

Correspondence.

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Essay on the Greek Words "Psyche" and "Pneuma."

BY REV. CHAS. TUPPER, D. D.

The doctrine that every one of the human family, however wicked and impenitent to the close of life, will subsequently be happy forever, is highly pleasing to the carnal mind. Some, however, who perceive that this is directly opposed to the plain teaching of the Bible, maintain that there is no hell, or place of future punishment, that none are conscious between death and the resurrection, and then unbelieving and impenitent sinners will be raised and annihilated, and so cease to exist. The advocates of this scheme are accustomed to represent the common English Version of the Scriptures as exceedingly incorrect on important points; and to propose numerous changes, rendering the language of the Bible much more congenial to their views. I do not imagine that the translators were infallibly inspired, nor that they always used the most appropriate terms. To me, however, it appears much wiser and more prudent for those who do not understand the original languages, to confide in the judgment of a large number of truly learned and pious men, than in that of individuals who labor under the misleading influence of strong prejudice in favor of sentiments pleasing to the ungodly.

In treating of the word Psyche, (by some called Psyche,) it may be remarked, as all acquainted with language know, that a word frequently has different meanings, and sometimes in one sentence. Take, for instance, the word pneuma in John iii. 8, "The wind (pneuma) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit (pneuma)." Even in cases in which only one word is used in the translation, it may be taken in quite different acceptations: as in Luke ix. 60, "Let the dead [in sins] bury their dead," that is, those that are literally dead. The Greek word Ouranos is usually rendered heaven; but it sometimes denotes the air or atmosphere (Matt. vi. 26), sometimes the expanse, in which the sun, moon and stars appear (Mar. xiii. 25), and in other places the peculiar residence of God, where Christ is (Heb. ix. 2, 4).

It need not, therefore, excite any degree of surprise that the word psyche sometimes, like soul in English, denotes a person, as in Acts xxvii. 37, Ezek. xviii. 20, sometimes natural life (Matt. vi. 25), and sometimes also the undying soul of man. In this sense it is evidently used in Matt. x. 28, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The futile attempts made to evade the obvious meaning of this text, which clearly establishes the fact that man has a soul which can not be killed by those who can kill the body, shew the absurdities to which its opposers are driven. A Universalist editor endeavored to mystify and obscure the plain import of this text by a translation and comment, in effect, as follows:—"Fear not them [the Jews] which can torture the body, but can not kill the life; but rather fear him [the Roman powers] which can destroy both body and life in the Valley of Hinnom." He adds, "We have sufficient reason for rendering the word Apopteino here torture." But I have carefully examined this word in all the passages in which it occurs in the New Testament—above 70—and no where found it to signify less than to kill. He remarks that the Jews had not the power to take life. They could not do it lawfully; but who took the life of Stephen (Acts vii. 58).

The language in Luke xii. 5, 6, is substantially the same as that in Matt. x. 28, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more

that they can do [can not inflict any farther suffering]; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear him which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." Unquestionably, persecutors that could kill the body, could cast it into the Valley of Hinnom; but God only could destroy [render miserable, Exod. x. 7] both soul and body in (Gehenna) hell. In Heb. x. 39 the apostle says, "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the (psyche) soul." It is well known that believing on Christ and confessing Him, instead of saving the natural life, in many instances caused the loss of it. Our Lord foretold His disciples, "The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service;" (John xvi. 2). This prediction presently began to be fulfilled (Acts vii. 59: viii. 3, xii. 2, xxiv. 10), and it has been verified in almost innumerable instances. Certainly, therefore, in Heb. x. 39 psyche can mean nothing else but the undying soul.

Paul says of the ministers or pastors, when writing to the Hebrews (xiii. 8), "They watch for your souls." So Christ is said to be "the Shepherd and Bishop of souls," (1 Pet. ii. 25). He is also distinctly spoken of as having a "family," of whom some are "in heaven," and others on "earth," (Eph. iii. 15). Those "in heaven" must evidently be the souls or spirits of departed saints (Rev. xiv. 13).

Our venerable translators have been grossly maligned by some for rendering the word psyche "soul" in Mark viii. 36, 37. But they did right, and evinced skill in exegesis. It is a rule that must commend itself to every intelligent person, that it is the duty of a translator to express in his translation, as exactly as he can, the idea originally intended by the writer or speaker. Had the word psyche been rendered life in these verses, unlearned readers would be likely to suppose that natural life was intended; and consequently that Jesus was cautioning His disciples against confessing Him where there might be any danger of being put to death for doing so. But assuredly this was not His object. It has been shewn that a word is sometimes used in different acceptations in one sentence. To represent the Saviour as saying, or meaning, "Whosoever will save his natural life shall lose his natural life; but whoever shall lose his natural life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save his natural life," is to charge Him with palpable inconsistency and self-contradiction. [He was evidently contrasting natural life with spiritual and eternal life, which is the salvation of the soul. So He said, to the same effect (John xii. 25) "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." The obvious import of this is, 'he who so ardently loves his transitory life in this world, as to induce him to deny Christ in order to preserve it, will fail to obtain eternal bliss in heaven; but he who so little regards the present life that he will part with it rather than to deny Christ, will obtain the eternal salvation of his soul.' In accordance with these declarations of Christ, our translators have, with evident propriety, translated Mar. viii. 36, 37, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own (psyche) soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his (psyche) soul?" These solemn and all-important questions are preceded by a strict charge to deny self, take up the cross, and follow Jesus, and they are immediately succeeded by His impressive declaration, "Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, &c., of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels." (See also Acts xiv. 22, 1 Pet. i. 9, 22, iv. 19, 3rd Jno. 2, Rev. xx. 4, &c.) It is needless to dwell farther on the word PSYCHE.

PSYCHE, in Greek, like Psyche, is evidently used in quite different senses. That a man making pretences to extensive erudition and knowledge of the Scriptures, should maintain that the Spirit of God, of men, whether pious or impious, and of beasts and reptiles, is the same, furnishes a demonstration of the extent to which an erroneous sentiment or incorrect preconceived

opinion, may lead one. It is true, indeed, that beasts have an inferior and temporary spirit; but, (as I have shewn in another Essay,) Solomon does not say that actually man has no pre-eminence above a beast. Every man of common sense knows it is not so. It seems that in a partial view of particulars in which men and beasts are alike, he had been ready to conclude, and 'said in his heart,' (see Eccles. ii. 1; Ps. lxxiii. 2, 3, 21, 22, and cxvi. 11,) that "a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast." But in conclusion he recognizes the vast difference between "the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth." (Eccles. iii. 18-21.) So the account of the creation of man differs widely from that of the inferior creatures. Of man only, God is said to have "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." (See Gen. i. 20, 21, 24-27; ii. 7.) The prophet Zechariah (xii. 1), speaking of the wonderful works of God, closes the climax by stating, that He "formeth the spirit of man within him." Is this any where said of beasts?

Psyche and Pneuma are not always synonymous; but they are shewn, by the principle of parallelism in Hebrew poetry, to be sometimes used in substantially the same sense. In Luke i. 46, 47, we read, "Mary said, My soul (psyche) doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit (pneuma) hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Each is used to denote the deathless part of man.

In Romans viii. 14, 16, it is said "The Spirit (Pneuma) of God itself beareth witness with our spirit (psyche) that we are the children of God." The apostle speaks in 1 Cor. ii. 11, "of the spirit (pneuma) of man which is in him"; and vii. 34, of being "holy both in body and spirit." So also the apostle Peter, using the word psyche, says, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the (pneuma) Spirit." (1 Pet. i. 22.)

But it is unnecessary to quote additional texts in which either psyche or pneuma occurs. The question is, Has man, who has a "mortal body" (Rom. viii. 11) a soul or spirit, which survives the death of the body? Having attentively examined the arguments adduced on both sides, and compared them with the living Oracles, I do not hesitate to answer the question in the affirmative. Though the reasons already assigned for this decision ought to satisfy every person, yet it may be well to offer a few additional remarks.

Though the Old Testament is, in general, much more obscure with reference to the future state of man than the New, (2 Cor. iii. 7-14,) yet, as those who take the opposite view, by referring what relates to the body, to the soul or spirit, attempt to draw their principal arguments from the former, it seems proper to notice a few texts in it. It is said of Rachel, "Her soul (in Hebrew nephesh, in Greek psyche) was departing (for she died)." (Gen. xxxv. 18.) And of Elijah, that he said, "I pray Thee let this child's soul (psyche) come into him again," (1 Kings xvii. 21. See also Psa. xlii. 5, 6; lxii. 1, &c.) As we are informed (Zech. xii. 1,) that God "formeth the spirit of man within him," so it is stated with reference to man's death, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit (Heb. ruah, Gr. pneuma) shall return to God who gave it." (Eccles. xii. 7.) It is obviously absurd to imagine that the breath would be said to 'return to God.' In like manner the inspired historian tells us that when Stephen was dying he committed his departing spirit (pneuma) into the hands of his beloved Redeemer, who had graciously promised, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." (John xii. 26.) Can any man whose mind is not strongly blinded by an erroneous view, imagine, that in such solemn circumstances Stephen would have committed his breath to the keeping of Christ? (Acts vii. 55-60.) Peter says, "Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls (psyche) to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." (1 Pet. i. 19.) The Psalmist says of the wicked man, when he had "passed away, I sought him, but he could not be found." (Psa. xxxvii. 35, 36.) Surely his body might have been found; but his spirit or soul, could not be found by man. In Psalm xc. 10, it is said of the thread of life. "It is soon cut off, and

we fly away." Certainly when people die, their bodies do not fly away; but this must refer to their souls or spirits. Again Solomon says, "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death." (Prov. xiv. 32.) The body is not driven away; but the wicked man's spirit is in many instances reluctantly compelled to leave it.

In adducing a few more proofs from the New Testament, it may be safely laid down as an axiom, "That a system which requires its abettors to put a forced and unnatural construction on plain texts of Scripture, must be unscriptural."

The fact that Moses, who had died, and Elijah, who was translated bodily to heaven, came together and conversed with Jesus, in the presence of Peter, James, and John, clearly demonstrates that Moses was in a state of conscious existence after his death. (Math. xvii. 1-4.) Luke informs us, "The Sadducees say there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both;" it is obviously equivalent to saying, both are true. So Paul speaks in one sentence of "angels," and "the spirits of just men made perfect." (Heb. xii. 22, 23.)

Our Lord's very compassionate promise to the penitent thief, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," has been sadly and palpably misconstrued, to evade its plain and unequivocal import. The Saviour has been represented as saying, 'I tell thee to-day, that thou shalt be with me,' meaning, "after the general resurrection." Christ's body did not indeed, enter heaven immediately; but His Spirit,—and not His breath,—which He commended into the hands of the Father, was doubtless, with that of the penitent in Paradise in less than a day. (See Luke xxiii. 42-44, 46. Jno. xix. 31-33. Gen. i. 8.)

Much ingenuity has also been called into requisition to explain away the obvious meaning of Luke xvi. 19-31. If it is a parable, it certainly has a meaning, and that a very plain one. It presents two opposite characters: the one living in luxury and worldly pleasure, regardless of God and His needy people; and the other a pious man in penury and distress. Such were their conditions till death came; but what then? Lazarus, "the beggar died, and was carried"—surely not his putrid body, but his ransomed and purified soul or spirit—"by angels into Abraham's bosom," a place of bliss. (Luke xvi. 22.) Our Lord adds, "The rich man died also, and was buried; and in hell (Greek Hades,) he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." Evidently it was not his lifeless body that was in torments, but his departed spirit, possessing consciousness and memory.

An earnest advocate of the doctrine of the unconscious state of the spirits of the dead, comment thus on this passage:—"The rich man denotes the Jewish nation. . . the poor man. . . the Gentiles." Here, then, we have the singular representation of unbelieving Jews who can not endure the thought of having any of their people embrace the gospel of Christ, praying that the gospel may be sent to their unbelieving brethren; and that favor denied.

It is proper to consider what were the views of the people to whom Jesus was speaking. They were principally Pharisees. (ver. 14.) Josephus says, "The Sadducees take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and of the punishments and rewards in Hades; maintaining that the souls die with the bodies." He adds, "Their doctrine is received by but a few." He also says, "The Pharisees have the multitude on their side;" and remarks, "They hold that souls have an immortal vigor in them; and that the wicked are to be detained in an everlasting prison." (Aut. B. xiii. C. v. 6. Wars B. ii. C. viii. 14. B. xviii. C. v. 6.) Mr. Walter Balfair, a shrewd opposer of the doctrine of conscious existence between death and the resurrection, admits that "Christ and his Apostles never expressly contradicted this false notion"—as Mr. B. calls it—"common to both Jews and Gentiles." Is it not, then, utterly unaccountable, that Christ who must have known the views of the Pharisees, and often exposed their errors, if their belief 'that the souls of the dead possess conscious existence, either in comfort or in wretchedness,' if it were false,

not only refrained from correcting it, but also delivered a discourse strictly adapted to confirm it?

It is not strange that our opponents are at a loss how to account for Paul's "desire to depart." (Phil. i. 23.) One attempts to solve the difficulty by suggesting, that, though he knew he could not get to heaven till a certain fixed period, yet he would like to be on the way!!! Another proposes to solve it by a reference to Paul's troubles and sufferings. But the Apostle himself assigns quite a different reason. He says (2 Cor. xii. 10.) "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake"; but since "to die is gain," he "had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better," namely, than to remain alive. (Phil. i. 20-24.)

The Apostles Paul and John both plainly mark the distinction between the believer's "outward man" his body, said to "perish," and his "inward man," the soul, which "shall never perish." (2 Cor. iv. 16. 3 John 2. John x. 28.) Though the felicity of real Christians will doubtless be enhanced by the reunion of the soul and the glorified body at the last day, yet Peter and Paul speak expressly of the mortal body as a "tabernacle," to be "put off," or "dissolved" by death. (2 Pet. i. 14. 2 Cor. i. 1.) Paul adds (ver. 8.) "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

If men in the face of such explicit and unequivocal statements, which need no comment, will persist in denying the conscious existence of persons between death and the resurrection, surely it may be justly said of them, "Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

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No. 3.—CHINA.—Continued.

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The structure of the human frame, in its normal state, is perfect. Obviously no organic change can be made in it without detriment. But in China, where the wisdom and goodness of the Creator are not known, an absurd and cruel fashion, that of foot-binding, designed to make the feet very small, and to distort their shape, subjects a large proportion of the females to extreme and long-continued suffering, and to great inconvenience through life.

It is, indeed true, that both the sufferings and enjoyments of time are inexpressibly inferior to those of eternity, and the publication of the gospel in all lands is especially intended to make Christ known to perishing sinners, and to render them forever happy. At the same time the mitigation of sorrows in this world that result from sin and error, is a worthy object, and one that is especially attainable by the diffusion of the precious gospel.

Female influence is evidently strong. Pious mothers have special opportunities to promote the spiritual welfare of their children; and they are in many instances the means of winning their husbands to Christ. (1 Pet. iii. 1, 2.) It is, therefore, of great importance, both on their own account, and that of others, that they should be partakers of saving grace. But in China, as in some other heathen countries, owing to the habits prevalent, females have very limited opportunities of hearing the gospel, or of receiving religious instruction, unless it is communicated to them by those of their own sex. Under these considerations it is highly requisite, and important, that a goodly number of Christian women, adapted to the discharge of this duty, should be devoted to it. The fact, therefore, that in the Southern States, as well as in other places, numbers of pious females have voluntarily laid themselves upon the altar of this sacrifice, and, leaving the comforts and endearments of home, have gone into the distant and benighted regions of heathendom to labor for the present and future welfare of the unhappy victims of superstition, especially those of the female sex. They are thus very usefully occupying an important department in the noble work of evangelizing the heathen which cannot be occupied by men.