CONCLUSION

Paradox of John Hick’s Critique of Resurrection and Life Hereafter

The main objective of the thesis has been to establish the possibility of identifying the present life with life hereafter (resurrection) and also show the centrality of resurrection to Christianity. We have done this with special reference to John Hick and have criticised Hick’s position on resurrection and life-hereafter.

The first phase of criticism was aimed at showing that personal identity between earthly life and resurrected life is possible personal identity, we pointed out was the bodily criterion, i.e. the form or resemblance persists despite the disintegration that the body is subjected to. In this connection we have also considered the problem of disembodied survival, where we established that the disembodied state of existence
can be linked with the embodied or pre-mortem state with the help of memory criterion.

With this we proceeded to discuss the twin problem of immortality and eternity. Here again we discussed in relation to Hick's argument that eternity is an 'age'. And pointed out that eternity or eternal does not carry with it the idea of an 'age' or duration anywhere in the New Testament, but timelessness or more precisely non-temporal. Further, we also pointed out that it is a logical inconsistency to conceive of one without the other. In discussing the two problems viz. problem of personal identity and disembodied survival, we have seen that Christian notion of both is tenable.

In the second phase of our enquiry, we have criticised Hick's view on immortal life or life hereafter. Here, we have shown the inconsistency of Hick's position on life after death. The findings
of our enquiry in this phase have been more interesting, in that they show that Hick was making a shift from Western thought to Indian thought. We pointed out the Vedantic theme of Atman and Brahman and reincarnation are embedded in his later writings. From what we have said so far, it affirms that Hick has been influenced by the Indian thought and was amalgamating both the Christian and Vedantic thought, with a view to defend his notion of life hereafter.

This supposed amalgamation is, in our view, no amalgamation. To use a metaphor the whole thing looks like, mixing oil with water. What he did perhaps could be better expressed by saying that Hick smuggled some of the ideas of Indian thought and tried to push it into Christianity by the back door. This is vividly seen in his effort to incorporate the idea of transcending ego-boundaries into the corpus of Christianity and to justify it, by appealing to the teachings of
Christ. This has been shown untenable. Nowhere does Christ refer to such a corporate living, in fact there is a blatant inconsistency between what Hick claims and what is really claimed by Christ. Moreover, the term like 'love thy neighbour' for example, though refers to the transcendence of one's ego, does not have any spiritual meaning but only have a moral import. Such propositions are meant to be moral propositions and they do not indicate anything what Hick is trying to attribute to them.

Finally, after showing the untenability of Hick's critique, we have tried to show how resurrection is embedded in the various doctrine of man, salvation etc. Thus pointing out that resurrection is not a peripheral matter but an integral part of the Christian thought.

Our enquiry shows that Hick's critique as a whole, does not shed any new light to Christianity nor does it make Christianity free from resurrection, a task which Hick was involved with.
Hick's argument against resurrection (based on linking earthly life with resurrected-life) amounts to a challenge of the entire framework of Christianity. As we have seen in the chapter entitled Christianity and Resurrection, that Resurrection is so vital to Christianity that one cannot conceive of one without the other. This involves a paradox i.e. how can one challenge, one's own framework, while retaining it? Hick is precisely doing, what he cannot do, i.e., questioning the framework of Christianity and yet at the same time working with it. For Hick, at the outset claims, that Christianity provides for him the framework for his philosophical discussion.

Again in his later phase as well, Hick's position is a paradoxical one, when he is suggesting, the life hereafter to be, one of self-transcendence, transcending ego-boundaries, a corporate life, many-in-one and one-in-many.

The paradox is this. Hick appears to have moved away from the Christian framework (on to the Vedantic
view of life-hereafter). This however is not the case. Though he is talking about transcending ego-boundaries, he is taking recourse to the teachings of Christ in order to justify his new claims, which really cannot be done. For the teachings of the Christian view of life-hereafter and the Vedantic view of life-hereafter or diametrically opposed one to the other.

In the ultimate analysis, Hick both in his early phase and later phase is entangled in a paradoxical situation, this in our evaluation involves the "Paradox of John Hick's Critique of Resurrection and life-hereafter".