Irish Church Quarterly

Thoughts on Two Passages in the Burial Office

Author(s): G. F. Hamilton

Source: *The Irish Church Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 22 (Apr., 1913), pp. 154-155

Published by: [Irish Church Quarterly](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30067131>

Accessed: 16/06/2014 22:16

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Irish Church Quarterly is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Irish Church Quarterly*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

DISCUSSION.

THOUGHTS ON TWO PASSAGES IN THE BURIAL OFFICE.

In this very suggestive article some important points are raised with regard to which few would care to dogmatize rashly. Certainly the postponement of the beginning of the resurrection-life to a precise date, perhaps 1900 years hence, has become unsatisfying to many minds at the present day. If the orthodox idea of the Second Advent as a definite historical event may be discarded, with this will probably go much else that has been traditionally held to be part of an unalterable deposit of Divine truth. Many reputable Anglican scholars do not believe in a literal rising up of the body from the grave. Whether they are right in appealing to St. Paul's teaching on this subject is another matter. The Apostle does, indeed, say that on the dissolution of our earthly frame "we have" a heavenly habitation prepared for us. But whether this language can be pressed to mean that at the moment of death he expected to pass at once into his soul's new abode may be doubted. His argument in 1 Cor. xv. seems to point to the conclusion that the resurrection mode of being is continuous with the present living body (the seed sown here in this earthly, mortal life), and that there is no interval during which the personality remains unclothed upon with a suitable organ of self-expression. But here, again, we may be drawing inferences that were quite remote from the Apostle's own thought.

May I call attention to the lengthy treatment of this question given in the article by Dr. Charles on Eschatology in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*? The writer there asks, "When does this resurrection of the body occur?" He sums up his answer thus: "In 1 Cor. xv. 13-49 the view that the resurrection follows immediately on the death of the faithful is implied; in 2 Cor. v. 1-8 it is categorically stated," (Does he not put this a little too strongly?)

It is interesting to read what Queen Victoria wrote in Jan., 1885 (Boyd Carpenter, *Some Pages of My Life*, p. 287): "You surely do not think . . . that our dear ones *sleep awhile*, and that their *bodies* are to rise again? I thought you wrote to me once you thought, as I always think one feels one *must*, that the spirit is *at once* free in death, and that you were inclined to believe in a spiritual body *within* our present one?" To this I

replied that the Queen was quite right in supposing that I was in sympathy with the view that the "spiritual body" (as St. Paul calls it) is set free at death.'

The idea that as the living seed contains the future plant, so the "natural body" (not the corpse) has within it the rudiments of the future spiritual mode of being, seems to resemble somewhat the Hindu doctrine that the soul during its various terms of residence on earth is covered by a subtle body and a gross body, an inner and an outer sheath; and that the latter is dropped at death, while the former thus liberated passes into the unseen world.

The subject cannot be treated apart from the question as to the nature of our Lord's own resurrection. Did He pass at death into a disembodied state? or was His "rising again on the third day" only the manifestation before the eyes of His disciples of the resurrection activity into which He had already entered? Our Lord Himself seems in one place to hint that the patriarchs, whom ancient Hebrew thought had consigned to the shadowy lower world, were enjoying life everlasting in their Father's heavenly abode: "As touching the dead that they are raised . . . He is not the God of the dead but of the living" (Mark xii. 27; St. Luke adds, "For all live unto him").

A recent statement by the Rev. B. H. Streeter (*Foundations*, p. 132) may here be fitly quoted. (The italics are mine.) He remarks that 'The belief is gradually being abandoned that the mode of being—or "body," if that be the term with which to describe it—in *which we ourselves hope to enter into immortality* will be materially identical with the physical body we have had on earth. The essence of what we mean by the hope of the resurrection of the body is surely contained in its emphasis on the survival of a full and distinct personality, and in the idea which finds expression in the lines of Tennyson—

Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet.'

G. F. HAMILTON.