

St. Paul's Doctrine of Resurrection.

A REPLY TO CRITICISMS.

THE interest which is naturally felt in this subject, and the great importance of having a clear and accurate apprehension of what the New Testament really teaches about it, will justify a brief notice of the criticisms that have appeared in the February CHURCHMAN.

Mr. Cohen's first comment, in which he charges the writer with teaching "resurrection by driblets," and with holding the heresy of Hymenæus and Philetus, is evidently based upon a confusion in thought between resurrection and re-embodiment. Now, these are two facts which are quite distinct the one from the other, although it is open to anyone to hold the opinion that they may occur simultaneously. To treat them, however, as *necessarily* simultaneous in their occurrence or as practically identical, as Mr. Cohen has done, is to beg the question at issue.

The words "then and there" in the writer's paraphrase of 2 Cor. v. 1 are not an unwarranted interpolation, as Mr. Cohen imagines, but rightly direct attention to the significance of the tense which St. Paul employs in this place—*οἰκοδομῆν ἐκ Θεοῦ ἔχομεν* (we *have* a building from God). Winer's comment on this use of the present tense is as follows: "The words are designed to indicate the instantaneous acquisition of a new habitation as soon as the *καταλύεσθαι* has taken place."¹

Nor are the words "in the very act of death," in the paraphrase of 2 Cor. v. 2-4, an unwarranted interpolation. The use of them will be justified in the remarks which follow on Mr. Routh's kindly criticism.

Mr. Cohen's second comment passes in review what he considers to be the clear teaching of Scripture, "that resurrection takes place *from the grave*, not from Paradise." He rejects

¹ "Grammar of Greek Testament," 3rd edition, p. 333.

the interpretation of St. John v. 28, which is given in the January article, but does not show wherein it is defective; and cites Isa. xxvi. 19 and Dan. xii. 2, together with the account of the raising of Lazarus, as evidencing this clear teaching of Scripture. Let us then study these passages.

In Isa. xxvi. a comparison of verse 19 with verse 14 makes it evident that the prophet is not referring to physical death at all, but figuratively to national overthrow. Unless, in verse 14, he is to be regarded as denouncing annihilation of both soul and body as the doom of Israel's adversaries, this interpretation is inevitable; and therefore the resurrection of Israel, proclaimed by way of contrast in verse 19, must be understood figuratively also. Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, understood in the light of the interpretation of it in the same chapter (xxxvii. 11), is a similar case of the figurative use of resurrection to signify national restoration. Hos. xiii. 14 affords another example of the same thing when we examine the whole of the context, for the expressions in verse 14 ought no more to be taken literally than those in verses 13, 15, etc.

The words of Dan. xii. 2, "them that sleep in the dust of the earth," are obviously incapable of a literal interpretation, and must be regarded as a metaphorical way of saying, "those who are dead and buried," unless we force upon the author of this book a meaning which contradicts the explicit teaching of Jesus Christ and the evidence of our own observation. For (1) the departed are not asleep, but, according to our Lord's teaching, are fully awake¹; (2) these living persons, consciously awake, are certainly not in the dust of the earth, but are described by the Lord as "in Paradise," or "in Hades"; (3) and even of their former mortal bodies only a very minute proportion, consisting of elementary solids, can literally be said to be in the dust of the earth. Many of us would hesitate in any case to go to the Book of Daniel for an explicit pronouncement on the Christian doctrine of resurrection; and where a metaphorical interpretation of the writer's words is so reason-

¹ St. Luke xvi. 19-31; xxiii. 43.

able and natural, few will venture to exact a literal interpretation at such a price.

The raising of Lazarus cannot be regarded as indicating the mode of the resurrection at the coming of Christ, for in his case life was restored to a body *which ultimately died again*. But "those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead . . . *can die no more.*"¹ That which happened to Lazarus is, therefore, not the kind of resurrection to which we look forward, and can afford no information concerning it.

The third comment, to the effect that the risen Lord would have been resorting to a sham and a deception if the wounds that Thomas demanded, and our Lord offered for his inspection, were only temporarily assumed for a particular purpose, depends for its force upon the suggestion that such temporary assumption must necessarily have been "unreal." But a little reflection will make it plain to most persons that in the case of the Lord's resurrection body—which, according to the recorded manifestations, appears to have been a perfect instrument for the expression of His will at every moment—no bodily modification or operation could be unreal which He willed to be or to perform, for each would be the true expression for the time being, in form or in action, of His personality and mind. Thus the form and features that defied the recognition of His most intimate friends were no less real than the bodily appearance which they perfectly recognized; the whole body was no less real in the moment when it vanished away into apparent nothingness, than when it reflected the light which rendered it visible and offered resistance, as of flesh and bones, to touch; the act of eating fish and honey was none the less real because such earthly food was most assuredly no part of that body's normal requirements. In short, whatever bodily manifestation was used by Christ to serve some wise and loving purpose of enlightenment and confirmation for those most bewildered disciples, in the moment when so immense a revelation was

¹ St. Luke xx. 35, 36.

dawning upon their unaccustomed minds, was most truly real. And thus the prints of the nails that helped to raise poor doubting Thomas to the highest pinnacle of Christian faith were not unreal, even though we may not believe that every injury and mutilation that may have happened to the earthly body is to be permanently reproduced in the spiritual body of our Saviour or ourselves.

Mr. Routh's suggested interpretation of 2 Cor. v. 1-5—viz., that the passage refers to the instantaneous translation from the earthly into the heavenly body at the coming of Christ, which experience St. Paul hoped might be his happy lot, cannot be maintained if we consider the whole of the context.

St. Paul describes himself, in common with other preachers of the Gospel, as having the treasure of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in earthen vessels¹—frail, earthly bodies. He speaks of bearing about in the body the putting to death of the Lord Jesus²; of being alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake³—carrying his life in his hands, as we should say; of being, nevertheless, sustained with the knowledge of resurrection and future glory, so that, although the outward man—the body—is decaying, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day⁴; and thus he turns his eyes away from the things that are seen, which are but transient, and fixes his gaze upon the unseen things, that are eternal.⁵ For if the earthen vessel be broken, if the daily threatening death overtake him, if the decaying outward man—the earthly house of his bodily frame—*be at length dissolved*, he has, then and there, a new habitation of the spirit, a heavenly body, eternal, and from God.⁶

Clearly, it is *dissolution*, physical death, which the Apostle is here anticipating as the portion of his worn and burdened

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

² Verse 10.

³ Verse 11. Cf. also xi. 23 and 26, "in deaths oft" . . . "in perils."

⁴ Verses 12-16.

⁵ Verse 18.

⁶ 2 Cor. v. 7.

bodily frame ; but the prospect occasions him no uneasiness, for there is for him the certainty of instantaneous re-embodiment in the moment of his death. The unclothing of the spirit from which he might well shrink, as incidental to bodily dissolution, will not be his experience, for God has so fashioned him that dissolution shall not be an unclothing, but rather a clothing upon, so that what is mortal—that which death connotes—shall be swallowed up of life.¹

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ST. PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF THE SECOND ADVENT.

To the Editor of the CHURCHMAN.

SIR,—I think we should all—even those who are least disposed to follow him—be grateful to Mr. Ford for giving us much food for thought in his article on St. Paul's Doctrine of the Second Advent. Personally, I specially welcome what he says on the passage in Romans xiii. 11, 12, which I have for the last quarter of a century taken in the same sense as Mr. Ford, though I have seldom found an appreciative listener. I would suggest, however, an amended translation in verse 12, in place of "The day is far spent, and"—which the Greek will hardly bear—"the night got very dark (*cf.* the terrible picture in Romans i.), *but* the dawn has come." The Greek word commonly translated "is far spent" surely expresses the *degree*, and not the speedy explanation of the darkness of the night, though the latter is thankfully implied in the following phrase. This rendering gives some force to the adversative "*but*," altogether omitted in A.V., and equally ignored in R.V., but still clearly present in the text. A. HANNAM.

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¹ 2 Cor. v. 2-5.

