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DEATH OF BELIEVERS.

BY B. M. PALMER, D.D., NEW ORLEANS.

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin ; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.—ROMANS viii. 10, 11.

A PLAUSIBLE objection may be urged that, as the Apostle declares death to be the evidence of guilt, he cannot consistently say, in the case of the dying believer, "there is no condemnation." The answer is twofold : In the case of the believer there is death of the body alone ; and the dominion of death even over this is only temporary.

I. WHY DOES DEATH PASS UPON THE BODY OF THE CHRISTIAN ?

1. *The body is the instrument through which we sin, and a provocative to sin.* If it were not for the eye leering with jealousy or flashing with revenge ; if it were not for the hand dealing with violence and fraud ; if it were not for the feet swift to shed blood ; if it were not for the tongue tripping with the vocables of the pit, the soul might be full of sin, but of sin never revealed to others to the dishonor of God. The body is thoroughly implicated in all the sin a man commits. It is fitting then that God should put upon it the mark of His displeasure.

2. *It is not the design of grace to remove evil out of the world, but to convert it into a means of discipline.* Poverty, pain, sickness, bereavement, are not removed from the Christian, but are made to minister to his spiritual growth. Death comes in the same category.

3. *The body must die that, by being sanctified, it may be fitted for the world of glory.* As under the old dispensation a house infected with leprosy was first dismantled, stone being taken from stone and beam from beam, and was not rebuilt until each part had been carefully scraped to remove the fretting disease, so God deals with these defiled bodies. (1 Cor. xv. 50, 53, 54 ; v. 44.)

4. *The sudden translation of believers would subvert the principle of grace.* All the succeeding steps of the Christian's course must be repetitions of the act of faith, until he reaches that step which

must be the last and severest test. It is the fundamental principle of the scheme of salvation. (Gal. ii. 20 ; Heb. xi. 6.) Suppose now every Christian were taken up bodily to heaven, would there not have to be a constant intervention of the supernatural, superseding the faith which God requires ?

5. *The translation of believers would anticipate the judgment day.* Should God put this visible distinction between believers and unbelievers, we would all know, of course, in this world, the eternal destinies of both. Could we bear the knowledge ? Would it not disintegrate society and unfit every human being for the duties of this life ? Shall the glory of the resurrection day, the coronation day of our Lord, be given us piecemeal ?

II. WHY IS THE BODY TO BE RAISED AGAIN ?

It is remarkable, the stress laid in the New Testament upon the resurrection of the body. (See Acts xvii. 30, 32 ; ii. 23-32 ; Phil. iii. 20, 21 ; 1 Thess. iv. 14-18.)

1. *The body will be raised because equally with the soul redeemed by Christ and united to Him.*

a. The body, as a constituent part of us, must be as truly redeemed as the soul. Without the body man ceases to be man. The separation of soul and body is unnatural, and hence the horror of death instinctively felt by all men.

b. Christ assumed human nature, body as well as soul, and we are united to Him in both. (See Rom. vi. 5 ; 1 Cor. xv. 20 ; Eph. v. 30.)

c. The curse of sin has fallen upon the body as well as upon the soul, equally necessitating its redemption. (See Gen. iii. 16-18 ; Rom. viii. 23.)

d. The Scriptures bear special testimony to the redemption of the body, and to its union with Christ. (See Isa. xxvi. 19 ; Rom. i. 3, 4 ; viii. 19, 23 ; Eph. v. 30 ; 1 Cor. vi. 15.)

2. *The body will be raised because of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.*

a. Because it is the Holy Ghost's prerogative to impart life. He is the author of physical life, from the atom floating in the sunbeam to the angel whom John saw standing in the sun. No less is he the author of intellectual life. All the strength of reason and brilliancy of imagination owe their triumphs to the actuating energy of the Spirit of God.

b. The Holy Ghost is the bond by which the believer is united with Jesus Christ.

c. The body of the saint is the temple of the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16.) The body dismantled and dissolving in the grave is a temple still, though a temple in ruins.

d. The Holy Spirit is the sanctifier, and by virtue of this office will raise the bodies of them that sleep in Jesus.

Remarks :

1. These moral grounds of the resurrection satisfy us of its certainty, and bear us over all the difficulties by which it is invested. All the objections ever urged against the resurrection are objections drawn from our ignorance.

2. The comfort is precious which flows from these truths in view of death, both to ourselves and to those we love.

THE CHRISTIAN'S VICTORY OVER DEATH.

BY REV. JOHN LOGAN, ENGLAND.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.—I CORINTHIANS XV. 55, 57.

It is the glory of the Christian religion that it abounds with consolations under all the evils of life; nor is its benign influence confined to the course of life, but even extends to death itself. It delivers us from the agony of the last hour, sets us free from the fears which then perplex the mind, from the horrors which haunt the offender, and from all the darkness which involves our mortal state. So complete is the victory we obtain that Jesus Christ is said in Scripture to have abolished death.

1. *Christ gives us victory over death by delivering us from the doubts and fears arising from uncertainty regarding the future state.*

Without divine revelation men wandered in the dark regarding an after-life. The light of nature shed but a feeble light on the region beyond the grave. For whence could reason derive any knowledge of immortality? Consult with nature, and destruction seems to be one of its great laws. The species remains, but the