

Divine claims of His Father and Himself, of His spiritual relations to His Father and to us.

It seems to us therefore, that we need wait no further information to be sure that the Lord is not pledged to any belief which the Old Testament criticism of the day calls in question. Let that criticism be jealously sifted, but let no man dream of surrendering his faith in Christ, whatever the issue of the controversy be.

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THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

III.

(1 COR. xv. 45, 46.)

AT the close of the verse immediately preceding the point now reached by us, St. Paul had laid it down as a settled and incontrovertible principle, that, "if there is a natural (or, rather, sensuous) body, there is also a spiritual body." The words present all the appearance of having been regarded by the apostle as an axiom. They rest upon the conception which universal experience compels us to attach to men whenever we think of them as living beings, that is, whenever we think of them in the only light in which they are a matter of concern to us. As living beings we know them, care for them, and must reason about them. But this living being of theirs, as known to us, consists of two things, a life-force and a body in which the life-force dwells. Extinguish the one, and you have nothing but a dead framework hastening to corruption. Extinguish the other, and you have but a shadowy phantom, not a man. When therefore we have the one, we may rest assured that God, who will not leave His creatures hopelessly stunted and imperfect, will add the other. But there are two wholly

different life-forces or inner states of man,—one connecting him with the visible, tangible, material world; the other connecting him with God and the spiritual, invisible, and heavenly world. That both existed was indisputable. No one would deny that the lower life-force was a reality. Evidence was borne to it at every step taken, and through every act performed, by men in the material sphere around them. Was the higher life-force less a reality than the lower? Let us remember that St. Paul is speaking to Christians, and he knows the answer that they will and must give. He would have given it himself. When he exclaims in writing to the Galatians, “I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me”; or when again, in writing to the Philippians, he says, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Gal. ii. 20, Phil. i. 21),—upon what is he dwelling? Not on outward proof only, or evidence presented to the senses. He had had outward proof of the *facts* which lay at the bottom of his spiritual life, and in many passages of his speeches and writings he shows his dependence upon it, and his joy in the thought that it was so satisfactory and complete. But no proof of a similar kind could bear witness to the reality of his inner life, that life of which he says, “It was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me” (Gal. i. 15, 16). The evidence of such a life depended upon his own experience of it. The Spirit of Christ living in him brought conviction to the apostle’s mind; and to any one who would have denounced this as enthusiasm or self-delusion he would simply have replied, “I know in whom I have believed.” The answer that he would himself have given he is well assured will be given by Christian men everywhere.

But if all Christians would give that answer, how much more even those to whom he was now writing! They were part of the Church of Christ in Corinth; and there was no city of the time in which greater or more undeniable evidence had been afforded to its Christian inhabitants of the reality of the higher life which animated them. They knew not only that, beyond the limits of earth, their Redeemer ruled in spiritual power and with a body glorified. All Christians, wherever their lot was cast, possessed that knowledge. In addition to that, it was known at Corinth, to a degree to which it seems to have been known nowhere else in that age, that the glorified Lord communicated His Spirit to His people. In what high terms does the apostle, in the beginning of this very epistle, describe the state of Christians there! "I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus; that in everything ye were enriched in Him, in all utterance and all knowledge, . . . so that ye come behind in no gift" (chap. i. 4-6); and at a later point in the same epistle what a splendid exuberance of gifts does he describe them as possessing: "the word of wisdom," "the word of knowledge," "faith," "gifts of healings," "workings of miracles," "prophecy," "discernings of spirits," "divers kinds of tongues," "the interpretation of tongues"; and all these were wrought in them by "the one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to each one severally as He would"! (chap. xii. 8-11.) Who could doubt the reality of the Spirit-life, of the Spirit-force, alike in their Saviour and in themselves? Therein lies one of the points of deepest interest in St. Paul's argument. He takes for granted that spiritual experience is a fact, and he reasons upon it. He is not afraid of being met with a charge on the part of some sceptic, that he is begging the question, and that the reality of the Spirit and of the Spirit-life must first be proved. There is no further proof needed

he, as it were, exclaims. Where the Spirit is He shows that He is, and he who has received Him becomes as conscious of His power as of breathing the air around him. The Church of Christ has felt, and still feels, this too little. She talks of proofs, of evidences, as if they were not less convincing than the Multiplication Table. She would often produce more effect were she to give the Spirit first and the proof afterwards. At any rate it was certain that there was a life of the Spirit as well as a life of sense. The argument is thus clear. God has clothed our lower life-force with a sensuous body adapted to it, and we may be sure that He will also clothe our higher life-force with the spiritual body which will alone be its fitting habitation.

The fact of man's existence in a sensuous body is thus the *primary* thought in St. Paul's mind; and this may help to explain one of the difficulties often felt in connexion with the quotation from the book of Genesis contained in the next following words. That quotation unquestionably ends with the word "soul" in the clause, "The first man Adam became a living soul"; and it is meant to end there. No other idea ought ever to have been entertained. Even on the ground of St. Paul's knowledge of Scripture, it ought never to have been supposed that he intended the last part of ver. 45 to be regarded as a part of his quotation. But, aside from that, the words would not have proved his immediate point, the existence of the sensuous body as something included in the Divine plan. That is the premiss from which he reasons to the existence of a spiritual body; and that therefore is all that he would establish by Scripture.

Besides this, however, it may be observed, that the latter half of ver. 45 not only was not, it could not be in Scripture, or at least in any Scripture that might be thought of here. As we have yet to see more fully, the point of time to which it relates did not arrive till centuries

after the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures had been closed. To imagine therefore, that St. Paul thought of passing off the words, "The last Adam became a life-giving spirit," as words of Scripture, is to attribute to him both an ignorance with which he could not possibly be chargeable, and a credulity as to the ease with which his readers might be misled that is equally incredible. The direct line of thought is simply this: the first man, a creature of earthly sensations, had a sensuous body. The inference is, the last man, being spirit, was also life-giving; and as there can be no life without a body adapted to it, the purpose or plan of God must include a spiritual as well as a sensuous body.

The apostle's appeal, then, is to Scripture. Why? Because Scripture is the expression of God's plan. In vers. 3 and 4 of this chapter, a similar appeal is made for a similar purpose. Christ is there said to have died for our sins "according to the Scriptures," and to have been raised again "according to the Scriptures." Not that in either instance any mere prophecy is fulfilled, or any mere fact of history recorded upon the Divine authority. The meaning is, that Scripture contains the mind and purpose of the Almighty. Does it tell us that man at his creation was a being possessed of a vital force clothed in a sensuous body? We may infer that this was part of a scheme or plan, which, having been fulfilled, as we see, in one part, will in due season be fulfilled in all its parts.

On the slight changes made in the form of the quotation it is not necessary to dwell; yet they are not without a bearing on St. Paul's line of thought, and they thus help us to understand more clearly what that is. As the words occur in Genesis ii. 7 in the LXX., from which they are taken, they contain no *πρῶτος* and no *Ἀδάμ*, running simply *ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν*. But St. Paul was justified in inserting *πρῶτος*, because there could be no doubt that the person referred to was really the first man,

the words of Genesis immediately preceding the quoted statement being, "And God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." He was also justified in inserting Ἀδάμ, because that man was Adam. As, accordingly, the words, "The last Adam became a life-giving spirit," are already at the beginning of the verse in St. Paul's thoughts, the insertion of the words "first" and "Adam" in the quotation need not occasion the slightest difficulty. At the same time, the fact that the words are inserted is highly instructive. Keeping them in view, we see more clearly than we might otherwise have done what is passing through the apostle's mind, and we are led by them to certain ideas of his which must be taken into account if we would understand him fully. The first of these ideas lurks in the word "Adam," the double use of which shows us, what need only be hinted at now (it will meet us again), that St. Paul is thinking of two heads of two lines of descendants, who convey to those that spring from them what they themselves are. The second idea appears in the word "first" when combined with the word "last" in the sense in which it is here used. That sense is precisely similar to the sense in which any one examining the passage will find it necessary to understand the adverbial "last" (ἔσχατον) in ver. 8 of this chapter: "And last of all He appeared to me also." In neither case does "last" mean simply the last of a series, who has appeared but may be followed by another. It means the last absolutely, the last of the series to which the person or the thing spoken of belongs, to be followed by no other. St. Paul does not merely say that there was an Adam who had appeared as the first man, and that then there was another Adam who had appeared later, and who might still have a successor. He sees that in God's plan there are two heads in the human family, *and no more*. The one, it is true, is the head of the whole family; the other is the head of believers only. But

the point is, that the last come is also in such a sense the last to come, that our position in God's plan must be regulated by our relation either to Him or to the one who went before Him. Nor is it any objection to this that in ver. 47 the apostle uses the word "second" instead of the word "last." He does so because there will then be a change of thought, because he will then be tracing the *historical* unfolding of the Divine economy as it is evolved, first, in a first Adam, and, secondly, in a second. At present it is not so much a historical unfolding of the economy that he has in view. He would grasp its principle; and for this purpose all its parts must be embraced in one whole, from its beginning to its end, from its first to its last. The words "first" and "Adam" added to the quotation are thus by no means unimportant. They belong directly to the current of thought, and are cast up by it.

A third word here before us calls also for a moment's notice—"life-giving." Why not simply "living"? Would not "living spirit" have been a closer parallel and contrast to "living soul"? It would be so could "spirit" simply live its own life, and be therewith satisfied. But spirit cannot thus live. The conception of something that merely lives, that exerts no quickening power on others, is not enough for *πνεῦμα*. In its very nature spirit is life-giving. It is the water of which Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria, "The water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of springing water (not a well of stagnant water, however deep and full), unto eternal life" (John iv. 14). Therefore must the last Adam, when he became "spirit," have been unable to confine His spirit-existence to Himself. It was necessary that He should be not simply "living," but "life-giving."

Such then are the apostle's words, and now what is his thought? It is that two great Heads include within them and sum up the history of man. The one is the first, the

other is the second Adam : the first, a living soul, sensuous, and all his descendants like him ; the second, a life-giving spirit, and all His descendants like Him, spiritual, life-giving spirit. There is no help for it. We must belong either to the one or to the other. To which of the two we ought to belong we shall be told by-and-by.

From these minor particulars we have now to turn to two questions of the greatest interest connected with the words of this verse. To what points of time does St. Paul refer in its two clauses? When was it that the first Adam became a living soul? When was it that the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

1. When did the first Adam become a living soul? The answer to this question seems undoubtedly to be, Before the Fall. The passage quoted from Genesis clearly indicates this by its position in that book. It is connected with the first account of the creation of man : " And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul " (Gen. ii. 7). The words thus relate to man's primal condition, while yet in his state of innocence. Even then our first parents were not all that the Almighty intended them to be. They were, it is true, endowed with more than a mere animal soul. They were certainly higher than the beasts that perish. They were perfectly adapted to this present world. They had not only their organs of sense, together with appetites, affections, and passions ; they had also intelligence, reason, imagination, memory, together with all that might fit them for a thoughtful and, so far as this world goes, an elevated life. Yet, even under his highest aspect, St. Paul would say, man was not fitted for the state of existence to which it was God's design to raise him at a future time. He had a body that was naturally mortal, that was not dominated by the spirit which is alone above all connexion with the dust, which is alone unchange-

able and eternal. Some means, no doubt, might and would have been found by his merciful Creator to save him from that decay and death which belonged to all merely sensuous things. Whether by eating of the tree of life, or in some other way, he would have been raised in the scale of being, and delivered from that penalty of death which was threatened to transgression. But only thus. Notwithstanding the opinion to the contrary entertained by distinguished theologians,¹ nothing seems clearer than that the apostle is not here thinking of our first parent after the Fall, but in his estate of innocence.

2. When did the last Adam become a life-giving spirit? It has been said, At the incarnation.² But the whole argument of the apostle makes it necessary to suppose that the resurrection, and not the incarnation, of our Lord is in his view. At ver. 21 he had said that "since through man came death, through man came also the resurrection of the dead"; and that the words do not simply mean through gift of man is proved by the following verse, where we read that "*in* the Christ shall all be made alive." In other words, the meaning is, that as we die in Adam, who died, so in Christ, who was raised from the dead, are we also raised. The thought of Christ risen is the very foundation of the whole reasoning. Again, when, at ver. 23, the order of the resurrection is spoken of, it is obviously the risen Christ who is described as "the firstfruits." And, once more, the words under consideration are introduced as the expression of the fundamental fact upon which the prospect of the resurrection of the dead has been rested in the immediately preceding statement. Besides this, it is to be remembered that the last Adam did not become a *life-giving* Spirit at His incarnation. He was then made in all things like unto those brethren whom He had come to save. He took upon Him the very nature, with all its

¹ Comp. Ellicott *in loc.*

² Comp. Edwards *in loc.*

frailties and limitations, possessed by them, that He might enter into their condition, and might lead them on in that way of toil and suffering and death by which alone they can reach His Father's kingdom. It is true that our Lord, even during His earthly life, was in possession of the Spirit, and St. Paul's conception of Spirit is, that it always acts towards what is external to it, that it is always in itself "*life-giving*." But herein lay the peculiarity in the case of Christ,—He was *Himself* limited, confined, restrained by the "flesh" which He had assumed; and, inasmuch as in giving His Spirit He gives *Himself*, not merely something else which He has to bestow, it necessarily follows that the Spirit dwelling in Him could not, during the days of His humiliation, exercise that quickening or life-giving power on others which properly belonged to it. Only when the limits occasioned by the "flesh" were broken through could Christ communicate *Himself*, and therefore only then could He communicate His Spirit, with perfect freedom. Thus, although Christ always possessed in Himself a fulness of the life-giving Spirit, He could not *become* that life-giving Spirit to others until, rising from the dead in a glorified body, He threw aside for ever the wrappings of earth by which He had been previously confined.

This teaching of St. Paul is not confined to the passage with which we are now dealing. It lies also at the bottom of such words as these, "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11); and it is still more clearly expressed when the same apostle says, "Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, who is Spirit"

(2 Cor. iii. 17, 18). In both these passages it is the risen Lord who is before us, and that in His estate of Spirit, in the freedom with which He works in that state, and in the transference to us of a spirit which quickens our mortal bodies into a resurrection like His own.

Only then at His resurrection, and not at His incarnation, did our Lord become a life-giving Spirit. Only at His resurrection was He in the full sense of the words the "last Adam." Then however He did become this Head of a new line of descendants; and the facts recorded in Scripture of the period of His history which followed this point illustrate the truth. It was only after His resurrection that "He breathed on His disciples, and said unto them, Receive ye Holy Spirit" (John xx. 22). Only after the same event, on the day of Pentecost, did He shed forth His Spirit on the assembled disciples and inaugurate the entrance of the Christian Church upon her mission (Acts ii.); and only with His risen life is connected that bestowal of His Spirit upon His people by which they are enabled to bear true witness to Him, and to convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment (John xv. 27; xvi. 7, 8). All this then He has done and does in the only body in which it is possible for Him to do it, in the glorified body which He now possesses in His heavenly kingdom. The "last Adam" is not simply the incarnate, but the risen and glorified Redeemer.

There is, however, something more to be considered; for the thought might naturally enough occur to many, If there is not only a sensuous, but a spiritual body, and if the spiritual body is, as it must be, so much more glorious than the sensuous body, why might we not have it now? To give an answer to this question seems to be the main object of the following verse, "Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is sensuous; then that which is spiritual" (ver. 46).

That the verse begins with *ἀλλά* is sufficient to show that we are not to have a mere repetition of what has gone before, but that new matter is to be introduced; and this new matter seems intended to meet the difficulty just mentioned. Not that we have now such a general or abstract statement as that, in the very nature of things, the "sensuous" must precede the "spiritual." The apostle appears rather to have in view the historical manifestation of God's plan as exhibited in Adam and in Christ. Let us look at them, and in them we shall see what is really the order of the universe, so far at least as it is connected with the thought of time. We then have brought before us in a concrete form the essential relations of things to one another. And, had St. Paul pursued his thought further, he might have added, No wonder that it should be so, for all things must be moulded upon the pattern which has existed from eternity in the Divine Mind. Where then may that pattern be best seen? Surely nowhere so well as in the contrast between the first and the last Adam. The first Adam begins the history of humanity; the last Adam carries it to its consummation. Compare the two with one another, and you will at once learn by the comparison that the sensuous precedes the spiritual, that the limitations of the earthly come before the freedom of the heavenly. What was the case in the history of the first and last Adam must find its reflection in us. We have no ground of complaint that only in the future shall we possess the spiritual and heavenly body.

The principle indeed is stated in the most general terms, for we are not to supply *σῶμα* to τὸ πνευματικόν and τὸ ψυχικόν.¹ We must take the neuters in the universality which they are so well fitted to express; and, thus taking them, the proposition is applicable, not to the human body

¹ Comp. Moulton's *Winer*, p. 741; *Ellicott in loc.* Hofmann supplies *σῶμα in loc.*

alone, but to all things. Nor when we think of the perfection of the Deity, can we believe in the existence of any other principle. God could not be what we must suppose Him to be, were the law of an opposite kind, were the progression from a higher to a lower. Absolute perfection must desire to draw all things nearer to itself. Nay, may we not even go further, and say, that it is difficult to imagine the Almighty placing man upon the earth in his highest perfection at the very first? The most essential element of human perfection, the free choice and appropriation of the successive steps that lead to it, would then have been wanting. There could have been no moral training of the race. The precious fruits of discipline would have been unknown. We need not therefore ask, Why not perfection?—why not the spirit-life?—why not the spiritual body—now?

With what calmness does the thought of the apostle teach us to contemplate the otherwise strange problem of human history! So far from complaining that we are not at once introduced to the perfection of our being, we learn to feel that the first lowly estate of man was the prerequisite of his moral growth. The fact that man was first formed only a living soul, so far from being full of nothing but perplexity, becomes, to one who recognises infinite love as the spring of all creation, the root out of which there grows the goodly tree of hope. That moral growth, that hope which impels to it,

“—is man’s distinctive mark alone,
Not God’s, and not the beasts’. God is, they are,
Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be.”

“By hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Rom. viii. 24, 25).

One other remark ought to be made. We are not to imagine that, while St. Paul has thus the idea of progress in his mind, he means by that progress continuous evolution, as if gradually, and by an infinite succession of small changes, the material passed into the sensuous, and the sensuous into the spiritual. Evolution has tried to bridge the chasm between matter and mind, but has failed to do so. St. Paul does not attempt to bridge it. Perhaps it never occurred to him that a bridge was necessary. He deals with a state of things, the existing conditions of which were acknowledged both by himself and others. Although, therefore, that state of things embodies a law of progress, it does not follow, that the steps of the progress are to rise out of and above one another by a development which never ceases to operate. The great stages of the progress are rather marked by new creative acts. At the transition from the body of dust to *ψυχή* God interposes. At that from *ψυχή* to *πνεῦμα* He interposes again.

For the present we must pause. Let us, in doing so, recall for a moment what has been established. We have found the difficulties connected with the thought of the resurrection of the dead frankly and fully met. We have seen the course of human life on earth as it terminates in the grave set over against another course animated by a Divine spirit with the thought of which death is incompatible, and which is seen to be holding on in its eternal course in the person of the risen and glorified Lord. We have had set before us the principle from which we infer that, given the spirit-life of which experience tells, the spiritual body must be also given as its framework. And, finally, we have been taught to behold in all this, not something standing isolated from ordinary human history, but something graven in the deepest lines upon that history, in its first and in its last Adam, in its whole progress therefore from its earliest, and for our purpose at least lowest, to its highest stage.

What we desire still further to know is, why we should be so closely connected with that history that it should repeat itself in us. If it can be shown us that it is reasonable that we should be, even if it be simply the fact that we are, thus closely connected with it, we can ask no more. We shall acquiesce in the Almighty's plan ; and, believing that there will be a resurrection of the dead in the Lord who has already risen, we shall be ready to listen to the apostle as he describes the particulars of an event so glorious, so far beyond all natural expectation or hope of man.

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