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EDWARD SCHILLEBEECKX'S POSITION ON THE RESURRECTION
AND THE TIME TEST. WHAT IS RESURRECTION TODAY?

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Abstract: This paper is an inquiry into Edward Schillebeeckx' concept of resurrection, though it is fairly different from a thorough analysis of the meaning of resurrection per se. The difference comes from the fact that we will not simply view his take on the concept as a peculiar experiment, but the question of the importance of resurrection today receives special attention. This does not mean that certain attempts at defining and elaborating on the significance of Schillebeeckx's concept of resurrection have been overlooked. Still, the main purpose of this study is to literally put this concept to the test and see the tradition associated with it over the years. A final purpose is to determine Schillebeeckx's place at the end of this experiment, as he is associated with the two poignant interpretations of resurrection today, namely the radical and liberal positions. The aim of this experiment is to decide whether we still need to talk about resurrection today and how critical it is to ask serious questions about it in this human history facing its end. This paper explores the concept of resurrection based on its impact on the humanum or the potential of human history always with an eye to its future, where in Schillebeeckx's thought the perfect human state will be attained.

Key words: Schillebeeckx, resurrection, eschatology, humanum, sanctification in Christ, Christian life, Christian doctrine, faith, tradition, political theology

1. Introduction. A resurrection for the future

The eschatological future or the “eschatological perfection and freedom” (Schillebeeckx 1987, 29) of human beings receives at Schillebeeckx a distinctive name employed by only a few others, including Hans Küng. As the concept of humanum has been investigated particularly for the accent it receives in Schillebeeckx, it can be traced back to Church fathers like Irenaeus and Athanasius, for instance, for whom being truly human involved both deification and humanization. This means that the humanum is a hint to the sanctification in Christ and the individual's accommodation with fellow human beings as ethics within history, so that in the end they might become true sons of God (Pelikan 1977; Küng 1999; and Casanova 1992, 22, quoted in Mong 2010, 23-41). The humanum in Schillebeeckx is the perfect human society formed out of men and women liberated of all social and political barriers. (Nevertheless, this differs from South America's liberationism in liberation theology, and instead is a “liberating” state, as Schillebeeckx calls it in his reflections on Metz's political theology, see Schillebeeckx 2014b, 69-70). This subject offers Schillebeeckx in his modern social context yet another opportunity to talk about the outcome of Christ's resurrection for modern men and women, i.e. the possibility to gain freedom and to be converted from their previous oppressive way of life. In other words, the humanum in Schillebeeckx is the Kingdom of God, which is the first metaphor describing how the future of our history will look like. The second metaphor that goes hand in hand with and is the condition for this first perfect human state is thus the “resurrection of the body”. Because the Kingdom of God is a perfect community, men and women living in it are called to be completely saved and happy. This calling is the equivalent of the resurrection of the body in Schillebeeckx's opinion. The bodily resurrection presupposes the “human person, including his or her human corporeality as a visible orchestration, the distinctive melody of a person which others enjoy” (Schillebeeckx 1987, 29). However, Schillebeeckx is not ready to say that a bodily resurrection implies a real body, because we are historically bound to live in the same body we were born with. The bodily resurrection rather means an elevation to the humanum state in the same body, yet transformed to please our fellow human beings. It is a body with the same characteristics “of the individual (sarx/body/flesh in the Bible)” (Schillebeeckx 1987, 29), but analyzed on a different basis, i.e. spiritually. These thoughts are especially meaningful for this discussion since the final part of this study is an analysis of Bultmann's radical position on the resurrection as a parallel view to Schillebeeckx's particular take on the subject, however without consigning it to the test of a genuine development of the doctrine. The debate envisages the possibility or impossibility of resurrection considering their respective thought on the

relationship between Jesus and God in the context of a whole body of mystical interpretations of the miracles, of which the resurrection is the supreme demonstration of power displayed by divinity within the history of mankind.

If the resurrection of the body implies only a person's transformation in accordance with human ethics and expectations, it should be very similar to what Schillebeeckx describes as the resurrection of nature or "the ecological milieu". From Schillebeeckx's description of this ecological milieu it is obvious that he not only associates it with the idea of perfection represented by God's kingdom, but also identifies it with the Kingdom of God: "The consummation of the undamaged 'ecological milieu' which human beings need to live in is suggested by the great metaphor of the 'new heaven and the new earth'" (Schillebeeckx 1987, 29-30). Jesus's resurrection would thus exceed all mundane political expectations about nature and life in nature, since the results it brought upon nature are not perfectible: they are already perfect. And since this perfection is not easily seen right now, it seems that Schillebeeckx opened the possibility for a definition of ecology and nature in the same spiritual terms he used to define Jesus' bodily resurrection. But how does one recognize a resurrected body/nature? A hundred years ago several tests have been proposed for a correct teaching on the resurrection.

2. The test of a faithful doctrine of resurrection. A commentary

From a traditional perspective on the resurrection, Schillebeeckx fails to develop a doctrine of the resurrection matching the biblical data, and also to construct a Christology which preserves the faith in Jesus' post-Easter appearances as historical facts different from abnormal phenomena. Debates concerning the resurrection as sound Catholic dogma have disclosed so far the real issues against which Schillebeeckx builds his paradigmatic views on the subject, as they have been concentrated into several tests, namely the test of faithfulness, consistency, logical sequence, conservative tendency, and chronic vigor.

Precisely because of his *Essay on the Development of the Christian Doctrine*, John Henry Newman is mentioned by Gerald O'Collins in the chapter "The Case of the Resurrection" (see Ker and Hill 1990, 338) as the promoter of the Oxford Movement in Britain in the second half of the 19th century. Newman is particularly pointed to as he offered, a hundred years before Schillebeeckx, his seven tests on the "faithful development and corruption" of the doctrine of resurrection from the standing point of his expertise in Christology. To a certain extent, however, the tests can be applied easily to all Christian doctrines which have been the object of controversies throughout the centuries. In a later paper entitled *Newman's Seven Notes. The Case for Resurrection*, Gerald O'Collins

analyses Schillebeeckx's thesis on Jesus' post-Easter appearances as expressed in Jesus, Christ, and Interim Report on the Books 'Jesus' and 'Christ', in the light of Newman's seven notes. He also considers Küng's arguments on the empty tomb from his book *On Being a Christian*.

O'Collins identifies Newman's seven notes on the faithful development or perversion of the Christian doctrine as follows: "preservation of the doctrinal type, continuity of the principles of the doctrine, power of assimilation, logical sequence, anticipation of the doctrine's future, conservative action upon its past, and chronic vigor or duration" of the doctrine (Ker and Hill 1990, 338-9). O'Collins reckons that the most important accent should be on Newman's second, fourth, sixth, and seventh tests because they draw attention on Schillebeeckx's failure to preserve the biblical data unmodified and the doctrine undamaged.

2.1. The test of consistency with traditional doctrine

While he deals with the idea of the empty tomb, Küng stresses the personal (corporeal, bodily) resurrection of Jesus. However, his thesis is that Jesus' spiritual body does not require the former earthly body. Consequently, the resurrection is approached from a new level of understanding, i.e. spiritual. Schillebeeckx, on his turn, explains Jesus' appearances after his death in the light of the disciples' change of perception about their experience with Jesus at his crucifixion. This means that the faith in Jesus' resurrection was a reflection of their mind and spirit as they experienced forgiveness and conversion at Jesus' death: „New Testament's talk of appearances was only a way of summarizing what the risen but invisible Jesus had done for the disciples and did not refer to genuinely historical events" (O'Collins in Ker and Hill 1990, 343).

As we have shown, the primary emphasis here is on the disciples' internal transfiguration rather than on the real event of Jesus' physical raise from the grave. In other words, the invisibility of Jesus' resurrection has a greater power of suggesting the apostles' faith in Christ. Thus Schillebeeckx infers that records of Jesus' visible and bodily resurrection could not have strengthened the apostles' hope more than the hidden Christ strengthened their faith.

Schillebeeckx's inconsistency with the traditional Christian doctrine of the resurrection meets some problems. It is not to say that Schillebeeckx fails to stress the necessity of the resurrection for the rise of the Christian faith. He nevertheless fails Newman's second test on the faithfulness and consistency with the principles involved in the doctrine of resurrection. Schillebeeckx does not elaborate on the importance of Jesus' visible appearances to individuals or groups of people and consequently he does not pay proper heed at God's power to intervene miraculously into human history: „Faith is emasculated when we insist on grounding it in pseudo-empiricism, thereby raising all sorts of false

problems: whether, for instance, this “Christological mode of seeing” was a sensory seeing of Jesus, whether it was “objective” or “subjective” seeing, a “manifestation” or a “vision”, and things of that sort” (Schillebeeckx in Ker and Hill 1990, 340; also Schillebeeckx 2014a, 384).

It is interesting how, within the experience of everyday Christian life, faith has its own status as it is seated above the power of God's grace. This is a legitimate observation in what Schillebeeckx is concerned because he argues against the major influence of visible signs in Jesus' post-Easter appearances or, for that matter, of any historical experience in the sphere of faith. Faith is exclusively an internal feeling, since Schillebeeckx places faith within the grasp of human assessment. In the end, one believes either intellectually or emotionally. Moreover, Schillebeeckx posits, “there are always intermediary historical factors in occurrences of divine grace” (O'Collins in Ker and Hill 1990, 340). If we relate this assertion to the observation made earlier, it can be said that: „Schillebeeckx's doctrine of grace may be slipping from rightly affirming that intermediary historical factors are always present to implying that, in the realm of visible history nothing but such factors are present” (O'Collins in Ker and Hill 1990, 340).

This objection to Schillebeeckx's position on history and faith shows just how much Schillebeeckx owes to existentialist thought. History is not the most appropriate realm in which existentialist thinkers would search the roots of faith. One may conclude that such intermediary factors hindered Schillebeeckx from making more profound statements about the soteriological value of Jesus' death.

2.2. The test of “logical sequence”

Newman's fourth test of the true development of Christian doctrine is the “logical succession or sequence of views from the original testimony to the appearances of the risen Christ” (O'Collins in Ker and Hill 1990, 341). In Schillebeeckx this dimension has to do with the apostle Paul and other New Testament writers' ability to follow the logical line of events which contributed to the disciples' awareness and faith in the risen Christ. Traditional hermeneutics approached the doctrine of resurrection by first mentioning the impact of the external visible signs of Jesus' appearances and as a sequel the power of these experiences to raise faith in the risen Christ. Schillebeeckx recognizes and admits to this major gap between traditionalism and his views. In his opinion the disciples first believed in the risen Christ. Their faith was thus strong enough to further stories about Jesus' appearances and the empty tomb.

In other words, testimonies like Paul's and other biblical writers' are void of substance for their modern interpreters. Newman, on the other hand, challenges us to reconsider this situation: it is either the apostles'

writings showing a high degree of incompetence or modern hermeneutics trying to seem less corrupted while dealing with its primary sources. One has to be aware that Christian creeds and faith are not based on a myth of resurrection, Newman explains, which would make them compatible with a collection of fantastic stories. Moreover, O'Collins adds, even if Schillebeeckx is keen on noticing that the accounts on the resurrection are not "the object of Christian faith", the point is that: „[the] appearances were the primary way the disciples came to know that Jesus had been raised from the dead. In that sense the appearances were essential means for first triggering knowledge of the resurrection and faith in the risen Lord. Any adequate discussion of the Eastern appearances would be usefully enriched by distinguishing between the (normal) object of New Testament faith and the (primary) means for generating the original Easter faith" (Ker and Hill 1990, 344).

With this we are reminded that most probably the primal formulation of the Christian faith was founded mainly on the primal material at hand for the church. The creedal confession of Jesus' resurrection had an objective foundation in Jesus' post-Easter appearances and not in mere presuppositions regarding the disciples' visions and the empty tomb.

2.3. The test of "conservative tendency"

Newman's sixth note on the true development of the doctrine of resurrection is "a tendency conservative of what has gone before it" (Newman in Ker and Hill 1990, 344). According to this test, if Schillebeeckx maintains suspicion regarding the apostles' ability to appreciate correctly the role of these appearances, he is also suspicious regarding the apostles' normative role in witnessing and giving an authoritative interpretation of both Jesus' teaching and their post-Eastern experience. When things are put this way, Schillebeeckx does not pay proper heed at the importance of the time spent by the apostles in the company of Jesus during his earthly life. The reason is, he implies, that such experiences are the same for any individual. The only thing that could have distinguished the apostles from other people in their experience with Jesus was the fact that "they knew Jesus before his death" (Schillebeeckx in Ker and Hill 1990, 344).

Apparently Schillebeeckx finds it difficult to ascertain the importance of the apostles' election as forefathers of Christian church and their normative authority in writing the New Testament in the power of the Holy Spirit. Another question is who or what else could have been the norm for their experience with Jesus or for the Christian's experience in the world. Should Christians find other models for their faith or is the experience of their conversion to Christianity yet another step towards a cosmic sense of the Kingdom of God? This test has its own sequel in the

fifth and final evaluation that we are going to investigate here as proposed by Newman.

2.4. The test of “chronic vigor”

Newman's seventh test for the true development of the doctrine of resurrection is its “chronic vigor”. The “chronic vigor” is opposed to the “transitory character of corruption” (Newman in Ker and Hill 1990, 345). O'Collins points to the lack of consistency regarding the accounts on the appearances from Schillebeeckx's *Jesus* (1974) to his *Interim Report on the books Jesus and Christ* (1982). Between the three books there seems to be a change of input as to what was the real status of the resurrection appearances. Were they real historical events or just another way of expressing gratitude for what Jesus has done for the disciples in his lifetime? Or, rather, is resurrection a revelation of the way in which God himself identifies with humans as a “personal event” before or after one's death (Cooper 2009, 180)? It is not clear from his various writings on this subject what Schillebeeckx's conclusion at this point might be, since he hesitates between denying the reality of appearances as visible historical signs, while in his *Interim Report* admitting that “when they experienced the living presence of the risen Lord, [the disciples] may have seen him alive” (Schillebeeckx in Ker and Hill 1990, 346).

Newman's observations on the resurrection were made a hundred years ago, but suggestions similar to Newman's appear in nowadays critique to Schillebeeckx's writings on the resurrection. The “chronic vigor” that Newman referred to is the opposite of the symbolist notes in which Schillebeeckx treated Jesus' death (see McManus 2005, 638-650) by diluting its meaning into a metaphorical, non-historical attempt to save human beings from their own death (Mosely 2008). Despite his critics, who find doctrinal flaws in his views on the resurrection, there are others for whom Schillebeeckx is none other than “a herald of God among us” (Hilkert 2011, 15, 17) referring to his teachings on the Holy Ghost, Christology, Christian faith, the Eucharist and church ministry. As for his second teaching, we are informed that Schillebeeckx was known to the English speaking world prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) with his ideas from *Christ, the Sacrament of the encounter with God*, but this cannot be, since the book was only translated into English in 1963 from its Flemish 1959 original. However, Schillebeeckx's preoccupation for Christ as sacrament is worth mentioning in the context of the mid- and late 1960s, when he was both a peritus (advisor, assistant) to the Dutch bishops participating in the meetings of the Second Vatican Council and an astute defender of the church-world relationship during his American conference tours. From Hilkert's interpretation of Schillebeeckx's notion of sacraments, they are not “magic rituals”, but a medium for God's grace

to be “bestowed” upon the believer. They point towards the make up between God and men achieved in the incarnation of Christ, in which “God’s love became tangible (and) historical” (Hilkert 2011, 16). Schillebeeckx is shown here and elsewhere (also in Sison 2006, 199) as the theological architect of a new “political holiness” in what the church/God-world/man relationship is concerned: God is not, we are told, a *Deus ex machina* in Schillebeeckx’s eschatological teaching; instead, to paraphrase Kennedy, he is *Deus Humanissimus* (Kennedy 1993a), more and more accessible to people today provided that the “later believers have access to the mystery of the resurrection” (Hilkert 2011, 17). Finally, due to the fact that human experience is shaped by negative experiences, it can hardly be consistent with divine truth and revelation; it is easy to see how it can be altered or corrupted by being generalized to contain all the people, believers or unbelievers. But do all these tests of a sound doctrine of the resurrection mean anything for people today? Do they involve them in any way?

3. Two positions on the resurrection

In one of his early papers on resurrection seen from a modern perspective, David Fergusson (1985: 297) focuses on the relationship between the Christian faith and the doctrine of resurrection following three different interpretations. Two of them make the object of our present debate. When the criterion of historicity or non-historicity of this relationship is concerned, these two “rival” interpretations are labelled as radical and liberal. They come in this order following the answer each of them returns to Fergusson’s question, “Is the resurrection an event in the life of Jesus or an event in the life of the believer?” (Fergusson 1985, 297)

3.1. Resurrection and radicalism

Fergusson holds that the most referential aspect in Bultmann’s radical interpretation of the rise of the Christian faith was a profoundly non-historical event. This implies first that historical judgements cannot “verify the truth claims of the Christian faith”. Secondly, it is implied that there is no place for the idea of miracles within human history. And thirdly, as a consequence of this latter statement, all New Testament data on Jesus’ empty tomb and appearances should be critically verified and brought to date with the help of the historical-critical method.

Bultmann equalized the birth of Christian faith with the efficiency of the Cross. Consequently, the raise of the Christian faith is not historically considered but it stands under the powerful meaning/significance of Jesus’ death. Just as Jesus’ bodily existence cannot be traced after the

event of his death, faith and the idea of resurrection do not depend on historical data. They are rather interrelated and co-extensive.

What can be easily noticed is that Bultmann's concepts of resurrection and Christian faith were not meant to support Christology. The reason is that, to answer Fergusson's question, "the resurrection belongs not so much to the history of Jesus as to that of the Christian faith" (Fergusson 1985, 288). And again, to verify Newman's observation on the question of miracles and God's power to intervene in human history, Bultmann not only states that miracles are historically impossible, but accordingly the divine power in history is undesirable. Schillebeeckx commends this, noting that God is not a *Deus ex machina*, meaning that he left history to mankind, thus people are endowed with free will (Kennedy 1993a). Moreover, as Schillebeeckx too reckons, Bultmann considered that such demonstration of supernatural force would only confess for the drama of war between men and gods described in mythological stories and legends. To avoid such conflicts one has to do justice to modern biblical interpretation as it tries to explain things like divine or angelic appearances in the New Testament. It would be more convenient to understand them idealistically and spiritually. Likewise, the resurrection is to be understood at best as a formula for Christian faith and hope: "If the event of Easter Day is in any sense a historical event additional to the event of the cross, it is nothing else than the rise of faith in the risen Lord" (Bultmann in Fergusson 1985, 288).

The logical nuances given by Bultmann to his "interpretation" of the cross are an effort to correct errors in the definition of miracles. They imply that the spectators at the developing "drama" between men and God/gods which Jesus' death involved, recognized Jesus as a deity and thus tried to get rid of his tempering with human life manifested through his "miracles". Bultmann's version in Christian context of a rather Greek tragedy is nevertheless missing its very point: gods "miracles" in the Ancient world more often than not afflicted human race and were punishments for their transgression, whereas the miracles in the New Testament were always a blessing for their recipients either physically or spiritually. No divine power was forced upon people when those miracles were performed, and no interpretation, ancient or modern, could question their reality as historical events, precisely because no interpretation falls short from the interpreter. (On the problem of ostensibly interpreting a doctrine with different nuances over the centuries, especially the reality of resurrection, see Alison 1999, 163-164, review to Osborne 1997.) Precisely because Bultmann considers the possibility of the resurrection against the context of faith in the risen Jesus, this question could logically sum up his efforts to undermine its theological importance: if the resurrection was an addition to the historical event of the cross, why can it not be inferred that it had a historical extension? Bultmann stands

corrected, since as previously stated Schillebeeckx maintains the possibility that Jesus' appearances after his death were real.

3.2. Resurrection and liberalism

Schillebeeckx's thought is also instrumental in relation to the second type of interpreting Christian faith and the resurrection, labelled as liberal. On the one hand, the radical position left us with a feeling of incertitude concerning the motivation for the apostles' faith in Jesus. On the other hand, Schillebeeckx attempts to explain why Jesus' life was so important that it required total trust and faith in him after his death. Schillebeeckx indeed feels at ease when faced with the problem of miracles. He agrees that what Jesus did for the seek and dead may have been miracles because the eye-witnesses perceived them as such, even if one might not define them accordingly. In the same way, the miracle of Jesus' resurrection may have been real because the disciples found themselves believing in Jesus after his death.

At this point, Fergusson suggests that Schillebeeckx offers inadequate explanations, and uses Hume's "criticism concerning the mutual destruction of arguments" (Fergusson 1985, 297). The problem he sees with Schillebeeckx's comments is that, historically, it is easier to think of the disciples' faith in a resurrected Jesus than to suggest the probability of the bodily resurrection of a dead person. The reason for this explanation is that Schillebeeckx, just like Roger Haight is interested in making Christian tenets easier to grasp by the unbeliever.

Paul Lakeland, on the other hand, notes the "reductionist" statements of faith in both theologians' thought (referring as well to those statements found in Schillebeeckx's *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*). As Lakeland quotes Cavadini (2007, 19-22), "there is a difference between rendering Christian faith intelligible to a culture and reducing its central theological claim to a statement that even an atheist can affirm." Going back to the resurrection debate and seeing that Schillebeeckx presents Jesus "as merely pointing to God than...being himself God", this is a point well taken. Like Schillebeeckx, Haight proposed that Jesus was a symbol of God in his *Jesus Symbol of God* from 1999. (Somehow belatedly, this proposition was sanctioned by the Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2004, see internet site at the end.) Nevertheless, one should also be mindful of Cavadini's take on the outcome of the resurrection within nature and his accent on love as its most imperative result, since love is "always re-born and renewed", thus proposing a selective and simulating theology (see Cavadini in Paffenroth and Kennedy 2003, 27).

But unless the same person is hypothetically resurrected, the faith would be a pretense. Unlike Schillebeeckx, one may fight the idea that the

elimination of radicalism in the case of the resurrection makes every attempts like his plausible: modern people would always have to ask what the miracles were as opposed to what the miracles mean. This distinction is perceived as something added to their essence, and the need for an analogy begs the question as to what the role of faith really was in the post-Easter events (Meier 1995, 92). We have shown that Schillebeeckx does not speculate on the resurrection, but adds a note: Jesus' post-Easter appearances might have been a genuine historical event. Schillebeeckx is convinced that faith in the resurrection is co-extensive with the historical truth due to the reality of those appearances. Nonetheless, in Bulmann's footsteps Schillebeeckx maintains that faith and history are not internally related. In other words, faith does not stand on historical grounds. Faith in the resurrection is first "the recognition of the intrinsic significance of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom". Secondly, it is "the manifestation of Jesus' communion of life with the living God". It is thirdly "the installation of the kingdom of God: the exaltation and glorification of Jesus to God" (Schillebeeckx 1987, 27). In every way, Schillebeeckx's faith in the resurrection transgresses history and is as independent from it as possible.

The appearances show indeed a continuity in Jesus' ministry and teaching, but the question is do they stand for a continuity in Jesus' life? In Fergusson's words: "Is the resurrection an event in the life of Jesus or an event in the life of the believer?" (as a central aspect of the general resurrection that Barth and Bultmann debated on, see Fergusson 2003, 65). Are they merely a change in the disciples' minds, a change of vision, or instead genuine visions of the living Jesus? There is nowadays a state of increasingly good feeling about the outcome of Jesus' suffering on the cross and his subsequent resurrection. This even became a news subject arousing from the folklore around the resurrection. For Christians, we are told, "the resurrection is a central article of faith. But even those who are not believers can see [its] value...Easter says that suffering need not be in vain; that out of great despair, a new start is possible" (Freedland 2006, 13). Still, a question arises: how is it that the all-encompassing idea of suffering and its power to gather Christians, non-Christians, and even non-believers in the same experience at a fixed moment of the year is linked with the concept of resurrection? These accounts show that we are recalling the/a resurrection whenever we celebrate Easter, but the fact that resurrection could be "a new start" is far from comforting if it only lasts for a moment in time.

It is an increasing necessity that lay Christians learned to make the "fundamental" difference between "the historical Jesus', who is 'available to us through the scientific study of the sources', and 'the real Jesus' who is 'much more that we can discover'", especially since getting to the "real Jesus" need not contradict "our belief in either the Divinity or the humanity of Jesus" (Green 2000, 90-92). The real Jesus and him alive/risen

could not be divided into what was seen and what is known about him. If we change our mind about Jesus on a regular basis, we can hardly be called Christians. Since no contradiction may exist between Jesus and the living God, there cannot be a dead Jesus who is honorably remembered today based on his post Easter appearances or a fabricated faith in him. A different perception on the resurrection and Jesus collides both logically and spiritually with the Christian teaching on the event and the person who has risen and is now alive.

4. Conclusions

This paper presented some aspects and metaphors used by Schillebeeckx's to define his concept of humanum (such as the Kingdom of God, the future of history, well-being, and the perfect human state as the "resurrection of the body"). Because Schillebeeckx views the Kingdom of God as a perfect community, he extends this image upon people today, who are called to be completely saved and happy. This calling was analyzed here as an equivalent of the resurrection of the body in Schillebeeckx's thought, a bodily resurrection by all means, which presupposes the human person in its corporeality and harmony.

We showed more in depth that for Schillebeeckx the bodily resurrection infers an elevation of the same body to its humanum state for both aesthetic and ethical ends, a body with the individual properties of the sarx, yet always referred to in spiritual terms. Since we also envisioned the implications of resurrection for those who believe in it, we followed the development of this doctrine through John Henry Newman's seven tests of the so called "faithful development" and also the "corruption" of the doctrine from the standing point of his expertise in Christology.

Out of Newman's seven notes on the resurrection we only considered five: the test of a faithful doctrine, the consistency with the traditional doctrine, the "logical sequence", "conservative tendency", and "chronic vigor". Schillebeeckx's thoughts on the appearances were deemed indecisive as he first denied their reality as historical signs, but later accepted the possibility of a bodily presence on account of Jesus' living presence as the risen Lord. His hesitation made us look into the problem of historicity, so the second half of this study investigated the two positions on the resurrection formulated by Fergusson, who discussed the relationship between Christian faith and the doctrine of resurrection along two conflicting interpretations emerging from the historicity debate.

Since the first interpretation comes from the Bultmannian tradition, the nature of resurrection today is a pretense. Further on, the liberal position was analyzed as an experiment which reconnects Schillebeeckx with the Christian tradition when accepting the reality of miracles within

the humanum as proven by Jesus' deeds for the sick and dead, notwithstanding their different assimilation and explanation over the centuries. Though not sufficiently poignant and conclusive, Schillebeeckx' input on the resurrection from this angle seems to offer a clearer view on this problem because it links the miracles Jesus performed during his earthly mission to the miracle of his resurrection. However, Schillebeeckx' conclusion that this is precisely why Jesus' followers then and now believe in him may not be the most brilliant finding of this type of interpretation regarding the rationality of their faith in the resurrection.

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