

SPECIAL ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK REVIEWS

THE OUTLOOK AND THE RESURRECTION.

By J. R. Jackson.

The doctrine of immortality criticized and condemned editorially in the New York Outlook, some time ago, namely, that after death the soul sleeps or is non-existent, and that life and immortality can only be associated with the body, has never been held by the churches of Christendom, nor by anybody, so far as I know, except the infinitesimal sect of the Christadelphians and a section of the Adventists. The doctrine defined and defended by the Outlook, that death and resurrection are simultaneous and synonymous, is not the doctrine of the Scriptures, the texts cited in support of it being witnesses against it. That portion of the scriptural doctrine which affirms that the blessed dead are more than ever alive within the veil, and which is proclaimed as a special discovery of the Outlook and its friends, has always been clearly held and taught by the orthodox churches. But this is not the whole teaching of the Scriptures and the churches on the question. The Presbyterian shorter catechism speaks as follows: "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory, and their bodies being still united to Christ do rest in their graves till the resurrection. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity." To the same effect are these sentences from the Anglican burial service: "Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity. . . . In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to his mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself."

The position of the creeds of Christendom respecting immortality is summed up in the above extracts. The orthodox view of the resurrection is first distorted and caricatured by the Outlook and then pronounced unscientific, impossible and pagan. Not only so, but the Scriptures are brought into requisition to contradict the original doctrine and to establish one which they know not. The well known words of Jesus, to the dying thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," are quoted to prove that death is the only resurrection. But they plainly prove the opposite. The resurrection of Jesus is everywhere stated to have been on THE THIRD DAY, and his departure into paradise had taken place two days before. The resurrection of the penitent thief is yet in the future, as it is written "Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." In neither case, therefore, was death and entrance into paradise identical with resurrection. The case of Lazarus of Bethany is similarly treated. Jesus said "thy brother shall rise again." But upon the Outlook's theory he should have said "thy brother HAS ALREADY RISEN"—death and resurrection being one and the same. The answer of Martha was in strict accordance with the words of Jesus on earlier occasions. "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." (John v. 28, 29.) "Everyone which seeth the Son and believeth on Him hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 40) What she apparently did not take into account was that Jesus himself was the life and resurrection of the dead, and could therefore manifest his divine power at any time in advance of the general resurrection. Another passage in the same connection was cited and explained by the Outlook is "He that liveth (the Outlook

substitutes the word loveth) and believeth in me shall never die." But this is only half the passage, the whole teaching of which is that believers in Christ who die shall rise again, and that believers who have not died before the resurrection day shall never die at all. This is borne out by other unmistakable statements, e.g., "We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now, as the editor of the Outlook very well knows, there are scores of such passages in the Gospels, Acts and Epistles, and they are in no wise contradicted or annulled by the many others which speak of our departing and being with Christ, as both are equally scriptural and true. But the two are distinct both in date and nature. The term "resurrection" is never once applied in the Scriptures to the apparition of the spirit from the body but always to the reunion of the spirit with the body. This surely proves that death and resurrection are NOT "the same phenomenon." "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? Foolish fellows! then sowest not that body that shall be; God giveth it a body as it pleaseth him." These words of the Apostle, quoted with approval in the Outlook article are a sufficient answer to its objections to the resurrection as unchristian and impossible, and were doubtless addressed to parties with the self-same views.

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NOTE.—The foregoing observations were sent first to the New York Outlook, but publication was declined—for obvious reasons. The main objection to the Outlook article referred to is not its denial of a bodily resurrection so much as its misrepresentation of historic and current Christian belief on the subject, and the wresting and twisting of holy scripture.

COLLEGE REFORM IN SCOTLAND.

There is an interesting movement in Scotland to co-ordinate the Divinity Halls of the Established and the United Free Churches. At present the Establishment has four Divinity Halls, with sixteen Professors, besides Lecturers. In the United Free Church are three theological colleges with adequate staff. All these men are teaching practically the same subjects, and none of the Halls is over-attended by students. The remedy proposed is thus outlined in a Scottish paper—"Clearly the question of amalgamation and reconstruction must be faced. The first step undoubtedly must be the amalgamation of our duplicate divinity halls. Let the Theological Faculty of Edinburgh University and the New College coalesce. Let the various subjects be divided more equitably among the professors, so that each professor will be able to deal thoroughly with one or two departments of his special field. Let other branches of theological learning be included in the curriculum. Let the same amalgamation and reconstruction take place also in Glasgow and Aberdeen. The Theological Curriculum must become less rigid. Account must be taken of the individual bent of our students. Nor should our students be compelled to begin and finish their studies at the same college. We might profitably take a lesson in this matter from our German friends." A student taking part of his education in another land, and at an ancient University gets a wider horizon of thought and sympathy.

MARKS OF THE TRUE REFORMER.

The country has been passing through an era of reform. Almost all phases of our complex life have been feeling the effects of it. Much has been accomplished, but much remains to be done. Evils that might have been abated have been stances, because of the radicalism of the remedies proposed. Reforms that involved political action have also been deferred because of the moral inertia of the people or because the reforms were complicated by association with other issues.

It is the reaction that follows an unsuccessful effort to secure improved social order and earnestness of those who have been enlisted in the good cause. Every movement that shows promise of success attracts to itself a crowd of camp followers. They are not interested in the core nothing about the moral aspects of the questions involved. But they see a chance to be on hand to pick up something for themselves out of the victory. A temporary reverse of the movement, scatters these adherents, and their real want of conviction and zeal is disclosed. It is as the men who are as steady under defeat as they were valorous in the assault who are the real reformers and the hope of the future.

For it is a mark of the true reformer that he does not regard a moral issue as settled by the "count of heads and the clack of tongues." Majorities are not decisive in determining questions of right and wrong. History is one long illustration of this. It was a majority in Israel that rejected Samuel and did drive Elijah into hiding, that contemned the preaching and warnings of the prophets. It was a majority that stood before Pilate's judgment seat and shouted "Crucify, crucify." A majority was for Diana when Paul preached in Ephesus. A majority count denounced Luther at the Council of Constance and disowned Luther at the Diet of Worms. It is the voice of the people in their passing verdicts on men and measures that come before them, were the voice of God, every great movement that has lifted the world a step higher would have stood condemned. Nothing is more striking than the reverses of history, the ultimate triumph of popular judgments, the ultimate triumph of men and causes that at one time seemed to go down in irrevocable defeat.

"For Humanity sweeps onward; where today the martyr stands, On the morrow crouches Judas, with the silver in his hands; Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling fagots burn. While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn."

Knowing these facts of history, a true reformer does not misread Talleyrand's political maxim that "Everybody is wiser than anybody." He knows that nearly every great reform has first gotten itself incarcerated in a single soul, then in a few choice spirits, before it has become a common blessing. His convictions have not been formed with his ear to the ground to catch the popular sentiment on the matter in hand. They have been fixed by the deliverance of his own enlightened reason and instructed conscience. The popular judgment has had nothing to do with creating them, and it is powerless to change them. He is as fully persuaded of the righteousness of his cause in its hour of defeat as he was when his hopes of its triumph were high.

And that means that the true reformer has the grace of continuance. He does not belong to that man and it is powerless can "haul out glittering phylacteries upon public platforms and carry a banner in the van amid throbbing drums and a tempest of cheers, and then suddenly weaken and grow limp. He can go on working when the cheers have died away without "bat-