MISCELLANEOUS.

PAUL AND THE RESURRECTION-BODY.

BY A. KAMPMEIER.

It is true, as the Editor says in "The Skeleton as a Representation of Death and the Dead" (Open Court, October), that the so-called Apostolic Creed teaches the resurrection of the "flesh," and the orthodox Church continued this doctrine up to our times. But this was not the doctrine of earliest Christianity, and the resurrection of the "flesh" is a later development which had its reasons. It is true also that Paul teaches that some members of his congregations will remain alive till the end and will be carried away into the skies to meet the Lord at his second coming, which Paul himself believed he would live to see, but Paul nevertheless does not teach the resurrection of the "flesh." He clearly says (1 Cor. xv. 50): "Flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Any one can see from the discussion on the resurrection-body beginning with verse 35 of that noted chapter, as also from 2 Cor. v. 2, 4, that Paul believes that the bodies of those who have died will decay and be transformed as also that the bodies of the survivors will be metamorphosed. He clearly distinguishes between a "natural body" (soma psychikon) and a "spiritual body" (soma pneumatikon) and claims that the earthly body will be replaced by a heavenly body. Through mystical connection with "the second or heavenly Adam," according to the Rabbinical doctrine of the Messiah, Paul assumes that the believer, a descendant of the first earthly, mortal Adam, will receive a spiritual heavenly body. He says (verse 45 of that discussion): "The first man Adam was made a living soul-nature [but mortal] the last Adam a life-giving spirit-being;" verse 49: "As we bore the image of the earthly, we shall bear the image of the heavenly," and closes his discussion with the words (v. 53): "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and the mortal immortality." But when the corruptible has put on the incorruptible and the mortal the immortal, then the word will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory," according to the Rabbinical doctrine, "in the days of the Messiah, God (blessed be He!) will swallow up death."

It may be that Paul conceived that the mortal body stood in some relation to the resurrection-body, but if he says (v. 36), that the seed which is sown is not quickened unless it die, and that the body sown is not the one that shall be, the idea that the body decays and does not take part in the resurrection is perhaps not quite so modern in Christianity as we may think.

In regard to the resurrection of the "flesh" in the so-called Apostolic Creed I cite the following from A. Harnack, The Apostolic Creed: "By the
wording 'resurrection of the flesh' the post-Apostolic Church has gone beyond the line, which was given in the common oldest preaching regarding the resurrection and eternal life. There is no doubt that from the earliest times some Christians have preached the resurrection of the flesh, but it was not a doctrine generally held. And many witnesses of the earlier times speak instead of resurrection of the flesh of 'resurrection' simply or 'eternal life.' On the other hand the Church, when about to enter into the struggle with Gnosticism, insisted upon the resurrection of the flesh in order not to lose resurrection entirely. But even this necessity forced upon the Church at that time does not establish the right of the formula. It only helps us to understand the reasons for the formula, 'resurrection of the flesh.'

The crude idea regarding the resurrection in the German hymn mentioned by the Editor and still unfortunately maintained in hymn-books through the influence of the orthodox party in the German Church, is of course founded on nothing else but the entirely erroneous translation of Job xix. 26, as found in the unrevised German version.

In closing I might also say that it is very debatable whether Paul conceived the resurrection of Jesus in the same way as the Gospels later represented it, since in 1 Cor. xv he places the appearances of Jesus to his disciples on exactly the same level as the apparition he had of Jesus several years later, which was clearly nothing but a vision.

A GERMAN CHRISTMAS SONG.

Christmas is approaching again, and will be celebrated in innumerable American homes in the old German fashion with a Christmas tree adorned with nuts and apples and candles. It reminds us of the song to the fir-tree which is sung by German children on entering the room where they receive their Christmas gifts. It is strange that (at least so far as we know) it has never been rendered into English. It is true that Longfellow translated a similar folk-song in which the fir-tree is used as a symbol of faithfulness and is contrasted to the fickleness of a maiden, but the character of the songs is different, although some lines, including the entire first stanza, read exactly the same. Longfellow translates Tannenbaum by "hemlock-tree," which is somewhat misleading, as hemlock primarily and generally means the poisonous herb of that name except locally in North America.

We offer here a versified translation in the original meter so as to fit the melody of the German song which (with only a slight change) is the same as the tune "Maryland, My Maryland!" Our version reads thus:

O fir-tree good, O fir-tree dear,  
O fir-tree green, so tall and straight,  
How do thy leaves endure!  
A sermon thou wilt preach us:  
In summer thou hast verdant been,  
That constancy and faithfulness  
In winter still art dressed in green;  
Give strength and courage in distress,  
O fir-tree good, O fir-tree dear,  
O fir-tree green, so tall and straight,  
No tree is better, truer.  
This lesson thou dost teach us.

O fir-tree dear, lit up full bright  
As Christmas-tree we raise thee.  
How often have thy candles clear  
Spread mirth and joy and Christmas cheer,  
Thou symbol of life's hope and light,  
How do we prize and praise thee.