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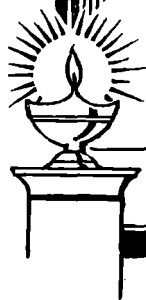
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THE

Bible

STUDENT

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THE HUMANITY OF THE LORD JESUS

By the late C. F. HOGG

The original promise concerning the Messiah was conveyed in the words of God addressed to the Serpent (Gen. 3:15), and in it He is called 'the Seed of the woman'. When the promise was repeated to Abraham the same word was used (ch. 22:18), and Paul reminds Timothy that in resurrection the Lord Jesus is still 'of the Seed of David' (2 Tim. 2:8). Now the word seed in this connection has a well-defined meaning in Scripture; it describes the off-spring of anybody by process of generation 'after its kind' (Gen. 1:11, 24). That it retains this meaning when it is used of the Messiah is confirmed by other language, in which the same relation is expressed. There is the word 'Son', for instance, used to present Him in His relation to Abraham and to David (Matt. 1:1). Then, in harmony with this, David is called His father (Luke 1:32) by the angel Gabriel, in confirmation of a mass of prophecy (Isa. 11:1, for example), and, lest notwithstanding all this plainness of speech, there should still be room for misunderstanding, it is explicitly stated that the Messiah was to be 'the fruit of his (David's) loins' (Acts 2:30).

In the account of the circumstances under which the Promised Seed was born the same language is used of Mary and her Son that is used of Elizabeth and her son: 'He (Jesus) was conceived in the womb,' 'Elizabeth . . . conceived' (Luke 1:24; 2:21). There can be no doubt as to the meaning of the term, it is entirely unambiguous; it describes a natural process, and there is no suggestion in the narrative itself that it is used in those passages that concern Mary in a sense different from that in which it is used in those that concern Elizabeth.

Again, Scripture makes it clear that the natural process thus begun proceeded in the natural way to its natural termination, as witness the language in which Joseph's perplexity is described in Matthew 1:18, 19, 25, and the simply recorded facts of Luke 2:5-7. Here also the same language is used of both women: 'The days were (time was) fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn (a) son' (Luke 1:57). It was this Son whom Elizabeth, some months before, had called, 'the fruit of (Mary's) womb' (Luke 1:42).

There is nothing lacking in all this to attest the true humanity of the Lord Jesus; 'of this man's seed' (Acts 13:23), 'fruit of David's loins,' and 'born of a woman' (Gal. 4:4), 'fruit of Mary's womb,' He is 'of the substance of His mother,' and so is, as to His manhood, 'consubstantial' with ourselves.

It was not merely His body that was thus 'prepared' for Him (Heb. 10:5). The body is necessary to perfect manhood, but it is not the whole of manhood. Therefore it is plainly asserted in Scripture that He became possessed of spirit and soul as well as body, as in His own words: 'Now is My soul troubled,' and, 'He . . . gave up His spirit' (John 12:27; 19:30). Moreover, the presence of the spirit and the soul in the body was necessary to the maintenance of life therein, as is the case with men; for when He had given up His spirit His body was dealt with in the ordinary way, it was laid in a tomb (John 19:38-42).

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the physical experiences of the Lord, such as that He was circumcised, that He 'grew' and 'waxed strong' (both words are used also of John), and 'advanced . . . in stature' (Luke 1:80; 2:40, 52), that He hungered, thirsted, became weary, rested, slept, and died. All these, so far as we know, are experiences peculiar to material bodies. They seem to be mentioned in the narratives for the purpose of suggesting to the mind of the reader that He of whom these things are said shared in our (sinless) experience in a body consubstantial with our own. If this was not the intention of the writers, and of the Spirit under whose direction they wrote, it is at least difficult to see what other language could have been used had this been their intention. He is called a 'Babe' in common with many others, and a 'Young Child'. He is described, at least inferentially, as a 'Manchild,' in common with every other first-born son in Israel (Matt. 2:8; Luke 2:12, 23; 19:15). Later He is called a 'Boy' (Luke 2:43; He calls Himself 'a Man' (John 8:40, *anthropos*, the general term, see 1 Tim. 2:5), and both Peter and Paul speak of Him as 'a Man,' *anēr*, the specific term for man as distinguished from woman (Acts 2:22; 17:31).

The title under which the Lord Jesus most frequently spoke of Himself was 'Son of Man,' in Greek *ho huios tou anthropou*, lit., and word for word, 'the Son of the Man'. The full significance of this title does not concern us now; it is adduced here, and attention is drawn to its form in the original, not for the purpose

of considering it in itself, but in order to contrast with it the form of the Greek words similarly translated in John 5:27. There both nouns are without the article, *huios anthropou* '(the) Son of Man'. Whatever the longer form may mean, there cannot be any doubt that the shorter is here used in order to emphasise the qualification of the Lord Jesus to be the Judge of men—He shares humanity with those who must hear their destiny from His lips.

After His resurrection the Lord Jesus, in order to establish His identity, in face of the natural incredulity of the disciples, did not merely remind them of what had passed between them 'while He was yet with them,' He invited them to assure themselves by the sense of touch that His body even then was not insubstantial, that it was material (Luke 24:36-44). Now if this was so in resurrection, how much more must it have been so in 'the days of His flesh'?

There does not seem to be anything lacking in the Gospel history to present the Lord to the reader as Man, among men, with a humanity, including the body necessary to perfect manhood, real, not insubstantial, true, not seeming, justifying to the full the symbol of Chalcedon, 'consubstantial with us as to His humanity, and like us in all respects, sin excepted.'

Apostolic statements concerning the Body of the Lord are not numerous; to those already mentioned it will not be necessary to refer again. Of the rest there is, first, John's statement in the Prologue to His Gospel (ch. 1:14): 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.' The word 'flesh' is at once a synonym of 'body' and of 'man'. 'Flesh' is preferred to 'body' in this place because 'there is a spiritual body' (1 Cor. 15:44), and the use of the word 'flesh' makes it clear that that was not a spiritual body in which He appeared among men. And 'flesh' is preferred to 'man' because by particularizing the lowest element in the complex nature of man the reality and completeness of His manhood is best attested. To say that 'the Word became a body' would have been to declare the materialization of the Word, which is something quite different from the incarnation of the Word. The Word, being spirit (John 4:24 with 1:1) did not become material, but entered into union with the material, in the incarnation. John's statement distinguishes the human nature from the Divine, the material from the spiritual. The Son of God condescended to enter into humanity, as the name Immanuel testifies, and in doing

so, in order that the whole man might be redeemed, was pleased to take to Himself all that is essential to humanity, its lowest element as well as its highest, the body as well as the soul and spirit.

Paul also, speaking of the incarnation, uses this term 'flesh' (Rom. 8:3; cp. 9:3). 'God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.' For the purpose of his argument (which does not concern us here) the apostle qualifies the word 'flesh' by adding 'sinful,' but standing alone this would misdescribe 'Him who knew no sin' (2 Cor. 5:21), therefore another qualifying word is added, 'likeness'. The apostle does not say 'sinful flesh,' for that would be untrue, bringing Him under the common condemnation of the race. Neither does he say 'the likeness of flesh,' for that, too, would be untrue, making His manhood unreal, manhood in appearance only, whereas He was, as to His manhood, just what He seemed to be. What was not capable of observation as an external phenomenon was that His was sinless manhood. The one adjective balances the other; together they present the true humanity of the Lord Jesus.

Matter is the creation of God, and in itself is no more evil than is that other part of the same creation which is called spirit. When it is stated that 'the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground' (Gen. 2:7) we understand that a portion of the material element which God had before called into being, was now appropriated by its Creator for the provision of a body for man. 'Man came to be a living soul,' that is, a separate, sentient person, when God had breathed into that body 'the breath of life'.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the Son as 'the Very Image of His (God's) Substance,' (ch. 1:3), and this with reference not to 'the days of His flesh,' but to His absolute Being. The word translated 'substance' is *hupostasis*, which may be defined as that which gives existence to anything, and which distinguishes it from everything else. The 'substance' of God then is the essence of His being, that in virtue of which He is God, that which distinguishes Him from all other existences. The Son is He by whom God reveals Himself to His universe. This is a function of the Son eternally, apart altogether from His assumption of manhood in the incarnation. He was 'manifested in (the) flesh' (1 Tim. 3:16) in order that in this sphere also He might reveal the Father (John 1:8). 'The body of His flesh' (Col. 1:22)

was not then of the Heavenly sphere but of the earthly, not spiritual but material, of the same substance as the bodies in which we ourselves live and move. Alternatively, God has become materialized in a body which, in whatever way tested, whether by sight, or hearing, or the sense of touch (1 John 1:1), seemed to be as is man's body, but only seemed and was not really so. Moreover, instead of being at once God and man, each in verity from whatever point of view considered, and however tested, the Lord Jesus was, as to His body, but a new manifestation of God; in the one Person there were not two natures, the human and the Divine, as the apostles seem to assert, there was but one, the Divine.

Later in the epistle the writer states that, 'Since . . . the children (*i.e.*, those whom He came to save) are sharers in flesh and blood (*lit.*, blood and flesh), He also Himself in like manner partook of the same' (ch. 2:14). The meaning of these words is simple enough taken just as they stand. There is nothing mysterious about them, they convey the idea that in order to accomplish their deliverance the Son of God must take upon Himself the nature of those who were in need of deliverance. As the writer develops his argument he adds that the manhood thus assumed was 'sin apart' (ch. 4:15). Sin is not essential to manhood. Adam was true man while yet sinless, he remained man after his fall. His disobedience brought sin into his manhood, not into his body merely; that sin belongs to the body is universal Pagan philosophy, that sin is of the will, affecting spirit, soul and body, is the teaching of the Bible.

It may be well, however, to examine the words of Hebrews 2:14. 'Sharers' represents the Greek *koinoneo*, which means 'to have or hold in common with'. Here the grammatical form is the perfect participle in the active voice. It describes the universal nature of humanity, that which, always and everywhere, makes men men, and without which they would not exist at all.

'Partook' is the rendering of the Greek *metecho* (it occurs again in ch. 7:13) which is synonym of *koinoneo*. The two words may be distinguished in this way: the latter is a possessing in common with others, a sharing; the former is a partaking of something external to oneself, as food, for example (see ch. 5:13). Accordingly *metecho* is here in the aorist tense, describing a voluntary act on the part of the Son of God, an act performed once. That 'blood and flesh' which is the common lot of men by

nature was something external to Himself; it did not belong to Him, He did not share it originally, but by His own voluntary act He partook thereof in incarnation.

The word translated 'in like manner' occurs here only in the New Testament. It seems to be intended to suggest the means whereby the Son of God became partaker of the nature wherein men share, that is through conception and birth. There is this difference, however, for whereas in their case the operations of nature are set in motion in the natural way, *His conception was 'of the Holy Spirit'* (Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35).

Here then are reasons for the conclusion that the believers who long ago condemned the Monophysite heresy in all its forms were led by the Spirit to a soundly Scriptural conclusion.*

* Monophysite, that is, 'single nature.' 'Eutyches was accused of denying the distinction of the natures in Christ, and of declaring that Christ's body was of different substance from ours.'—ORR, *Progress of Dogma*, p. 190.

THE MAILING LIST TELLS!

The Mailing List of a magazine sometimes makes interesting reading! It can be of course a matter of deep concern—especially if there are signs of shrinkage or failure of growth!! The M.L. of this magazine is neither shrinking nor standing still and it is interesting to note the 'geography' feature about it. That shows up the fact that subscribers to the 'B.S.' are to be found in all five continents! Though, to be honest, there are big 'gaps' in some countries where we have no subscriber!

Now we would wish to ask our Readers this question—if you have derived help from this magazine in the study of the Bible can you help towards the healthy growth of the Mailing List by making the 'B.S.' known to Christians definitely interested in Bible study?

We will gladly send a sample copy!