CHAPTER IV

Christianity and Resurrection

The need for elaborating Christian doctrine of resurrection, arises in the context of what we have seen thus far, both in early Hick and later Hick—Early Hick, as we have pointed out was very skeptical on the notion of resurrection, and in his later phase, Hick, accepts life-hereafter. In both the phases, he was within the bounds of the Christian framework, but one cannot have Christianity without having the very basis on which the entire system rests upon, viz., resurrection. Therefore it is imperative to study how resurrection is thematically embedded in the entire Christian tradition. The doctrine of resurrection cannot be avoided and Christianity be still retained, it is as paradoxical as playing Hamlet without the prince of Denmark.

The objective of the present discussion is to show the centrality of Resurrection, as embedded in
the corpus of the following **Christian doctrines**

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In Biblical thought man is regarded created by God,

"And God created man in his own image..."\(^1\)

"And God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ..."\(^2\)

man is classified above all forms of life, because of the distinction, that God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and also he was made in the image of God.

The image of God goes not denote physical likeness. God is a spirit. He does not have parts and passions like man. The image of God refers to the mental likeness. God is a spirit; the human soul is a spirit and the likeness refers to the attributes of a spirit i.e., reason, conscience and will. In making man after his own image God endowed upon man rationality, morality and thereby freedom. With these attributes which belong to a spirit man is distinguished from all the
inhabitants of the world. He belongs to the same order of being as God Himself, and thus the possibility of communication between God and man. This capacity to know God and have communion with God serves as the basis of religious enterprise.

Further man was endowed with intellect. Genesis Chapter two reveals that man had intelligence to give names. Adam, the first man created by God had the power of speech, and the connection between reasoning and speech. He could link ideas with words, i.e., he had the cognitive function of man.

In Genesis Chapter three, we read man was endowed with the moral faculty. Adam, had the power to resist or yield to moral evil. When confronted with the choice to eat or not to eat the forbidden fruit, we find Adam willfully ate the fruit offered by Eve.

Over and above these three facets of God, (Rational
Moral and Freewill) yet another essential attribute of God which is bestowed upon man is the "immortality".

The living principle, which is used interchangeably is the "Soul" or "Spirit" that man receives from God by virtue of being created by God. This Soul or Spirit in man is immortal. Man shares this essential attribute of God, in that he continues to exist after death. This Soul or the Spirit which is immaterial in man returns to God who gave it. The Spirit remains, to be reunited with the body at resurrection.

Generally speaking, man's Creation included a physical aspect as well. "The dust", symbolises the use of elements appropriate to the forming of material body. "The dust" stands as opposed to the "breathe of life". This two-fold distinction of the material and the immaterial, is the basis for the concept of resurrection (more on page 122). Further, this distinction brings us to the forceful conclusion of the "Psycho-Somatic" view of man.
IV B. SIN AND DEATH: The fall of Man and The consequence of Sin

In the previous section, we have seen that the human race was created in Adam and that the present generation is a result of natural generation. It is said that man who was created by God was "very good", i.e. well pleasing to the Creator. Though man was made in the image of God, yet he was a creature. A creature that was made with a free-will. It was this free-will that was subject to a test and the result of this test is the fall of man or Sin.

The test to which man was subjected to, was both significant and relatively minor as well. It was minor in that, it consisted of only a single prohibition, amidst a bountiful provision in the garden of Eden. Significant, in the sense, that the prohibition was a matter of life end death. To keep or break the commandment, was the principal means of showing obedience or disobedience to God.
The course of the test was started, by Eve lured to eat the forbidden fruit. On examining the forbidden fruit, Eve reasoned that it was good for food, and forgetting the fact that God had expressly forbidden the eating of that particular fruit, she ate the fruit and also gave the fruit to Adam. It must be remembered that Adam and Eve were free moral agents, with the ability to resist or yield to the evil temptation. This willful choice of eating the forbidden fruit, was breaking the law given by God. And this breaking of the law or disobedience to the will of God, is known as SIN.

Sin was purely volitional; an act of one's own determination. In other words, a voluntary act of the will, further sin was the denial of the divine will and the elevation of the will of man, over the will of God. In short, a deliberate over-stepping of divine limits. In its final analysis, the first Sin was a positive disbelief, in the words of God.
Sin is otherwise described as, the "Fall of Man".

i) THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN:

The consequences of Adam's fall were both immediate and far reaching. The immediate consequence was that, Adam's relationship with God was broken. Adam recognised the fact that he had lost his standing before God, owing to his disobedience. He had now a sense of God's displeasure upon him and also the condemnation of God rested upon him. The condemnation of God was that, for disobedience man would 'surely die'. God said to Adam "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return". This condemnation of God on Adam was again, both immediate and far reaching. Immediate, that Adam did die, and far reaching, that the descendants of Adam do die even today.

"Wherefore, as by one man Sin entered into the world, and death by Sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all
men have sinned."

Elsewhere Paul writing on the same theme says,

"As in Adam all die ..."5

Because of the unity of race in Adam and the organic unity of mankind Adam's one sin (or sinful nature) is imputed to each member of the race. The one initial sin of Adam is transmuted in the form of sinful nature by inheritance, from father to son throughout all generations. Now, men do not fall by their first sin but they are born fallen sons of Adam. They are not sinful by sinning, but they sin because by nature they are sinful. The effect of the fall is universal.

Thus, death is the far reaching consequence of Adam's Sin. Man the creature, had the privilege of sharing the immortal nature of God. But by sinning he foreited his privilage, and became subjected to death.
What would have been the situation, if man had not sinned? To this thought-provoking question, Smith suggests that there might have been a separation of soul and body, but he adds, "it is certainly supposable that the transition to another state might be made without anything, of that which now goes to make up the terribleness of death".

Death is the separation of the two basic elements in man - the immaterial from the material, or the soul from the body. We have seen that man was created by God, with a material body and immaterial soul. When man ceases to exist as a union of the two, i.e., the body with the soul, we say he is dead. Death then, is the disassociation of the two, while life is union of the two.

The Words of Paul: "As in Adam all die ..." have primary reference to death. But Paul was dealing with the subject of resurrection and sets it over against
Our observation so far has been that the human race has been a result of natural generation through the centuries, with Adam being the first man created by God. And Adam's one initial sin is imputed to the entire human race, resulting in the unvarying sentence of death upon all. But God who created man and nature in such an orderly way, has not left man to a haphazard and an uncertain end. He has a definite plan and program of salvation for redeeming man.

Salvation is the whole work of God by which He rescues man, from the doom of sin (death) and bestows upon him eternal life, rather restores the initial privilege of immortal life. Salvation therefore, is the purpose of God to redeem fallen man. In all its aspects, it is God's work on behalf of man and not vice-versa.

God's plan of salvation was provided in the person
and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was made to assume flesh \textsuperscript{12} like us, to die in our stead. His death was substitutionary death, this simply means, that Christ died \textbf{in place of the} fallen man. As Christ Himself said,

"For even the son of man came not be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many."\textsuperscript{13}

His death, as He Himself said, was \textbf{to be a payment} in the place of many. His death was in the \textbf{place of} the fallen man and for his benefit. In \textbf{relation} to Salvation, His death means the payment of a \textbf{price which} Sin demanded, so that the fallen \textbf{man could be redeemed}.

The death of Christ not only paid the \textbf{price for} sin, but also averted the \textbf{condemnation of God}. Because Christ died, God is satisfied.

The death of Christ is effective and \textbf{is acceptable}
as a ransom for many, because of the impeccability of Christ. The impeccability, refers to the sinless nature of Christ. Christ though tempted as any human, remained sinless. The substitutionary death of Christ does not end with the fact that he died as a ransom, but His substitution is effective in that He rose from the dead. The idea of salvation would have never been meaningful, if Christ did not rise from the dead.

Paul, in First Corinthians shows it very clearly, that if Christ is not risen, then men are still in their sins. And if men are yet in their sins, the redemptive Program of God is an utter failure.

Thus, the doctrine of resurrection is vitally linked with the concept of salvation.

Salvation is provided to the world in a general sense. As Adam's initial sin is imputed to the human race, to the end that all are under penalty of death.
and as the sin of man was imputed to Christ, to the end that He became a ransom for the whole world, so also the righteousness of God is imputed to all who believe, to the end that they may stand before God justified, free from the condemnation of death.

In the death and resurrection of Christ, God has provided salvation for the human race, the whole scheme is laid open to every man. All that is required of man is, to accept what God has provided by faith, without which the accomplished work of Christ stands meaningless to the individual member of the human race. The acceptance of this accomplished work of Christ, is what makes man to have passed from "the condemnation of death unto life."
IV D. JESUS CHRIST: The Incarnation of God,

The Uniqueness of Christianity is the close kinship of Christ and the distinctiveness of Christ is that, He is the incarnation of God. In other words, He is the divine-human-being. The whole substance of Christian faith centres in Jesus Christ, without Him there is absolutely nothing.

The study of the incarnation of Christ, raises the question concerning His pre-incarnate state or the pre-existence of Christ, i.e., Did Christ exist before He was born?

i) PRE-INCARNATE CHRIST:

The question concerning the pre-existence of Christ, is answered in John's Gospel, Chapter one and verses one and two which read as follows:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God. And the same in the beginning was
with God."\(^\text{16}\)

In eternal past, "Christ was with God", i.e., in the beginning. "In the beginning", in John's Gospel refers to, "in the beginning" of the Genesis account, where it says,

"In the beginning God created..."\(^\text{17}\)

"This reveals another aspect of Christ, and that is, Christ had a part in creation where God said,

"Let us make man in our image..."\(^\text{18}\)

The reference is being made to Christ, in the usage of the plural pronoun us. The same is asserted by John, in his Gospel, when he declares,

"all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made."\(^\text{19}\)

That Christ had a part in creation, undoubtedly speaks of his pre-incarnate state. Someone has said:
"a word is a medium of manifestation, a means of communication, a method of revelation."\textsuperscript{20}

In harmony with this we read,

\textit{"And the word became flesh"}.\textsuperscript{21}

The Word becoming flesh, was a medium of God's manifestation of Himself in the person of Christ, and in the person of Christ God communicated Himself with the fallen man. Again, Christ was the method by which God's plan of salvation for humanity was carried out.

\textbf{ii) INCARNATION:}

As seen earlier in John's Gospel, \textit{Christ}, who was with God in eternal past, became flesh and lived among men. "Became flesh", is considered to be a designation of human nature, referring to its lower and visible side. It declares one of whom, humanity could be affirmed. The meaning would have still been the same,
if John had said, "the Word became Man."

iii) HUMAN BIRTH:

In becoming flesh, to dwell among human beings, in the first place, he was born of a woman. His descent is traced back to Adam by Luke. But the question that had been raised concerning his humanity is, did Christ inherit a sinful nature? Like it is, since the fall. In being born of a woman, He, though He lay aside His glory, in no sense did He lay aside His Deity. He was still God, though in Human form. His essential nature of being sinless, was no way tampered with, by being born of a woman. On the other hand, we have ample evidences concerning his sinless nature. John says, "in Him was no sin". And Paul says "Who knew no Sin" etc.

iv) HUMAN NATURE:

Concerning His Human Nature, Christ had all the
elements that are essential to human nature. He had the development of ordinary human beings. He grew, he advanced in wisdom and stature.

He had a body and a soul or spirit, the material and immaterial aspect of human nature. Of the body, we read,

"Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" 27

"He Spake of the temple of his body" 28

"He partook of Flesh and blood" 29

Concerning the Soul, we read,

"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death" 30

"Now my soul is troubled" 31

"Jesus perceiving in His Spirit." 32
"Father, into they hands I commend my spirit".\textsuperscript{33}

Further, he had the characteristics of a human being, like being hungry, thirsty, tiresomeness,\textsuperscript{36} etc. And He was repeatedly called, a "Man".\textsuperscript{37}

Despite the overwhelming proof of His humanity, Christ did not forsake His Deity. He continued to be God. In Him all the fulness of the God dwelt bodily.\textsuperscript{38} The very essence and the nature of the God head, dwelt in Him, In short, he was not merely God-like-man but He was God-man.

v) PURPOSE OF INCARNATION:

The One and the only purpose of His coming, is to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He came to give His life a ransom for many, to redeem man from sin by His death. As John puts it,

"and we know that He hath been
manifested to take away Sins;
and in HIM was no Sin". \(^{39}\)

But the question is, why **must he be a sinless man?** To this Schaff answers,

"because the justice of God requires, that the same human nature which had sinned should make satisfaction for sin; **but** no man being himself a **sinner**, could satisfy for others." \(^{40}\)

The idea of putting away sin refers to the scape-goat, where a goat was offered as a **sacrifice and another** was sent into the wilderness, after the **sins** have been confessed upon its head.

Thus Christ was referred to as the "**Lamb of God** \(^{41}\) which has taken away the **sin of the world.**" The **Death of Christ is the foundation for man's redemption.**
IV E. DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST: The fulfillment of God's Plan of Salvation and a foretaste of (future) eschatology.

We have just seen the incarnation of God, in the person of Jesus Christ and also the purpose of the incarnation. It would be quite profitable to look into the work of Christ, during the earthly stay, as for example, His works as Benefactor, His labours as a Teacher, His deeds as a Healer, etc., but because of the nature of our work, we must pass these by and concentrate on the two main things in His work, and they are, His death and resurrection.

We would refer to death of Christ as a "Work", because His death was result of a definite choice, (for a purpose) on His part. It was not a death that came by unavoidable circumstances, or came upon Him unawares. Therefore, the usage of the term 'work', could be justified, because or the purpose of Christ's death.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ (and the
concept of resurrection in general), is essential to Christianity. And if resurrection of Christ is essential, the death of Christ is equally essential, since death precedes resurrection.

The uniqueness of Christianity is this, that it assigns importance to the Death of its founder. The elimination of the death of Christ, is as good as the elimination of Christianity from the list of religions.

The death of Christ is the fundamental theme of Gospel. The term 'Gospel' means 'Good-news' and the good news is this, that Christ died for the sins of man-kind because it implies that we do not need to die for them.

The Pauline description of the Gospel is

"the death of Christ for our sins, burial and resurrection."^{42}
In short the death of Christ is the "Good news of Salvation".

This essential element of Christianity and the fundamental theme of the Gospel, is prophesied in the Old Testament on several occasions by different writers, as for example, we read about the crucifixion of Christ in Psalms, again in Psalms we read about His resurrection. In Isaiah, we are told that He,

"was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our inquiries." foretells the selling of Christ for thirty Silver Pieces and the investment of that in potters field.

To list out the references in the New Testament would be redundant, because the entire New Testament revolves around the vital theme of Christ's death an
resurrection.

The death of Christ is the fulfillment of the chief purpose of Incarnation. We have earlier pointed out that the "Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many". Thus, we repeat, that Christ primarily came to die for the fallen man. The Incarnation of Christ is not an end in itself; it is but a means to an end, the end is the redemption of the lost through the death of Christ on the cross.

The death of Christ, a ransom for many, first of all, brings reconciliation between God and man. The relationship that was broken, at the time of man's fall, is now restored. Restored, because Christ atoned for man. The condemnation or the curse of God on man, has been removed.

Christ has removed the curse, as we read "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law."
The summary of the whole redemptive program of God is like this:

At first God and man (Adam) stood face to face with each other. In sinning, Adam turned his back upon God. Then God turned His back upon Adam, Christ's death has satisfied the demands of God and now God has again turned His face toward man. (But what remains is that, the fallen man must turn around and face God, i.e., believe that Christ died for Him).

i) THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST:

The objective aspect of the entire redemptive program of God for man, includes more than the death of Christ; it includes His resurrection also.

Christianity as a religion, stands or falls with Christ's resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a body resurrection. There are many who refuse to accept the
bodily resurrection and advocate spiritual resurrection. They say, "in His Death He passed out of His Physical life and in His resurrection, He passed into spiritual life". But this by no means is an explanation, because if it is resurrection, it is the resurrection of the body and not of the spirit, for the spirit by its inherent nature does not die. The spirit is immortal and further more, if one passes into spiritual life, it need not be by resurrection, it could as well be by death itself. Perhaps, it's more logical to conceive of moving on to another phase by Death than resurrection.

Resurrection, is resurrection of the body, and not of the Spirit. This is proved by the post-resurrection appearances of Christ. Christ Himself declared

"Behold my hands and my feet, that is myself, handle me, and see, for the spirit hath not flesh and bones,
as you see me have.'

Again, he was recognised by his disciple, that He was Jesus, with the nail print on his hand.\textsuperscript{50} In fact, the resurrection of Jesus becomes unintelligible if it was other than bodily resurrection.

"The resurrection of Christ affirms His Deity, as Paul says, He was declared to be the "son of God ... by the resurrection from the dead". Had Christ remained in the grave as other men had been, there would have been no reasonable ground to impose faith in Him. In fact, Christ's work of redeeming mankind has been acceptable to God because of resurrection. We read in Romans," was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.\textsuperscript{52} The essence of the "statement would be, He died for the sin of mankind and rose again "for the sake of" justification. Resurrection is the objective proof of God's acceptance of Christ's death in place of man's sin. The confidence
that God has accepted Christ's sacrifice would not have been the same, if Christ had not rise from the dead.

Finally, Christ's resurrection carries with it with assurance that all men will rise from the dead. In our classic passage on resurrection we read,

"as in Adam all die; even so in Christ all be made alive".

As in Adam all men die physically, so in Christ, all men are raised physically. In short, the resurrection of Christ guarantees the resurrection of all men. This guarantee is a foretaste of the future eschatology according to the Christian doctrine and as well, the consummation of God's original creative act. i.e. In creation, man was created in God's image, which we noticed was immortal. So in resurrection, we find this immortality is being restored to man.

The entire survey on the various Christian doctrines.
brinjs us to this conclusion that the resurrection is not an incidental or peripheral matter. Indeed, resurrection is an integral part of the entire Christian doctrine. The elimination of resurrection leads to elimination of Christianity itself, we cannot remove the foundation and yet retain the building.