous than this passage of his Lordship's address we have not come across in our experience. A Bishop of the Church of England telling us that the Catholic Church is not democratic enough for the age, and that it is to be saved by being remodeled on the pattern of that "true ideal of a Christian Church"—the Anglican Establishment! Surely absurdity could not further go! In one of Charles Lever's novels he introduces an English visitor to Ireland, who, by means of the rollicking expedients of his Irish acquaintances, is made to believe that night is day in that country. The Bishop's colonial friends must have been playing some such prank upon His Lordship.

In America and in the colonies the Catholic Church is powerful essentially because it is democratic. Its clergy took up their work amongst the people in the Apostolic spirit—without scrip or staff. They had no wealth, but they believed in the rights and the generosity of the people, and their confidence has been repaid. They are everywhere trusted and revered, because it is felt that they are unselfish, and their influence has grown because they have been pioneers in putting programmes and principles before the masses. Take men such as Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop Ireland, Archbishop Ryan, and Bishop Keane in America; or Cardinal Moran and Archbishop Carr in Australia, and what Anglicans do we find who can be mentioned in the same breath with them—whose influence even among Protestant working men can be compared with theirs? Absolutely none. Protestants of every shade in the colonies are too much engaged in considering suitable "calls" and commercial transactions to be influential leaders of popular movements. It is Protestant religious ministers of this kind who need a reformation, for by their worship of Mammon they are bringing the name of Christianity into contempt.

## TOTAL ABSTAINERS.

### The Longevity of Temperate Persons.

We can point with pride to the life-work of many men as proof that total abstinence, in practice and as a principle, is a benediction, direct and indirect, in its effects upon life and character. Thousands of men who began life under favorable auspices have fallen in the prime of their manhood, without having accomplished their allotted work. Total abstinence would have saved them. Moderate drinking led them to an untimely end.

A noted statistician of England, after long and careful investigations, comparisons and observations, has established the following facts:

Between the ages of fifteen and twenty, where the total abstainers die, eighteen moderate drinkers die. Between the ages of twenty and thirty, ten of the former and thirty one of the latter. Between thirty and forty years, forty moderate drinkers to ten abstainers die.

That is: A total abstainer twenty years old has a fair chance of living forty-four years longer; a moderate drinker has a chance of living only fifteen and one half years longer.

At thirty years a total abstainer has a chance of living thirty six and one-half years longer; a moderate drinker at the same age only thirteen and one-half years.

At forty a total abstainer has a chance of living twenty-eight years more, and a moderate drinker only eleven and two-thirds.

We may talk and write as eloquently as we will about the "fifteen hundred millions" annually spent in our own nation for intoxicating liquors, but half the truth is not told unless we add the actual money value of the wasted mental and physical resources of thousands of otherwise noble and useful citizens, destroyed by moderate drinking.

Kind words cost us nothing, yet how often do we grade them!—Father Faber.