

THE WORLD TO COME AND FINAL DESTINY

BY

J. H. LECKIE, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "AUTHORITY IN RELIGION"

(THE KERR LECTURES)

"HOWBEIT, when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; . . . and He will show you things to come."

SECOND EDITION

Edinburgh: T. & T. CLARK, 38 George Street



TO
THE MEMORY
OF
JOSEPH LECKIE
DOCTOR OF DIVINITY
AND OF
ELIZA HANNAY
HIS WIFE
WHOSE LIFE AND HOPE WERE
FULL OF IMMORTALITY



FIRST EDITION 1918
SECOND (REVISED) EDITION . . . 1922

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

By the time that a theological treatise has, without any undue haste, advanced to the stage of a second edition its author is often disposed to feel that he would like to write it all over again. He sees his work as it is, and as it ought to be; and he dreams of the manner in which he might improve it if he lived in a golden age wherein publishers could afford to encourage their clients in luxurious schemes and costly adventures. There is comfort, however, in the reflection that a book which has once been constructed with care is not always the better for being recomposed. In the case of the present volume, also, I am the more content to abstain from extensive changes in that I have not seen reason to depart from any of the positions maintained, or to alter expositions, or to cancel criticisms. A thorough revision has of course been made; references have been verified, typographical errors removed, some expressions amended and some statements modified.

Out of respect, further, to those authorities who have been good enough to favour me with comments and discussions, and in view of knowledge acquired since this volume was first issued, it is desirable to preface the present edition with one or two explanations.

(1) The first chapter, which contains an account of the Jewish prophetic books, was written, not with the view of

presenting an adequate discussion of these books in the entirety of their contents, but merely for the purpose of indicating the more salient features of their eschatology, as these are reflected in the New Testament and in later Christian thought. If this limitation of aim be kept in mind the chapter will be found, one hopes, accurate and adequate enough; and of course it is supplemented in later sections of this work. I grant, however, that throughout the first part of the discussion insufficient weight is attached to the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Further study has led me to recognise more clearly than I formerly did that the *Testaments* really belong to the apocalyptic literature, and, indeed, form a most important part of that literature. One feels it necessary, therefore, to modify somewhat the statement that pessimism of mood and the sense of imminent catastrophe and an exclusive and narrow doctrine of the Kingdom of God are absolutely essential features of Apocalypse; for the *Testaments* as a whole are gentle in their tone, do not predict violent revolution, and foretell a limitless Dominion of God which shall include in its beneficent sway all the races of mankind. All this is, indeed, suggested in these Lectures, but it is not adequately enforced as evidence that the universalist strain which is found in the New Testament was present in later Jewish thought. It is needless to say that the due assertion of this truth strengthens my general argument as to the dogmatic variety and freedom of Apocalypse, and as to the eschatology of St. Paul.

(2) Some exception has been taken to the absence of detailed textual discussion in those parts of this volume which treat of New Testament doctrine. But such discussion would be foreign to the whole method of the book. It does not seem to me possible to deduce important theological conclusions from anything else than the pervading spirit and persistent tendencies of apostolic thought.

(3) Some critics have found fault with the passage

(pp. 112, 113) which discusses the Judgment Parable in St. Matthew's Gospel. The view there expressed is, briefly, that we cannot feel assured that this parable is given by the Evangelist, in all its details, exactly as it was spoken; and that we are, therefore, not justified in basing far-reaching dogmatic inferences on any of its individual expressions. This is a position to which I still adhere, not, as has been suggested, in the interests of a theological opinion, but on purely literary grounds. How can we build securely on separate words and phrases which occur in a passage that is largely composed of allusions and quotations? One is, however, increasingly persuaded that the Parable as a whole is the authentic work of Jesus; and if this be the case it supplies a final proof that the Saviour was in close sympathy with Apocalypse, and even had some acquaintance with its literature.

(4) Some writers have described this book as supporting an "agnostic" position on the subject of final destiny; but that position is expressly repudiated several times throughout the volume. It has also been suggested that the writer of these lectures conceals for the most part his personal opinions. One is sorry to have created such an impression, for it is far from my purpose to practise the "doctrine of reserve." The closing chapter, *Review and Construction*, is meant, indeed, to be a brief contribution to Christian Dogmatics. It is true that, in harmony with the entire plan of this work, the constructive statement in question is presented largely in historical terms, as embodying deductions from the observed tendencies of theological thought. And this adherence to "the historical method" has certainly given to the expression of my conclusions a somewhat aloof and impersonal air. In order to correct this defect some qualifying phrases are introduced in this present edition; but it may be permitted one to say further that the argument of this book is definitely τ hostile to the theory of a conditional or contingent im-

mortality, and also to the idea that evil is everlasting. For the rest, it maintains a threefold doctrine of the state beyond death, and supports the belief that a universal Kingdom of God is the appointed goal of human history, and the end to which creation moves. It is my conviction that these positions are in themselves valid on grounds of reason and ethics; but one would hesitate to assert them in a systematic way if they did not seem to interpret fairly the general drift of Christian reflection throughout the ages. For a solitary speculation is but a little thing in the "long, long thoughts" of the believing generations.

J. H. L.

April 1922.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

I CANNOT claim that this book, like some others recently published, owes its origin to the circumstances of the present time. When I had the honour of being appointed to the Kerr Lectureship the war had but recently begun, and I chose the subject of the Last Things because I had already given to it a good deal of study, and also because it had not been treated by any of my predecessors. Nevertheless, I have been influenced throughout this discussion by an acute sense of the perplexities that beset the faith in immortality in these days of death and sacrifice. We all understand better to-day than we did three years ago the attitude of the Jewish prophets towards the enemies of the good cause, and the tone of Jesus in speaking of sins against love and humanity. Also, we realise perhaps more fully than we used to do that the Christian view of the Divine character cannot easily be maintained apart from an adequate doctrine of final destiny.

The Kerr Lectures are delivered to theological students ; but it is evident from the terms of the Trust that they are designed also to reach a wider audience. I have tried, in preparing this book, to keep this double end in view, and to combine theological accuracy with such a form of expression as may commend itself to the non-professional reader. One must admit, however, that this endeavour has been embarrassed somewhat by the necessity of using certain technical terms

which belong to the vocabulary of my subject. Some of these terms are uncouth, some are obscure, and some are inaccurate. "Eschatology" and "eschatological," for instance, are distasteful from the literary standpoint, and they are not commonly understood. One finds that educated people are not always aware that Eschatology means the Doctrine of the Last Things; and when the matter is explained, they justly object that there can be no "last things" in the life of an immortal, and that resurrection and judgment, for example, are not really final—if they are ends they are also beginnings. And yet, whatever exception we may take to these words, they cannot be omitted without having resort to roundabout and ambiguous phrases. Again, "Conditionalism" and "Conditionalist" are evident barbarisms; but they have established themselves, and must be employed. "Universalism" is also open to objection; and I have sometimes used in its place the expression "Christian optimism." "Apocalyptic" and "apocalypses," too, are clattering terms whose constant repetition becomes intolerable; and this must be my justification for speaking often of "the Jewish 'revelation' books" and "the Jewish 'revelation' literature."

Some of the definitions adopted in this work would not be accepted by certain scholars; and they are, of course, subject to qualification. Thus, I have sharply distinguished apocalypse from dogma and speculation; and one must agree that while this distinction is generally valid it is not without exceptions. Again, it may be noted that in the first chapter I have mentioned certain books which are not apocalyptic in form; but my defence is that all these writings adhere to the general standpoint of the Jewish mystics and exhibit in their prophetic passages the spirit of Apocalypse. It is evident, further, that when one speaks of "Jewish" thought, as opposed to "Hellenistic" and "Greek," one is indicating a distinction that is not absolute: no doubt, the later Judaism was all penetrated more or less by foreign influences. Finally, the ordering of the discussion which is indicated by its division into Parts I.

and II. involves a certain amount of repetition; but I can think of no equally comprehensive scheme which would not be even more open to this objection. After all, this study is largely concerned with history; and history is indifferent to the rules of logic and is rich in cross-divisions.

In seeking to indicate the sources of Christian forms of belief I have not gone farther back than the literature of Judaism — Apocalyptic, Alexandrian, and Rabbinic. The Jewish mind, during especially the two centuries preceding the birth of our Saviour, collected a great store of imaginative symbols, of speculations and of beliefs, regarding the Age to come. And it was from this store that Christianity derived the modes of its eschatology. No doubt, Judaism in its turn was indebted to the Old Testament, to Greek philosophy, to the Persian and the Egyptian religions, and to the traditions of many peoples. But I have not thought it necessary to dwell at length on this matter. When we undertake to describe the source of a river, it is enough to consider the lake out of which it flows; there is no need to trace the various streams by which the lake itself is fed. Of course, when one speaks of certain beliefs as “apocalyptic,” one does not mean to say that these were peculiar to the Jewish prophetic writers, but only that they were emphasised by these writers, and received from them the distinctive semblance and colour which they bear in many parts of the New Testament and have continued to exhibit in later Christian tradition.

Burke describes himself as one “who shuns contention, though he will hazard an opinion.” Well, a writer on eschatology cannot altogether avoid contention, and he must hazard an opinion; but the purpose of this book is not controversial, nor is it mainly the advancement of a private speculation. Endeavour is made throughout to preserve the historical standpoint, and to give due weight to each of those forms of faith and of thought that have found and maintained a place in Christian Eschatology.

It will be recognised that a book prepared and published under present conditions labours under certain disadvantages. Thus, I have thought it necessary, owing to the need of economising paper, to sacrifice a good deal of detailed work which I had intended for the appendices. In view of this exclusion of material it is permissible to say that I have referred throughout to the sources, and have not sought to expound or to criticise any writer whom I have not read. To make this statement is not to claim any credit, since it indicates the bare fulfilment of an obvious duty.

My thanks are due to Colonel the Rev. Robert Primrose, C.F., who delivered the lectures for me in my unavoidable absence. The Revs. Prof. Cairns, D.D., J. T. Dean, M.A., and A. Scott Murray, B.D., read the MS. and favoured me with valuable criticism. Sir John M. Clark, Bart. (my publisher), took a kind interest in the work during its passage through the press, and suggested some useful emendations. The Rev. W. H. Macfarlane revised the proofs with me. The Rev. D. M. Baillie, M.A., also assisted us in this matter and prepared the Indices. To all these gentlemen I am deeply indebted.

I desire, further, to recognise the consideration shown me by the Senatus of the United Free Church College, Glasgow, in unusual circumstances, as well as the courteous reception given to the lectures by the students of that Seminary.

J. H. L.

May 1918.

CONTENTS.



PART I.

APOCALYPTIC FORMS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. JEWISH APOCALYPSE	3
(1) Introductory Statement as to Eschatology. (2) Jewish Revelation Books: <i>Their Literary Characteristics: Deeper Elements in their Teaching: Their Importance.</i> Review.	
II. KINGDOM AND SECOND ADVENT	27
(1) Jewish Doctrine: <i>Its Development: Variety of its Forms.</i>	
(2) General New Testament Doctrine: <i>Its Apocalyptic Character and Indefiniteness.</i> (3) Teaching of Jesus: <i>Outline of His Prophecy: Various Interpretations of it: Modifying Considerations: Testimony of Records: Constructive Statement.</i> (4) Church Tradition	
III. RESURRECTION, JUDGMENT, THE INTERMEDIATE STATE	68
(1) Jewish Beliefs. (2) Christian Doctrine. (a) Of Resurrection: <i>In New Testament: Vital to Christian Hope of Immortality: Dogmatic Difficulties.</i> (b) Of Judgment: <i>In New Testament: Theological Interpretation: Rational Basis of Belief.</i> (c) Of Intermediate State: <i>In New Testament and Patristic Writings: Theological Developments, Greek, Roman, Protestant: Theory of Future Probation: Prayers for the Dead: Permanent Value of Belief in Intermediate State.</i>	

CHAP.	PAGE
IV. GEHENNA	103
(1) Jewish Speculations: <i>Their Elusive and Contradictory Character.</i> (2) New Testament Doctrine: <i>General Characteristics: Teaching of Jesus.</i> (3) Early Church Doctrine: <i>In Popular Opinion and in Tertullian, Origen, etc.: In Augustine's "City of God."</i> (4) Modern Doctrine: <i>Newman, Pusey, etc. Review.</i>	

PART II.

PROBLEM OF FINAL DESTINY.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE ON JEWISH OPINION IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES	133
Josephus: Philo: "Book of Wisdom," etc. Rabbinic Teaching: "Salathiel Apocalypse."	
I. FINAL DESTINY: NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE	146
(1) Teaching of Jesus: <i>Its Two Sides.</i> (2) Apostolic Doctrine: (a) <i>Its General Characteristics.</i> (b) <i>St. John: His Dualism: Reconciling Element in his Thought.</i> (c) <i>St. Paul: His Doctrine of "Death": His Doctrine of Ultimate Reconciliation: Dogmatic Interpretations of his Teaching.</i> (3) <i>Review of New Testament Evidence.</i>	
II. EVERLASTING EVIL (DUALISTIC SOLUTION)	188
(1) <i>Historical Sketch.</i> (2) <i>Types of Dogmatic Statement: Aquinas, Swedenborg, Salmond, etc.: Analysis of Orthodox Statements.</i> (3) <i>Speculative Aspects: Grounds of Objection to this Theory.</i> (4) <i>Moral and Religious Truths underlying Traditional Belief.</i>	
III. CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY (MEDIATING SOLUTION)	219
(1) <i>Historical Statement.</i> (2) <i>Modern Theories.</i> (a) <i>Evolutionary: Sabatier.</i> (b) <i>Philosophical: Rothe, Ritschl, etc.</i> (c) <i>Undogmatic: Lotze, Tyrrell, Arnold.</i> (d) <i>Theological: Edward White.</i> (3) <i>General Criticism.</i>	

CONTENTS

XV

CHAP.

PAGE

IV. UNIVERSAL RESTORATION (OPTIMIST SOLUTION) . . . 252

- (1) Historical Development: *Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Erigena, Tauler, William Law, Modern Poets.* (2) Exposition: *Speculative Strength of this Theory.* (3) Ethical Objections: *Criticism of these.* Review.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

REVIEW AND CONSTRUCTION 293

Introductory: *Criticism of "Agnostic" Position.* (1) Permanent Value of Apocalypse. *It belongs to Genius of Christianity: It expresses the Convictions which underlie Christian Belief in Immortality: Its Symbols give Definite Content to Doctrine of Future Life.* (2) Doctrine of Universal Destiny. (a) *Essential Meaning and Speculative Perplexities of Traditional View: Harmonising Tendencies in Theological History.* (b) Historical and Speculative Construction. (3) Eternal Life. *Two Types of Thought: The Apocalyptic, the Mystical. These combined in Christian Belief.*

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX	I. <i>General View of Eschatological Doctrine in Twelve Jewish Books</i>	. . . . .	326
"	II. <i>Comparative Statement of Jewish and New Testament Eschatology</i>	. . . . .	332
"	III. <i>Meaning of New Testament Term "Eternal"</i>	. . . . .	346
"	IV. <i>Future Punishment in the Creeds</i>	. . . . .	353

INDICES.

INDEX	I. SUBJECTS	. . . . .	355
"	II. AUTHORS	. . . . .	360



PART I.
APOCALYPTIC FORMS.

CHAPTER I.

JEWISH APOCALYPSE.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. THE man who undertakes the discussion of any subject must ask to be granted certain postulates. He must be allowed a foundation on which to build. Even the strictest of thinkers requires of us many concessions. And so it is quite a modest thing for one to begin the present study with the assumption that we are agreed on two matters of opinion. The first of these is the belief that human personality survives death, and the second is that some kind of eschatology is involved in the principles of our Faith. These two presuppositions may be described as modest; since to deny the first is to depart entirely from historical Christianity, and since a refusal of the second would imply that religious thought had no unity, the redemption in Christ no definite end, and the purpose of God no final goal.

But, if these two things be granted, the importance of Eschatology becomes at once apparent. It is seen to be occupied with no matters of trivial moment or of merely academic interest, but with questions of the gravest speculative import and of the most intimate human concern. The doctrine of the Last Things has for its theme those beliefs which give definite content to the thought of immortality—that thought without which there is no meaning or power in any of the great affirmations of our Faith. It has to do with those solemn and radiant expectations which, reaching beyond the limits of this transitory life, afford solace and cheer and warning to men throughout their pilgrimage, inform their hopes with larger promise and urge their thoughts to vaster issues.

Evidently, then, this is a realm of thought in the service of which one might gladly labour for a lifetime, content with the

hope of contributing but a little towards the solution of its problems. Clearly, also, it is a theme which requires of us that we approach it with sympathy, and that we regard it in the liberal light of history. It is not a matter on which an irresponsible individualism can exercise itself to any useful end. One must assume that no great eschatological doctrine has begun, continued, and ended in error and evil—must, on the contrary, hold it certain that every such belief has had its main source in truth, and has owed its strength and persistence to the verity which it contains. “False” doctrines survive because of their secret truthfulness; and no view of ultimate destiny ever held by men has been without its root in a conviction of the conscience, an experience of the soul, a demand of life. It is when we forget this that our faith is troubled, and that we fail in generous appreciation of the testimony of the Church. It is as we remember this, and patiently continue in the light of it, that we enter into that peace of mind which comes of understanding—that, at any rate, we are enabled to find the only path that leads towards reconciliation, and towards a truer statement of the universal faith.

2. But if Eschatology is thus an important part of religious theory, it presents difficulties that are fully commensurate with its dignity. Worthy to be mentioned among these is the extent to which the study of this subject is perplexed by *the conflict of authorities*. The domain of Eschatology extends on every hand into the territories of the experts; and these are regions of perpetual strife. Whether the theme of immediate discussion be the teaching of the Apocalypses or of the Rabbis, of Philo, St. Paul, the Fathers or the Schoolmen; whether it be the doctrine of Resurrection, Judgment, the Intermediate State, or Final Destiny—it is enveloped in a cloud of warring words. So much is this so that the plain man is liable to be intimidated into a position of ineffectual neutrality. In any case, he feels that whatever opinion he may express has been decisively rejected by some important theological personage. His only way of escape is to go to the original writings, to examine with care any account of an author’s teaching, to verify every reference, and—to do the best he can.

3. Again, Eschatology is rendered peculiarly perplexing by *the symbolic nature of its language*. It is rich in imaginative signs and pictures. Necessarily so; since it deals with the future and the unexperienced, and imagination is the only faculty whereby we can present to our minds the things that belong to that realm. No one has definite knowledge of things to come, or of things that are within the veil; but faith has premonitions regarding them, and it expresses these in imagery drawn from human life and experience. Hence that richly hued and splendid world of concrete symbols in which the hearts of men have been at home throughout the ages of Christian faith. Hence, in particular, such forms as Judgment, Resurrection, the Second Advent, Hades, Heaven and Hell. All these are fruits of history, not of speculation. And for this reason they do not lend themselves to systematic treatment.

It is to be remembered, also, that even those elements in Eschatology which are called doctrinal or dogmatic are, from the historical point of view, simply *forms of faith*. Doctrines of the Last Things do not start, like theories of the Person of Christ or of the Atonement, from a basis in past events. They can neither be proved nor discredited by an appeal to the records of days gone by. Neither can they be judged as if they were scientific accounts of the known and material world. They belong to the region of conjecture and vision. They are prophecies based on the contents of the Gospel and the moral convictions of religious men. They find in conscience and revelation certain elements, and out of these they seek to build a spiritual City of the Unseen. They see certain tendencies at work in the world, and they predict what the final result of these tendencies will be. They project, as it were, the lines of present experience into the Unknown and trace them to their goal. Being rational forms, they are subject to rational criticism. But they cannot be condemned forthwith on the sole ground that the understanding finds faults in their structure. They require to be tested by standards that are less simple and less easily applied. Thus, the theory of Eternal Punishment or of Conditional Immortality or of

Universal Restoration is rightly subjected to the examination of the reason, because it professes to be reasonable. But the most important question to be asked about it is—To what degree does it correspond with spiritual and moral facts? Has it a true basis in the Gospel of Christ? Is it an assertion of something in faith which, without it, might be forgotten or ignored?

4. But the chief difficulty which besets this branch of theological study is due to *the immense variety and confusion of its forms*—a variety and confusion which have arisen out of historical influences and the diversities of Christian thought. No doubt, it would conduce very much to an orderly treatment of the subject if we were to adopt private judgment as the test of truth, and exclude from consideration every doctrine, every hope and every fear, which is not ours. But such a proceeding would, we fear, work great havoc among the forms of Eschatology. It might prove to be the kind of method that makes a desert and calls it peace. And its results might suggest the saying that “where no oxen are the stalls are clean.” Evidently, we must regard as Christian every form of belief that has established an assured place in the thought of the Church. And there can be no question that the field of Eschatology, when thus viewed from a catholic and historical standpoint, presents an aspect of great confusion. It is like a straitened sea, wherein many opposing tides cause a leaping of troubled waters. A great stream of thought flowing through Judaism from sources out of sight; a powerful current of Greek speculation; a force that represents historical experiences and ancient battles; an influence that has its origin in the evolutionary view of things—all these converge in the region of Eschatology. Jewish Mystics, Platonists, Schoolmen, Idealists, Transcendental visionaries, rigid logicians, humanitarian enthusiasts, poets and men of science, have all contributed something to its content. Fantastic dreams and crude imaginings have place in it along with lofty thoughts and profound spiritual intuitions. Philosophical and pictorial elements are curiously entangled together. Beliefs which contradict each other in the plainest way claim a common source in Revelation. Alto-

gether, it is doubtful whether any department of religious thought is so rich in discords and confusions as the Christian Doctrine of the Last Things.

5. We may reasonably doubt whether it will ever be possible to bring order out of all this perplexity, or to reduce to system the amazing variety of the eschatological forms. Certainly no such ambitious endeavour is contemplated in this discussion. I suggest, however, that we may obtain a clue to some partial understanding, and find something resembling a path through the labyrinth, if we keep carefully in mind the distinction between the logical statement of a doctrine and its meaning and value for faith; and if we separate, throughout, forms which are imaginative and pictorial from those which are doctrinal and abstract. And it is in pursuance of this view that I have divided this course of Lectures into two parts; separating the apocalyptic element in the Christian teaching about things to come from those speculative theories of human destiny which are answers to a problem created by the Gospel and by the progress of religious thought. This division affords a convenient ordering of the discussion, and helps us to avoid those troubles which always arise when Apocalypse is confused with dogma, and when the language of vision and prophecy is mistaken for that of sober-minded science.

I cannot hide from you that in pursuing this study we shall have to travel along well-beaten paths. But this is a disadvantage that is not peculiar to Eschatology. The theologian must cultivate a hopeful frame of mind—must learn to tread frequented ways in a mood of expectation, and to sail familiar seas in the spirit of Columbus.

THE JEWISH REVELATION BOOKS.

I.

THEIR GENERAL LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS.

1. It is necessary to begin the study of the apocalyptic forms, as they appear in Christian history, by reminding our-

selves of certain features that characterise the "revelation" literature of Judaism in which these find their classical expression. Apocalypse must be regarded as a true development of an element in Old Testament prophecy, since we find even in the earlier prophets, as well as in later writers, predictions of the coming of the Kingdom heralded by the Messianic woes, the Consummation of glory and blessedness, the Judgment and even the Resurrection.¹ But the roots of Apocalypse stretch far back into history and must be sought in the religions of Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and in the dreams of "silent, vanished races." Apocalypse is prophecy expressed in concrete terms of the imagination, and dealing with things that transcend knowledge and experience, and are thus incapable of logical proof or purely spiritual exposition. It is an "unveiling," a "revealing," but it is so after a peculiar fashion of its own. It does not declare doctrines; it tells visions. It does not teach principles; it paints pictures. The writer of a Jewish "revelation" does not tell us that we shall be judged of God; he shows us a great white throne, and One who sits thereon encompassed by angelic hosts. Instead of saying, "The wages of sin is death," he reveals to us a burning fiery furnace. He is not content to declare that the good cause will be victorious; he pictures an army of the righteous that destroy the wicked, and a Messianic Kingdom established in a new and glorified earth.

2. The apocalyptic literature may be said to have reached its fullest development during the period between 200 B.C. and 120 A.D. It embodies a type of piety, in some respects very inferior to that of the Old Testament—narrower, less spiritual, less generous in its attitude to humanity, less believing in its attitude to God. But at the same time it represents an advance of *religious thought*, especially in the doctrine of immortality. It was a necessary preparation for the Gospel; and it was in the light of the hopes and the fears it expressed that the early Church interpreted Jesus Christ.

3. An apocalypse was generally issued in the name of

¹ Cf. A. C. Welch, *Religion of Israel under the Kingdom* (especially chaps. iv.-vi.).

some saint or prophet of great renown, like Enoch or Moses, Ezra or Daniel; and its method was to represent this venerable personage as describing his visions, relating the things that he had seen and heard in mysterious journeyings through the regions of the spiritual world. It was commonly written in some time of distress, to comfort a suffering party or people. Every crisis in later Jewish history—every time of calamity, struggle, persecution—produced its book of "revelation." When the burden of humiliation was heavy, when hope was like to die, when the hearts of men burned with wrath and fear, then this strange messenger appeared, to proclaim the coming redemption and the day of the vengeance of the Most High.

It is easy to see why writings produced at such times and for such purposes assumed their peculiar characteristics. When you are professing to tell a dream you need not be precise or accurate; you may use images most fantastic and highly coloured; you need not avoid confusions or discords; you may write without constraint and let your fancy have the rein. Thus you can appeal immediately to the hot imaginations of men, and fill their minds with hopes which are all the more stimulating in that they are vague and do not awaken the sceptical powers of the understanding. Also, it is a very wise thing to put your words into the mouth of Moses or Daniel; for in so doing you conceal your own unimpressive personality, and secure the powerful imaginative appeal of a great and shining name. Contemporaries who might not receive your revelation if they knew it to be yours, will accept it, perhaps, if they think it comes from Enoch.

Further, it is evident that when a man is describing a dream he can refer to tyrants and oppressors, and to current events, in a figurative way, so that his language may be understood easily by those who have the key to its meaning, while it will convey nothing to less fortunate persons. And this is certainly a great advantage when those whose characters and deeds are being attacked have a sword in their hand and sit in the seats of the mighty.¹

¹ Statements in pp. 8-19, as to, *e.g.*, pessimism and catastrophe, apply, without reserve, only to 1 and 2 *En.*, 2 *Bar.*, *Pss. of Sol.*, 4 *Ezra*.

4. Certainly, the apocalyptic writers take full advantage of the licence given them by their peculiar form of literary art. Their pictures are confused and indistinct. They observe no order or sequence of events. They repeat an assertion over and over again. They contradict themselves with a freedom hardly excusable even in a dreamer. They care nothing for congruity in their imagery: sheep carry swords, stars fall from heaven and become beasts of the field, altars speak, lambs inspire terror, impossible creatures keep doing impossible things. There is a quivering and uncertainty in their descriptions as in pictures cast upon a screen; and the colouring is brilliant yet blurred, as in a feverish vision.

5. The spirit of the Apocalypses in their allusions to the enemy is fierce and bitter. It could not indeed be other than this. Books that were written for the express purpose of prophesying vengeance could not be expected to contain a message of grace. Declarations of war could not be couched in terms of peace. Words of compassion would have been out of place in a warning of judgment. A garland of flowers on the handle of an executioner's axe were as fitting as soft words of charity in an apocalypse. These were stern books, written in stern days. Their mission was to witness against the victorious enemy, the arrogant usurper, the tormentor of the weak, the lying teacher of religion; and to proclaim against all these a message of hastening doom. This mission they perform with exuberant power, with unwearying zest, with redundancy of malignant force. For the opposing party, the cruel persecutors, the "kings and the mighty," the apostate Jews, the Gentiles, the fallen angels, all the workers of iniquity, there is foretold slavery, torment, eternal fire, total destruction. In this aspect of them the Apocalypses are the Black Country of literature. Flames leap up against a sky of darkness, and the gloomy valleys are filled with the voices of despair. The Creator himself rejoices in the destruction of his creatures, the Messiah exults in the work of his sword. As one reads the message of death and damnation in the *Book of Enoch*, the mind grows weary of the flaring colours;

the imagination is jaded by the long succession of horrors. The tired senses refuse to respond, at last, to the reek of blood and the smoke of fire.

6. Over against these warnings of vengeance, we find in the Apocalypses a presentation of the joys that await the righteous. This side of their message contains many beautiful and tender sayings, and is almost as vivid as the other, as lavish in imagery, as fertile in fancy. The pictures of future blessedness are as emphatic and unrelieved as the pictures of perdition. As the wicked have no light in their darkness, so the righteous have no shadows in their light. They are perfectly victorious, happy and strong; they dwell in a new world with God and His Anointed; are clothed with light as with a garment, and walk in eternal goodness and truth. They are satisfied with the likeness of the Lord, and reap in perpetual harvest the fruits of all their sorrow.

“On the heights of that world shall they dwell,
And they shall be made like unto the angels,
And be made equal to the stars;
And they shall be changed into every form they desire,
From beauty into loveliness,
And from light into the splendour of glory.”¹

II.

DEEPER ELEMENTS IN THEIR TEACHING.

1. *Their problem and its solution.*—When, however, one says that an apocalypse owed its birth, as a rule, to a particular crisis in national affairs, one does not mean to infer that the book was concerned only with that crisis, or that its predictions applied merely to the issue of one special conflict. The battle of which the author was himself a spectator was, to his mind, an example of many similar conflicts, an episode in the age-long war between the evil and the good. The problem he faced was not merely the difficulty of explaining why

¹ *Apoc. of Baruch*, 51¹⁰.

the unrighteous should triumph in his own generation, it was the problem of the prosperity of the wicked in all generations. Hence, his thought travelled far beyond the circumstances which immediately suggested his writing and embraced the whole moral problem of history, as he understood it. His task was, though after a somewhat narrow fashion, "to assert eternal providence and justify the ways of God to men."

The solution which the apocalyptic prophet gave of the problem thus set before him was always in substance the same. He pointed forward to a quickly coming end of this world, to a Judgment that should redress the wrongs of the present evil state. He had no belief in the effective working of divine grace in the lives of men, no conception of a Kingdom of God that was like the leaven gradually leavening the whole of society. The present age was in his view desperately wicked, incapable of reformation. It was "full of sound and fury," and a great many worse things, and it "signified nothing" that was hopeful or gracious. Like the modern anarchist who finds no good thing in the existing social order and believes that the whole fabric must be destroyed and a new one built up in its place, so the Jewish seer believed the present world to be so evil that nothing remained for it but speedy and utter destruction. All his hopes for the future were staked on a violent intervention of divine power—wrecking, slaying, burning with fire. This great catastrophe, this terrible day of the Lord, was at hand. Not long now till the Judge appeared, till the heavens were rent asunder, till the angelic hosts came forth on the last campaign. Not long till the books were opened and the doom begun, till the fire devoured the Gentiles with the devil and all his armies, till the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven and the establishment of the elect in everlasting peace.

"For the youth of the world is past,
And the strength of the creation already exhausted,
And the advent of the times is very short,
Yea, they are passed by :

And the pitcher is near to the cistern,
And the ship to the port,
And the course of the journey to the city,
And life to its consummation."¹

2. *Their view of the universe.*—It is this prophecy of Judgment, of an approaching Revolution and Vindication by the intervention of God, that is the proper task, the one unchanging characteristic of Apocalypse. Optimism as to the future, rooted in pessimism as to the present, is its mood; the coming consummation is its theme. Whatever is more than this is only accessory and embellishment. All ethical teaching, all historical statement, all doctrinal speculation, is strictly subordinate to the prophecy of the End. Yet, these incidental elements in the "revelation" books are of the utmost value and interest. They contain many passages of poetic beauty and religious elevation, and they enable us to see the Universe as it appeared to the eyes of the contemporaries and fellow countrymen of Jesus. It is evident that, to those Jews, the invisible world was an ever-present, poignant reality. Every hot spring was the place where a demon was tortured. Every well of healing water was the agent of angelic ministry. Throughout the whole unseen universe, as in the life of man, good and evil forces strove unceasingly for victory. Guardian spirits watched over the lives of mortals with perpetual intercession; and devils thronged the air seeking to destroy the bodies and souls of men. In the heavens above, as on the earth beneath, was waged aeonian war. Yet, somewhere above all the strife and confusion, God sat on His throne amid the sevenfold Hallelujahs; and His purpose was almighty. Every life had its appointed end and its predestined place, and all things must finally be according to the will of the "Holy One," the "Father of Israel," the "Lord of Spirits."

Such was the scheme of things as it appeared to those ancient Jews; and it is worthy of note that medieval Christians inhabited a very similar world of thought. The universe of Enoch and Ezra was the universe also of Aquinas and of

¹ *Apoc. Bar.* 85¹⁰.

Dante. For these as for those, the seven heavens were overhead, and the regions of despair were underneath their feet; the hierarchy of thrones and dominations, principalities and powers, angels and archangels, stood around the throne of God; human life was compassed about by unseen forces of good and evil; saints and holy spirits were ever "at their priestly task" of intercession for the souls of men. Also, the Kingdom which the Jewish seers prophesied, wherein God was to be present with His people, the Messiah was to dwell among them in glory, the saints were to feast upon mystical food, and eternity was to dominate time—this Kingdom was, in a measure, realised for the medieval Christian in the Church. The very God tabernacled with men on every altar; Christ dwelt visibly with His people in the person of His Vicar on earth; the faithful were nourished, in the Mass, with the body and blood of the Redeemer; and life everlasting was present in all the ministries of salvation, in all the sacraments of grace.

3. *Undogmatic character of their thought.*—It is, however, of the utmost importance for the purposes of our later discussions to remember that the "revelation" writers were not systematic theologians, that they did not speak the language of dogma, and that their mentality resembled, in no respect, that of a modern Herr Professor. The Jewish mystics were persons to whom, as Dr. Burkitt says, "consistency and rationality were quite secondary considerations."¹ Certainly, a study of their writings lends no support to the notion that there existed among the Jews any uniformity of belief regarding the Last Things. If we question them about the precise meaning of even the great apocalyptic Forms, we obtain little satisfaction. The Fall of man—did it come about through the sin of Adam, or through the apostasy of the angels? The coming Kingdom—is it to be an earthly empire, or a spiritual and heavenly state? The Messiah—are we to expect Him or not; and, if He is to come, what mission is He to fulfil? The Resurrection—is it a bodily rising from the grave; or a purely spiritual event, the rising of the soul out of Hades? Are all men to rise, or Israel only, or the righteous of Israel? The Last

¹ *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, p. 48.

Assize—is the Judge to be God Himself, or the Messiah? The Intermediate State—is it a place of opportunity; and does prayer avail for those therein? Gehenna—does it represent annihilation or æonian torment? All these are questions to which we receive, from the Jewish oracles, only obscure and discordant replies.

One may illustrate this by reference to the apocalyptic prophecies of future punishment. In the oldest part of the *Book of Enoch*¹ things are said which indicate a joyful conviction that everlasting torments await the unrighteous. But then, the writer of this document had no clear conception of personal immortality; and it is plain to the simplest mind that without unending personal life there can be no unending punishment. Also, he tells us that an existence of five hundred years is life everlasting;² so that his notion of what constitutes endless duration must have been a very modest one.

Again, the author of the *Similitudes of Enoch*³ is one of whom we suspect theological intentions, and his statements about the fate of the lost are very vivid indeed. Thus, he says:

“As straw in the fire so shall they burn before the face of the holy.
As lead in the water shall they sink before the face of the righteous,
And no trace of them shall any more be found.”⁴

Now, this prophecy seems clearly to indicate the doom of annihilation. But some scholars who have studied *Enoch* for a very long time think that it means no such thing. So that, if this writer had speculation in his eye, it is evident that he was not able to express himself in such a way as to escape misunderstanding.

Once more, the writer of the *Visions of Enoch*⁵ who describes the apostate Jews under the similitude of a flock of sheep, tells of these being cast into Gehenna, and he adds: “I saw the sheep burning and their bones burning.”⁶ Surely this is a grim and realistic picture of utter destruction. Also, there is not one word of this writer that even suggests everlasting

¹ *Enoch* 6–36.

² 10¹⁰.

³ 37–71.

⁴ 48⁹.

⁵ 83–90.

⁶ 90²⁷.

torments. So that, if he was of a theological mind he probably believed in the annihilation of the wicked. It must, however, be confessed that his discourse as a whole does not indicate that he was given to speculation.

Finally, in the last section of *Enoch*¹ both annihilation and everlasting torment seem to be predicted for sinners. It is said to these: "Your Creator will rejoice at your *destruction*." . . . "In blazing flames burning worse than fire shall ye burn." "Ye sinners shall be *cursed forever*." . . . "You shall be *slain in Sheol*."²

Such, then, is the confused variety of prediction in this great *Book of Enoch*; and in this characteristic it is typical of the whole "revelation" literature, with the possible exception of *Second Enoch* and *Second Baruch*. It is difficult to read all these books, and yet believe that the idea of annihilation was foreign to the Jewish mind; but it is impossible to study them without being convinced that no coherent or deliberate opinion regarding future destiny was in the thoughts of those ancient prophets of wrath and judgment who spoke the language of apocalypse.

It may be thought, perhaps, that this perplexity would disappear if we were to arrange the Jewish books in chronological order. But this is not so. No clear process of doctrinal development is traceable in this literature from age to age. The most advanced moral teaching of Judaism up to the time of Hillel is found in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, written at the end of the second century B.C. Also, the only approach to the Synoptic idea that the Kingdom would come gradually is contained in the *Book of Jubilees*, a work contemporary with the *Testaments*. The very rich and strong Messianic doctrine of the *Testaments*, the *Similitudes of Enoch* and the *Psalms of Solomon* is without parallel in later books. And the most definite description of Hades is in the oldest part of *Enoch*. It is notable, also, that books which belong to the same period show little agreement in doctrine. Thus, *Jubilees* denies the bodily Resurrection, while the *Testaments* affirm it. And the same divergence of opinion regarding this

¹ *En.* 91-104.

² See App. I. and II.

belief appears when we compare the *Psalms of Solomon* with *Second Maccabees*. Also, the former of these books expects the Messiah, and the latter does not. The *Assumption of Moses* and the *Secrets of Enoch* are quite opposed in tone and temper, and are agreed only in not predicting the Messiah. *Baruch* and *Ezra* show quite different estimates of the value of the Law. And Baruch is as sure about things as Ezra is doubtful and troubled. Also, Baruch contains a very elaborate doctrine of Resurrection, while Ezra presents only a vague poetic statement.¹

It is thus quite evident that these writers were not theologians. The professional theologians of Judea did not incline to write apocalypse; indeed they despised it. Those who affected this form of literary expression were patriots, prophets, mystics, even poets, but they were not systematic thinkers. They were all, of course, predestinarians; they believed in the divine calling of Israel; and they held a more or less adequate doctrine of immortality. But all their conceptions were vague. They used in common certain accepted forms; but, in their interpretation of these, they exercised great freedom of private judgment. Just as Christians of our own day may unite in repeating the Apostles' Creed and yet may differ very widely in their understanding of its various articles, so Jewish thinkers might all say, "We believe in the Kingdom, in the Resurrection, in the Judgment, in the Reward of the Righteous, and in the Destruction of the Wicked"; and yet might not be at one in their several interpretations of these great hopes and beliefs.

4. *Their imaginative freedom.*—And, as the "revelation" writers thus attached various meanings to the assertions of their faith, so they used in a free and individual manner those *imaginative phrases and symbols* which belonged to their tradition. We cannot be sure, for instance, to what extent they regarded their own pictures of the unseen world as veritable transcripts of reality. Their art was deliberate, and rich in mechanical

¹ For refs. see App. I. and II. For an account of the development of eschatological thought, in certain subordinate aspects, see Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 241-246, 287-297, 355-361.

devices. And they, beyond doubt, exerted their imagination in order to give verisimilitude to the fictitious messages of Patriarchs and Prophets. They varied their imagery to suit the requirements of their own teaching; and no one of them was careful to maintain even formal harmony with other writers of his class. The unfortunate Patriarch Enoch, for instance, is made to contradict himself outrageously by the various authors who use his name. His statements about the unseen world are deplorably inharmonious with each other. His views about the position of Gehenna are dubious and changeable; and he is not quite certain whether Hades is below the earth or in the Second Heaven.¹ Also, he sometimes believes in the Resurrection, and sometimes does not. When he denies this article of faith, he forgets to bring his views of future torment into harmony with this negation; and goes on picturing with unabated zest the physical agonies of the lost.² During the first century B.C. he is sometimes minute and enthusiastic in his portraiture of the Messiah; but in the following century he has not so much as heard that such an one exists.³ The author of *Jubilees*, also, is found denying the Resurrection of the body, and picturing the future state of the blessed as one of purely spiritual life. And yet, when he desires to show that the law of circumcision is universal and everlasting, he forgets his objection to the idea of immortals having bodies, and declares that the angels are all circumcised.⁴

These are only illustrations of many things in these books which make it impossible for us to suppose that the apocalyptic authors mistook their imagery for fact, made no distinction whatever between the sign and the thing signified, and had in their minds an unchanging picture of the coming Kingdom and the state beyond death. It is hardly credible that writers so able as these remained unconscious of their own contradictions, or that they would have permitted themselves such freedom had they attached supreme importance to the precise forms of

¹ Cf. *Secrets of Enoch*, 40¹². 13 71-3.

² Cf. *Book of Enoch*, sec. I., with *Book of Enoch*, sec. V.

³ Cf. *Similitudes of Enoch* with *Secrets of Enoch*.

⁴ *Jub.* 23³⁰. 31 15²⁷.

their imagery. Plato, in the *Phaedo*, puts into the mouth of Socrates a long account of the future state as represented in Greek mythology—its dark lakes and rivers, its prison-house of the damned, its purgatorial torments by fire. But he represents Socrates as saying at the end of it all: "To affirm positively that these things are as I have described them does not become a man of sense. But that something of this kind happens with regard to our souls and their habitations appears to me most fitting to be believed."¹ Now, it is not likely that the apocalyptic writers distinguished so clearly between the substance and the form of their teaching as Plato did; but we suspect that, if they had been strictly questioned on the matter, they would have confessed, like Socrates, that "to affirm positively that these things are exactly as we have described them would not become a man of sense."

III.

IMPORTANCE OF APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE.

1. The importance of this apocalyptic literature is, from many points of view, very great; and its influence has been out of all proportion to its volume or to the excellence of its artistic qualities.² A great deal might be written, for instance, about the impression it has made on the literature of Europe. The great Latin hymns of the Church, the *Dies Irae* and the *Te Deum*, are informed throughout by apocalyptic inspirations. When Bernard of Cluny sang the glories of the future state his voice took the tones of the old Jewish poets, and the colouring of his song was theirs. Even to this day the hymns of Christian hope repeat the forms of Enoch and of Baruch. When Dante wrote the *Divina Commedia* he showed himself the greatest of the apocalyptic seers; and he saw the realms of the other world in a light that streamed from a Jewish

¹ *Phaedo*, sec. 144.

² Greek essays in Apocalypse are inferior to Jewish even artistically; cf. legend of Erus, in *Republic*.

source. Milton would have composed the *Paradise Lost* after another fashion had the "revelation" books of Judea never been produced; and his *Lycidas*, greatest of English elegies, is rich in apocalyptic symbols. The same influence is discernible in Tennyson; as, for instance, in *St. Agnes' Eve*:

"The sabbaths of eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining road—
The Bridegroom with his Bride!"

Of peculiar significance to us in these times is the apocalyptic note in the great *Battle Hymn of the Republic*:

"He hath sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat,
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat;
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on."

Not to be forgotten, also, are the apocalyptic lines of William Blake:

"Bring me my bow of burning gold;
Bring me my arrows of desire;
Bring me my spear; O clouds, unfold;
Bring me my chariot of fire.
I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land."

In view of all this it seems strange that many writers permit themselves to speak with contempt of the apocalyptic books. Surely there must have been great creative force, and many qualities of power and beauty, in a literature which has been able to make its voice heard in the sacred songs of so many centuries, and to originate poetic forms that were not despised by Dante or by Milton.

2. But however this may be, the importance of these writings for the student of the New Testament and of Christian theology is beyond all question. When one advances from a study of the Jewish books to the reading of the Gospels, his first impression is one akin to consternation. It is startling to find that there is so little that is fresh in the figurative language of

the Evangelists. And throughout all our sacred writings we discover an important strain of thought and expression which differs in no respect from the familiar features of Jewish prophetic tradition. Wherever we find, in the Christian Scriptures, spiritual realities described and future events predicted in an imaginative fashion: wherever we read of a visible coming of the Son of Man in His glory: wherever the drama of the Last Things unfolds itself in resurrection and judgment, in the reward of the blessed and the doom of the unrighteous: wherever we are told of the angel hosts, of the New Jerusalem, of the eternal fire, the outer darkness, and the vengeance of the Lord: wherever, in short, the evangelic message of retribution and redress is conveyed, not directly to the reason and conscience, but indirectly through the imagination, especially when there is prediction of sudden and violent happenings, we are in the presence of Apocalypse, and the messengers of the Gospel are speaking to the people through the old familiar symbols which had been commended to their hearts by immemorial tradition.

Now, the value of this element in the New Testament cannot be questioned. It has proved its vitality throughout the ages of Christian life. It supplies the imaginative colour and form without which the Gospel would hardly have commended itself to men of the time of Jesus, or maintained its hold on popular thought throughout succeeding generations. The universality of the appeal of Apocalypse is made clear by the remarkable fact that its literature was more popular among those early Christians who belonged to Gentile nations than among their brethren who were converts from the Jewish Church. And this power of appealing to the common mind of humanity is evidenced by the truth that our Faith still conveys, not only its doctrine of judgment, but its most intimate messages of assurance and hope in the terms of apocalyptic vision—in the sayings of St. Paul about the rising from the dead, in the prophecies of "St. John the Divine," in the imperial word of Jesus, "I am the Resurrection."¹

Nevertheless, this strain in the New Testament message

¹ John 11²⁵.

has been the source of much perplexity, needless debate, and baseless dogmatising. And it is necessary to remind ourselves that the picturesque language of evangelic prophecy was originally designed to express the hopes and fears of a religion of a narrower and poorer content than ours, and was never capable of uttering the whole secret of Christian thought. It was a thing which Apostles and Evangelists had inherited, and were constrained to use *whether it accurately expressed their mind or no*. It was traditional; it was current coin. It was, therefore, capable of many meanings, and was in fact interpreted in many different ways. Thus, the early Christian teachers, when they used it, gained in power of direct appeal, but they lost of necessity in ability to convey a clear and unambiguous message. Hence, they have created great perplexity for those in every age who have been ignorant of the conditions which limited the freedom of Apostolic utterance, or who have persisted in treating figures and symbols as if they were prosaic statement; who have ignored the truth that a spiritual idea cannot be fully expressed under the form of a material image; who have not been willing to recognise that Apocalypse is not dogma—is the servant and not the master of thought.

3. The teaching of Jesus Himself, as recorded by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, supplies the strongest claim which Apocalypse possesses to be regarded as a thing of perpetual value. It created the forms in which our Lord expressed one aspect of His mind and purpose. It flourished in the atmosphere which was His native air. The note on which He began His ministry harmonised with it, as also did His saying to the disciples at the end—"I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in the Kingdom of God."

We cannot, therefore, regard Apocalypse in an external way, with aloof, unfriendly eyes. That old world of picture and sign does not seem alien to us when we remember that in it Jesus was at home, nor its language foreign to us when we recall that it was the native tongue of the Redeemer. We cannot wish that any of His authentic prophecies had not been uttered: since the servant is not greater than his master,

nor the disciple above his Lord. And yet it is necessary in the case of Jesus, even more than of lesser teachers, to be on our guard against the vice of literal interpretation. No tradition, however well beloved by Jesus, could contain or limit Jesus. It could only supply the raiment of His thought—and “the body is more than raiment.” Its old bottles could hold but a little of the new wine, its coloured glass could only “stain the white radiance” of the eternal revelation. It would have required a new language to express Jesus Christ—a language which He could not have spoken, nor His people have understood. Hence, it is certain that our Lord must have been misinterpreted often in His use of the traditional forms. He must sometimes have given the impression of being much less original, and much more a child of His time, than He really was. And we may, perhaps, marvel that in the providence of God it should have been necessary for Him to think and to speak in terms so peculiarly liable to being interpreted in a literal and exaggerated way. But Jesus Himself was singularly indifferent to the danger of being misunderstood. His parabolic teaching was, of its very nature, almost as liable to this danger as His apocalyptic prophecies. And some of His sayings about the Son of Man and eternal life must have been a sore puzzle to simple men and women. But for these things He seems to have cared not at all. He gave to men the words that were given Him to speak; and they that had ears to hear might hear. In this He was taught of His Father, whose purpose it was to make Himself known, not in one swift in-breaking of eternal light, but in a gradual process of revelation—a process whereby men should come to understand, little by little as the ages passed away, what had been the true meaning of a life that was lived in Galilee, a death that was suffered on the Cross, and a voice that spoke a message which was traditional and yet everlasting. The “words of eternal life” are not words that are capable of being rightly understood all at once, nor even words that are of literal, immediate verity, but words that can be used by the Spirit to guide men slowly into all the truth—that are “as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

4. There are thus certain difficulties created by the presence in the New Testament of elements that owe their origin to the Jewish "books of revelation"; and of this we shall find abundant illustration in the course of further discussion. Much might be said, also, regarding the disturbing influence which Apocalypse has never ceased to exert in every department of Christian thought. The apocalyptic genius has always displayed a marked and aggressive individuality, and has not shown itself disposed to compromise with other factors in religious belief. Hence, it has hindered and confused the work of theologians in all domains of their activity. Even the doctrine of the Divine Nature has been embarrassed by the necessity of harmonising concrete, imaginative ideas about God, derived from ancient prophecy, with those more abstract conceptions which are cherished by philosophers. In like manner, the view of the Person of Christ that is founded on the old belief in the Messiah has been difficult to reconcile with that which has its basis in Greek and Hellenistic speculation. But, of course, it is the doctrine of the Last Things that has been most influenced, and therefore most disturbed, by the apocalyptic tradition. Rationalising modes of thought regarding Immortality, Judgment, the Kingdom of God, and future Retribution have always been very much perplexed by the need of recognising and conciliating those immemorial hopes and fears, so vivid, so picturesque, so vital, that were declared by Enoch, that colour the pages of sacred Writ, that have been so dear to the common mind in every age of the Christian Church.

But, although these traditional elements in our faith may be a trouble to us as theologians, they are of immense value to us as Christian believers. Especially do they witness to a truth for which we cannot be too grateful—the truth that our religion is not a system created by the abstract thought of theorists, but an historical faith with its sources deep in the experience of mankind; taking its colours from the long travail of peoples, from the hopes and disappointments, victories and defeats of generations, from the "old, unhappy, far-off things" of Judah's age-long martyrdom. As the sign

of the Cross is witness that our hopes of salvation are rooted in the sacrificial life and death of Jesus, so the apocalyptic forms are the symbols of things that were learned in pain and tested in many sorrows. They come to us by the hands of men who through long days of battle and stress were able to maintain a steadfast faith in God, and to hope to the end that the good cause would finally triumph and the Kingdom of the Lord appear. They are thus an heritage of great price and of manifold consecration. They belong to the inestimable boon of an historical religion.

CONCLUSION.

In concluding this outline of the Jewish "revelation" literature, we need do no more than reiterate the assertion of its importance for the student of Christianity. We cannot question the greatness of the influence which it has exercised on theology, partly for evil and partly for good. On the one hand, it has created some of our deepest perplexities, some of our most persistent misunderstandings. It has been the root also of millenarian speculations, Messianic dreams, inhuman superstitions, and fierce conceptions of future penalty. On the other hand, it has supplied many of the most tender and beautiful forms of Christian hope, and it has conserved for us ideas of eternal truthfulness. The Apocalypses, for instance, look for the triumph of good, and an earthly Kingdom of righteousness; and this expectation of theirs we still cherish, looking, according to the measure of our faith, for the vindication of justice, and a condition of human society in this world that shall be in accordance with the gracious will of God. They affirm, also, that the divine method contains elements of crisis and intervention and catastrophe, as well as of education and gradual development; and this affirmation of theirs is true to the experience of men as individuals and as nations. They assert, further, that history has a moral principle in it and leads on towards a moral climax; they put their trust for future and final good, not at all in the merits of man, but wholly in the sovereign will of God; they have a sure and

certain hope of Immortality, and a fearful looking for of Judgment. And this their testimony must continue true and unshaken, in its substance and meaning, a vital element of the Christian faith and hope, as long as that faith remains, as long as that hope endures. Nay, it may well be that, not only the substance of the apocalyptic message, but its very forms as well may prove themselves possessed of a permanent fitness, an indestructible vitality. It cannot have been without reason that these forms were, according to the divine purposes, received by Jesus and His apostles through inheritance from the fathers; nor can we suppose that the Christian Church would have adopted them with such lively willingness, or held to them with so great tenacity, had they not been adapted in a peculiar way to represent and to conserve the ideas they contain. The Coming of Christ in His Kingdom, the Intermediate State, the Resurrection of the Body, the cleansing and destroying Fires, the New Jerusalem, and the Beatific Vision of God, may be found to retain their place in the thought of Christian people, as pictures and signs than which we can find none fitter to fulfil their appointed purpose. They, at least, express with dignity and worthiness, and with the sanction of immemorial use, realities of the spiritual order which in their nature transcend our thought.

Apocalyptic forms belong to the same order as sacrament and ritual, architecture, music and poetry, and share with these the invaluable gift of expressing religious faith without unduly defining it. And thus they have a meaning for the wise and understanding, while they are not without a message for the unlettered and the simple and the little child. For this reason they are peculiarly fitted for the use of the great community of the Christian Church, which embraces within its borders all sorts and conditions of men, all nations and tribes, all types of intelligence, all degrees of spiritual understanding. While dogmatic statements and logical definitions may enchain us and may divide us, the Apocalyptic Forms will always tend to set us free and to unite us under the banner of an ancient tradition — will help us, through their large catholicity, to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

CHAPTER II.

KINGDOM AND SECOND ADVENT.

I.

JEWISH DOCTRINE.

THE Kingdom of God is the central thought of Apocalypse. Other beliefs—Judgment, Resurrection, Hades, Gehenna—are subordinate to the vision of the City of God. It is true that these lesser conceptions are sometimes so emphasised in the Jewish books as to obscure the pre-eminence of the sovereign Hope. Nevertheless, they are really satellites and attendants. The Kingdom is the ruling planet in the sky.

And yet, even this supreme idea is not clearly defined in Jewish thought; nor are the various teachers at one in their presentation of it. In the "revelation" books we find the belief in the Kingdom expressed in very different forms, and diversely coloured by the religious, philosophical, and political outlook of each writer. It is an excellent rule to suspect all accounts of Jewish doctrine in proportion as they suggest symmetry, order, and logical coherence.

These confusions and perplexities are due mainly to the historical circumstance that the Kingdom conception arose at a time when the outlook of men was confined to this present world, and had afterwards to be modified so as to meet the requirements of belief in a real personal immortality. In the Old Testament the hope of the Kingdom is expressed sometimes in a very lofty and generous way. It is predicted that Israel shall be set free, vindicated, and established, that the Gentiles shall be converted, and that all the ends of the earth shall see

the salvation of God. Then will come a blessed era of universal well-being—a time of peace wherein men shall dwell in brotherhood, and their spears be changed into pruning hooks; a time of religious light wherein all men are to know the Lord. The blessings of this golden age are to extend even to the lower creatures. Wild beasts shall raven no more, and the lion shall lie down with the lamb. The whole order of nature, also, will be so modified and transfigured as to be a fit environment for this glorious life—tearless, painless, and without sin.¹

This was a great conception, altogether noble, worthy, and simple; and it never lost its place in the minds of men. But the growth of the belief in personal immortality complicated matters and introduced a disturbing element into the thought of the Kingdom. The doctrine of immortality solves many a hard riddle, but it undoubtedly creates problems of its own; and this the Jews discovered. Their increasing faith in a state of rewards and punishments beyond the grave delivered them from the old difficulty of reconciling their belief in God with their experience of the inequality and injustice which oppressed this present life, but it perplexed their doctrine of the Messianic Age. It confronted them with the question—What is to be the relation of the blessed dead to the Kingdom of God when it comes on the earth? Are they to remain in the Unseen State, remote from their brethren, or are they to return to this world and have a share in the great consummation? The answer usually given to this was that the saints would arise from the dead and enter with the living into the City of God. This was the natural solution. It was most fitting to be believed that those who had looked for the Kingdom in the days of their flesh would wish to return and rejoice in its coming. And so there came to be a generally received opinion that the Messianic State would include the dead as well as the living. But it must be confessed that this belief expressed itself at first in a form that was somewhat crude. The earliest view retained the traditional idea of the Kingdom, and expected the righteous dead to experience a second incarnation in order that they might be fitted to enjoy its citizenship. This conception

¹ See refs. in App. II.

is found, for instance, in the apocalyptic prophecy which runs through chaps. 24, 25, 26 of Isaiah. In this very old writing, the Messianic woes and fiery judgments are described. Then comes a vision of the Kingdom which God will establish in His holy hill of Zion. Finally, the blessed are called to awake out of sleep and arise from the dust in gladness of life. "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

The same ancient view is expressed, with less religious elevation but in a more developed form, in the oldest section of the *Book of Enoch*. In this work the Messianic State is described as one in which men eat and drink, marry and give in marriage, beget many children, and live a life of five hundred years, surrounded by peace and abundance, in a world of beauty and generous harvests. It is predicted, also, that the departed of Israel will arise out of Hades and receive a new body such as shall fit them to share again all the conditions of physical life.

This conception, however, was outgrown by the more thoughtful. These came to feel that, as the condition of departed saints was already one of spiritual blessedness, so any Kingdom to which they could return must be first of all a spiritual state. Hence, in the *Similitudes of Enoch*, the Kingdom is conceived as a condition of religious communion with God and with the Messiah; its citizens shall be clothed with light, and shall dwell in a transfigured and glorified earth. The author of the *Book of Jubilees*, going further, discarded the idea of a bodily resurrection, and did not expect the departed to share in the Messianic Reign. And the writer of the last section of *Enoch* transferred the scene of the Kingdom to the spiritual world. He taught that the earth would pass away, and that the righteous dead would awake from sleep in Hades and rise disembodied into the heavens. The righteous living, also, being transmuted into a spiritual likeness, would become as the angels of God and ascend to be for ever with the Lord.¹

The Alexandrian Jews, again, either gave up the idea of the Kingdom altogether or thought of it as an earthly paradise

¹ For refs. see App. I. and II.

in which departed saints would have no place. Thus, Philo predicts that the scattered Jews will be set free and return to Zion led by a supernatural Appearance, visible to the redeemed but unseen by others; a soldier Messiah, "warring furiously," will subdue their enemies; the lower creatures will become friends of humanity; and a state of universal joy and peace will appear. Men will there live long lives, and pass peacefully on towards death "or rather immortality."¹ Philo could not possibly entertain the idea of the departed having any lot in this Kingdom. They had passed at death to their native state of rapt communion with God. For them to experience resurrection and a new life on the earth would be humiliation and punishment, not reward or blessedness. Bodily life was an evil and a prison; and those who had escaped from it returned to it no more. Thus the Kingdom, as conceived by Philo, was simply the consummation of earthly history, and had no relation to that heavenly state wherein the souls of the blessed behold the face of God.

The Jewish literature thus contains four different answers to the question created by the faith in immortal life. The *first* of these is to think of the Kingdom as an earthly paradise, and to suppose that the departed will receive at the resurrection such a body as shall enable them to share in mundane joys. The *second* is to spiritualise the Kingdom in a somewhat indefinite way; and to say that those who are alive at its coming will have their physical frames changed into a spiritual likeness, while the righteous dead will be endowed with a body after the same fashion, so that all may be heirs together of the City of God. The *third* is to transfer the scene of the Kingdom to heaven, and to think of the quick and the dead as translated thither at the last day—absent from the body but present with the Lord. The *fourth* is to keep the idea of the Kingdom separate from that of personal immortality; and to conceive the former as a terrestrial state in which the departed can have no portion, inasmuch as they already possess a better life than any earthly empire can bestow. These four solutions of the problem are, however, confused and intermingled in

¹ *De Excerptat.* 9, *De Praem. et Poen.* 16.

many of the books; individual thinkers seem sometimes to hold one of them and sometimes another; and the apocalyptic writers, as a rule, express no clear view as to the relation of the Kingdom to the unseen world.

The Rabbis describe the Kingdom of God under three aspects: (1) as a thing already present wherever men are found who are faithful to the law; (2) as the vindication of Israel; (3) as a means of blessing to all mankind.¹ I believe it to be impossible to say how they related the doctrine of the Kingdom to that of immortality. Probably they tended in the main towards the view expressed by Philo; but their thoughts on the subject were characterised by the same perplexity and changefulness as marked the whole Jewish doctrine of the last things. And the apparent confusion of their teaching was increased by the peculiarities of apocalyptic imagery, by the influence of changing political circumstances, and by the waxing and waning of the hope of a personal Messiah.

II.

GENERAL NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE.

Now, the influence of all this variety of thought is evident in the New Testament which, indeed, contains suggestions of all the different Jewish theories. The belief in the personal Messiah, of course, attained in the minds of Apostles and Evangelists a value it had never possessed before, receiving new tenderness, intimacy, and wealth of content from its association with the personality of Jesus. But, otherwise, the Kingdom idea is not more positively defined in our sacred writings than it is in Jewish books. There is no formal consistency in the pictures of it; and its relation, as an earthly state, to the heavenly Empire of God is not made clear. The outline of the whole conception remains vague, clouded, and variable, like that of distant hills against a changing sky. It is plain that, in the case of the Kingdom as of other apocalyptic

¹ Cf. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, pp. 65-115.

ideas, the Spirit of revelation was not concerned to alter existing forms of thinking, but was content to give them new religious value and to illumine them all with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps the best illustration of the indefiniteness that characterises the New Testament doctrine of the Kingdom is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Nowhere is the Kingdom idea more prominent than in this book; and yet it remains exceedingly elusive in its form. The author does not expect any earthly reign of the Messiah; he looks for "the heavenly Jerusalem," "an heavenly country," a "city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."¹ Also, he expresses the expectation of the Parousia with deliberate vagueness—"to those who look for Him" Christ "shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation."² In short, all that we know about this writer's belief regarding the Kingdom is that it signifies the fulfilment of all the desires, and the fruition of all the hopes, of faith.

Now, this characteristic of the Epistle to the Hebrews cannot be ascribed to Alexandrian influence, since the apostolic First Epistle of St. Peter, while it is suffused with the light of the near coming of Christ, maintains a similar reserve of tone, and speaks of the Kingdom as "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for believers.³ It is unnecessary, further, to remind ourselves that the Gospel and First Epistle of St. John are even more reticent than First Peter on this subject. In these writings the Kingdom is seldom represented as a thing that is to come; and the hope of the Second Advent is expressed in the promise of Jesus to come again and to receive His disciples unto Himself,⁴ and in the saying—"It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."⁵

On the other hand, the Second Epistle of St. Peter predicts that heaven and earth will be consumed by fire, and that there will appear "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth

¹ Heb. 12²² 11¹⁶. 10.

² 9²⁸.

³ 1 Pet. 1⁴ 5.

⁴ John 14³.

⁵ 1 John 3².

righteousness.”¹ The Apostle Paul, again, presents the Kingdom idea in several forms and in varying imagery. It is the present possession of believers—“righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.” It is the Church, the Body of the Redeemer. It is a Kingdom in a renewed world. And it is an universal dominion of God through Jesus Christ.²

In the Apocalypse of St. John the element of discord is so increased as to defy any attempt at coherent interpretation. In this book the Kingdom is, now the Church, now a glorified earthly state, and now a spiritual inheritance. And the difficulties of its teaching are increased by the fidelity with which it follows the rules of apocalyptic art. The martyrs, for instance, are portrayed both as a triumphant host and as prisoners under the altar;³ and the New Jerusalem, though it is described as a material city, is lighted by no material sunshine, but by the spiritual splendour of God.⁴ Also, it is said to exclude all that are without, and yet its gates are declared to be open all the hours in perpetual welcome.⁵ Further, there is in the City a Tree of Life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations;⁶ and it is difficult to see what use this tree can serve, since those that are within the City are in no need of healing, and all the sinners who have escaped the great Destruction are denied admission to the place of blessedness.⁷

But they that are troubled greatly by things like these perplex themselves in vain, forgetting that symbolical truth is one thing and literal truth another. It passes the wit of man to present a many-sided reality in a succession of pictures that are all of one colour; and every picture of St. John is faithful to an aspect of the Gospel. If he had believed it possible to describe the Kingdom with logical consistency he would have written an essay, and not an apocalypse.

Thus many and thus various, then, are the forms of the Kingdom-hope in our sacred writings. It is a vision that

¹ 2 Pet. 3¹⁸.

² Cf. 1 Thess. 4¹⁴⁻¹⁷, 2 Thess. 1⁵⁻¹¹, 1 Cor. 15²⁰⁻²⁸, Rom. 8¹⁸⁻²⁵, Eph. 1³⁻¹⁴, Phil. 2⁹⁻¹¹, Col. 1⁹⁻²³.

³ Rev. 7⁹⁻¹¹ 6⁹⁻¹¹.

⁴ 22⁵.

⁵ 21²⁵⁻²⁷ 22^{14. 15}.

⁶ 22².

⁷ 21⁸ 21⁷ etc.

presents itself to the eyes of faith in many a different guise. Hardly has one view of it appeared than it dissolves and another takes its place. Yet in all its varied semblances it bears certain characteristics that never change. It is always securely established, incorruptible, dominating, beautiful. And it is always an heritage that has been purchased for us with the precious blood of Christ, who is ever its Lord, its light and its glory by the grace of God the Father. We may apply to the New Testament vision of the Kingdom the words that Browning uses in speaking of the face of Christ. It

“Far from vanish, rather grows,
Or decomposes but to recompose,
Becomes my universe that feels and knows.”

III.

TEACHING OF JESUS.

Now, the perplexities which attend the interpretation of the Kingdom doctrine, both in the Jewish books and in the New Testament generally, assert themselves in an acute form when we come to consider the prophecies of Jesus as recorded by the earlier Evangelists. Our Lord's predictions of the approaching Reign of God, His account of Himself as the Son of Man, and His pictorial descriptions of the Second Advent—all these present the apocalyptic problem in its most disturbing aspect. The questions which they raise are not of merely academic concern, but touch the vital interests of faith. The Gospel apocalypse is certainly marked by features of apparent discord; and it suggests that our Lord entertained expectations which history has not fulfilled. Also, the imagination finds it hard to reconcile the picture of Jesus of Nazareth, in its grace and truth, with the vision of the terrible Messiah; and it is difficult to feel that the Synoptic prophecies have any natural congruity with the sayings recorded by St. John, with teaching like that contained in the Parable of the Prodigal Son and in the Sermon on the Mount, and especially, perhaps, with the

story of the Cross and Passion. It is impossible for us to regard the perplexities thus created with detachment or indifference. The words of Jesus are to us of paramount importance; and nothing that might even tend to modify the Christian view of His supreme spiritual authority can fail to awake in the Church a keen and anxious concern.

Outline of Gospel Apocalypse.

(a) Now, there can be no doubt whatever as to the importance of the Kingdom doctrine and prophecy in the Synoptic account of our Lord's teaching. Jesus began His mission with the message—"The Kingdom of God is at hand."¹ He continued to speak of that Kingdom and of its coming throughout the whole of His ministry. And He said to His disciples at the Last Supper, "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."² The thought of that coming time of awe and glory and blessedness was the poetry and the inspiration of His life. He lavished the treasures of His imagination, and appealed to the simplest experiences of His hearers, to illustrate His great conception. Nothing was too high, and nothing too homely, to afford a parable of the Kingdom. He saw symbols of it in the springing corn, and in the tiny seed which grows to be a great spreading tree of hospitable shade. It was the Pearl of great price. It was the Banqueting Hall of plenty and welcome. It was the great Marriage Feast. It was the appointed place of recompense for the poor and the weak, and for all who lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. Many would come from the east and from the west and enter into its blessedness. It would be ruled by the spirit of service to one's neighbour and of filial trust towards God. Its law would be the law of love; and self-forgetfulness, humility, and the childlike heart would be the conditions of attaining to rule and authority therein.

(b) Such was the importance of the Kingdom idea in the teaching of Jesus; and such the variety and wealth of form

¹ Mark 1¹⁵,

² 14²⁵,

in which it was expressed. Of course, a great deal of this doctrine is not in any way apocalyptic, either in substance or fashion. Much of it is simple and direct, expressed in imagery taken from nature and common life—"one with the blowing clover and the falling rain," one also with the common experience of humanity and the assured thoughts of religion. Still, it is impossible to evade the force of those utterances which are after the manner of the "revelation" books, and declare visions that are coloured with the most vivid hues of Apocalypse. Thus the sense of impending crisis which is so characteristic of Jewish prophecy finds expression often in the Gospels. Jesus speaks not seldom as if He feels Himself to be standing among things that are old and ready to vanish away. He sees the Galilean towns and the city of Jerusalem lying under the shadow of approaching doom. He declares with a stern sorrow that many are following the easy way that ends in destruction, while few are finding the narrow path that leads to the Kingdom of God. He is doubtful whether the Son of Man when He comes will find faith on the earth. He proclaims the approach of the Messianic woes—fiery signs and portents, wars, famine, pestilence and earthquake. He prophesies the appearing of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven with His angelic hosts. He tells of the throne of Judgment being set, and all nations standing before it; of the condemned being cast into the outer darkness and into the eternal fire, and of the justified being called into the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. He speaks of the blessedness of that Kingdom—the joy of the Lord, the comforting, the feasting, the recompense. And He bids men watch for its coming, lest they be asleep or unprepared when the Son of Man appears—lest they may not be ready to welcome Him, or to endure His question, when He steals upon the world like a thief in the night, at an hidden hour, at even or at midnight, or at cock-crow or in the morning.

(c) Thus the prophetic teaching of Jesus, as presented by the earlier Evangelists, contains all the familiar features of the apocalyptic programme. No doubt, some elements in it may

have been exaggerated under the influence of contemporary expectations and modes of thought; but its authenticity is, in the main, guaranteed by the best documentary evidence. Also, its expression is sometimes so characteristic, so vivid, so brief and pointed, so touched with imagination and imbued with ethical meaning, as to leave little doubt that it is among the things which the early Church truly received of the Lord. The problem it involves is not that of determining the main outline of our Lord's predictive message; it is the question of its interpretation. This latter presents a difficulty that has continuously occupied the attention of scholars for very many years; and it would exceed the limits even of amateur audacity to approach its discussion with a light heart, or even a hopeful spirit. The very confidence with which it has been debated has made assurance difficult; the ingenuities of the learned have obscured the prospect of any complete solution.

Modes of Interpretation.

(a) One thing, however, is evident; we cannot solve the problem of the Gospel prophecies by the method of so-called "spiritualising." It is impossible to accept the view that the apocalyptic element in the Synoptics represents nothing that was really characteristic of Jesus. We cannot agree, for instance, that when He spoke of His Second Coming He meant to say that the impression of His life and sacrifice would produce its full effect only after He was gone; or that, when He prophesied the Kingdom, He intended simply to assure us that certain moral and religious principles would prevail. It is, indeed, difficult to understand how this explanation of things ever satisfied any one. It is worse than unhistorical; it is dull. It explains poetry by turning it into prose. It is like saying that when Shakespeare described the stars as singing like angels, he proposed only to remark that the stars revolved in an orderly manner. This mode of interpretation does, of course, achieve simplicity, but it is the simplicity of the commonplace. It does not blend the colours; it washes them out. In place of the glowing imagery, the splendid paradoxes,

of the prophet, it gives us plain and cool and placid meditation. It reduces to an abstraction that concrete hope, of many hues and forms, that shone in the vision of Jesus—that was the romance of His life, and the joy that was set before Him in His death.

(b) But, if we thus reject as insufficient the theory which practically excludes the Gospel Apocalypse from serious consideration, there remains for our adoption the opposite view which attaches high importance to this feature in the records as representing a vital element in the mind of Jesus Christ. But, if we assent to this latter position, and agree that our Lord thought and spoke of things to come after the manner of the Jewish mystics, then it is well that we should do this with thoroughness and goodwill. We do not show thoroughness or goodwill in this matter if we say that Jesus was an apocalyptic prophet, and yet insist that He must have meant, when He spoke of the Reign of God, just what we suppose other teachers to have meant; since we know that the Kingdom idea had no dogmatic or uniform content either in the "revelation" books of Judaism or in the New Testament writings generally, but, on the contrary, took several different forms, and depended for its meaning on the individual genius of each writer. Again, we are not thorough in the application of our principle if we look for logical consistency in the imaginative teaching of our Lord; inasmuch as a study of the literature shows that the method of the Jewish prophets did not encourage or even permit that quality. In short, a really scientific interpretation of the Gospel predictions in the light of Apocalypse leads us to expect no dogmatic precision in the evangelic conception of the Kingdom, forbids us to limit the freedom and originality of our Lord's belief by reference to any supposed standard of contemporary thought, and does not permit us to be impressed or disconcerted by the discovery of apparent discords in the pictorial predictions of Jesus. The more we test the Gospel apocalypse by the data given us in works like the *Enoch* writings and the Revelation of St. John, the more are we delivered from perplexity, the less are we disposed to literal and dogmatic exposition, and the better do we understand the

freedom and wealth and beauty of the hope that dwelt in Jesus.

I propose then to illustrate this view by reference (1) to the difficulties that beset the strict eschatological rendering of the Gospel apocalypse; (2) to certain characteristics of Jesus which forbid us to identify His thought with that of any Jewish school; (3) to those features of the records themselves which show the free and indefinite character of our Lord's belief as to the Kingdom of God.

(1)

Difficulties of the "Eschatological" Theory.

The theory which interprets the Synoptic account of Jesus in the light of a dogmatic conception of Apocalypse is not the creation of one thinker, but has been developed gradually through the labour of many minds. It attains, however, to its full expression in the writings of Joh Weiss and Albert Schweitzer.¹ It may be well, then, to begin this section by combining in one brief statement the main features of the construction presented by these two scholars.

Jesus was, in their view, the supreme prophet of the apocalyptic tradition. He apprehended His Gospel in strictly Messianic terms, and under the influence of a dogmatic predestinarianism. He shared the pessimistic standpoint of the Jewish thinkers; and the crash of hastening doom was constantly in His ears. His prophetic mood was "gloomy and rugged," oppressed by "the shadow of approaching judgment" and "the thought of the destruction of the world."² His mission was to prepare men for the approaching end, and to clear the way for the coming of the divine Kingdom whose appointed ruler He Himself was. His general religious and moral teaching was a thing subordinate to His eschatological message, and even out of harmony with it. His ethical doctrine

¹ Joh. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (2nd ed.); A. Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus* (English).

² Weiss, p. 135.

of personal salvation was inconsistent with the predestinarianism of His prophecies,¹ and with His view of the Kingdom which was purely religious, without moral content, the "bare idea of a Reign of God." The precepts of the Sermon on the Mount were simply expositions of the manner in which men should think and believe while they awaited the coming of the Son of Man.² According to Weiss, Jesus had "an innate joy in nature and in the world of men," and it was at times when this natural characteristic of His mind prevailed over His prophetic convictions that He uttered "those parables and maxims which possess an eternal validity for mankind of every age."³ These precious elements in His teaching were thus a mere by-product of His ministry, and failed entirely to influence the prevailing tone of His message. At first He expected the Kingdom to come during His lifetime; indeed, it is probable that when He sent away His disciples on their preaching mission He looked for its appearing before they should have completed their work—at the close of the harvest which was already ripening in the fields.⁴ But this early hope was disappointed, and soon He came to understand that something hindered the Advent of the Kingdom. Weiss thinks that this hindrance was the unrepented sin of the people.⁵ Schweitzer supposes that Jesus believed the delay of the Advent to be due to the fact that the Messianic woes had not appeared—those troubles and sorrows which according to tradition must precede the coming of the Lord.⁶ But, whatever the obstacle may have been, He set Himself to remove it by the sacrifice of Himself. His voluntary submission to death was to procure redemption for the elect, either because it would be a propitiation for their sin or because through it He would take upon Himself, and endure in His own experience, the whole burden of the Messianic sorrows. He therefore set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem on a sublime mission of uttermost self-surrender for the attainment of the supreme good. He saw in the Cross the way to the Kingdom.

¹ Schweitzer, p. 353.

² Weiss, pp. 134-136.

³ Weiss, p. 201.

² *Ibid.* p. 352.

⁴ Schweitzer, p. 356.

⁶ Schweitzer, pp. 385-388.

By the path of death He would go to the Father, and would return again in a little while to judge and to destroy the world, and to establish that state of blessedness, that Reign of God, which He should have purchased for His people with His precious blood.

(a) Now, it is not to be denied that this construction is supported by many features of the Synoptic record. One must admit, also, that the theory, of which Schweitzer is the most thorough exponent, does emphasise elements in the character and work of our Lord that have often been forgotten—the sheer force of His personality, His sense of authority, the immutable strength of His purpose. Also, it does conserve, in a kind of symbolism, much of the Evangelical faith, inasmuch as it asserts that Jesus was conscious of a supernatural origin and mission, that He set Himself to establish the Kingdom of God, and that He gave Himself in willing sacrifice that He might accomplish a great redemption.

(b) But the difficulties that beset this interpretation, in its details and on its negative side, are certainly very great. Evidently it presents a self-contradictory portrait of Jesus—depicting Him as a gloomy and rugged prophet, who nevertheless taught a doctrine of mercy and service; a man who was great enough to change the history of the world, and yet so misread the signs of the times as to believe the end of that world at hand; a high predestinarian, who thought to hasten the purpose of God;¹ one who came to minister and give His life a ransom, but none the less expected to establish a Kingdom of love by means of destruction. This is a quite incredible account of Jesus Christ; and it is incapable of being reconciled with many elements in His doctrine, and especially with the view of His person and teaching presented in the Fourth Gospel.

(c) And, if this theory is open to criticism when regarded in general outline, further defects are revealed if we consider it as stated in detail by each of the writers I have named. It is to be noted, for instance, that Weiss describes the

¹ Schweitzer, pp. 368-369.

prophetic convictions of Jesus as opposed to His native genius, and to His most intimate thoughts regarding God and the world. He thus denies the harmony of the Saviour's religious experience, and depicts the mind of Christ as a kingdom divided against itself.

As to Schweitzer's exposition, its disabilities are manifold. To begin with, this writer takes astonishing liberties with the historical evidence. For instance, he says that John the Baptist appeared at a time when apocalyptic prophecy had fallen into "silence";¹ in face of the fact that one of the most vivid predictions of the Parousia in the whole of Jewish literature was written by a contemporary of John and of Jesus.² Also, he speaks as if there had been only one Jewish doctrine of the Kingdom; whereas there were several. And, further, he denies that there was any political colour in the Messianic expectation as expressed in Apocalypse, although there is clear evidence to the contrary in the *Psalms of Solomon*. But, apart from these little matters, he combines a continual claim to extreme scientific rigour with habitual concession and compromise. Thus, he affirms that Jesus always thought of the Kingdom as a thing to come, and yet admits that the Messianic consciousness of our Lord implied that the Kingdom was, in some sense, already present with Him in the world. And this is only an illustration of Schweitzer's failure to make good his claim to be the one consistent apostle of logic. What are we to make of a writer who maintains the attitude of Christian faith towards the Saviour; but nevertheless teaches that Jesus discovered on the Cross that His visions had deceived Him and that the hope that had inspired His ministry had been mistaken after all? But the final example of this author's inconsistency is afforded by the statement with which he closes his discussion. In this statement he contends that, while the conclusions he has already indicated are valid on critical grounds, they need not destroy the confidence of the Christian believer. Whoever will repeat in his own life the self-renunciation of Jesus will learn to know Him as He really is, and will attain a faith that cannot be shaken. Thus the

¹ *Quest.*, etc. p. 368.

² *Ass. of Moses.*

truth of history is set in opposition to the truth of experience, and each individual is thrown back on his own subjective impressions as the ground of his assurance. We are to find in self-denial a means of escape from the negative results of science!

(d) Now this is, of course, a fragmentary and brief account of this critical construction of the Gospel. But it may suffice to indicate that the school which dogmatizes Apocalypse fails of complete success. Its purpose is to show that the difficulties of the evangelic records can be solved by the application of a rigorous historical analysis. With this intent it assumes that Jewish thought had attained in gospel times to a definite doctrine of the Last Things. It then affirms that Jesus adopted this doctrine, and expressed it with decision and harmony in His later teaching. As a result of this view, it subordinates the more individual to the more traditional elements in our Lord's message; and asserts that there was a rift in His thought, and that His prophetic convictions were not in accord with His moral and religious beliefs. Thus, it creates perplexities of a deeper and more radical kind than those which it seeks to remove; it leaves confusion worse confounded. And the root of its misfortunes is that it starts from an unhistorical basis. The Jewish expectation of the End was not dogmatic but prophetic and imaginative. Its conception of the Kingdom was not defined and uniform, but vague and many-sided and changing. Also, the imagery in which it was expressed was not harmonious in form and colour, but diverse and discordant. When we forget these things we attribute to Apocalypse a logical cohesion that is foreign to its genius—that is not ancient but modern, not Jewish but German. And the result is that we reap a harvest of amazement; and achieve a portrait of Jesus that is not recognisable either by history or by faith.¹

¹ Of course much of this criticism does not apply to Weiss so much as to later writers. Weiss does not himself insist strongly on the "dogmatic" character of Apocalypse. There is an elusiveness about his beautiful and suggestive work that renders strict interpretation difficult. But his exposition, *on its negative side*, is logically at one with Schweitzer's.

(2)

Characteristics of Jesus that modify His Prophecies.

1. *His unique religious consciousness.*—But, in the second place, there are elements in the character and experience of Jesus which forbid us to identify His prophetic beliefs with those of any other teacher or of any Jewish school. The first of these, of course, is His unique religious knowledge, His unbroken filial communion with the Father. This is the supreme fact about Jesus. It constitutes His originality and His permanent claim on the devotion of mankind. In the light of it, therefore, we must interpret all His reported sayings. Especially must we regard His use of traditional forms as modified by it. But if we thus start from the consciousness of Jesus, and ask ourselves how the whole scheme of Jewish thought would present itself to Him, we find ourselves without the means of reply. It is sometimes assumed, indeed, that Jesus shared “the popular Messianic expectation of His time.” But then we do not know what this popular expectation was; and even if we did, it would be impossible to take for granted that Jesus shared it. The opinion of the vulgar is the worst possible guide to the beliefs of the wise. Besides, the Gospels afford clear evidence that our Lord was not “the unlettered peasant” of common tradition. This is shown by the accounts of His arguments with Scribes, by His reading and translating the Scriptures in the Synagogue, and by the traces of Rabbinic modes of thought that sometimes appear in His teaching.¹ Also, it seems quite certain that He was acquainted with the literature of *Apocalypse*. Evidently, then, it is not possible for us to assume that Jesus held the “popular” ideas about the Kingdom, whatever these may have been.

Neither can we be confident that He was in accord with the opinions of any separate Jewish writer. How can we say that any one of those anonymous persons who composed the *Enoch* books was able to anticipate the mind of Jesus? They

¹ Cf. Joh. Weiss, *Paul and Jesus*, p. 69.

did not agree with each other; they were not men of first-class genius, either intellectual or prophetic. How, then, can we accept the best of them as the interpreter of Christ? No doubt, He shared with them the general outline of a radiant hope; no doubt, also, He expressed Himself in the imagery that was theirs. But, beyond these common characteristics, we cannot feel any assurance that His thoughts were their thoughts. We know that it is the spirit within a man that gives meaning to the forms of his belief; and so it seems certain that no article of faith can have meant for our Lord just what it did even for the most religious of His countrymen. How shall we present to ourselves the world of traditional hope and promise as it lay in the serene light of the mind of Christ, a light that transfigured all things by a secret of its own? We may surely say, at least, that ancient symbols and signs had for Jesus a significance other than they had ever possessed before. Even the Jewish prophets of apocalypse had a fine spirit of individuality and independence, and each of them imparted fresh meaning to his message according to the measure of his power. And we are plainly without excuse if we deny to Jesus a freedom that was exercised by these ordinary men. The only sure way to misunderstand Him is to limit Him; and the only certainly mistaken theory is that which seeks to impose the bondage of common tradition on the most original personality in the history of mankind.

Especially must we count it unreasonable to interpret *the Messianic consciousness* of the Saviour by ancient Jewish expectations, in such a way as to imply that these conditioned His inner life. It is not possible to suppose that His filial communion with God *arose out of* the belief that He was the Messiah, or that He expressed the whole religious content of His mind when He said to Himself, in the language of tradition, "I am the Son of Man."¹ The Messianic idea was not great enough to contain Him. He embodied it, but He changed it; combining it with the conception of the suffering Servant of

¹ On Jesus' use of title Son of Man, cf. Dalman, *Words of Jesus*, p. 241 ff.; E. F. Scott, *Kingdom and Messiah*; Charles, *Book of Enoch* (Appendix).

the Lord, and enriching it with His own experience. His vision of God was the achievement of His own spirit, not a privilege that attached itself to His position in the hierarchy of souls. His fellowship with the Father conditioned His thoughts about the Kingdom and His supremacy therein—created and informed His conviction that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. The Messiahship was but the transparent lamp; His individuality was the light that illumined it. Indeed, Christian faith has always discerned this truth. It has penetrated by a kind of intuition to the secret of His personality, and has found Him to be greater than the Christ, more human than the Son of Man, and more divine than the Lord of the Kingdom. Hence it is that the imagery of the Fourth Gospel has gradually come to have more religious value for it than the eschatology of the earlier records; that the Good Shepherd, the Bread and Water of life, the Light of the World, the true Vine, the Resurrection and the Life, seem to it more adequate symbols of Jesus than the picture of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven; that Eternal Life is more to it than the Kingdom; and that, more than the vision of a Second Coming like the lightning in the skies, it treasures the promise recorded by St. John—"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself"¹

2. *His "optimism."*—It seems, then, that the unique religious knowledge and experience of Jesus must have given a newness of meaning for Him to the expectation of the Kingdom and Parousia—a newness of meaning which we cannot measure or define, since it was incapable of being expressed in the traditional language which He used. But it is to be remembered, further, that one of the essentials of the apocalyptic spirit was absent from the mind of Christ. The Jewish books, as a rule, are permeated with a very gloomy temper of thought—the only exceptions to this being the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and the *Books of Adam and Eve*. The prophets of Apocalypse looked with sad, lowering, censorious eyes on the world which they inhabited.

¹ John 14³.

They put no trust in the power of spiritual forces to redeem humanity, and they showed little tolerance, tenderness, or faith in their judgment of their fellow-men. They saw nothing around them but decay and death. Baruch expressed their attitude when he said:

“For all the healthinesses of this time are turning into diseases,
And all the might of this time is turning into weakness,
And all the force of this time is turning into impotence,
And every energy of youth into old age and consummation.”

This pessimism of the Jewish prophets was, indeed, the secret of their whole position. It was because they were utterly hopeless of the present order that they looked for its complete destruction in the day when the Lord should appear.

Now, it is not possible to agree with those who think that the attitude and temperament of the Master were in harmony with this mood of thought. Spite of some sayings in the Gospels, we cannot agree to speak of “the pessimism of Jesus.” No doubt, He saw that the Jewish State was hastening on towards disaster. No doubt, also, He believed that the world was largely under the tyranny of evil powers. He had a sad and stern sense of the moral peril that besets the life of men. He is rightly called the Man of Sorrows; and there is profound truth in the saying of Pascal—“Jesus will be in agony till the end of the world. No sleep for Him during that time.”¹ Nevertheless, the impression produced upon the mind by the personality and bearing of our Lord is one of great hopefulness. It could not, indeed, be otherwise. He knew Himself man; and He knew Himself one with God; how then could He despair of mankind? Edward Caird speaks in his *Gifford Lectures* of the “immeasurable optimism of Jesus”;² and we can understand his use of the phrase. As we read the account of the Galilean ministry we feel ourselves in the presence of a spirit that is rich in hope as in mercy. All things seem possible in the light of His face; and it seems the merest unbelief to doubt the conquering power of goodness. Con-

¹ Vinet's *Studies in Pascal*, p. 80.

² Cf. *Evolution of Religion*, vol. ii. pp. 107-111.

fidence in the ability of the forces of life to overcome disease and sin shines through His words and works; and He sees Satan fall as lightning from Heaven. Nothing is able to resist the touch of the life eternal that is in Him—not demons, nor pain, nor weakness, nor death. He discerns the promise of the Kingdom in the eyes of little children, whose angels do always behold the face of the Father. In His attitude towards the world of humanity, also, there is little that suggests the gloomy prophet of judgment. He sees a pathos in the wandering lives of men; they are to Him as sheep not having a shepherd. He finds spiritual possibilities in the most despised; believes that the publicans and sinners may be made fit for the Kingdom of God, and that the lost may be restored. He reserves His censure for sins of arrogance, oppression, pretence, and cruelty, and has little to say in condemnation even of the offences that seem to us most shameful and hopeless. The Son of Man is come, He says, not to be ministered unto but to minister: and those to whom His service is given are the weak, the poor, the sinful, and the despised.

Now, nothing could be more alien than all this to the spirit of Jewish apocalypse. When He said to the woman who was a sinner, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more,"¹ and to another penitent, "Thy sins are forgiven,"² He showed that a great gulf separated Him from all those who thought after the manner of *Enoch*. And this is a characteristic of Jesus which has a most important bearing on our interpretation of those Gospel prophecies that indicate a promise to return to the world on a mission of destruction. Predictions of this kind, as expressed by the Jewish teachers, belong to a consistent view of things—they pertain to the prevailing sense of impending catastrophe, which again arose out of a pessimistic temper of thought. Hence, our estimate of the likelihood that a purpose of destruction possessed the mind of Jesus depends very much on the degree in which we suppose Him to have shared the pessimism of His age. The more you are able to show that He looked upon the world

¹ John 8¹¹.

² Luke 7⁴⁸.

with the eyes of the Jewish teachers, and that His ears continually heard the crash of the coming doom, the more likely you make it to appear that He expected the Parousia soon, and according to the Jewish manner. On the other hand, the more you emphasise the hopeful, gentle, universal element in His teaching and life, the less probable does it seem that He pictured His own Second Coming in the colours of flaming vision and as a swiftly hastening doom. Thus Weiss admits that there is something in the life of our Lord which does not suggest that He shared the gloomy thoughts of His countrymen—those very thoughts out of which arose the expectation of a speedy end of things. But he attributes this element in the story of Jesus to times when He experienced relief from the burden of His message, when the eschatological gloom of His thought lightened and the sun of God shone through the clouds. The optimism of Jesus was a passing mood; His pessimism was the daily atmosphere of His thought. And it was in harmony with this latter dominant element in His belief that He predicted His speedy return to condemn the world and establish the Kingdom of God.¹ And it is evident that if we can accept this interpretation it will appear to us altogether natural that Jesus should have painted the vision of the Second Advent in the darkest possible colours. If, however, Weiss's view seems to us utterly incredible, we are left face to face with the old difficulty of accounting for the Synoptic sayings which speak of His immediate return in apocalypse of wrath and terror. We are compelled to ask ourselves again whether it is likely that He, being no pessimist, adopted an expectation which belonged to pessimistic thought, and that He who loved so well the world of men promised to appear in a little while for its destruction and for the establishment on its ruins of a Kingdom of the Elect.

Now, this difficulty of reconciling the negative side of the Gospel apocalypse with the wide human sympathy and great hopefulness of Jesus, lends some weight to the suggestion that the early Church under the influence of eschatological habits

¹ *Predigt*, p. 134 f.

of thought may have exaggerated somewhat the force and definiteness of the Parousia predictions, and even in some cases have misunderstood their intention. It is true that this possibility is often discounted on the ground that the prophecies of the Messianic woes and the end of the world occur in the earliest documents, which date from a period before the crisis of Jewish affairs had begun to fill the minds of men with the sense of approaching fate. It is to be noted, however, that in the *Assumption of Moses*, which is older than any of the Synoptic records, the Consummation is declared to be at hand, and the sorrows and portents that are to attend the Parousia are stated in terms that resemble closely those of the Gospels. Also, one can see no reason for denying that Jesus may have foreseen the fall of Jerusalem forty years before it came to pass, and that some of His most vivid prophecies may have foreshadowed that tremendous event. Of course, we must agree that He foretold His coming again, and that He described this Second Advent as being appointed for judgment as well as for deliverance. But it is difficult to believe that He can have declared His intention to destroy all the world except a small company of the chosen. Such a prospect would have been congenial enough to the Jewish mind, in some of its moods, but it is almost impossible to harmonise it with the outlook of Jesus. And so it is altogether reasonable to admit that the note of universal doom in the message of the Saviour was echoed with greatly magnified force by the mind of the early Church, during that period of tense and feverish emotion which preceded the close of Jewish history.

But even if we were sure that Jesus said all the things recorded in the Gospels, and even if we were to affirm that all His prophecies applied to the end of the world, and were to interpret them in the light of current opinion, we should not be constrained to find in them any very rigorous import.¹ Certainly we could not agree that our Lord declared anything

¹ The Jewish idea of what would really happen to the world in the Consummation was, of course, as vague and variable as the conception of the Kingdom itself.

regarding His Second Advent that was inconsistent with His attitude towards the masses of men throughout His earthly ministry. "We *know* the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," His hopefulness and His benignity; and this knowledge is founded on the impression made by His entire life and character. It is, therefore, more secure than any opinion we may hold as to the meaning of certain apocalyptic sayings in the Gospels. What precisely was in His mind when He predicted the great catastrophe and tragedy of the End, we cannot tell. His thought is obscured by the imaginative terms in which it is expressed—terms that are capable of different interpretations. But we may be confident that His message of destruction and judgment, like His doctrine of the Messiah and the Kingdom, was in complete inner harmony with the divine sympathy and compassion which He always showed toward the multitude of men, and with His belief in the Fatherly care and love of God for every creature He had made.

(3)

Testimony of the Records.

I have thus sought to indicate two characteristics of Jesus which must have modified His prophetic outlook—namely, His unique religious knowledge, and the hopefulness and catholicity of His mind. If we make due allowance for these we shall be led to adopt a somewhat agnostic view as to the precise meaning of His predictions; at least we may refuse to identify His thought with any particular form of Jewish opinion. In accepting this conclusion, also, we do not depart from the belief that Jesus was the sovereign exponent of Apocalypse. Rather may we claim to enforce that idea with thoroughness and goodwill. It was of the essence of the apocalyptic tradition that it left room for individual liberty, and that it did not define its terms. And, therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that the supreme Master of it was supremely free, and that He expressed with completeness the imaginative variety of its genius. There remains, then, the task of showing that this

interpretation of our Lord's prophetic message is confirmed by the testimony of the records.

1. *The Kingdom doctrine.*—And this is not an undertaking that presents any great difficulty, either in the case of the Kingdom doctrine or in that of the Parousia predictions. The belief that the *Kingdom idea* is expounded in a clear and consistent way in the Gospels is quite unjustified. Any one that is in doubt of this has only to consider what he would say if he were asked to tell us what precisely our Lord's conception of the Kingdom was in its concrete form and relations.

The difficulty of answering this question is indeed illustrated fully by the want of agreement among those who make the attempt. For instance, most readers of the Gospels will have no doubt that Jesus taught an *ethical* doctrine of the Kingdom—that He thought of it as a state in which moral life continued, and men practised self-denial and mercy. And this impression seems abundantly justified by the qualities which our Lord required of those who would inherit the coming Age, by His assertion that the law of love would govern it, and above all by His doctrine of God. An ethical view of the divine nature would seem to imply a similar view of the divine government. Yet some eminent authorities find reason to assert that the idea of the Messianic State, as held by Jesus, was purely religious and predestinarian—without moral content, “the bare idea of a Reign of God.” Nor can we say that this interpretation is without basis in the Gospels; since it is evident that many of our Lord's commandments are directed to men surrounded by evil and violence, and would find no sphere of fulfilment in an ideal state of things. Similarly, the Gospel records suggest that Jesus believed the Kingdom to be, in some sense, *present in the world*. This is the apparent teaching of the Parable of the Leaven, and is directly stated by St. Luke;¹ and it is reasonable to say that if Jesus knew Himself to be the Messiah, even in the days of His flesh, He must have believed that the Messianic State was ideally come. The Kingdom could not be absent from the earth if its King was there. He carried it about with Him wherever He went, and

¹ Luke 17²¹.

He realised it in His own perfect obedience. Yet many authorities whose opinion is worthy of great respect certainly teach that our Lord never thought of the Realm of God except as a thing to come.¹ These are only illustrations of the contradictory answers that are given by competent persons to the most elementary questions regarding our Lord's doctrine of the Kingdom. And surely it is fair to conclude that there can be no clear teaching where such diversity of interpretation is possible.

Suppose, again, we ask ourselves which of the Jewish conceptions of the Messianic Age was nearest to the mind of Jesus, the answer is far from clear. It is evident that He did not think of the Kingdom as a purely heavenly state. He looked for a time in which the will of God should be done on earth as it is in heaven.² Was His hope, then, of the character which is expressed in the oldest of the *Enoch* writings—the hope of an earthly Paradise, a state of material well-being, victory, and peace? Or did it resemble, rather, the vision contained in the *Similitudes of Enoch*—the vision of a spiritual Empire in a new world made after the pattern of Heaven? To such questions no unqualified answer can be given, since some sayings in the Gospels support one view and some another. There is, certainly, evidence that lends colour to the more material interpretation. Promises of earthly reward and recompense are found even in the earliest documents;³ and the saying that Jesus will drink wine with His disciples in the Kingdom of God⁴ does, in its literal meaning, suggest the idea of a physical form of life. A like import, also, attaches itself to the prediction that the disciples will sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel.⁵ But, on the other hand, such a conception of the Kingdom is difficult to reconcile with our knowledge of the mind of Christ, and it seems definitely excluded by the saying that those who inherit the Kingdom

¹ Joh. Weiss's statement on this point is guarded (*Predigt*, p. 69 ff.; cf. also Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 371-378. E. F. Scott, *Kingdom and Messiah*; also Moffatt, *Theology of the Gospels*, p. 49 f.).

² Matt. 6¹⁰.

³ Mark 10²⁹, Matt. 19²⁹.

⁴ Matt. 26²⁹.

⁵ 19²⁸.

are "as the angels in heaven."¹ It is also out of harmony with the general doctrine of the New Testament.

The Gospels do, indeed, contain one description of the Kingdom that seems to correspond in its outline with that contained in the *Visions of Enoch*. The passage in question declares that many Gentiles will come from all quarters of the globe and will share with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom; while Jews, rejected because of their unbelief, will remain outside, and will gnash their teeth with envy at the sight of aliens enjoying a privilege that is denied to them.² This account seems to contemplate a limited dominion established at Jerusalem, having among its citizens saints that have experienced resurrection, as well as many persons gathered from all nations. But it is evident that this presentation exhibits elements that are plainly incongruous, and also that it does not harmonise with the universalism implied in the prayer—"Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The reference to the Patriarchs may even suggest that the prophecy relates to the future state, inasmuch as it was commonly believed that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would receive the faithful dead.

It appears, then, that the doctrine of the Coming Age does not assume one definite and harmonious form in the Synoptic Gospels any more than in the other books of the New Testament. Jesus dwelt with fulness of illustration on the religious and moral aspects of the Kingdom as a state of complete harmony with the will of God, of perfect restitution and reward. But He does not seem to have declared any concrete picture of it, such as could be grasped in a single act of the imagination.

2. *Parousia predictions*.—But it is evident that this conclusion regarding our Lord's conception of the Kingdom must influence our interpretation of the *Parousia* predictions. His view of the Messianic Advent must have been conditioned by His doctrine of the Empire which it was to inaugurate. A definite and material idea of the Kingdom would harmonise with a literal and dramatic prophecy of its appearing. On the other hand, a more spiritual and ethical form of belief would

¹ Matt. 22³⁰.

² Matt. 8¹¹⁻¹², Luke 13^{28, 29}; cf. *En.* 90²⁰⁻³⁶.

be likely to find expression in the idea that the Advent of the Golden Age might be gradual and "not with observation."¹ And, finally, an indefinite poetic way of thinking about the Reign of God would be reflected in the prophecies of its appearing. Also, one would suppose that the form in which our Lord hoped for the coming of the Messiah would depend a good deal on His conception of the Son of Man. A Messiah who was a Judge, Ruler, and Avenger would fittingly appear in wrath and fire, heralded by earthquake and eclipse; but a Messiah who had come to the earth not to be ministered unto but to minister, and who had attained His glory by sacrifice, might be expected to come again clothed in a gentler beauty—not with terror unto destruction, but without sin unto salvation.

This seems a reasonable view of matters, and it is confirmed by the early records which show that our Lord's prophecies of the Advent were in fact as varied as His presentation of the Kingdom—corresponding now to one, and now to another conception of the Messianic State, and harmonising sometimes with the sterner and sometimes with the gentler view of the character and office of the Son of Man.

(a) Even before we come to examine these prophecies separately, and to compare them with each other, we are perplexed by the difficulty of reconciling their *general tone* with certain elements in the teaching of Jesus. When taken by themselves they certainly suggest the idea that His mind was dominated and possessed by the conviction that the end of all things was at hand. Yet there are features of His doctrine which imply that He did not feel this sense of approaching climax. The sweep and reach of His ethical demands, which call men to be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect,² seem to require a long period of time for their fulfilment. It is remarkable, also, that when He counsels His hearers not to be anxious about the future, He does not enforce the lesson by reminding them that there will be no future to be anxious about—does not say, "Be not anxious about the morrow; for to-morrow the Lord cometh." This would have been a most

¹ Luke 17²⁰.

² Matt. 5⁴⁸.

powerful argument to have used if Jesus had been possessed by the conviction that the end was at hand. Yet He is content to base His appeal on a homely and familiar thought which implies that things will be in the days to come even as they have been in days gone by, and that the old pathetic human experience will go on repeating itself. "The morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."¹ This is a striking example of a strain in the Gospels which does not suggest a foreshortening of the future.

One may refer, also, to those sayings which speak of the *Ecclesia*. There is no sufficient reason for rejecting the declaration to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."² In this connection we must remark, also, the institution of the Lord's Supper. Now this idea of the Church closely corresponds, in some respects, to that of the Kingdom. The institution of the Eucharist suggests the old belief that the saints would be fed at the table of the Messiah with mystical food; and the saying, "On this rock I will build my Church," implies that our Lord thought of the *Ecclesia* as a thing to be established in the future, at the close of His earthly ministry. Also, the promise to Peter of the power of the keys points to the continuous exercise of a spiritual authority. And from all this it seems to follow that the Church was pictured by Jesus as, at least, an imperfect and preliminary form of the Kingdom—a visible society in which He would be present by His spirit in the sacrament. But, if such was His conception, it is difficult to see how it could be harmonised in His mind with the belief that the advent of the Reign of God was just at hand. It is much easier to reconcile it with the view that He thought of the Kingdom as already present with Him in the world and destined to reveal itself visibly, though not with completeness,

¹ Matt. 6³⁴.

² 16^{18, 19}.

after His death, in the Ecclesia, and to continue in that form until the fulness of the times was come.¹

(b) But if the Parousia predictions are thus difficult to reconcile with other elements in the Gospel message, they are still more difficult to harmonise with each other. Some of these indicate that Jesus expected to return at a certain moment and in a physical manner—that His coming was to take the form of a great event. On the other hand, St. Matthew's version of His declaration in presence of the chief priests describes rather a spiritual process, a thing that is to go on continuously in the experience of men. "*Hereafter* shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."² And this conception of the Advent would harmonise with those parables which liken the Kingdom to the slowly growing seed and to the leaven which gradually does its work, as well as with the saying, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation."³

Again, Jesus certainly speaks as if His coming is to be secret and hidden, like the entrance of a thief in the night. Men are to be carefully on the watch for it lest they miss their opportunity, lest the Master find them sleeping. And yet He predicts also that His advent will be unmistakable, open and apparent to all men, like "The lightning that cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west."⁴ It is hardly credible that such opposite predictions could apply to a definitely conceived historical event.

But perhaps the most perplexing of these apparent contradictions appears in those sayings which speak of the *time* of the Second Coming. On the one hand, it is expressly declared that the day and the hour of the Advent are known to God only. "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."⁵ There is no saying in the Gospels that has more authority than this. It belongs to the primitive tradition; and it is a confession of ignorance which must have been uncongenial to the temper of

¹ Cf., however, E. F. Scott, *Beginnings of the Church*, pp. 50-56.

² Matt. 26⁶⁴ (cf. Moffatt's version).

³ Luke 17²⁰.

⁴ Matt. 24²⁷.

⁵ Mark 13³².

early Christian faith. Nothing but the conviction that it was certainly uttered by Jesus could have induced the Evangelists to record it. It is, therefore, the dominant saying regarding the time of the Second Coming, and with it all other utterances must be reconciled. Yet Jesus is represented as promising to return within the lifetime of His own generation;¹ and this although it is said that all nations must be evangelised before His coming. And the apparent meaning of these sayings, taken together, is the incredible idea that Jesus was granted knowledge in terms of generations but not of days and hours; that He had power to promise His return within a certain number of years, but not to give any more definite assurance. Also, it is implied that He expected the whole world to hear the Gospel preached, in such a manner as would give it a real chance of changing all its thoughts and ways, within the space of a lifetime.²

There are thus real difficulties and apparent discords in the Synoptic accounts of our Lord's teaching, both as to the general conception of the coming Kingdom and as to the manner and time of its appearing. No critical analysis removes them. Even when all allowance has been made for the uncertainties of tradition, we recognise something intractable in the discords of the evangelic prophecies. They refuse to be charmed away by the touch of a dexterous exegesis. The stones are too diverse in shape and substance to be builded together in any way, nor do they yield to the chisel of the mason, chisel he never so wisely.

3. *Inferences.*—What, then, is the inference which we must draw from this conclusion? Not that Jesus was mistaken, or that He held eschatological beliefs and hopes that were really inconsistent with each other. The inference is, rather, that, as before indicated, He thought and spoke about the future according to the spirit and forms of that imaginative type of prophecy which is found in some of the greatest passages of the Old Testament, which was developed by the Jewish mystics, and which finds typical expression in the Apocalypse of St. John. There are two possible ways of presenting a many-

¹ Mark 13³⁰, Matt. 16²⁸.

² Mark 13¹⁰.

sided religious idea like that of the Kingdom. The one is to state it in general poetic terms, avoiding all detailed expression—this is the method of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The other is to portray each side of it in turn, in one vivid picture after another, and leave the task of harmonising to faith and to experience—this was the method of Apocalypse, and of Jesus. If we accept this view with any goodwill, the discords of Gospel prophecy will not perplex us, nor shall we keep looking for dogma in a type of teaching which was careful to preserve a freedom of outlook. Apocalypse had a reasonableness of its own, but it was not the rationality of logic. It was tolerant of the most opposing images and symbols, caring only that each of these expressed some truth of the spiritual order. The writings that embody its spirit resemble a picture gallery wherein the most dissimilar presentations of Nature hang side by side, all being welcome which worthily reflect genuine aspects of the world. No teacher using the forms of Apocalypse was, or could be, careful to display the second-rate virtues of the systematic mind. All that he could be expected to do was to see that each of his utterances was in itself an authentic message of truth. And the best illustration of this is to be found in the recorded words of Jesus. He was the greatest of apocalyptic prophets, in a more thorough sense than even the school of Weiss admits, inasmuch as in His predictive visions He expressed one aspect of truth at a time, and expressed it in a concrete form and in an absolute way, without regard to other features of reality, or any concern for logical consistency. Many of our difficulties arise from forgetfulness of this, from fixing our attention on the mere fashion of His sayings, and from confusing the truth of the spirit with that of the letter. Why, for instance, should we be troubled by the thought that the predictions of Jesus speak of the consummation as being “nigh, even at the door”? The sense of immediacy was always characteristic of the prophetic mind, as is apparent in the case of Isaiah and other Old Testament teachers, as well as of the Jewish mystics. Just as a distant shore seen through a telescope seems close at hand, so the atmosphere of prophecy magnified and defined the vision of things to come,

and brought them very near. When a prophet declared that an object of faith and hope was just about to appear, he really meant that he saw it with vividness and that its coming was sure. And this consideration does, I think, explain in large measure the note of imminence which certainly characterised many of our Lord's predictions of the Kingdom and the Second Advent. And similarly, most of the apparent discords of His eschatology may be explained by the peculiarities of the instrument of expression which He employed. All His sayings, interpreted in the free spirit of apocalypse, correspond to realities and can be reconciled by faith. Suppose He said that the coming of the blessed time was to be gradual and hidden, yet also sudden and apparent—what then? Spiritual principles do work secretly; nevertheless they finally reveal themselves in vivid manifestations; they are like brooks that run a long way under ground, but leap at last into the light. Suppose, again, that He taught both a moral and a material view of the Messianic State—what then? The Kingdom *is* a thing both of inward and outward life; at once of the body and of the soul. Suppose, finally, that He did present the consummation sometimes in a light austere and exclusive—what of that? Judgment and mercy are alike facts of the moral order, and the Coming of the Son of Man is both for peace and for revolution, is a hope and also a fear.

Constructive Statement.

Perhaps we may express this view of our Lord's message in some such way as this:—The mind of Jesus, in so far as it can be said to have belonged to any particular type, was of the mystical and poetic order. He conceived all reality, whether spiritual or moral, in terms of the imagination, and He saw things in direct prophetic vision. And this quality of His genius conditioned the manner in which He interpreted His own vocation and the hope of its fulfilment. He knew Himself to be invested with a supernatural authority, and to hold an unique relation alike to God and man, and to be the appointed Mediator of salvation—of a perfect good for the

world of men. This salvation, this ideal good, was apprehended by Him under the form of the Kingdom, the Reign of God upon earth, the breaking in of the eternal order upon the world of temporal things. Of this Kingdom He believed Himself to be the appointed head—the Son of Man, the Lord and Master. This He was already, in the sight of God and of His own soul; and His Kingdom was present with Him wherever He wrought mighty works, and wherever men fulfilled His law and shared His spirit. But the Kingdom was yet to come in its fulness in some great day of regeneration, and with it He was to be manifested in the glory of His power. But before that day could come He had a work to accomplish. It was necessary that He should perfectly affirm and fulfil in His own person that supreme law of sacrifice which He knew to be the only means of spiritual achievement, whether for the individual or for the race. That the Kingdom of Life might come, He must give Himself to death. That there might be redemption and healing for the sons of men, the Son of Man must be rejected, betrayed, and crucified, must drink the cup of mysterious woe that was given Him of the Father.

That such was indeed the belief of Jesus regarding Himself and His mission, is attested by evidence that cannot be shaken. Of course, these convictions did not occupy His mind to the exclusion of other elements. He had a human life to live, a revelation of the Father to declare, and works of mercy to accomplish. He was conscious of no discord between His own natural joy in the world of nature and of humanity and His vision of the Kingdom. All the elements of His manifold experience dwelt together in the harmony of a perfect faith. Nevertheless, the thought of the future, and of the means by which the advent of the Kingdom would be attained, was the dominant note of His earthly life; and He conceived this thought with all its accompaniments under the familiar forms of apocalypse. These forms He did not criticise; He was indifferent to the apparent contradictions they involved. They expressed for Him every element of the complete truth—judgment, salvation, retribution, reward; the redemption of life in all its concerns, physical and spiritual, individual and

social. He was at home in a world of traditional imagery, which the light that shone from His own mind touched with an alien beauty, which His unique knowledge informed with eternal meaning. Of the precise significance which He attached to His prophecies we know only that it was such as was worthy of His perfect understanding of God and His measureless love for the souls of men.

It is quite possible, indeed, that He never had any definite conception of the fashion in which the Kingdom would realise itself in the world; and was content to leave this matter in the hands of God, and to declare such aspects of it as were revealed to Him in flashes of insight, in visions and signs. He disclaimed knowledge of the day and hour of the Consummation; and it may well have been that He did not seek to know in what guise His promises would be fulfilled—after what manner He would come again, or in what outward appearing the City of God would manifest itself to mortal eyes. Jesus made no mistakes; no hope He inspired was vain; somewhere, some time, every prophecy of His will be found to be justified, and every picture He drew, to have its counterpart in reality. But we cannot be sure that He sought in the days of His flesh to distinguish between the form and the substance of truth, or to harmonise the various aspects of His message. The conditions under which the sovereign purpose of good would accomplish itself in the relations of space and time may have been among the secret things that were known of no man, nor of the angels, nor of the Son, but of the Father only.

But, while all this may be said with truth regarding our Lord's belief, in its historical aspects, it is well to remind ourselves that His faith and hope were but the unique and supreme expression of an universal religious assurance. What is the Kingdom of God, after all, but the higher world of white ideals, of broad spiritual expanses, of clean thought and generous service, of just and steadfast vision, of the loving fear of God and the reverent love of men—that world which all men behold sometimes when the clouds break, of which some high souls are the constant citizens, though most of us know

it only in those rare hours when almost we are what we would hope to be. This heavenly state, this home of our ideals, is the source of all our light. In it are treasured the perfect types of all good things that can be known to any man, or be embodied in any society or in any Church or in any Age of gold. No faith, no race, has any exclusive right in it; it has always been the motherland of all the faithful. What matters the name by which we call it—the New Jerusalem, the Realm of God, Eternal Life? What matter whether we speak of it in the language of vision as the Heavenly Zion coming down from on high, or in the language of ethics as the Chief Good? It is the same whatever it be called, however it be conceived, in whatsoever terms it be described. It is always in heaven yet always on earth, ever present yet ever to be. To religious men, it is always the City of God; to the Christian, its Messiah is Jesus, and the Lamb is the light thereof. The expectation of its perfect coming is the assurance of a measureless good for the individual and for the race, and the certainty of the triumph of God in His redeeming purpose through Jesus Christ our Lord.

IV.

CHURCH TRADITION.

Now, the view of the New Testament doctrine on this subject which I have thus sought to illustrate is supported by the later developments of Christian thought. It is true that there has arisen in modern times a type of theology that seeks to interpret all the tenets of our Faith in terms of the Kingdom idea, which it thus employs as a dogmatic category. But this system is apart from the main current of tradition. The Church has never defined its belief in the Reign of God; but has held it in freedom of spirit, and has taken it for the symbol of many shining hopes. The Kingdom has always meant, for believers, the Church and also something wider than the Church—the good Cause, the purpose of righteousness which God has in view for the world. It has also signified

the promise of the return of Christ at the last day. And, again, it has represented that incorruptible and undefiled inheritance which is reserved for the faithful beyond the gates of death. Thus the historical faith has preserved the imaginative variety of New Testament teaching. It has not endeavoured to harmonise its thoughts on this great theme, any more than Jesus did; but has been content like its Master to entertain a vision of manifold good, and to express it in the concrete forms and many colours of Apocalypse.

In ancient Christian thought the Ecclesia is the visible Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom, as a thing that is to come, is the Ecclesia triumphant and glorified and in manifest communion with the saints in heaven. St. Augustine, standing amidst the ruins of the ancient order—the imperial city fallen, and the Roman Empire crashing to destruction around him—displayed a divine prophetic genius when he directed the thoughts of men to the eternal City of God, the great community of the faithful, which had been in the beginning, was still and ever would be the indestructible witness to things spiritual and everlasting, the inviolate home of souls. This City had been standing over against the earthly Kingdom of mortal things ever since evil appeared in the universe. It had embodied itself in the company of the Patriarchs, in the elect and chosen People, in the Church of Christ. It was the new Jerusalem, continually coming down from heaven because continually supported by grace from on high. It must endure through all the coming and going of empires, and rising and falling of powers and dominions, because founded on the immutable decree of God. And it would enter at last into final and manifest victory when He should appear, who was the blessed and only potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords. There is nothing that so attests the greatness of Augustine as his ability to proclaim this confident message of hope in the midst of a generation whose hearts were fainting for fear because the end of all things was come. It was an heroic faith that was able to say in such a time as that—So passes away the glory of the world, but so passes not away the glory of the Kingdom.

Of a like nobility with the message of Augustine, also, was the great medieval conception of the Holy Roman Church and the Holy Roman Empire, embodying together the complete Lordship of Christ over the whole life of man. According to that ideal the Pope was to be the visible representative of Christ in things spiritual, the Emperor in things temporal: and these two together were to subdue all the world into one dominion of the Crucified. It was, no doubt, an impossible programme, but a splendid vision; and, like Augustine's conception of the City of God, it was a genuine development of old apocalyptic hopes. It was true, as the Church of Rome has been true throughout, to the mystical, imaginative traditions of Jewish revelation. It embodied, in an enriched and universalised form, the ancient vision of an Empire in which the eternal order should become manifest, and the perfect righteousness visibly appear.

Akin to such conceptions, also, and in the true apocalyptic succession, are political speculations like those of Dante, pictures of the Ideal State like Bacon's *Atlantis* and More's *Utopia*, elusive dreams like that of the Holy Grail, social and evangelical enthusiasms, and that divine and generous discontent which inspires the heroes of humanity. Luther, amid the grim battles of the Reformation, spoke again the very language of Augustine, and of many an older prophet, when he declared:

"These things shall vanish all;
The city of God remaineth."

It is along such lines as these that we must seek for the true historical expression of the ideals that were contained in the New Testament prophecies of the Kingdom. When our Lord predicted the Reign of God on earth He did not have in His mind a fellowship of good men scattered all over the world, having no actual relations with each other and bearing no external marks of kinship. He thought of something visible and corporate—something that signified well-being in the whole of life, outward and inward, physical and spiritual; something more like to a perfect state than to a dispersed

multitude of righteous people, resembling a Church rather than a dominion; a great family of the Father rather than a mere Kingdom, which is after all but a chilly home for the souls of men. Schweitzer speaks truly when he says that Jesus set Himself to translate Apocalypse from words into facts. Where others had dreamed about the Kingdom, He determined to make it a reality in the world, by prayer and sacrifice and ministry, by death and resurrection, by the divine compulsion of love. And it is not by the way of abstract thinking that we are to serve ourselves heirs to His conception of the Kingdom. It is rather by social effort, by the strengthening and purifying of the Church, by common worship and sacrament, by the nurture of the devout life, by all those endeavours and visions which make the eternal order to appear in this transitory world, that men show themselves apostles of the Kingdom of God according to the mind of Jesus.

The idea of the Parousia, also, like that of the Kingdom, is essentially an imaginative and spiritual form. It belongs to the vision and poetry of faith. We need not be concerned to answer very definitely the question—What do you mean by the Second Advent? If we cherish the hope of a visible appearing of the Son of Man, no one can deny us our right to such an expectation. We believe that God intervened in the affairs of men once when Jesus came; and who shall say that He may not intervene again after another fashion? If, again, we cherish no such hope, but believe simply that a time will surely come when the Lordship of Christ shall be universally owned in spirit and in truth, no one can say us nay. The Church has held its belief in the Parousia in varying forms throughout the ages. The thought of the Second Coming was to the early Church, as has been said, “as some great eastern window that burns and shines in unearthly radiance and gorgeous hues in the splendour of dawn.”¹ Succeeding generations have thought of it, now as near at hand and now as far away; have conceived it sometimes in a literal, sometimes in a spiritual, sense; and individuals have thought about

¹ D. S. Cairns in *The Student Movement*.

it according to their varying moods and habits of mind. But the hope itself has been treasured as a precious possession in all the centuries. It is expressed in the songs and prayers of the Church universal. It is in Augustine's *City of God*, it is in the *Imitation of Christ*, in the *Te Deum*, in the *Apostles' Creed*, in the hymns of Bernard and Luther. It appears in every Liturgy and in every book of devotion and in every celebration of the Eucharistic Feast. It is, therefore, part of the permanent heritage of Faith, to be variously held in the liberty of the spirit, but never in any wise to be denied. Whatever our school of thought may be, whatever our manner of belief, we can all sincerely unite in the prayer of the Advent Collect, that we may be enabled to "cast away the unprofitable works of darkness and put upon us the armour of light, in the time of this mortal life," in which our Lord Jesus Christ "came to visit us in great humility, that in the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty," we may "rise with Him to the life that is immortal."

CHAPTER III.

RESURRECTION, JUDGMENT, THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

I.

JEWISH BELIEFS.

THE Jewish ideas of the Resurrection, Judgment, and Intermediate State are really, as we have seen, part of the Kingdom of God conception. This is illustrated by the fact that those of the "revelation" books in which the Messianic hope is most vivid and strong are also characterised by specially clear presentations of the Rising-again, the great Assize, and the regions of the Underworld.¹

1. *Resurrection.* — The belief in Resurrection was, for obvious reasons, allied in a peculiarly intimate way with the Kingdom doctrine, and was determined as to its form by the manner in which that doctrine was conceived. Men who took an earthly view of the Kingdom held a material conception of the Rising-again. Those, on the other hand, whose thoughts about the Age to come were spiritual, cherished a corresponding form of the resurrection hope. Originally, the Resurrection of the Just was simply a reincarnation to a new life on a glorified earth. But later it experienced the development which culminated in the sublime doctrine of St. Paul. The further idea, that not the just only but all men would arise from the grave, grew out of the earlier, more limited, belief by

¹ For Jewish teaching on these several themes, see refs. in App. I. ; and for comparison with N.T. doctrine, see App. II.

a quite logical movement of mind. If justice required that departed saints should be recalled from Hades that they might have a portion in the Kingdom, it also demanded that the unrighteous dead should be summoned to the earth to share in the great *debacle* of the heathen world.

2. *Judgment*.—But this belief involved, again, the notion of the great Day of Reckoning, when the multitudes of the living and the dead were to have declared to them their final destiny. The innumerable hosts were to stand before the Judge of all, and the righteous were to be called, with the redeemed Israel, into the Kingdom; while the armies of the ungodly, with their kings and their mighty men and their great lords, were to be cast into the Pit prepared for the devil and his angels. This was the earliest form of the Jewish belief in the Last Judgment; and the apocalyptic doctrine on the subject always bore traces of its origin. It never identified itself altogether with the idea of personal responsibility, nor was it mainly concerned with the destiny of individuals. Its interest was in the issue of moral history as a whole, not in the fortunes of this man or of that. There are no portraits of separate faces in the visions of the great Assize. Apocalypse painted its pictures in broad outline and with a big brush, and it thought of men as being judged in the mass—not by their private record, but as members of parties and nations. It always stood for the great truth that the world moves on to a moral end.

Thus, Resurrection and Judgment belonged to the hope of the Kingdom of God. The *pictures* of them which we find in the Jewish books are part of the pageantry, the pomp and circumstance, of the coming of the Messianic State; but the ideas themselves are logical consequences of the belief that history is to culminate in a golden Age of retribution and reward.

3. *Hades*.—To this same logical necessity we owe the doctrine of the Intermediate State. If the coming Dominion of the Lord was to include the dead as well as the living, then it was evident that departed souls were, in the meantime, in a state of waiting. Disembodied, and experiencing imperfect

forms of joy and pain, they were expecting in Hades the sound of the last trump which should call them up, to pass by resurrection and judgment into the perfect blessedness of the Kingdom or the unmingled sorrows of Gehenna.

Now this Jewish doctrine of the Intermediate State is one of considerable theological importance; and it is necessary to consider it with some care for the sake of the light it sheds on the belief of the Apostolic Church. The New Testament writers say so little about the matter that we are compelled to seek for information as to their opinions in the national literature. In the absence of express evidence to the contrary, we may assume that their ideas were those of their time and people.

(a) The original belief of Israel was that the souls of men descended after death into Sheol, which was a condition very like the Greek Hades, though it was seldom pictured by the Hebrew mind with the vividness and poetic power that we find in the writings of the Greeks.¹ Sheol was a state of existence that was, in some aspects of it, but little removed from death—cold and shadowed, without joy or grief, voiceless and empty of hope. There was no retribution there for sin, and no reward for virtue, no praise of God and no communion with Him, no development of character, no fear and no expectation. There the wicked ceased from troubling and the weary were at rest. The moral history of a man was at an end when he went to dwell in that shadowy land of ghosts, that colourless dwelling of disembodied souls.

(b) Such was the older Hebrew doctrine of the Future State. Nor had it entirely lost its hold on the Jewish mind even in the time of Christ. The powerful party of the Sadducees retained the ancient idea of Sheol, and looked for no reward or punishment beyond the grave. This latter position is expressed in the *Book of Sirach*, one of the greatest of Jewish writings, composed during the second century B.C. It suggests no hope of any immortality beyond that of the influence which a man leaves behind him in this world. It teaches that there is neither penalty for sin nor reward for

¹ Cf., however, Isa. 14⁹⁻¹⁸.

virtue in the place whither a man goeth. "Thanksgiving perisheth from the dead as from one that is not." "Weep gently for the dead, for he has found rest."

(c) It is evident, also, that the old belief in Sheol continued to influence the thought even of those who adopted the doctrine of a true immortality. One can see, for example, that they never thought of Gehenna as a condition of continued moral life, in which character went on developing itself, but merely as a state of punishment. Gehenna was just Sheol *plus* torment. It is probable, also, that the tendency which the Jewish mind always showed towards the idea of conditional immortality is to be attributed to their ancestral belief in Sheol. That belief led them to think of the wicked as destined to a state of moral nonentity; and the conception of moral non-existence readily passes over into that of actual extinction.

(d) But, however this may be, there can be no doubt that very many Jews of our Lord's time had come to think of Sheol as a state intermediate between death and judgment. In the *Book of Enoch* we find a very elaborate description of this Underworld. It is there divided into two parts—a dwelling of the righteous, and an abode for the wicked. Each of these, again, is subdivided; the righteous who have suffered greatly in this world and deserve, therefore, a better compensation in Sheol, are separated from those who have enjoyed a prosperous life on earth and thus have earned a lesser recompense; and conversely, the wicked who have been punished during this mortal existence enter an abode of less suffering hereafter, while those who have hitherto escaped retribution inherit a prison-house of more bitter chastisement.¹ Thus the old conception is profoundly changed. It has become an intensely moral idea. Hades has now a real place in the spiritual history of a man. There the just and the unjust together await, in earnest expectation, the final Judgment and its solemn issues.

(e) If we ask ourselves whether the countrymen of Jesus entertained the hope that deliverance might be found in Hades, the answer is not clear. One would not expect refer-

¹ *En.* 22.

ences to this subject in the Apocalypses, as it belongs to the question of individual destiny with which these books had little concern. Their common teaching is that men experience in Hades foretastes of their ultimate fate, that as they die so they appear before the Judge at last. At the same time, the importance of intercession is constantly magnified in these books; and it is evident that great difficulty was felt in setting any limit to the efficacy of prayer, whether offered by angels or by men, for the living or for the dead. It is true that some apocalyptic writers affirm strongly that such prayer does not avail after the Judgment, but the very emphasis with which this assertion is made would suggest that it *does* avail until that great day. Also, it is significant that in the *Book of Enoch* intercession is said to be the perpetual office of the Archangel Gabriel.¹ We are told, moreover, that Enoch interceded for the fallen angels; and this indicates that no dogmatic objection was taken to petitions for the lost.² Further, in the *Books of Adam and Eve* it is written that Adam through the intercession of the angels was committed to purifying punishment until the end of the age, that he might be rendered worthy of a glorious resurrection.³ In *Second Maccabees*, also, we learn that Judas caused prayer and sacrifice to be offered for the souls of his men who had died in sin.⁴ This statement is of great importance, since *Second Maccabees* is founded on an older work and thus embodies a persistent tradition. It is incredible that such a story would have been told about a great national hero if the idea of prayers for the dead had been alien and unacceptable to the Jewish mind. So that, altogether, it cannot be said that even the popular literature of Judaism is without indications of a hope that reached beyond the grave.

(f) *The Rabbis* did not distinguish between Hades and Gehenna. But many of them believed that punishment in the place of fire would, at least in the case of many, last for only a limited time. It is in conformity with this belief that

¹ *En.* 40⁶.

² *En.* 12-13; also, *Secrets of Enoch*, 18⁷.

³ *Vit. Ad. et Eve*, 48¹⁻².

⁴ 12³⁸⁻⁴⁵.

we find in the Talmud some distinct assertions that prayer avails for the dead, and that the Jewish prayer-book contains a petition for the departed soul which begins thus—"O Lord and King, who art full of compassion, in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all flesh, who killest and makest alive, who bringest down to the grave and bringest up again, receive, we beseech Thee, in Thy great loving-kindness, the soul of — who hath been gathered unto his people." The substance of this prayer, though not its present form, is very ancient, and some think that it may have existed even in the time of Jesus. Of this latter point, however, there is no proof; though we may admit that the teaching of the two great Rabbinic schools which at that time dominated the Synagogues would have been friendly to such a practice of devotion.¹ Clearly, men who taught that the period of future punishment would, in some cases, be limited, and who believed intensely in the value of intercession, could have had no objection, *in theory*, to petitions being offered for souls in Purgatory.

This is all that we can say with any assurance on this subject; but it is enough to forbid the dogmatic assertion that the possibility of salvation beyond the grave was unanimously rejected by the Jews of New Testament times, or that they were at one in definitely denying that prayers availed for the dead.

II.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

Introductory.—Such, then, was the history of the Jewish doctrine of immortality, and such the opinions held among the fellow countrymen of Jesus at the time of His coming. We may conjecture that the Jewish Christians of the first generation continued to hold the traditional faith regarding the fate of the departed. The great change wrought by Jesus in the outlook of His disciples upon the future life did not consist in an altered dogmatic belief as to the Last Things, but

¹ Cf. *Daily Prayer-Book*, etc., pp. 323-324, also pp. ccxxxi-ccxxxii.

rather in an enrichment and glorifying of the ancient forms. Especially were the old beliefs transfigured by their association with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Every thought of the future was, for the early Christians, simply part of their thoughts about the risen Master. They looked, as their fellow countrymen did, for the Coming of the Messiah, the Judgment, the Resurrection. But the Messiah they expected was the returning Jesus; the Judgment they awaited was in His hands; the Resurrection they hoped for was one like His own; the unending blessedness they believed in was unending communion with Him. It was Jesus that made the difference for them. The Intermediate State and all the great Events of the Coming Age remained in their faith as they had inherited them; but they had all received new content and meaning for their hearts since they had come to trust in One who had the keys of Hades, who had lived and died and was alive for evermore.

(I.).

RESURRECTION.

1. *New Testament doctrine.*—The idea of the Resurrection occupies a far more prominent place in the New Testament than it does in the Jewish books. In the latter it is one among several co-ordinate forms; but in the classical writings of our faith it holds a position of unique religious splendour, through its association with the victory of Christ. The thought of it is the master-light in which men see all things clearly. In the view, especially, of St. Peter and St. Paul, the Evangel is essentially a gospel of the Resurrection; and throughout the whole New Testament the Easter message is the word of wonder that makes all things new. And yet it is not possible to deduce from the sacred writings one clear and consistent doctrine of the Rising from the dead.

(a) On the one hand, the Apostolic teaching on this subject corresponds closely, in some respects, to that of Jewish

Apocalypse, and exhibits the same variety of form. It is probable, as we have seen, that popular Christianity took over from popular Judaism the primitive belief that the dead would be endowed with new bodies resembling closely in their character the earthly house of this tabernacle. This view is suggested in St. Luke's statement that the risen Jesus "did eat" in the presence of His disciples.¹ But the sacred writers were no more bound by the terms of the ordinary belief than were the Jewish mystics. There may be found in the New Testament as many different ways of conceiving the Resurrection as of describing the Kingdom. A spiritual view of the matter is implied in the saying—"They that are accounted worthy to obtain that Age and the Resurrection . . . are equal unto the angels."² Yet the idea of physical resuscitation seems involved in the prophecy—"All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth."³ And again, the Pauline doctrine suggests the thought of the transmutation of the material into the spiritual—"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."⁴ The one thing certain, from this point of view, is that while the Apostolic writers may express somewhat varying views as to the *nature* of the Rising-again, they had no doubt whatever as to the *Fact*.

(b) On the other hand, the New Testament conception of the Resurrection from the dead is not so closely associated as is the Jewish with the idea of the Kingdom of God. It is possible to show that each apocalyptic writer did try to adapt his doctrine on this subject to the form in which he held the Messianic hope. But it is not so in the case of the Christian teachers. Rather is it plain that Apostolic thought tended to depart from the tradition which regarded the Rising-again as the door of entrance to the Messianic Kingdom. They believed that Christ had risen from the dead; for them, therefore, resurrection was not only a part of their hope for the future, but a part also of their belief in the living Saviour. Hence it became for them more and more the symbol of personal immortality. Moreover, there appears in our sacred

¹ Luke 24⁴³ (possibly an interpolation, but cf. Acts 10⁴¹).

² Luke 20^{35, 36}.

³ John 5^{28, 29}.

⁴ 1 Cor. 15⁴⁴.

books a highly imaginative type of thought which conceives the rising from the dead as a present moral experience, equal to conversion. This form of teaching has no doubt its parallels in Hellenistic writings; but, as expressed by the Apostles, it has its root in the doctrine of Jesus that men must die to live, and that "whosoever will lose his life shall find it."¹ It is elaborated fully by St. Paul and St. John. The former declares that Christians have been crucified with Christ and have also risen with Him.² In like manner, St. John loves to dwell on the thought that the hour of resurrection "cometh, and *now is*."³ Thus both these teachers describe resurrection as a part of present experience; and in doing so depart from Jewish practice and from the standpoint of apocalyptic prophecy. This peculiarity of theirs, no doubt, adds greatly to the beauty and suggestiveness of their spiritual teaching, but it does not help us to define their eschatology.

This phase of thought is indeed so strongly marked in the Johannine writings as to excite suspicion in some minds that their author, under the influence of Philo, had given up belief in the Resurrection. They think that the saying, "They that are in their graves shall come forth," is either an interpolation or a mere concession to popular belief, or is perhaps due to a certain traditional element that lingered in the mind of the Evangelist, though it was out of harmony with his personal convictions. But surely if St. John had disliked the idea of the Resurrection he would not have told the story of Lazarus, nor been at such pains to show that the risen Lord possessed a real body. Also, it seems plain that if he had shared Philo's notion that embodiment was a humiliation of the spirit, he would not have said that "the Word was made flesh." There is really no sufficient reason to suppose that St. John ever departed from the general faith of the Church regarding this great matter.

(c) This figurative use of the resurrection phraseology, however, does render it difficult to say whether the Apostles agreed with those Jewish writers who confined the privilege of Resurrection to the righteous, or with those who extended it

¹ Matt. 16²⁵.

² *E.g.* Col. 3¹⁻³.

³ John 5²⁵.

to all mankind. Certainly, it does seem as if the thought of St. Paul and St. John implied the conclusion that only believers would rise from the dead—that, as none but those who were in Christ experienced the process of spiritual resurrection in this world, so none but they could have any part in that rising-again which was to be the crown of the regenerate life beyond the grave. And yet one suspects that the general Apostolic eschatology, especially St. Paul's hope of an Universal Kingdom of God, implies some kind of re-embodiment for all men. The Apostles believed in a Judgment Day wherein all were to appear before the throne of God; and it is not likely that they entertained the grotesque imagination of an assemblage, consisting partly of ghosts and partly of fully embodied personalities. The universal Judgment seems to involve the universal Resurrection.

(d) But, whatever view one may take of this difficult question, it is undeniable that the New Testament seldom speaks of the Resurrection except as it concerns the regenerate, the heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. The experience awaiting the unregenerate in the day when the trumpet should sound and the dead should be raised, was not a matter which engaged the minds of Evangelists and Apostles. Their thoughts were filled with the vision of the glory that awaited the redeemed in the great Day. In so far as they considered at all the meaning of the rising out of Hades for the unregenerate, they probably thought of it as an appearing for judgment in vivid consciousness, and in fulness of personality. Such a wretched and sorrowful thing they could not hold to be worthy of the name resurrection. That great word was associated in their minds with the triumph of their Master over death; it was the symbol of the most glorious and sacred fact in history. It stood for the most profound experience of the Christian life, and for all the brightness of the Christian hope. How, then, could they have it in their minds when they thought of the multitudes of the impenitent standing, sullen and miserable, before the throne of God?

(e) The New Testament, as we have seen, does not commit itself to any definite theory of Resurrection on what may be

called its physical side. It teaches that men are to be endowed with some sort of habitation, that the life of Heaven is not to be the life of disembodied spirits. But as to the nature of that new temple of the soul, it has nothing to say beyond picture and speculation. The Apostle Paul speaks of a spiritual body which is related to this material frame of ours as the living wheat is related to the dead seed; he speaks of "this earthly tabernacle" being dissolved and our receiving in its place "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"—so that we are not to be "unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life."¹ And this teaching of St. Paul represents the highest expression that has ever been given to the Christian hope. No doubt, different minds will always attach different meanings to the confession—"I believe in the Resurrection of the body." But the substance of that confession is vital to the catholic faith—is, indeed, that which distinguishes the peculiarly Christian view of immortality. When we say that we believe in the bodily resurrection, we profess our conviction that all which enters into the being of a man here shall have something corresponding to it in the life hereafter: that nothing of our personality shall be lost, but that all of it shall be transmuted into something familiar yet new, finite but deathless.

2. *Dogmatic difficulties.*—It is true that we are often invited to recognise that the Resurrection idea is incredible, beneath the attention of the modern mind, part of the cast-off garments of faith. But the grounds on which we are asked to make this admission are not so convincing as one might expect. The theological Hector is prone to employ such epithets as "obscurantist," "superstitious," "reactionary," and so on. But these are innocuous terms, and express nothing more than an ecstasy of disapproval. Strong language of this sort might, perhaps, be justified were it directed against the notion that the body, after it has suffered corruption, will rise again out of the grave. But belief in the Resurrection is not to be identified with this crude and popular form of it; though even this has been of great value as a symbol of the truth that

¹ 2 Cor. 5¹⁻⁴.

personal identity is preserved beyond death. It seems a forcible thing to say that "rising-again" must refer to the body—that as the body alone goes downward at death so it only can be said to "come up" again. But Jewish thinkers did not recognise this piece of logic, nor did the Apostle Paul, nor need we. Those who are troubled by such reasoning have forgotten the facts of history, and fail to remember the vague and poetic nature of the apocalyptic forms. They are leaving out of sight the truth that thinkers as early as the authors of the *Book of Enoch* held the faith of the Resurrection without affirming the resuscitation of this mortal body.

But, in any case, the conception of immortality that is symbolised by resurrection is perfectly credible. Even the idea of Reincarnation is not irrational, as is evidenced by the fact that it was held by Plato. Indeed it is, on philosophic grounds, as defensible as any other theory of the future state.¹ If the soul has been embodied once, it certainly may be again; and one feels, in reading Eastern literature and the writings of modern theosophists, that the thought of a succession of lives under bodily conditions solves many hard problems and explains many perplexing facts. The main objections to it are that it fails to preserve a real continuity of personal experience from one life to another, and that it condemns the soul to a prolonged, if not a perpetual, bondage to the law of birth and death. But the doctrine of Resurrection differs widely from that of Reincarnation, though it belongs to the same order of ideas. It asserts simply that souls will experience hereafter something analogous to embodiment, on a higher plane of being—something that shall conserve the fulness of the human personality. It thus asserts the continuance of individual self-consciousness beyond the grave, and affirms that men "will wake and remember and understand." Also, it declares that a man can die but once, and that, having suffered the dissolution of the flesh, he is henceforth free from the bondage of decay. In these respects it is speculatively superior to the doctrine of Reincarnation; and it presents difficulties only when we seek for an unattainable precision of thought, and

¹ Cf. Archer Hind's *Phaedo*, Introduction.

ask ourselves *how* and *when* the resurrection will take place. It is often objected that the idea of the Rising-again is materialistic; but this argument would be more impressive if we knew what matter is, or had reason to suppose that it cannot assume a guise other than that which it presents to us in this earthly life. And so one is not disposed to admit the unreasonableness of this ancient belief, in the substance of its meaning. On the contrary, the alternative idea of a disembodied existence exceeds all that is conceivable. The notion of a mind without an organ of expression, of a soul without a local habitation, is a mere rational abstraction, and is unable to support itself by any appeal to imagination or to experience.

(II.).

JUDGMENT.

1. *New Testament doctrine.* — (a) The New Testament teaching about Judgment presents the same characteristics as its doctrine of Resurrection. In its exposition of the subject we find the same variety of statement, and difference of aspect and standpoint. Just as Resurrection is sometimes spoken of as the privilege of the righteous, sometimes as the lot of all; sometimes as a moral process and spiritual experience, and sometimes as a great coming Event: so Judgment is now presented as a thing to befall the wicked only,¹ and again as a trial which all must face;² now as a matter already accomplished,³ and, again, as the great Day of Reckoning which is to mark the end of the world.⁴ Also, while Judgment is generally said to be in the hands of Christ, it is occasionally described as the direct act of God.⁵

These so-called contradictions are, however, of small importance and represent little more than varieties of standpoint, different angles of vision. It is not surprising that Judgment should generally be described as in the hands of Jesus, yet in

¹ John 5²⁴.

² 1 Pet. 4⁵ etc.

³ John 3¹⁸.

⁴ Rev. 20¹¹⁻¹⁴.

⁵ Heb. 12²³.

some passages as directly enforced by God, since all things, according to the New Testament, are of the Father through the Son. Nor need we suppose that the manner in which the Apostles keep expressing the idea that the judgment is a process always going on casts any doubt on their belief in the last Assize. All the supreme objects of religious hope and fear are recognised by the sacred writers as facts of present knowledge, as well as things that are to be looked for in vivid appearing hereafter. The Kingdom is present, and yet it is to come; the Resurrection is a matter of daily experience, yet it awaits men beyond the grave; and, in like manner, Judgment is already taking place,¹ and yet it is to be expected. Men are always being tested and tried, and their deeds are writing themselves from hour to hour on the records of the soul. Nevertheless, there is a great Day that is to "break in fire"; and "we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ."²

(b) One is conscious, however, that it is extremely difficult to interpret with completeness the Apostolic doctrine on this subject. All that we may say about it is qualified by the impression that the ancient belief in the Last Reckoning was profoundly modified by the Gospel. The new knowledge that had come through Jesus Christ, the vitalising of the whole moral world which had been accomplished by His spirit, disturbed inherited conceptions of the Judgment more than the early Christians were able to express, or even fully to realise. This is especially evident in the writings of St. John, whose mystical type of faith transcended all definite forms. Thus he tells us that they who dwell in love dwell in God; and so are enabled to have "boldness in the day of Judgment," since "perfect love casteth out fear."³ Evidently this is a doctrine which really transmutes the old idea of the last Assize into something that is new. And it is the expression of an undertone of New Testament teaching which must always be kept in mind when we speak about its prophecies of the Day of wrath and revelation.

(c) *Twofold aspect of Judgment.*—The Roman theology distinguishes clearly between the judgment of the individual

¹ John 12³¹.

² 2 Cor. 5¹⁰.

³ 1 John 4¹⁴⁻¹⁹.

at death and the great Reckoning which is to mark the end of the world. It cannot be said that the New Testament makes this formal distinction; rather does it leave the whole conception in the vague and imaginative state which is proper to its apocalyptic origin. Nevertheless, it is convenient to separate in our thoughts the idea of an universal Reckoning, which belongs to a world-view of things, from the expectation of individual judgment, which pertains to personal religion. We may claim, also, that these two aspects of the matter are both presented in our sacred books.

(d) *Universal aspect.*—As to the New Testament teaching about the *universal Judgment* little need be said. It is expressed in the imaginative terms of Jewish prophecy, and belongs to the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. It is depicted sometimes as with a brush that has been dipped “in earthquake and eclipse,” but more often in sombre colours and with austere reserve of tone. But the substance of it was always implicit in the apocalyptic message. The essential idea that is symbolised by the picture of a Great Assize wherein the dead, small and great, stand before the throne is really involved in the belief that the human race has a corporate life of its own, and that its history is moving towards some moral end. Just as all the spiritual strivings and sufferings, victories and defeats, experienced by the individual are part of a development which must issue at last in a definite state of character, so all the travail and effort of Humanity belong to a process of evolution which moves towards an appointed goal—towards an End wherein the true nature of all its history shall be made plain. Lord Acton has called history “the conscience of the Race,” and it is in conformity with this view that we expect history to culminate in a great Day of moral manifestation, wherein the conscience of the Race shall declare itself, wherein the truth of things shall be once for all affirmed.

(e) *Personal aspect.*—But this aspect of the Judgment, in which it appears in its true apocalyptic guise of a great world-event, is not the one which is mainly emphasised in the New Testament. The Christian teachers departed from the apocalyptic standpoint very decidedly in their treatment of

this subject. They maintained, indeed, the old belief that the Most High had appointed a day wherein He would judge the world; but they were chiefly concerned with the thought that every man must give account of himself to God, that each separate soul must at last "be made manifest"¹ in the light of the truth, in the shining of the face of Christ. And the remarkable thing is that they thought of this experience as awaiting the redeemed as well as the lost. The Apostles, indeed, speak of it chiefly as a prospect of awe and dread for the believing soul. St. Paul may be said to dwell almost continually under the shadow of Judgment. In one remarkable passage he describes it as a purgatorial experience in which Christian men shall be "saved, yet so as through fire." St. Peter expresses the same thought of a dreadful ordeal in the saying, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"² And these sayings, no doubt, represent fairly the attitude of the Christian mind in New Testament times. Wonder is often, indeed, expressed at this characteristic of Apostolic thought. St. Paul especially is held to show great inconsistency in declaring that "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,"³ and at the same time expressing a fear of the Judgment; and it is thought necessary to explain that this latter characteristic of his mind was due to a lingering remnant of his Jewish belief. But some better solution of the difficulty must be found than this, since it was by no means congenial to Jewish thought to regard the Judgment as a prospect of dread for the righteous. Rather did it tend to think of the Last Day as the final vindication and triumph of the just. The truth is that the alleged inconsistency of the Apostolic teaching on this matter is rooted in the realities of the moral life. If it is true that men are justified by faith, it is also true that personal responsibility is an unchanging fact of the spiritual order. If Jesus taught that the penitent were received by the Father with a free and simple welcome, He also declared that men must give an account for every idle word.⁴ The logic of the religious life is not the logic of the understanding; and the Christian mind

¹ 1 Cor. 3¹⁰⁻¹⁵.² 1 Pet. 4¹⁸.³ Rom. 8¹.⁴ Luke 15¹¹, Matt. 12³⁶.

always continues to combine the assurance of faith with the awe of judgment and the fear of God.

Indeed, the difficulty of interpreting St. Paul's doctrine on this subject does not connect itself so much with the idea of salvation as with that of perdition. His view of the last supreme Crisis is almost purely ethical, and implies that all souls will be brought to recognise their own spiritual state. And it is easy to understand how such a moral experience as this should occur in the history of the redeemed, but hard to see how it can be the prelude of endless death. . If the verdict of the great Assize were a physical thing, like the deliverance of a criminal court, and meant simply that the condemned were to be sent away by force into material torment, there would be no difficulty in seeing how a hopelessly evil character could experience judgment. But if the sentence of the supreme Tribunal means something moral, and involves the wakening of the conscience and the opening of the spiritual vision to reality, then it does seem that no man utterly lost can stand at the bar of God. Only a creature that remains essentially good can possibly recognise a spiritual decree, assent to the justice of a moral condemnation, or be made manifest in his own eyes before the Throne of the Highest.

2. *Theological interpretation.*—Such, then, are the two aspects of the Judgment idea. On the one hand, it is a great world-event; on the other hand, a personal experience. No doubt it is difficult for us to combine these two thoughts, or even to form any clear idea of their relation to each other. Nor could it, indeed, be otherwise, since in speaking of these things we are dealing with symbols of unknown reality, and with forms which are but as gleams of light on the wide moorlands of our ignorance. Some help towards an understanding of this matter will, however, be afforded if it be remembered that the individual is a part of the Race, and his moral experience a part of the experience of Humanity. It is not possible so to separate each life from the organism to which it belongs as to value and judge it by itself alone. As Carlyle has said, "No thought, word, or act of man but has sprung withal out of all men, and works sooner or later,

recognisably or unrecognisably, on all men." And this truth is the key to the doctrine of Judgment, even as it is the key to the inner meaning of other apocalyptic forms. When we remember the organic unity of the Race we see that no final verdict can be passed on the individual except as part of a verdict on mankind. Not till the Book of the Soul has been closed can the record of souls be written.

(a) If we were to essay a definite account of the entire conception of Judgment to come, we would find that it had in it two distinct elements. In the first place, there is a personal individual reckoning, a crisis of revelation, wherein a man sees himself as he is, knows his position in the sight of God—his relation to the moral law and the divine Kingdom. This experience determines his own immediate destiny. But, in the second place, this individual crisis is not, and cannot be, a complete and perfect judgment, giving an account of the whole man and the final value of his life. He is not only an individual, possessed of this or that private character, he is also a member of a race; and evidently this aspect of his record has to be taken into consideration in estimating the total significance of him. A man of genius, for instance, like Shakespeare, lives his personal life, meets with certain temptations, fights his battles in the lonely places of the soul, attains a certain type of character; and at the end goes in and stands before his Master. But there is something more to be said about Shakespeare than this. He was entrusted with supreme creative powers, and he exercised them in accordance with a great ideal. He set in motion forces which remain for ever active in the lives of men. His works are part of the world so long as it endures. And all this is to be taken into account in considering the value of the man. The manner in which he exercised his gifts had a moral worth and meaning—a worth and meaning that cannot be told till the end of things is come. We see all this clearly in the case of Shakespeare and of every other great personality. But that which is true of him must be true, in some degree, of all. No man lives to himself alone, or even to himself and God alone. He lives also to Humanity. In the things he has made, the work he

has done, he has become a part of the history of mankind; and the moral worth of his influence is something distinct from his private character, whether that be good or bad. His life has become an eternal element in a larger whole, and maintains itself from generation to generation. But the complete effect and import of him, in this aspect of his existence, will not appear till our Race has reached its goal. It is this final valuing of a man, as a part of the complete Humanity, that we call the Final Judgment.

(b) *Rational basis of belief.*—The rational grounds for belief in some kind of Future Judgment are, as already suggested, of considerable weight. The most important of these is the witness of conscience. Conscience is doubtless, in its own degree, a tribunal of divine appointment; but it has shortcomings and disabilities which involve the existence of a higher tribunal than itself. It bears the characteristics of a lower court, whose decisions are subject to review. It claims an absolute authority, but it lacks power to enforce its decrees; it can be bribed and cajoled into silence; and it is often incapable of making its meaning plain and beyond dispute. Its message is often hard to interpret, and its voice muffled by the jarring voices of the world. For its vindication it requires the appearing at last of a Tribunal incorruptible and undefiled; able to enforce and establish its verdicts, to make its righteousness clear as the noonday, to pronounce its decrees in a world where but for its voice there is silence.

It is evident, also, that there are things in the moral universe which are of the nature of Crisis, and experiences in our spiritual life which come suddenly and are produced by agencies outside ourselves. And these are clearly of the same order as the Judgment to come, and point towards it. We know, for instance, that the great moral laws which, for the most part work in silence, out of sight, do manifest themselves also in outward and visible fulfilment. The condemnation of evil doing, which is always being written in the records of character, keeps expressing itself from time to time in crises of suffering, in terrors of self-understanding, in paroxysms of conviction, in sudden, vivid revelation. Without these crises,

these hours and days of judgment, the moral order, as we know it, would be incomplete—would, indeed, have little in it of healing or of promise. That law of retribution which ordains that the heart shall grow harder and ever harder as it persists in an evil course, has in it no tendency towards salvation, but works always towards insensibility and death; it is necessary, therefore, that its action be checked, and its narcotic influence interrupted, by outward impact upon the life of a man—by the sound of warning voices, by the stroke of adverse circumstance, by the glare of sudden light, by the awakening grip of fear, by the vital touch of love. A man to whom the voice of conscience had spoken in vain has often been awakened to the reality of his state when he has read the truth about his life in the faces of his fellow-men, or heard it spoken by a faithful voice, or felt it graven on his flesh by the fiery stamp of pain.

Apart from these awakening forces, where were the hopes of men? Without these *days* of judgment the *process* of judgment were always an agent of destruction. So evident is this side of the moral order that the human instinct of righteousness is not content with the thought that a man is to be left alone to suffer that inner process of retribution that hardens the heart, or that he is to have no warning given him beyond the chiding of the enfeebled voice of conscience. The sense of poetic justice requires that there shall be something outward to correspond with the inward state, that the wrongdoer shall not only be condemned for his evil deeds, but shall know himself condemned. It is not enough that he be slowly robbed of moral strength while his spirit sleeps; he must be awakened to a sense of his enfeeblement. Consciousness of penalty is an essential part of retribution. Without that, righteousness is not accomplished; there is neither fairness to the sinner nor vindication of the moral law.

There are thus elements in God's dealings with men which cannot be described as belonging to the mere process of punishment—elements with which the thought of a final Reckoning completely harmonises. Nay, we may go further, and say that without the hope of future Judgment these great things in the moral experience of mankind would be left without complete-

ness. They would be as a road without an end, a voyage without a port, and a prophecy without fulfilment.

All this, then, one may say with confidence on this great subject. And yet it is necessary to repeat that there is something in New Testament teaching and in the principles of our Religion which is not expressed by the category of Judgment. The idea of the Last Assize always bears a legal aspect, and is concerned only with retribution and reward; but the last word of Christianity is not law or retribution, but grace. The thought of a Last Reckoning, also, suggests a point which closes moral history; but there can be no absolute finality in the life of a spiritual being or in the manifestation of God in Christ. Thus Judgment is a reality, and all that the Scriptures say of it is true. But there is a higher truth that transcends it; and even the terrors of the Day of the Lord must be seen at last to have had a place in the infinite purpose of redeeming love.

(III.)

INTERMEDIATE STATE.

1. *New Testament doctrine.*—(a) We may take it for granted that the belief in the Intermediate State was a part of the ordinary, popular creed of the Apostolic Church, since it is a necessary element in the apocalyptic scheme of thought, and belongs to the expectation of Resurrection and Judgment. There is nothing in the New Testament to discourage this view, but rather a good deal to support it. It is not in the least contradicted by those sayings of the Apostles which indicate the hope of entering into blessedness at the hour of death, and being immediately with the Lord. No intelligent Jewish believer thought of Hades as a state in which the righteous dead experienced anything else than pure happiness—a happiness only slightly less than the full glory of the Kingdom. And this was probably the character of the primitive Christian hope.

(b) It is true that the doctrine of Hades does not hold any

prominent place in the New Testament; but this may be explained by the fact that the early Christians lived in daily expectation of the Parousia, and were confident that some of them would see the coming of the Lord. This being so, the space between death and the end of the world counted for little in the outlook of believers. The Intermediate State, therefore, held a small place in their thoughts, being cast into shadow by the expectation of the Second Advent, the great Reckoning, and the end of the world.

(c) Such references to the Intermediate State, however, as do occur in the New Testament suffice to show that early Christian thought on this subject exhibited the same general features, and was just as indefinite, as the Jewish doctrine. The traditional conception of the Underworld appears in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus, where our Lord employs the imagery commonly used in apocalyptic descriptions of Hades.¹ Also, the idea which is expressed in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, that the Messiah would hold the power of the keys, is apparent in the saying that Christ has the keys of hell and of death.² Again, the apocalyptic belief that Hades would pass away at the Judgment and merge in heaven and hell, is reflected in the prophecy of St. John that Hades will be cast into the lake of fire.³ Similarly, the habit of describing the state of the departed as a condition of "sleep" is common to the New Testament and Apocalypse generally.⁴ Finally, the suggestion sometimes found in Jewish writings, that some of the dead may find deliverance from Hades, or at least may profit by the intercession of the living, is indicated by St. Paul's reference to "baptism for the dead"⁵ and by St. Peter's account of "the descent into Hades."⁶

(d) "*Sleep of souls.*" — The persistence with which the sacred writers describe death as "sleep," "sleep in Jesus," is very striking, and has led in some cases to the doctrine, suggested even by Luther, that souls remain in a state of

¹ Luke 16¹⁹⁻²⁶; cf. *En.* 22, also 4 *Macc.* 13¹⁷.

² Rev. 1¹⁸; cf. *Testament of Levi*, 18¹⁰.

³ Rev. 20¹⁴; cf. 4 *Ezra* 8⁵³.

⁴ 1 Cor. 15¹⁸ etc.; cf. *En.* 92¹⁰ etc.

⁵ 1 Cor. 15²⁹; cf. 2 *Macc.* 12³⁸⁻⁴⁵.

⁶ 1 Pet. 3¹⁸⁻²⁵ 4⁶.

unconsciousness between death and resurrection. There is nothing irrational in this belief. The mind, whether it be ever really unconscious during this life or no, is undoubtedly robbed of the power to express itself by that quiescence of the brain which occurs in slumber, and sometimes in disease. And it is not incredible that it may experience a similar disability in the intermediate state if it be there deprived altogether of its organ of expression. Nor does the idea of the sleep of souls involve the conclusion that the blessedness of the departed is really delayed. To the man who has been asleep there seems to have been but a moment between falling into slumber and awaking again. And in like manner, the soul that passed into unconsciousness at the moment of death and awoke again at the resurrection would not be aware of having suffered loss although it had slept for ten thousand years. It does not, however, seem that the Apostles are to be understood in a literal sense when they speak of "those who sleep." Such an interpretation would be contrary to Jewish thought as a whole, and to many sayings in the New Testament. Probably the description of death as sleep is to be understood in a poetic way, as signifying rest, peace, security. This conception has permanent hold on the Christian mind, and has received final expression in Shakespeare's perfect line—"After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well."

(e) *Descent into Hades*.—But the most interesting and important references to the Intermediate State are contained in those passages which show that the traditional belief in the Descent of Christ into Hades goes back to New Testament times. St. Paul probably refers to this belief when he says in the Epistle to the Ephesians that our Lord "descended into the lower parts of the earth." But the First Epistle of St. Peter supplies more definite information as to the nature of the ancient opinion on this matter. In that Epistle the Apostle declares, first, that Jesus descended in the spirit into Hades and proclaimed good news there to certain spirits in prison; and, secondly, that the gospel was preached to the dead that these might live according to God in the spirit.¹

¹ See App. II. (Hades).

Various endeavours have been made to explain these sayings in such a way as to exclude the idea of a Descent into the Intermediate State, or, failing that, to escape the conclusion that Jesus preached "good tidings" there. For instance, it has been said that our Lord descended into the lower world in order to make a kind of triumphal progress through that region and to exhibit the proofs of His victory. This was, in effect, Luther's view, and it was expressed by Goethe in one of his early poems. Calvin held that the Saviour went down into hell itself, partly to declare to the lost their doom, and partly "that He might endure in the spirit the cruel torments of a lost and damned man."¹ This is an idea of quite gratuitous horror, having no relation to Scripture or reason, but evolved entirely out of the inner consciousness of theologians. Other explanations are that the Apostle teaches merely that the gospel was preached to the spiritually dead in this present world, or that he refers to something which took place before the Incarnation. But all these interpretations, however ingenious or theologically convenient, have the fatal defect of finding no support whatever in the words of St. Peter, who declares that Jesus descended into Hades and preached good news.

Whatever difficulty, then, may beset the detailed exegesis of these admittedly difficult passages, their general import seems plain. St. Peter almost certainly meant to teach that Jesus in the interval between death and resurrection went down into the lower world and there proclaimed good tidings. "There should be no doubt," says Dr. Briggs, "as to the New Testament doctrine of the descent of Christ into Hades in the main features, though many details are obscure."² This conclusion is, indeed, the only one that can explain the widespread belief regarding this matter which existed in the early Church. Polycarp, Ignatius, Hermas, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Hippolytus, all refer with more or less emphasis to the Mission of Christ to departed souls.

¹ "Quod diros in anima cruciatus perditī ac damnati hominis pertulerit" (*Institutio*, Lib. II. cap. 16. 10).

² *Fundamental Christian Faith*, pp. 129, 130.

Hermas extends the sweep of the tradition, and asserts that the Apostles after their martyrdom continued in the underworld the redeeming work which their Master had begun—"The Apostles and the teachers who preached the name of the Son of God, after they had fallen asleep in the power and faith of the Son of God, preached also to them that had fallen asleep before them."¹ The most vivid account, however, of this tradition is to be found in the Christian apocalypse entitled the *Descent into Hades*, written some time during the first half of the second century. It tells of the bright light which shone of a sudden in the darkness of Hades, of the appearing of John the Baptist to announce the coming of the Son of God, of the rejoicing with which Patriarchs and Apostles hailed His approach. It describes the terror of the evil powers at the news that the Conqueror was drawing nigh, their endeavours to close the gates against Him, their ultimate confession of defeat. It shows us, finally, the multitudes of the ransomed children of Adam, and the company of the saints departing from Hades, led by their divine Deliverer, with songs of joy and thanksgiving.²

This primitive belief receives final expression in the familiar article of the Apostles' Creed—"He descended into Hades." It is to be remembered that this Creed was practically completed in the fourth century, and that it contains nothing which was not considered to pertain to the Catholic faith. It is a singularly successful endeavour to express such beliefs as were held to be of apostolic authority. That its testimony as to the Descent into Hades was generally received by medieval Christianity is witnessed by Dante, who represents Virgil as telling how, shortly after his own arrival in the infernal region, there came one, "With crowns of conquest gloriously graced," who released from their imprisonment and took away with him to heaven Adam and Abel, Moses and David, and all the primitive fathers of the ancient faith.³

So Peter's reference to the ministry of Christ in the Under-

¹ *Shepherd of Hermas*, iii. 16.

² *Gospel of Nicodemus* (Westcott's edition), pp. 17-23.

³ *Inferno*, Canto IV.

world thus remains the earliest and most important of those utterances which show that primitive Christian thought agreed with apocalyptic Judaism in that it did distinguish between Hades and Gehenna, and also that it did not object to the idea that some of the dead might hear good tidings and be delivered from the Prison-house of Souls.

2. *Theological developments.*—But the doctrine of the Intermediate State, which has never ceased to find a place in Christian theology, is to be traced to something deeper than the mere authority of certain New Testament sayings. It owes its vitality to the evident truth that it is involved in the doctrine of Judgment. We have seen that the Apostolic teaching presents Judgment as an experience which awaits all men, and is to be anticipated with reverent awe even by believers. And this view of the matter is taught by Jesus Himself, inasmuch as He declares that “every idle word that a man shall speak, he shall give account thereof in the day of Judgment,” and also affirms that the Lord at the establishment of His Kingdom will chasten His undutiful servants with a severity proportioned to their talent and responsibility. But, if this be so, it is evident that the world to come will contain something besides the perdition of the lost and the perfect glory of the saints, namely, an experience of discipline and trial. In other words, it will contain an intermediate state—intermediate between the conditions of this mortal life and the inheritance of the saints in light. In any case, this is undoubtedly the belief that has given vitality to this aspect of the ancient faith in immortality.

Greek doctrine.—As to the persistent power of this belief in an Intermediate State there can be no question. It has maintained itself throughout the ages in all the three great branches of the Christian Church, though in varying forms and with varying degrees of dogmatic definition. The Greco-Russian Church has retained in a vague fashion the old apocalyptic view of Hades as a state in which the good and the evil experience imperfect forms of joy and of sorrow while they await the Judgment. Thus Palmer tells us that theological students in Russia write dissertations on such subjects as “The Intermediate State of

imperfect happiness and imperfect torment, and the profitable-ness of prayers and oblations for the departed; especially for those who have died with faith and repentance but with great sins, and without having had time for full amendment of life.”¹ In this doctrine we may find a characteristic trait of orthodox Eastern Christianity, which is faithful always to tradition and distrusts the Western tendency to precise logical statement.

Roman doctrine.—The Roman theology has developed out of the old idea of Hades its dogma of purgatory. According to Roman teaching, the soul’s destiny is eternally fixed by the individual judgment which takes place at death. Those who are condemned in this judgment depart into unending torment; those who endure this final test inherit everlasting salvation, but not all of them enter at once into perfect felicity. Immediate admission to heaven is the privilege only of certain saintly souls; the great majority of the redeemed must experience the ordeal of purgatory, which is a condition partly of retributive punishment and partly of purifying discipline. Whenever the cleansing flame has completed its work, the redeemed and purified spirit ascends to the region of the blessed, and enjoys henceforth the glorious liberty of the children of God.²

Protestant speculation.—(a) The Protestant Church, on the other hand, has formally rejected both the Greek and the Roman doctrines of Purgatory, mainly because it finds something in them which is inconsistent with its view of salvation, and because it dislikes the thought that retributive suffering remains in the life of the blessed dead. And yet Protestant theology has not been able to divest itself altogether of belief in an intermediate state. Most of those who in recent times have maintained the doctrine of Eternal Punishment have recognised that many who depart this world in a condition of repentance and faith must begin the future life with an experience of cleansing and education. And the majority of evangelical teachers at the present day hold some form of the doctrine that is commonly called “Future Probation.” This

¹ *Visit to the Russian Church*, p. 305.

² For statement of Roman doctrine, cf. Moehler, *Symbolism*, pp. 349-353.

latter form of thought is really the Protestant version of belief in an intermediate state, and its exponents find warrant for it in those features of New Testament teaching to which I have already referred, and also in the many declarations of Scripture which affirm the universality of the Gospel. Their argument is that, since the New Testament asserts that there is no salvation except through Christ, it implies that every soul of man must have an opportunity of accepting Him. But this again involves the conclusion that the ministry of the Saviour continues beyond the grave. If He is to draw all men unto Himself, then He must be lifted up in the sight of all men; and those who have not seen Him in the days of their flesh must be enabled to see Him hereafter. If this be not true, then the teaching of the Apostles is meaningless; their claim that He is the appointed Saviour of all men is altogether vain. Such is the reasoning of many thinkers, such as Dorner,¹ Müller,² Godet, Delitzsch,³ and other more recent writers; and if it be accepted, then the idea of a continued ministry of grace in the state between death and judgment is supported not only by the direct statement of St. Peter, but by a great mass of indirect New Testament evidence.

(b) *Speculative strength of this theory.*—Now, the positive strength of this theory is derived mainly from the fact that existence in this world does not bear the aspect of being intended to afford equal opportunity and full probation for every soul of man. One may admit that this earthly life is admirably adapted for the development and testing of Humanity as a whole. The struggle with nature and the necessity of learning its secrets and conforming to its laws; the constant need of labour; the clash of race with race; the mingled experience of joy and pain, of childhood, youth, maturity, old age; the various relationships of life; the process of reconciling individual freedom with the good of society—all these together constitute a mass of influence which is admirably suited to develop the human type, and to

¹ *System of Christian Doctrine*, vol. iv. pp. 408–410.

² *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, vol. ii. p. 429.

³ *System of Biblical Psychology*, p. 553.

produce at last such a creature as man is intended to become. Matters assume a very different aspect, however, when we come to consider the case of the individual. It cannot be said that the brief span of mortal existence affords equal opportunity or fair probation for every one that is born of woman. Vast multitudes never attain the age of self-consciousness. Many more fail to reach maturity. Only a small number experience all the seven ages of man. Some, again, inherit defects of physical life which react upon the mind and hinder its expression. Some are born into a low state of civilisation. The lives of others are narrowed and confined, and denied the means of self-realisation. To how few it is given to know the glory of the world, or to taste the fulness of the cup of life.

One can imagine an arm of the sea stretching between two shores, of which it might be said—"This strait seems perfectly designed to afford a test of the sea-going qualities of ships. It has in it all kind of perils—rocks, shoals, currents; also all sorts of weather—squalls, storms, calms, heat and cold. No better trial could be given any ship than a voyage across this water." But, suppose we found on inquiry that of all the vessels launched on that sea the greater number sank before they cleared the harbour bar; that of those which survived to reach the open waters some experienced favouring winds and peaceful skies, while others had test of continual storms and buffetings and varied perils; that, finally, only a few of the craft which attempted this voyage ever made the opposite shore, we should surely be disposed to doubt whether this stretch of sea was really designed after all to afford a fair test of the efficiency and worthiness of ships. This mortal life is such a sea. In theory it affords an ideal probation. But in experience it does not, since a multitude of souls never are exposed to its trials nor granted its opportunities, since very few complete its course, and since its tests and its privileges are not given in equal measure to this man and to that.

There are thus many difficulties besetting the view that this earthly life is designed to afford a final probation of souls. And the greatest of these, perhaps, is suggested by the fact that so many perish in infancy. The problem presented by

this feature of human existence has always been felt by theologians.¹ The general teaching of the Roman Church has always been that, of all who die in early years, those that have enjoyed the privilege of baptism inherit the fulness of eternal life; while those who have not been baptized experience unending happiness, though they fail of perfect blessing. This is probably the meaning of that passage in the early part of Dante's *Inferno* which gives to unbaptized infants a place in that region where dwell the good and great of the pagan world—Homer, Virgil, and their peers. The early Reformed theology, less humane than the Roman, commonly taught that elect children were received at death to Paradise, while the non-elect shared with all lost souls that everlasting doom which is the appointed penalty of original sin. On the other hand, modern theology of the liberal evangelical type usually rejects both these theories, and affirms broadly that all who leave this world before they reach the age of responsibility are saved. But this latter view, though it harmonises with the sentiments of Christian humanity, is not easily defended so long as we maintain that this life presents the final probation of souls. We may assume that such a trial as is given us in this world is necessary for the perfecting of moral character, is an essential stage in our development. It is, indeed, only on this assumption that we can justify all the cost, the pathos and tragedy of human history. The suffering and heartbreak which have attended probation on the earth cannot be reconciled with the goodness of God, unless we believe that such a probation was necessary for the attainment of eternal life. But if this moral conflict and trial are thus necessary for the gaining of the highest good, how can it be said that those who have never experienced it may yet without it achieve the crown? If the battle is the only path to victory, how can those who have never fought be counted among the conquerors? This is certainly a very weighty objection to the general liberal doctrine of infant salvation. But it is a difficulty that loses all its force as soon as we confess that this life is not the scene of a complete and final

¹ Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Statu Infantium*, etc.

testing, that the period of opportunity stretches out into the future state and endures until all have experienced the necessary discipline, have faced "the hard task that man was made for," and have, for good or for evil, attained to permanence of moral character.

(c) *Criticism*.—Such are some of the advantages which attend the theory of future Probation, and they are generally admitted by those Protestant theologians of our time who believe that evil is eternal, or who affirm Conditional Immortality, or who profess an agnostic view of the whole matter. One may confess, however, a certain want of interest in the mere question of future *Probation*. The term "probation" does not adequately describe the experience of spiritual creatures or their relation to the Creator. It stands for an element in the moral life, but not for the whole of it. There is something narrow and legal in the idea that we are given life merely that we may be tested, either here or hereafter, and if we fail to stand the trial, may be cast away for ever. Such a conception is, indeed, inconsistent with the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. An inventor may make a machine, and if it fail to do its work may break it in pieces; a master may engage a servant, and if the servant prove incapable may dismiss him; but a father cannot reject his son on the ground that he has not fulfilled his expectations. No man who is worthy to have a son says to himself, "I will test this lad, and if he fails I will cast him out." He knows that no failure, or succession of failures, on the part of his son, can make an end of his obligation to do and to desire the best for him. Such failure must, of course, entail suffering and penalty; but transcending all punishment, all retribution, is the necessity that is laid upon a father to strive to the last that his child may be saved and brought into the ways of good. But if the idea of "probation" is thus an inadequate account of the relation of any man to his son, much less is it capable of expressing the whole attitude of the Heavenly Father towards any to whom He has granted the gift of life. God, who knows all things, does not require to try any man in order to discover his capabilities; and so all the testing to which He subjects us is

better described as discipline than as probation. He does put us on trial, He does bring us to judgment. But the issue of testing and of judgment cannot be retributive, *and nothing more*. It cannot make an end of that divine grace which is from everlasting to everlasting; which ceaselessly strives to transmute all failure and all penalty into righteousness and peace.

3. *Prayer for the dead*.—Closely related to the doctrines of Purgatory and of Future Probation, and belonging like them to the subject of the Intermediate State, is the question of Prayer for the Dead. There can be no doubt that the practice of supplication for the departed prevailed widely in the early Christian Community. Arnobius, for instance, mentions incidentally that petitions were offered in the churches of his day for the dead as well as for the living.¹ In later times, of course, this custom became universal; and it is still an essential element in the public worship and private devotion of that great majority of Christians who adhere to the Greek and Roman Communions. Even in the Evangelical Churches, also, many thinkers have protested against the idea that the inhabitants of the Future State are excluded from the reach of intercession; and petitions for the welfare of those who are gone before are quite commonly offered at the present day in Anglican places of worship. So that the weight of the historical evidence in favour of this observance is undoubtedly very impressive.

It is beyond question, also, that there have always been individual Protestants of perfectly orthodox belief who have been mindful of their beloved dead, in their hours of private devotion. Thus Samuel Johnson, a man of the simplest faith, always continued to pray for the soul of his wife departed. After the death of his friend Thrale, too, we find in his diary the touching petition—"Almighty God, who art the giver of all good, enable me to remember with due thankfulness the comforts and advantages I have enjoyed through the friendship of Henry Thrale, for whom, so far as is lawful, I humbly implore Thy mercy in his present state."² And we may

¹ *Contra Gentes*, Book iv. sec. 36.

² *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 135.

confess some difficulty in showing reasonable grounds for condemning any who may follow Johnson's example in this matter. Modern theology has largely departed from the dogmatic position which excludes intercession for the dead. No one, for instance, can logically object to such intercession who believes in future probation, or who thinks that the souls of the blessed gradually develop in holiness after they have departed this life, or who is uncertain in his doctrine of future destiny. Also, it is reasonable to ask by what authority we interfere with the rights of the individual believer in so intimate a matter, and say to him—Thou shalt not. Not by the authority of any express commandment of Christ or of His Apostles, since the New Testament is silent on this subject. Not in the name of the Church universal, since the great majority of Christians in all ages have prayed for the dead. Not on the ground of assured knowledge, for we cannot *know* that intercession does not avail for the departed. Nor can we urge that it is a reverent and religious thing to leave the beloved dead silently in the hands of God. Evidently this is an argument which might be used to discourage prayer for the living, since they, as certainly as "those who sleep," are in the care of the almighty Love. May we not say with justice that intercession, in all its forms, is a matter of faith, not of reason? It is one of the great enduring facts of the religious life, always and everywhere, and is simply to be accepted as one of the essential features of the spiritual Order. We might as well ask whether the outburst of life in the springtime is of any use, whether the rotation of day and night serves any end, as say—"What is the value of intercession, and *how* can it avail?" As to the manner in which intercession avails we have no knowledge; we cannot see how the All-wise and All-loving can be moved by the poor petitions of our ignorance. But we do know that pray for each other we must; and we do know, also, that this necessity arises from the least selfish and the noblest instincts of the soul, and that it binds us to our brethren and to God. We trust, also, that in some sense it makes us fellow-workers with God in the fulfilment of His purpose. But if this be so,

we may well distrust all limitations of intercession which rest on logical reasoning, or on the assumption that the power that avails within the borders of this mortal life is brought to impotence by death. We believe in the communion of saints; we believe that we who dwell here and those who are gone before do but inherit different rooms in the Father's house. How then can we be sure that our prayers for them, or theirs for us, are profitless and vain? While, therefore, we may be content to remain by the tradition of our own Church in this matter, we may, at the same time, confess that the *forbidding* of petitions for the departed is difficult to justify. Indeed, it is evident that all religious men do in effect, though not perhaps in words, pray for the dead. "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire"; and the sincere desire that the departed may find forgiveness and peace, may enjoy the light and life eternal, is really a spiritual act which differs in nothing but form from stated intercession, and is the substance of all the liturgies.¹

Permanent value of belief in Intermediate State.—But, whatever our view of these difficult questions may be, and whether or no we are prepared to accept any theological formula as to the subject of the Intermediate State, we cannot doubt that the Christian Church, whether Greek, Roman, or Reformed, does recognise in some degree the force of those considerations which created and have sustained the three-fold doctrine of future destiny. And so we are constrained to admit that the belief in "Hades," like the other apocalyptic forms, has shown such vitality and endurance as to prove it the expression of abiding truth—as to vindicate the place which it has held in religious faith since ever man came to believe in the life everlasting.

We have seen that the Kingdom, the Rising from the dead, and the final Reckoning owe their permanent power to their being the symbols of moral and spiritual realities. And, in like manner, the doctrine of the Intermediate State has its roots in something deeper than historical circumstance or changing speculations. Like the beliefs in an universal Resurrection

¹ Cf. Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, pp. 161–163.

and Judgment, it rests on the assured conviction that the lot of the individual, whether for weal or for woe, must have something wanting to its completeness until the destiny of the race as a whole has finally been determined. No one can doubt that this is a conviction which is firmly based on truth; nor does its validity depend on any particular view of ultimate destiny. If every man be judged at death according to the record of his life, and enter thereafter into a settled condition of sorrow or of blessedness; still it is evident that until the number of the condemned be accomplished and the company of the redeemed completed, the cup of experience must remain unfulfilled for every one that is lost and for every one that is saved. If, again, there be a final Judgment at the close of earthly history which shall mark the end alike of hope and of fear; then, until that day has dawned, no saint and no sinner can inherit in its completeness the place prepared for him of old. If, finally, beyond all judgment there stretch a period of penalty and discipline and ministry which shall culminate at last in some far-off event of final peace and light; then, till that consummation be attained no separate soul in all the universe, however rich in blessedness, however crowned with life, can know the flower and glory of beatitude. For the purpose of God is, in all its parts, a purpose for the race of men; nor can it be fulfilled in one until attained in all. Until the latest laggard of the human host has reached his house of destiny, it must be true of all his comrades gone before that they without him cannot be made perfect.

CHAPTER IV.

GEHENNA.

(EVERLASTING TORMENT.)

I.

Introductory.

1. THE doctrine of Gehenna and its fiery torments affords a striking example of the essentially symbolic character of the apocalyptic genius. That doctrine was originally just the negative side of the Kingdom of God conception. It had really no connection with any deliberate theological opinion about the ultimate destiny of mankind. And all later endeavours to identify it with the dogma of Everlasting Evil have been unsuccessful and unfortunate—unfitted to endure a rational analysis, and harmful in their effects on religious thought and life. At least, this is the view of the matter which I propose to illustrate in this chapter.

2. The sources of the Gehenna belief, as it appears in the Christian Church, must be sought far back in the history of Israel; and its peculiar forms must be attributed largely to remote influences, mainly Egyptian and Persian. We have seen how in later Old Testament times it was believed that the benefits and blessings of the Messianic Kingdom would be extended to such of the Gentile nations as should submit to its sway. The negative side of this expectation, however, was that the persistently hostile among foreign peoples would experience total national destruction—irrecoverable calamity and disaster. An emblem of this doom was found in the

putrefaction and burning that were in the valley of Hinnom where, according to tradition, were gathered abominable débris and carcases of the slain. "Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched."¹

3. This was, generally speaking, the early conception of the aeonian punishment. It was a purely mundane thing, "the everlasting desolation of many generations." But, as the belief in immortality matured, and as the thought of punishment became more individual and ethical, the notion of this final destruction was carried forward into the future state. It became the conception of a personal and other-worldly as well as of a national and earthly ruin. And this development led to an incongruous fashion of using imagery that had been suited to the older belief, to illustrate the features of the newer conception. When the scene of punishment was extended beyond this earth no emancipation was achieved from the barbarous forms of thought which had been derived from the horrors of war and of Oriental tyranny. Rather did these become greatly exaggerated. Imagination became free to riot in visions of the torments of the future state. No one could check its excesses and say: "I have been in the lower regions, and these visions are not true." Hence there appeared in Jewish teaching about Gehenna ingenious descriptions of complicated horrors, which the apocalyptic prophets embellished with materials drawn from the folklore of the peoples, and especially from Persian sources. Not only general conceptions, but also definite symbols like the "outer darkness," "the eternal fire," and so on, were borrowed from the Zoroastrian Scriptures.² Not that the Jewish artists stood greatly in need of resorting to foreign teachers for help in the production of pictures fully adequate to the requirements of their theme. They showed a wealth of original genius in depicting the manifold tortures and sorrows of Gehenna.

4. Thus the doctrine of future torment became established. But it was quite vague and undogmatic. It was a mere extension into the future state of the penalty and ruin which it had been the custom to predict for the godless nations in this

¹ Isa. 66²⁴.

² Cf. Mills, *Avesta Eschatology*, p. 50.

present world. It is important to bear this in mind—to remember that the *idea of aeonian punishment is older than the belief in personal immortality*. It had in the beginning no real likeness, and can never have any legitimate relation, to the dogma of Eternal Evil. It was not the creation of men who had faced the problem of human destiny, and had come to a definite conclusion regarding it. It simply meant that, even as this present world was to witness the Messianic Kingdom and the overthrow of its enemies, so the future state was to see the vindication of the righteous and the destruction of their foes. The older conception and the new remained side by side in Jewish thought. Doom and destruction awaited the Gentiles here; and Gehenna flamed for the godless hereafter. And whether men spoke of aeonian punishment as a thing of the present or of the future, they meant by it nothing theological. The flames of Gehenna filled the background of the picture which had for its foreground the City of God.

II.

JEWISH SPECULATIONS.

1. There can be no doubt, of course, that in the time of our Lord, which was a period of great mental activity, men were beginning to suggest theories of ultimate destiny. But the expression of such theories was always hindered and confused when the Gehenna symbolism was employed. Thus the Rabbis of the schools of Hillel and Shammai would have been able to make their meaning much clearer had they not felt obliged to use the cumbrous and grotesque language of tradition. It was unfortunate that, when they wished to say that the period of future punishment would be limited, they had to speak of sinners going down into the Gehenna flame and “moaning and coming up again.” Also, they did themselves injustice when they expressed the idea of annihilation by asserting that souls would be “burned up” and “their ashes scattered under the feet of the righteous.” And these are but examples of the

truth that the old figurative language was unfitted to become the instrument of speculative thought.

2. Another illustration of this is found in the difficulty which, as we have seen, besets any attempt to interpret in a dogmatic sense the Gehenna imagery in the *Book of Enoch*. And a similar perplexity attends the doctrinal exegesis of all the books of this class. *Fourth Ezra*, for instance, is so hard to understand that some excellent authorities find in it the idea of conditional immortality,¹ while others are quite sure that it expresses belief in unending torment. It is interesting also to note that while the *Apocalypse of Baruch* is said to have issued from the school of Shammai its language seems to assert that all the wicked suffer everlasting woe. This was not the doctrine of Shammai, who reserved the fate of perpetual torment for the worst of sinners. Why, then, does *Baruch* convey no hint of any distinction between one class of transgressors and another? Evidently, for the reason that the language of Apocalypse was adapted to express only the conception of general destruction.

3. But a final proof of the elusive nature of the Gehenna imagery is afforded by the inability of modern writers to give an account of its dogmatic force without contradicting themselves. Thus, the learned article on "Eschatology," in the *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, states the doctrine of Judaism to be that "all evil deeds meet with everlasting punishment." Yet it also says that "Gehenna has a double purpose, annihilation and eternal pain." Further, it tells us that Shammai's doctrine of Gehenna "resembled Purgatory," and finally that some Rabbis believed that "the punishment of the wicked endured for twelve months." Surely these are perplexing contradictions; but they are due simply to the writer's fidelity in describing a state of hopeless mental confusion. And this confusion arose partly out of the endeavour to express rational theories and distinctions of thought through the medium of imagery that was meant to convey only a vague conception of overthrow and ruin.

¹ *E.g.* Schultz, *O. T. Theology*, vol. ii. p. 395 (note).

III.

NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE.

But if all this is to be said about the Jewish presentations of Gehenna, very much the same things are to be affirmed concerning the early Christian teaching on this subject. The New Testament prophecies of fiery wrath and judgment are not more easy to interpret than the pictures of *Enoch*. In their references to the pit of destruction, our sacred writers betray little sign of speculative influences; and their use of the fire imagery is very free and varied. It is literary rather than dogmatic, and suggests sometimes one thought and sometimes another.

1. *Its general characteristics.*—(a) The writer of the Book of Revelation, for instance, tells us that the wicked “shall be tormented day and night for ever”;¹ but, on the other hand, he says that “death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.”² The first of these sayings, taken literally, states the doctrine of Everlasting Torment; while the second suggests the idea of Annihilation, since its intention is to teach that *there will be an end* of death and of the Intermediate State. And so, if we are to suppose that this writer had in mind a theory of destiny, we must conclude that he enforced two contradictory views.³ The absurdity of this conclusion warns us not to attempt dogmatic interpretation. Indeed, the impossibility of attaching importance to St. John’s prophecies of eternal doom becomes evident when we remember his saying that the smoke of the fallen city of Rome will “go up for ever and ever.”⁴

(b) The Apostle Paul, like Philo, avoids all reference to fire as the symbol of eternal perdition. It is true that in Second Thessalonians he predicts that the Lord will come “in flaming fire”;⁵ but the terms used in this passage point to the thought of annihilation. On the other hand, the element of fire appears

¹ Rev. 20¹⁰.

² 20¹⁴.

³ This is Beyschlag’s conclusion, *N.T. Theology*, vol. ii. p. 404.

⁴ Rev. 19³.

⁵ 2 Thess. 1⁸.

as a symbol of testing and saving power in the third chapter of First Corinthians, where it is said that in the day of judgment certain believers in Christ will be "saved as by fire."¹ And so, if we are to dogmatise the fire imagery used by St. Paul, we must say that it embodies the doctrine of Purgatory, and also of Destruction.

(c) We may further add to these illustrations of New Testament usage the passage in which St. Peter likens faith that is tested by affliction to gold that is tried by fire.² Also, it is important to remember the great imaginative utterance in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Our God is a consuming fire."³ The same Epistle declares that apostates from Christ have nothing to look for but judgment and a fierceness of devouring fire, and that their "end is to be burned."⁴ It must be admitted that this is language which suggests the doom of utter extinction.

(d) But it is when we come to the Gospels themselves that we find the greatest difficulty in attaching one fixed theological meaning to the symbolism of fire. Thus, the Baptist declares that the Messiah will baptize "with the Holy Ghost and with fire," and will "burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."⁵ And it is clear that in the first of these prophecies he has in view spiritual and moral force; while the apparent meaning of the second prediction is that the wicked will be totally destroyed. Our Lord, also, makes fire the symbol of spiritual power in the saying, "I am come to send fire on the earth,"⁶ and still more in the striking utterance, "Every one must be consecrated with the fire of self-discipline."⁷ Evidently, the Synoptic use of this symbolism is quite as free and varied as that of St. Paul or of St. John the Divine.

It thus appears that the emblem of fire in common New Testament usage signifies four different things — spiritual energy, purifying discipline, penal suffering, and total extinction.

2. *Gehenna prophecies of Jesus.*—But, of course, the most important and difficult of those sayings in the sacred books

¹ 1 Cor. 3¹⁵.

² 1 Pet. 1⁷.

³ Heb. 12²⁹.

⁴ 10²⁷ 6⁸.

⁵ Matt. 3¹¹, 12.

⁶ Luke 12⁴⁹.

⁷ Mark 9⁴⁹ (Moffatt's translation); cf. Bruce in *Expos. Greek Test.*

that embody this type of symbolism are found in the Synoptic prophecies that the outcasts from the Kingdom will be cast into Gehenna, the unquenchable and eternal fire.¹ And these predictions afford a final proof that this imagery is quite undogmatic in its meaning. The attempt to deduce from them a definite and consistent theory of future destiny is entirely fruitless.

(a) In the first place, it is impossible to say that all these references to Gehenna and its torments are couched in the very words of Jesus. They do not, as a rule, bear the imprint of His mind, being expressed in terms which are entirely traditional, and therefore not suited to convey any message that is individual or definite. Phrases and sayings that have been used over and over again by all sorts of people lose their power to declare anything but a vague and common idea. And so, when we find such expressions in the Gospels, we are without any means of assuring ourselves that they belong to a verbatim report. They do not verify themselves, any more than would a proverb or a commonplace quotation. It would be otherwise, of course, if these Gehenna prophecies were accompanied by any qualifying or explanatory sayings, such as might show that they had issued with newness of meaning from the mind of Jesus. But no such interpreting phrases are found in the Gospels. Other apocalyptic forms, like those of the Kingdom and of the Messiah, appear in the Synoptic records so modified and enriched by contact with the mind of our Lord that they guarantee themselves as part of His teaching. But these predictions of Gehenna are not different in any respect from similar prophecies in the Jewish books. Indeed, they are singularly wanting in any feature that might associate them with the personality of the Saviour. We cannot find in them any image or thought which is not traditional.

This will appear at once if we quote a few typical sayings from the Synoptics, and compare them with parallel expressions in the *Book of Enoch*. Thus we read in St. Matthew's Gospel — "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of

¹ Cf. Matt. 13^{42, 50} 18⁸, Mark 9⁴³⁻⁴⁸ etc.

His glory. . . . Then shall He say . . . 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire.' . . . The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them who do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. . . . As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. . . . Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." ¹

It will not be questioned that these sayings, taken together, represent the whole Synoptic Apocalypse of punishment. Compare it, then, with a similar statement composed of quotations from *Enoch*—"When they see the Son of Man sitting on the throne of His glory . . . He will deliver them to the angels of punishment . . . the holy angels. . . . And they will be banished from His presence . . . cursed for ever. . . . They shall be led to the abyss of fire . . . a fire which burns for ever . . . the flame of a burning fire, and the voice of crying and lamentation and weeping. . . . As straw in fire shall they burn." ²

Who can fail to observe the resemblance between these two prophecies? Who can say that the first, any more than the second, bears any marks of individual genius? Surely it is evident that they both owe their form to a common imaginative tradition. Also, it is to be remembered that this tradition kept repeating the same imagery, through all changes of thought, for at least two hundred years. It is plain that such ancient and conventional symbols were not able to express anything that was peculiar to the mind of any one teacher. Indeed, the proof of this, in the case of Jesus, is written on the face of the records. No one could infer from these Synoptic prophecies that our Lord distinguished between different classes of sinners, or that He believed in degrees of punishment, or that He had compassion for lost souls?

(b) This is a consideration, however, which does not help us much towards a theological conclusion. It does not prove that Jesus did not utter prophecies of this kind, but only that

¹ Matt. 25³¹. 41 13⁴¹. 42. 40 10²⁸.

² *En.* 62⁵. 11 63¹¹ 102³ 10¹³ 67¹³ 108⁵. 6 48⁹.

we cannot be sure that we possess them in the very terms He used,¹ or in the fulness of their original form. Still less does it create any doubt that our Lord did speak of Gehenna as the appointed doom of those who might be outcasts from the Kingdom. But this admission does not enable us to attain a definite interpretation of this element in the Gospels. We have to remember that Gehenna represented the negative side of the Kingdom of God idea; it signified exclusion from the blessings of the Coming Age. And this fact presents a serious obstacle to any attempt at confident interpretation. The negative side of any idea is conditioned by the positive side; our knowledge of the one is limited by our understanding of the other. Hence it follows that the Synoptic doctrine of Gehenna must be interpreted by the Synoptic presentation of the Kingdom. But we have seen that our Lord's conception of the Reign of God was poetic and undefined, and we must conclude that His idea of Gehenna was of the same character. If we do not know whether the Messianic Kingdom which Jesus predicted was to be temporal or eternal; and if He described it as at once earthly and heavenly, material and spiritual, present and to come—then it is difficult to see how we can attach any one fixed meaning to His sayings regarding the fate of those who should be exiles from the City of God. And so the knowledge that Jesus spoke of Gehenna helps us little towards an understanding of His mind.

(c) But, in the second place, it is evident that difficulties remain even if we grant that these Gehenna sayings do embody a doctrine of future destiny. We have still to ask what that doctrine is. We have to inquire, for instance, whether the doom which is prophesied for the unrighteous is everlasting punishment or torment ending in annihilation. The attempt to solve this problem leads us into a field of entirely profitless discussion. We become involved in a debate about the meaning of a few ambiguous words, and of two or three pictorial expressions. We are constrained to balance a very little evidence on one side against a very little on the other; and we

¹ "Eternal fire," "eternal punishment," being peculiar to St. Matthew, are doubtful.

know that it matters nothing whether the scale inclines in this way or in that. The doctrine of Jesus as to the fate of mankind is not to be ascertained by a precarious weighing of petty probabilities.

It is true that in the great parable of Judgment (Matt. 25³²⁻⁴⁸) "the eternal fire" is defined as "eternal punishment." But this is a passage which does not lend itself to the designs of confident theologians. Its closing declaration, "These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life," is probably no part of the parable. It seems to be a comment of the Evangelist or of some later scribe; since it really distracts attention from the main purpose of the passage, which is not to declare the duration of punishment, but to explain the principle of judgment. We have to remember, also, that the phrase "aeonian punishment" is used with great freedom by many Jewish writers, as is illustrated by a passage in the *Fragmenta* of Philo,¹ wherein this very expression describes a purely temporal and earthly penalty. The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, also, states that women who adorn themselves unduly are reserved for "eternal punishment";² and, surely, no one can attach dogmatic rigour to this pronouncement. It is to be borne in mind, further, that the apocalyptic writers use the term "eternal life" to describe the life of the Kingdom even when there is no suggestion of endlessness;³ so that eternal punishment probably meant for them simply the state of exclusion from the Messianic dominion. The looseness with which Hellenistic authors of that time spoke of "eternity" is indicated by the passage in which Philo says that the lower creatures are enemies of mankind to "an illimitable eternity," and yet goes on to assert that these will be reconciled to humanity at the coming of the Kingdom.⁴

But, leaving this point aside, it is beyond dispute that the parable as a whole presents peculiar difficulties for the ex-

¹ See App. III. : *N.T. term "Eternal."*

² *Reuben* 5⁵ (κδλασις αλδνιος).

³ Cf. *Fragments of Greek Version of Enoch*, 1-36.

⁴ *Praem. et Poen.* 15 (ἀπρελγραφον αλδωα).

positor. St. Matthew's version of it is certainly an account of something that Jesus said; there is, indeed, no apocalyptic passage in the Gospels that is more certainly interwoven with elements that are characteristic of the Saviour. Nevertheless it may not be a verbatim report of His words. It is an elaborate piece of literary apocalypse, highly allusive, and showing an intimate acquaintance with the Jewish books. It is evidently founded on the Judgment scene in the *Book of Enoch*, and might almost be reconstructed, so far as its imagery and accessories go, out of the "revelation" literature.¹

Dr. Burkitt says of this parable: "It seems to me, therefore, that we are really in the presence of a sort of Midrash, by which I mean an application of the Judgment scene in *Enoch* to enforce a particular moral";² and this is an opinion which we may accept. The precise terms that are used in the passage, therefore, cannot be held to have any doctrinal importance, nor can any momentous conclusion be drawn from the imagery it contains. Its message is expressed in the great saying so characteristic of Jesus, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me." Its purpose is to show that the Gentiles who have not known Christ are to be judged according to the measure in which they exhibit the spirit of love and ministry, and have served the Lord by serving those who are His own. The possession of this spirit is the very essence of the Kingdom and its blessedness, while to be without it is to be an exile from the divine Society and an alien from the commonwealth of Christ. To teach this is the whole intent of the parable.

But, even if we admit that this and some other passages do suggest the doctrine of Everlasting Penalty, we must agree that the Gehenna imagery as a whole distinctly supports the idea that the wicked will be destroyed. We read of tares being cast into the fire;³ and we know what happens to things that are thrown into a furnace. We read also of Him "who

¹ See App. II. : *Judgment*.

² *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, p. 25. For account of resemblances to Zoroastrian doctrine, see Mills, *Avesta Eschatology*, pp. 50-52.

³ Matt. 13³⁰.

is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna,"¹ and we cannot imagine any language more fitted to express annihilation. Indeed, there is very little of the fire symbolism in the Synoptics which is not, at least, capable of being interpreted in this sense. And so we must admit that it is not possible to say that the prophecies of future punishment which appear in the Gospel records enforce one harmonious doctrine of ultimate destiny. It is true that New Testament scholars do sometimes make very definite assertions on this matter. We are told, for instance, that Jesus certainly believed that "the unrighteous descend to everlasting torments," and that "punishment is generally conceived in the Gospels as everlasting." But such confident statements surprise us very much when we remember the state of Jewish thought in those days, and when we consider the evidence actually presented by the Gospels.

3. *Review.*—On the whole, then, a review of the New Testament teaching on this subject supports the opinion that the fire imagery is just as difficult to interpret in our sacred writings as it is in the Jewish books. Apostles and Evangelists use it to symbolise many kinds of spiritual force—retributive, purifying, destroying. Also, their prophecies of Gehenna cannot be understood in a dogmatic sense without involving the impossible conclusion that they taught both the unending punishment and the utter annihilation of the wicked. In the case of our Lord's teaching, especially, we cannot attach theological importance to the terms in which He is said to have declared the doom of the lost. A literal method of exegesis is forbidden by our knowledge of contemporary forms of thought and by our want of assurance as to the words which He used. Also, it can lead to no decision regarding the question of ultimate destiny. If the message of Jesus has any light to cast on this problem, it must be found elsewhere than in apocalyptic sayings which convey no idea that is in the least complex or characteristic, or which distinguishes Him from other teachers of His time.

But if we cannot deduce dogmatic results from the Gehenna predictions of Jesus, nor even be sure that we possess

¹ This saying is rejected by some critics. But it corresponds to Matt. 5³⁰ etc.

them in His actual words, we yet cannot doubt that He did employ the symbol of the Everlasting Fire; and we can see that it was fitted to express, in a general way, an aspect of His mind. It represented, for instance, that intense moral indignation and implacable enmity which was so marked a feature of His attitude to certain sins, such as pretence, cruelty, treachery, and the oppression of the weak. It embodied, also, His belief in future Judgment and the retributive wrath of God. But chiefly, perhaps, it expressed His sense of the pity and terror of spiritual loss. He referred often to that which was lost as the most sad and tragic of all things in His eyes, and in the sight of God and of His angels. He thought more of what men might *lose* than of what they might *suffer*. That they should miss the good of life and fail of the Kingdom was a possibility that had for Him every attribute of dread and sorrow. An existence without the spirit of love and without communion with God was, to His mind, death, perdition, and Gehenna. Thus His apocalyptic judgments exhibit a very stern aspect of His message. He believed in the penalties of sin and in the danger that besets the moral life; and He expressed this belief through the imaginative form that lay to His hand, the austere and terrible image of the Everlasting Fire. His was a mind that transmuted every old and common thought into the pure simplicity of truth. And He saw the ancient vision of Gehenna cleansed of all that was cruel and base, and become the perfect symbol of the spotless fear of God.

IV.

EARLY CHURCH DOCTRINE.

1. *Popular belief in primitive Church.*—(a) There can be little doubt that the Christians of the post-Apostolic Church held the doctrine of future punishment in the form which distinguished popular Jewish belief rather than New Testament teaching. Gibbon, with characteristic irony, numbers

among the things that explain the triumph of Christianity the intensity with which it taught the everlasting torment of the wicked. Pagans were naturally impressed, he says, by the claims of a Gospel which professed to be the only means of salvation from the flames of hell. "The primitive Church delivered over without hesitation to eternal torture the far greater part of the human species." "The careless Polytheist was very frequently terrified and subdued by the menace of eternal tortures."¹

(b) Such is Gibbon's account of the early Christian doctrine; and we must admit that it is not without truth, in so far at least as the popular belief was concerned. The recorded sayings of the martyrs of our faith leave us in little doubt as to this. These sayings prophesy with the utmost clearness the fate that awaits all who reject or betray Christianity. The threats and warnings addressed by the followers of Jesus to their persecutors and judges bear, indeed, a startling resemblance to the sayings of the martyrs of Judah as these are given in the *Books of the Maccabees*.

As illustration of this, take these warnings addressed by the seven Jewish martyrs to the tyrant Antiochus: "You, for the wicked and despotic slaughter of us all, shall, by the divine vengeance, endure eternal torture by fire." "The divine vengeance is reserving you for eternal fire, and torments that shall cling to you to all time":² and compare these with the following sayings of Christian witnesses: "All who do not profess Christ to be very God shall be sent into eternal fire." "Although thou usest more grievous torments thou injurest me in no wise, but providest for thine own soul eternal torments." "Thou canst not injure me by thy torments, but providest for thine own soul inextinguishable fires." "Lest I fall into eternal fire and perpetual torments, I worship God and His Christ." "I fear not thy temporary fire; but I fear, if I give way to thee, that I may become partaker of His eternal fire."³

¹ *Decline and Fall*, vol. i. chap. xv. sec. 2.

² *4 Macc.* 9⁹ 12¹².

³ Cf. Pusey, *What is of Faith*, etc., pp. 154-171.

These sayings of the martyrs show quite clearly that early Christians held the old Eschatology, and held it in the old spirit. The Church was for them what the Chosen People had been for the patriots of Israel. It was God's peculiar possession, His favoured Kingdom. Within its walls were eternal life and peace; beyond its borders were spiritual death and everlasting doom. As many of the Jews had believed all the Gentile world to be hastening towards the Pit of fire, so numbers of the primitive Christians affirmed that all who were outside the Church were appointed to Gehenna torments. And there can be little doubt that, as Gibbon suggests, this belief was a source of valour and endurance. It presented to the imagination vivid forms of supernatural hope and fear, which helped men to despise the promises and to overcome the terrors of earthly joy and pain.

(c) We cannot, however, agree that this popular creed was dogmatic in the sense that it represented the fruits of reflection or was adopted as the result of deliberate thought about the problem of destiny. Popular forms of belief are always extreme, and are, indeed, not so much thoughts as symbols. In order to know what any faith really means, one must consult the utterances of its educated teachers. And when we turn to the works of the early Christian Fathers, we find that the imagery of the Eternal Fire had, to begin with, no very fixed or definite meaning. It is used, for instance, by Irenaeus and Justin Martyr, whose teaching as to final destiny is so doubtful that it is quoted by modern authorities in support now of one theory and now of another. And even in somewhat later days, traces of this original vagueness of meaning are found in Tertullian, Origen, and Arnobius. These all refer to "the eternal fire"; but for Tertullian it signifies everlasting torment, for Origen universal restoration, and for Arnobius the destruction of the wicked. These references suffice to indicate that the popular Christian belief of primitive times was little more speculative than the older Jewish doctrine, and represented just the traditional thought that utter defeat and destruction awaited all the enemies of the Kingdom.

2. *Dogmatic development.* — The mention of the Fathers,

however, suggests to us how soon dogma began to invade the territory of Apocalypse. And this process of invasion went on until the old imaginative symbolism was compelled to surrender its proper office and become the instrument of one determinate doctrine. That this was an unhappy development one can hardly doubt—unhappy in its effects both on popular religion and theological thinking.

(1) *Popular presentations*.—In order to illustrate its effect on *popular belief*, we must study the literature of the times during which the doctrine of everlasting torments exercised its fully developed power. Throughout many ages the minds of theologians were in a state of chronic eschatological intoxication. Their imagination rejoiced in pictures of torment and woe. It displayed the morbid activity, the inebriated ingenuity, of the opium-eater. The Catholic mystic, Suso, thus expresses himself: "Alas, misery and prison, thou must last for ever! Oh eternity, what art thou? Oh end without end! Oh Death which is above every death, to die every hour and yet not to be able ever to die! Oh separation, everlasting separation, how painful thou art! Oh the wringing of hands! Oh the sobbing, sighing, weeping, unceasing howling and lamenting, yet never to be pardoned!"¹ And this utterance is not an extreme example of the style which prevailed among Roman preachers of all schools during "the Ages of Faith." The tedious minuteness of Dante's descriptions when he deals with the varied torments of the Inferno are typical of the "insane licence" which the Christian imagination allowed itself when it dwelt on the future state of retribution—that state concerning which we, in point of fact, have no definite knowledge at all. Nor was the tone of Protestant discourse during many generations very different in temper from that of the Roman. Preachers of great repute for sanctity and zeal painted their pictures of Gehenna in colours of a crude vulgarity. Their imagery revealed often a singular acquaintance with the worst horrors of human life. They depicted the future state of the masses of men as one of a torture like that of the rack or the vivisection table, protracted to all eternity.

¹ Cf. Hagenbach, *History of Doctrines*, vol. ii. p. 151.

It was a state of every nameless outrage, of every agony and shame, of every unendurable wrong. And over all this scene of sordid cruelty the saints of heaven watched, and were glad. Any one who desires to have full and copious illustration of this kind of frenzied assertion need only consult the sermons of many popular teachers, from the time of Tertullian on to the present day.

The investigation of this type of prophecy is the most distasteful duty that is involved in the study of the doctrine of Immortality. Of course, the Church in its corporate capacity is not responsible for the excesses of individuals; and in its official statements regarding perdition it has been very guarded and reserved. Still, it is surprising to contemplate the indulgence which ecclesiastical authorities have shown in their attitude to those who have allowed themselves unwarranted liberty in depicting the torments of the lost. This aspect of popular teaching has done more, perhaps, than anything else to provoke a revolt against the whole Christian view of the world;¹ and yet we have never heard of a man being charged with heresy on account of the severity of his eschatological predictions. The truth is that such presentations as I have referred to bear no peculiar mark of Christianity at all. They differ in no important respect from those found in ancient pagan mythologies. They, also, surpass the Jewish Apocalypses in their own line. They out-Enoch *Enoch*. They repeat the doctrine of the old "revelation" writers, but with a harder dogmatic meaning, and with an inhuman emphasis unknown to the fanatics of Judah.²

(2) *Tertullian, Origen*.—(a) Let us turn, however, from this unhappy aspect of popular Christian teaching, and see how the gradual combination of the Gehenna doctrine with a dogma of Eternal Evil wrought confusion and trouble in the field of scientific theology. The dogmatic period in the history of any doctrine begins when its precise meaning becomes matter for debate, and different interpretations come to find exponents.

¹ Cf. Shelley, *Queen Mab*, 6.

² For illustration of this type of teaching, see Alger, *History of Doctrine of Future Life*, pp. 508-520. Also Pollok, *Course of Time*, Book I. pp. 8-12.

By the end of the second century the apocalyptic idea of future penalty had undoubtedly reached this stage of development, since Tertullian not only paints vivid pictures of torment, but definitely asserts that "Not all men will be saved." This is a statement that clearly implies a controversial atmosphere. No one would think of saying, "Not all men will be saved,"¹ unless some people had asserted the opposite. In like manner, his saying that "the fire of hell will burn yet not consume, like the fire of volcanoes,"² may reasonably be read as a denial of the annihilation of the wicked. Tertullian thus definitely adopts a fixed view of human destiny, and maintains it against those who say that all men will be saved, and against those also who assert that some will be utterly destroyed.

(b) Origen, on the other hand, uses the fire imagery to present his doctrine of Universal salvation. The eternal fire, according to his teaching, is, in the first place, a thing created within the soul by its own evil deeds and thoughts. Just as poisonous humours in the body produce at length fever, so sin in the soul kindles an inward torment and anguish. This is the dreadful internal Gehenna which the sinner creates for himself—retributive and destructive. But after this penal flame has done its work of punishment and desolation within the soul, God applies to it another fire which produces in the end restoration and health. He says: "When the dissolution and rending asunder of the soul shall have been tested by the application of fire, a solidification into a firmer structure will undoubtedly take place and a restoration be effected."³

Now, Origen's way of interpreting the fire imagery has in it beauty and fitness, since all the poetic and worthy thoughts which we naturally associate with fire suggest purifying, renewing, and destroying power. And this is the interpretation that the Church embodied in its doctrine of Purgatory, which has always afforded practical relief from the pressure of the Gehenna dogma. We may conjecture that the devout Roman Catholic does not really hold himself to be in danger of hell. He has been regenerated in baptism, and he is kept in spiritual health

¹ *Adv. Marc.* ii. 24.

² *Apologia*, 48.

³ *De Principiis*, Lib. II. cap. x. 5.

by sacramental grace. He is thus in small peril of eternal loss. Further, he is seldom called to face the thought that his beloved dead are entered into everlasting perdition, since the same faith which gives him hope for himself gives light to his thoughts about them. It is really the temporary pain of Purgatory that is the actual object of his fears, both for himself and for his friends. He also cherishes a large hope for the non-Catholic masses of men on the ground of God's "uncovenanted mercies" and of His power to turn souls to repentance in the very moment of dissolution. So that, generally speaking, the thought of perdition does not hold a large place in his religious life, being really supplanted by the idea of Purgatory. This peculiarity of Catholic faith is illustrated by the fact that throughout the Middle Ages the terror which lay like a black cloud over the popular mind was the fear not of Hell, whose pains though endless were remote, but of Purgatory, with its temporary but dreadful and imminent fires. We must remember, also, that the suffering of Purgatory itself is a very modified thing in the belief of many Romans. How tender and reverent the Catholic thought of the Intermediate State may be is illustrated in Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*, where the angel who commits the soul to its place of punishment says:

"Farewell, but not for ever! brother dear,
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow;
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow."

(3) *Augustine*.—But, while Origen's interpretation of the fire imagery was thus perpetuated in the idea of Purgatory, it was not allowed to extend itself to the doctrine of final penalty. And that this was so may be attributed mainly to the influence of Augustine, whose imperial mind and power of clear, rhetorical statement enabled him to leave an indelible stamp on the general thought of the Church. He was not, of course, the first to identify the apocalyptic vision of Gehenna with the theory of Unending Evil, but he expressed this view with fresh mastery, decision, and force. He tried to give it an assured

place in a rational scheme of things; and he certainly secured for it a long reign in the popular theology of Christendom.

(a) Great, however, as was the success of Augustine in this matter, one can hardly feel that it was altogether merited. The passage in the *City of God* which deals with the subject of perdition is perhaps the weakest part of that great book. Augustine's philosophical opinions could not really be reconciled with Jewish forms of thought, and a literal interpretation of these forms was alien to his habit of mind. It is true that, by a superb exertion of force and ingenuity, he contrived to bring *Enoch* into apparent agreement with Plotinus, and to erect on a Greek foundation a Jewish eschatology. But a close examination of the structure reveals the essential incongruity of its various elements. Indeed, his eschatological statement resembles one of those curious trees which are produced by grafting a stem on an alien root. In such a plant we discover branches which come directly from the root and are altogether different in leafage and blossom from those which belong to the ingrafted stem. And so in Augustine's doctrine we find elements which pertain to his Neo-Platonist philosophy and which harmonise ill with those forms that own another origin.

(b) Augustine, of course, maintained the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment, and argued at some length against the Universalists of his day; though he never suggested that these were not entitled to a place in the Church, and had nothing worse to say about them than that they were "perversely compassionate." He teaches that the fire of Gehenna, though not that of the Intermediate State, is a material flame, and that the lost will be furnished with bodies able, like the salamander, to live for ever in the furnace. He associates this doctrine, also, with a high theory of predestination, and thus conforms entirely to the traditions of Apocalypse.

(c) Matters, however, assume a somewhat different aspect when we come to consider all this in the light of Augustine's philosophical postulates and his general thought about things. No idea is more prominent in Augustine's system than that of the harmony and beauty of the Universe, and the essential, permanent goodness of everything that God has made. In

consonance with this doctrine, he denies to evil the attribute of positive existence. The good was, in his view, the only real, and sin was merely negative—a privation, a defect of the will. On this ground he evades the necessity of accounting for its beginning, maintaining that a thing which has no real existence, which is a defect or perversion, can have no origin. Hence he affirms that all moral creatures are, and must remain, in their nature good. If they became evil they would of necessity cease to be, inasmuch as evil itself belongs to the realm of the non-existent. This is true even of devils and lost souls. It is in virtue of that in them which is good that they continue to exist, and that they suffer regret and spiritual pain.

Now all this is, surely, difficult to reconcile with Augustine's eschatology. If sin be possessed of nothing more than a negative existence, how can we be sure that it will be immortal? If even lost souls remain essentially good, how can we be certain that they will never repent and find salvation? What place has everlasting torment in a Universe of perfect harmony and beauty?

(d) It is not difficult, of course, to see how Augustine met these difficulties; but a consideration of his way of doing this suggests doubts as to the orthodoxy of his doctrine—at least from the modern point of view. If we ask how he could believe that evil had no real existence, and yet that it was certainly immortal, the answer is that he did not affirm the eternity of sin, but only of punishment. It is true that he does not explicitly deny that sin will last for ever. But we do not find in the *City of God* any suggestion that he thought of the future state as one in which men continue in active rebellion against the Most High. The moral history of a man was ended when he was condemned at the Judgment; and eternity was, for him, only a perpetual reaping of the harvest he had sown in this earthly life; it was a state of simple retribution.

If, again, we inquire how Augustine could be sure that the lost, while remaining essentially good, would yet never repent, the reply is that this conclusion followed from his belief that moral life, in the case of the unregenerate, did not go on beyond

the grave. They were destined by the decree of God to enter a condition of spiritual paralysis, and to have no consciousness beyond that of consuming pain, physical and mental. And beings who existed in such a state were, of course, incapable of repentance.

If, finally, we press the objection that Augustine's belief in the sovereignty of God and in the perfect harmony of the universe was inconsistent with the doctrine of everlasting evil, we find that he escaped this difficulty by affirming that eternal penalty was not an evil but a good. The unending existence of pain could be attributed to the will of the Holy One, because it was the righteous punishment of evil; and it could be regarded as an element in the beauty of creation, since it supplied the place of shadow in a great picture, and since it represented a perfectly beautiful thing, the justice of God. "God would never have created man, whose future wickedness He foreknew, unless He had equally known to what uses in behalf of the good He could turn him, thus embellishing the course of the ages, as it were an exquisite poem set off with antitheses." That is to say, man even in his fallen state, and in all his sufferings, remains part of the divine order and contributes to its beauty—his evil establishing by contrast the loveliness of virtue, and his penal sufferings illustrating to all eternity the austere splendour of the divine justice. Thus, even as Heaven is the perpetual manifestation of God's mercy, so Hell is the unending apocalypse of His righteousness. It is an element in the foreordained harmony of things, and a perpetual witness to the beauty of God.

(e) Now this is, I think, a fair account of Augustine's doctrine as contained in the *City of God*,¹ his most mature and deliberate work. And it supports the view that the notion of Everlasting Torment was no necessary part of his system. It owes its place in his teaching to that respect for tradition which led him to accept the imagery of Apocalypse. That imagery was utterly unsuited to the part which he assigned to it. He claims it as an element of harmony in his presentation of the universe; but it is in its nature so aggressive and highly

¹ *Civitas Dei*, Lib. 21, c. 9 ff.

coloured that it holds our attention and proclaims his whole picture a discord. It is quite intractable to his purpose; refuses to assume a reasonable guise, or to lend itself to his philosophical intentions. It remains alien to his thought, and goes far to rob it of moral force or intellectual appeal.

(f) It is, indeed, quite apparent that Augustine never had any imaginative understanding of what was meant by the phrase "everlasting torment by fire." If he had, he would not have been capable of defending it with a smooth and easy eloquence. It is difficult to be patient with the inhuman urbanity of the Bishop of Hippo when he discourses elegantly of the value of human suffering in embellishing the ages by supplying an artistic shadow in the spectacle of the world. We detect, also, the doctrinaire ruthlessness of academic dogmatism in his talk about the beauty of an everlasting torture-chamber, and his sneer at the "perversely compassionate" people who disliked the thought of it. These are features of his discussion which we very properly resent. It is vain to suggest that such want of human pity was characteristic of his time, since his own argument shows that many of his contemporaries saw as clearly as we do the revolting nature of the Gehenna doctrine. That so great a spiritual genius as Augustine failed of a like perception is final proof that the apocalyptic idea of Hell was not a thing that he saw as it was in its concrete reality. It was just a traditional form, not suited to the uses of his mind. It was, indeed, but little more than the algebraic symbol of an unknown quantity. It is probable that all that was really vital to his belief, or could be reconciled with his philosophy, is to be found in his immortal words of devotion—"Thou, O God, hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." The substance of his thought regarding the fate of those who might suffer final exclusion from the Kingdom was that an eternity without God must be an unspeakable burden of restless misery for beings whom He had created for Himself.

V.

MODERN DOCTRINE.

1. *Newman, Pusey.*—(a) It thus appears that Augustine failed in adapting Apocalypse to the purposes of rational theory; and it is certain that no later writer has succeeded in the task which he attempted. Roman Catholic theologians have always continued to use his language, and to speak of “perpetual torments by fire.” Even Moehler, a most acute and liberal writer, refers to the denial of everlasting torments as if that were an almost incredible degree of heresy. Nevertheless all these thinkers are found to make admissions which involve them in contradiction, and even render doubtful the sense in which they really hold the accepted dogma. I shall have occasion to illustrate this in the case of the medieval Doctors when we come to discuss the theological theory of Everlasting Evil. But it is not less marked in the work of those modern writers who adhere to the ancient tradition. Thus, Newman maintains the old doctrine in a literal form, and he expounds it in some of his sermons with excessive violence; but in the *Grammar of Assent*¹ he recognises its difficulty, and indeed goes a long way towards rejecting it. He suggests that there may be no sense of continuity in the minds of the lost, so that they shall not be aware of a past or a future of pain; also that occasional intervals of cooling (*refrigeria*) may be granted the victims of the Eternal Fire—so that their punishment, though it will be everlasting, may not be without a break. But this latter assertion surely savours of heresy. Evidently a suffering that has intervals of cessation is so far from being endless that it has many ends. No dialectical skill avails to show that successive paroxysms of pain with intervals of ease are the same thing as one perpetual anguish. There is also something unreal in the idea that the lost are, as it were, lifted out of the fire from time to time and granted a period of coolness. It conceives of penalty not as an inward condition due to the

¹ P. 422, and Note III. in Appendix.

action of moral law, but as a thing imposed from without, and so capable of being relieved by the exercise of external power. That Newman should have been constrained to support such a conception shows that the Gehenna imagery is apt to betray the dogma which it is expected to represent and defend.

(b) Dr. Pusey begins his treatise on Everlasting Punishment with the statement that he believes literally in everlasting fire.¹ But, having done this, he proceeds to surround his doctrine with so many qualifications that we are left in some doubt whether any one is likely to suffer perdition. Of those who die in infancy all the baptized are saved, while the unbaptized enjoy endless natural happiness. All the heathen who have in them any good thing, when judged by their own standard, receive the benefits of Christ's redemption, as do also the heathen at home. Finally, no one is lost who does not "obstinately to the end and at the end reject God"; and great hope is to be placed in God's dealing with souls in the mysterious hour of dissolution, "the almost sacrament of death." The remarkable thing about Pusey's really noble statement is that while he asserts everlasting torment in literal fire, he also says that there will be degrees of punishment, and that the main burden of perdition will be the want of the divine presence, which, he holds, will be punishment enough.² Surely this is doctrine hard to be believed. How can there be degrees of punishment in a furnace of fire? Also, if an eternity without God be penalty enough, why should there be added to it the pain of physical torture? Altogether, it is plain that for Pusey, as for others who seek to dogmatise Apocalypse, the notion of everlasting torment was only a form of thought. Whoever says that any mental anguish can be the supreme sorrow of a creature who is being tortured in living flame, fails to grasp the meaning of his own imagery, and is using strong words without sense.

2. But there is no need to illustrate further the truth that the old Gehenna belief is intractable to dogmatic interpretation, and has never been anything but a perplexity to those who have tried to make it a doctrine of ultimate destiny. A

¹ *What is of Faith*, etc., Preface.

² *Ibid.* pp. 1-23.

rigorous and literal rendering of its message is impossible. Nothing can be a help to rational theory which is itself incapable of being grasped by the reason; and torment without end is not conceivable by any mind of man. Just as the glare of a stupendous furnace would paralyse the sight of one who faced it with open eyes, so the Gehenna doctrine destroys all definite impression in the mind that considers it. Nothing is left but a vague blur of confused horror

VI.

REVIEW.

1. I have thus endeavoured to trace the process by which the ancient vision of Judgment was transformed into a determinate doctrine of everlasting torment, and to show that this was in the main an unfortunate and illegitimate development, perplexing the work of the theologian and leading to the disfigurement of Christian eschatology. I have sought to illustrate the position that the Gehenna symbolism had no ascertainable meaning either in the Jewish books or in the New Testament beyond the general assertion of future retribution, and that later attempts to identify it with a rational theory of the End have signally failed of success. Imaginative expressions that were fitted to the aims of poetic prophecy are alien to the purposes of formal dialectic. The wild horses of apocalypse were never meant to be yoked to the heavy chariot of dogma.

2. We must recognise, indeed, that it was by constraint of historical circumstance that the imagery in question came to be imposed upon theology. The Gehenna belief became part of the popular Christian faith through the strength of the apocalyptic tradition, and through the storm and stress of the early days of the Church's life. The imagery of the eternal fire was presented to the common mind while as yet it had no dogmatic force; and it commended itself to men as a part of that pictorial message of vivid hopes and fears which received

its best expression in the Revelation of St. John, and which appealed with singular power to a persecuted, despised, and humble people. One can see, also, that this imagery, in its indefinite popular meaning, did correspond to certain requirements of moral truth. If it had a dark significance, it dealt with a dark subject, the consequences of evil. If it was fierce and hopeless in its spirit, the penalties of sin are the fiercest things in our experience, and conscience often finds a hopeless element in life.

In any case, the popular acceptance of this symbolism was so general that it had to be employed by theologians, who were for the most part preachers and ecclesiastics as well as abstract thinkers. And thus the idea that the doom of the unregenerate was unending physical torment was not the result of careful thought, but was the fruit of an old inheritance. It did not owe its origin to the Christian genius, or to any great principle of the Gospel, but to the symbols of an ancient tradition, distorted and misapplied.

It is only along this line of thought that we can offer any *apologia* for this feature of the Church's eschatology—a feature which has been often described in terms that are very good rhetoric but very poor history. Those scholars who maintain that the Gehenna imagery had a dogmatic meaning both in the Jewish books and in the message of Jesus, and that later theology correctly interpreted that meaning, are dangerous allies of the orthodox apologist. They compel us, either to reject the teaching of our Lord, or to attempt the defence of an incredible doctrine. The effect of their contention is not to conserve but to destroy; it presents an impossible picture of the mind of Christ, and affords material for the exposition of a crude and popular form of unbelief. It is for this reason, indeed, that it is worth one's while to give to this matter careful consideration from the historical point of view.

3. It thus appears that the ancient prophecy of Retribution lends itself even less than the other apocalyptic forms to rigid theological definition. But, like these also, it has abiding authority and value as the poetic expression of enduring truth. Fire has always been the emblem of religious thoughts and

spiritual realities; shining on the altar of every faith; the type of things which do not pass away. And the image of the Eternal Fire, as justly and purely conceived, ought never to lose that aspect of imaginative greatness which belonged to it in the beginning, and which it doubtless wore for the mind of Jesus. It should never have suggested to men petty thoughts of cruelty and pain. Fire inflicts lingering torments only when it is weak and small. Omnipotent flame does not excruciate and agonise; it purifies and destroys. It is the noblest of all the elemental forces; too strong to be cruel, too swift to defile. Hence a white flame is the best symbol known to men of the unspotted holiness of God, whose "fear is clean, enduring for ever," whose "pure love is the only eternal fire." And hence, too, the enduring fitness of that vision of the retributive Flame, which is older than Christianity, older than Judaism, older than any faith whose records remain on the earth. That vision is true. It has sight of an austere force which guards the moral law; of an ever-living energy which tests the gold, and consumes the wood and the hay and the stubble and all things that offend. It is the apocalypse of a righteous Majesty that goes forth in judgment against all who profane the ways of life, violate the sanctities of nature, oppose the sovereign will that moves without rest and without haste to its appointed end. Who shall deny that this is a wise and faithful witness, or that the symbol in which it is uttered is suited to its theme? It may be that only ignorance and superstition can speak of unceasing torments, or an endless infliction of meaningless pain; but it is sober reason and experience that discern an uttermost terror in the moral Order, that see in the spiritual universe an Everlasting Fire.

PART II.

PROBLEM OF FINAL DESTINY.



INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

ON JEWISH OPINION IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES.

I HAVE had occasion in preceding chapters to make reference to Jewish Opinion on the subject of final destiny. Indeed, the apocalyptic doctrine as to the fate of the lost has been so fully illustrated that no further account of it is necessary. It may be well, however, to preface the second part of this discussion, especially the consideration of New Testament teaching, with a brief statement of the views held by certain writers who stood apart from the purely prophetic and imaginative tradition represented by *Enoch*. The question is whether the utterances of these latter authorities contain any more coherent or dogmatic belief than is to be found in the "revelation" books. In pursuing this inquiry, it will be necessary to refer (1) to the historian Josephus; (2) to the Jewish Alexandrians, especially Philo; and (3) to the Rabbinic teaching.

Josephus (born about 38 A.D.).—This very able, though not perhaps very admirable, person tells us that the Pharisees held the doctrine of everlasting punishment. "The Pharisees . . . hold," he says, "that every soul is imperishable, but that the souls of the good alone go into another body, while those of the bad are punished with everlasting vengeance."¹ In another place he defines the Pharisaic idea of Future Punishment as "perpetual imprisonment." Yet again, he states his own personal belief in the following terms—"the soul is a portion of the Deity which inhabits our body"; . . . "Pure and obedient souls obtain a most holy place in Heaven from whence in the revolution of the ages they are again sent into pure bodies."² It is to be noted, also, that he was acquainted with

¹ *Antiquities*, XVIII. i. 3.

² *Wars of Jews*, III. viii. 5.

the idea of conditional immortality; for he affirms that Titus declared to his soldiers that those who died in battle secured for their souls a future life, while those who perished by natural decay or sickness passed utterly out of existence¹—which reads very like an excellent military version of Conditionalism.

Now, this statement of Josephus is somewhat perplexing, since it ignores the doctrine of the Resurrection, and depicts the Pharisees as believing that the wicked would suffer in the life to come everlasting vengeance or imprisonment, while the righteous would be granted the privilege of reincarnation. Many discredit it altogether on the ground that this historian deliberately omitted, as a rule, to mention such elements in his own faith and that of the Pharisees generally as might be displeasing to pagan readers. They also think that he must have been wrong in representing his countrymen as believing in reincarnation. It is more likely, however, that Josephus was guilty of nothing worse than merely attributing to the whole of the sect to which he belonged opinions which in fact were held only by a few of them. There is nothing incredible in the idea that some at least of the Pharisees held the doctrine of the reincarnation of souls or that this was the view of Josephus, since that doctrine was not, after all, very far removed from the common Jewish notion of resurrection to a bodily life on earth. We may conclude, also, that the historian held liberal and indefinite views about the future state from his extremely sympathetic account of the Essenes, who denied the resurrection, and taught that souls at death escaped from the body, as from a prison, and returned to that state of liberty in which they had existed before they became incarnate. In any case, the statement of this writer shows that a man could believe himself an orthodox Pharisee and yet feel at liberty to speculate freely on the subject of future destiny.

Philo Judæus (B.C. 20—A.D. 50).—The chief writer of the Alexandrian school was, of course, Philo, a thinker of great power and influence, a man of wide learning and spiritual insight, a master of clear, and often elevated, expression. He was a contemporary of Jesus, and was the chief exponent of that

¹ *Wars of Jews*, VI. i. 5.

Hellenistic type of thought whose influence is evident in the New Testament writings. Hence he is a thinker whose teaching it is desirable to understand. But the interpretation of his doctrine is, unfortunately, very difficult. He, as an important member of the highly privileged Jewish colony in Alexandria, had access to the stores of learning contained in the library of that city, and was brought into contact with various types of Gentile thought. The result of this is apparent in his work. The various influences in his mind keep compromising, thwarting, and contradicting each other. He tries to be as much of a Platonist as he can, while retaining elements of Stoicism and continuing loyal to his Jewish faith; and the consequence of this is considerable confusion. As a Platonist he should have affirmed the eternity of the soul; but his Judaism would not permit this, so he contented himself with asserting its pre-existence. His individualism, derived from the Stoics, is inconsistent with the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. The influence of his Greek masters leads him to teach that God is separated from the world by intermediate beings, and that He created it through the Logos; but his loyalty to the Jewish belief in revelation causes him to affirm that God makes Himself known directly to the souls of men. His Platonism destroys his belief in the Resurrection, and his doctrine of the Fall in Adam is not reconcilable with his notion of pre-existence, which is coloured by Gentile conceptions.

All souls, according to Philo, enjoyed in the beginning a life of communion with God, and only those with a downward tendency were attracted towards a bodily life. Hence, existence in this world is, in his view, a kind of purgatory, partly penal and partly probationary. Souls which follow after philosophy and piety return at death to their original state of blessedness. They escape as from an evil prison-house, achieving immortality. On the other hand, souls that fall under the dominion of the earthly life pass from this world into perdition; death is for them "the beginning of sorrows."

So far the doctrine of Philo is clear. When, however, we ask what his view was as to the *final destiny* of lost souls, we encounter much perplexity. Considering his philosophical

opinions, one might have expected him to adopt the idea of Transmigration, and to teach that the wicked, after a period of punishment in the unseen world, returned again to the earth to endure another trial.¹ He was, however, precluded from taking this view by his Jewish orthodoxy—especially by his belief that terrestrial history would culminate ere long in the Kingdom of God. And so he taught that, for the good and evil alike, death was the final end of bodily existence. How, then, did he picture to himself the ultimate doom of the unspiritual multitude beyond the grave?

A common interpretation is that Philo, like some other Alexandrian Jews, held the doctrine of everlasting torment;² but it does not seem to me that the evidence for this view is conclusive. Thus, some authorities quote a saying in the treatise *Concerning Rewards and Punishments*: "That he should live continually dying, and that he should in a manner endure an undying and never ending death."³ This saying, however, refers to the curse of Cain and to his punishment in this life. It appears, also, from another passage that Philo believed that Cain was doomed, like the Wandering Jew of legend, to move ever restlessly hither and thither on the earth, denied the boon of death. Hence this utterance can hardly be held to refer to the fate of the lost in general.

The other passage commonly cited is from the treatise *Concerning the Cherubim*, and is as follows: "He who is cast out by God must endure an eternal banishment, for it is granted to him who has not yet been completely and violently taken prisoner by wickedness, to repent, and so to return to virtue from which he has been driven, as to his great country; but he who is weighed down by, and wholly subjected to, a violent and incurable disease, must bear his misfortunes for ever, being for all times unalterably cast out into the place of the wicked, that there he may endure unmitigated and everlasting misery."⁴

¹ Fairweather (*Background of the Gospels*, p. 360) says that Philo expects the wicked at death to "return into another body." But I cannot find this in Philo. *De Som.* i. 22 does not accord with P.'s general teaching.

² Cf. Charles (*Eschatology*, pp. 313, 314); Drummond (*Philo*, ii. pp. 321-323).

³ *De Praem. et Poen.* 12.

⁴ i. 1.

The context shows, however, that this refers to the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise. Taken literally it would mean that Adam and Eve, and presumably all their descendants, were doomed without hope to everlasting misery. But this is certainly not Philo's teaching. He tells us, for instance, that the Logos is God's security to the human race that it will not revolt altogether from Him, and that the Creator will not forget His own creatures.¹ On the whole, it seems possible that he means to describe here the fate of the race on this earth, and refers to its restless, painful, evil existence, doomed never to know a return to the Paradise it has lost.

But even if we waive this question, and agree that this and some other sayings of Philo point to the doctrine of everlasting torment, we cannot exclude from view other utterances of his which bear a different import. Thus, to quote one out of many passages of a similar kind, he says: "If any one burns with a desire of virtue which makes the soul immortal, he, beyond doubt, attains to an heavenly inheritance; but . . . the earth, as it is the beginning of a wicked and depraved man, so is it also his end (*finis*)."²

This pronouncement belongs to a class of sayings which do seem to indicate the idea of conditional immortality; as, for instance, these—"Piety, by which alone the mind attains to immortality (*immortalitatem assequitur*)";³ "Philosophy, by which man though mortal becomes immortal (*ἀπαθανατίζεται*)."⁴

More important, however, than any individual utterances of Philo is the general tendency of his thought. The most significant feature in his system, from this point of view, is his doctrine of the Logos. The Logos is a personal-impersonal being intermediate between the soul and God, "a model of the one and a copy of the other";⁵ "the soul of the world,"⁶ the intercessor for mankind.⁷ By it all things were created, and in it they cohere. It is the first-begotten Son of God, the Divine Reason immanent in the universe, the Mediator of all

¹ *Quis Heres.* 42.

² *Ibid.* i. 10.

³ *Quis Heres.* 48 (παράδειγμα . . . ἀπεικόνισμα).

⁷ *Quis Heres.* 42.

² *Quest. et Solut.* i. 51.

⁴ *De Mundi Op.* 25.

⁶ *De Migrat.* 32.

rational and moral life. It is by communion with the Logos alone that man maintains his contact with his original state of spiritual blessedness, and is capable of that virtue and philosophy by which he attains immortal life. Hence, unspiritual men, being out of fellowship with the Logos, are dead while they live; "the unholy in real truth are dead."¹ They have surrendered all relation to reality, and have become the subjects of an alien power, the power of the lower, material, fleeting world. How then could Philo suppose that such as these would be able to maintain themselves in being, when those things which had become their real nature should have passed away at death?

Further, Philo denies the everlasting duration of sin, which, he says, has no place among immortal things.² Also he teaches that it is only the higher part of the soul that is in communion with the Logos—draws from it continual vitality, and through it achieves unending existence.³ And the inference from this is plain. If only the higher reason be immortal, and if it have fallen into a state of death by neglect of fellowship with the divine Word, in the case of unspiritual men, then it follows that there is nothing in these unhappy beings that is capable of eternal life.

While, then, Philo does not express himself clearly on this subject, being, perhaps, but faintly interested in the destiny of the lost masses of men, it seems that the general tendency of his thought is towards something that resembles the idea of Conditional Immortality. The vagueness of his thinking on a theme which must have seemed to him an unwelcome source of trouble is reflected in the vagueness of his language. But, if he believed that evil men were "dead" now in ignorance and futility and were doomed to "death" hereafter, he must have regarded them as destined to find a place among the mere refuse and waste of the Universe. The best he can have expected for them was that they would remain in a kind of Sheol. But it is more likely that he imagined them as suffering the final dissolution of personality. Such an idea

¹ *Quis Heres.* 42.

² *De Incorr. Mundi*, 21.

³ Cf. Denney, *Factors of Faith in Immortality*, p. 41.

must have been familiar to him as a student of the Stoics, and would have been congenial to the austerity of his mind. Philo, as Kuenen says, believed, not that everlasting life was possessed by all men, but only that "it was attainable by all."¹

Book of Wisdom, etc.—But, if there is thus some doubt as to the nature of Philo's eschatology, and some ground for finding in his works a tendency towards Conditionalism, there can be no question that the *Secrets of Enoch*² and *Fourth Maccabees*³ teach Everlasting Torment with vigour and decision, though without clear dogmatic intention.

The *Book of Wisdom*, on the other hand, which is, next to the writings of Philo, the greatest work of this school, is very confused in its doctrine. The first part of it affirms, as does Philo, that the wicked have no true life. They confess at the Judgment—"We died as soon as we were born." It also asserts that the punishment reserved for the unspiritual is "death." Whether this death signifies annihilation or no is a point on which authorities are hopelessly divided. It is doubtful whether the author knew himself what he meant.⁴ The second part,⁵ on the other hand, has for its thesis that all punishment is remedial. And this is a doctrine which involves, beyond doubt, the conclusion that all men will be saved. If punishment in the future state be remedial it must issue in salvation. This conclusion is also in harmony with the general tone of this writing:

"But Thou hast mercy on all men, because Thou hast power to do all things;

And Thou overlookest the sins of men to the end that they may repent.

For Thou lovest all things that are. . . .

Thou sparest all things because they are Thine,

Oh, Sovereign Lord, Thou Lover of souls."⁶

On the whole, then, it is reasonable to say that these

¹ *History of Israel*, vol. iii. p. 200.

² *S. of En.* 10, etc. This book is, however, apocalyptic, although influenced by Alexandrian thought.

³ *4 Macc.* 9^o.

⁵ Second part, 11 seq.

⁴ *Wisd.* 2¹⁻⁵ 5¹⁻¹⁴. 19. 20 etc.

⁶ 11²³⁻²⁶.

Alexandrian writings do contain at least the germs of all the later doctrines of destiny. The theory of Conditional Immortality is implicit in *Philo* and possibly also in the first part of *Wisdom*; Everlasting Punishment, in *Fourth Maccabees* and in the *Secrets of Enoch*; Universal Salvation, in the second part of *Wisdom*. The promise of the latter doctrine is also to be found in *Philo's* teaching regarding the Logos and its universal relation to mankind.¹

Rabbinic teaching.—When we turn to the teaching of the Rabbis, the professional theologians of Judaism, we find, as might be expected, more definite doctrine than in the apocalyptic books, but still a great absence of assurance. The collection of Rabbinic Sayings which is incorporated in the Jewish Liturgy contains no statement of any moment regarding the subject of ultimate destiny; and the study of quotations gathered from the *Talmud* leaves one very much perplexed by the utter want they display of any apparent unity of opinion. Authorities, also, differ very widely in their accounts of Rabbinic doctrine. Emmanuel Deutsch, for instance, who possessed the unusual advantage of knowing the *Talmud* at first hand, states in the most absolute manner that the idea of an endless Hell was altogether foreign to Rabbinic doctrine, that according to it the duration of punishment was limited even for the worst of criminals, and escape from Gehenna into Paradise by repentance remained always a possibility. He even asserts that the Jews distinguished

¹ In describing an element in the thought of John and of Paul as "Philonic" and "Alexandrian," one means to say that these two writers were influenced by the "Logos" doctrine which was common to all forms of Hellenism, and was developed especially by *Philo*. The truth of this view, at least as stated in next chapter, is not prejudiced by the contention that Paul and John were indebted to the "Wisdom" tradition, illustrated in *Job*, *Proverbs*, *Enoch*, *Wisdom of Sol.* etc. (see Godet, *Gospel according to St. John*, i. pp. 230-241; Rendel Harris, *Prologue to St. John's Gospel*). For (1) the "Word" and the "Wisdom" doctrine were both held by *Philo*, and not clearly distinguished even by him. (2) This was true also, no doubt, of the sacred writers. (3) Col. 1¹⁵⁻¹⁷ is unmistakably "Philonic." (4) If *Philo* had become a disciple of Jesus, and retained his philosophy, he might have written the Prologue, and he would have had to adopt the Christology of Colossians.

themselves from other Semitic peoples by their protest against the doctrine of everlasting torment.¹

Now these statements of Deutsch are of a startling character and have caused much debate. But no one has ever known the Talmud better than he; and his accounts of it are the most vivid and inspiring that have been written; though he wanted perhaps that frigid impartiality of mind that is one of the privileges of mediocrity. It is to be observed, also, that the difference between him and his critics lies chiefly in the interpretation of the phrase "To all generations," which is applied in the classical Rabbinic passage to the fate of those who are "signed and sealed" to perdition.² Deutsch understands this expression in a limited sense, whereas his opponents take it to describe absolute endlessness.

Dr. Pusey is at the opposite extreme from Deutsch, and maintains that unending suffering was the doctrine of practically all the Rabbis.³ Edersheim, again, who shared Deutsch's Talmudic learning, holds that all the Rabbis at the time of Christ believed that some at least of the wicked would suffer eternal punishment. This general statement of his must, however, be read in the light of the evidence on which it is founded.⁴ He shows that the rival schools of Shammai and Hillel, which between them represented Jewish thought in our Lord's day, were nearly agreed in their teaching on this subject. The former taught that the perfectly good are at death immediately "written and sealed to eternal life," the perfectly wicked to Gehenna, while an intermediate class "go down to Gehenna and moan and come up again." The school of Hillel asserted that sinners of Israel and of the Gentiles were punished in Gehenna for twelve months, after which "their souls are burned up and scattered as dust under the feet of the righteous." "But it excepts from this number certain classes of sinners who go down to Gehenna and are

¹ *Literary Remains*, pp. 53, 87.

² See citation of this Rabbinic passage in Farrar, Appendix to *Eternal Hope*; also Schechter, *Rabbinical Writings*.

³ *What is of Faith*, etc., pp. 71-98.

⁴ *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, pp. 791-796.

punished there to the age of the ages." From this evidence Edersheim draws the conclusion that both of these schools of Jewish thought believed in the unending punishment of some sinners; but he indicates that Hillel and his followers, in harmony with the gentle spirit of their theology, hoped that the number of the lost would be small.

Volz, the leading German authority on Jewish eschatology, agrees generally with Edersheim in his account of this matter. He says that the school of Shammai probably held that for ordinary sinners Gehenna would be a purgatory cleansing them from their defilement. The school of Hillel, he says, believed that for special sinners damnation would be eternal, but for the less heinous transgressors, temporary and ending in annihilation (*eine zeitweilige Verdammnis, die mit der völligen Vernichtung endigt*). He also, like Edersheim, shows how rapidly a mild doctrine of future punishment developed among the Rabbis after the time of Christ; how Akiba taught that the punishment of sinners in hell would last for twelve months, while his contemporary, Jochanan ben Nuri, said that it would endure only from Passover to Pentecost. As to the question whether this short time of torment in Gehenna was expected to end in salvation or annihilation, Volz concludes: "Whether these learned men held that the end of the sojourn in Hell would be the pardon of sinners or their dissolution into nothingness, on this point we receive no information."¹ Volz thus differs from Edersheim only in his important contention that the school of Hillel, which was so powerful in the time of Christ, taught that consignment to Gehenna meant, for all but the worst sinners, a short time of punishment ending in extinction.

The perplexities of the account thus given by Volz, especially as to the fate of the intermediate class of men (the *mittelmässigen*, as he quaintly calls them), are evident. He describes the doctrine of Hillel as "milder" than that of Shammai. Yet he maintains that the former believed that all sinners except the worst would suffer annihilation, while the latter affirmed that they would experience purgatorial cleansing. Surely it is hard to see how the idea of purgatorial

¹ *Jüdische Eschatologie*, pp. 286-288.

cleansing ending in release can be described as more severe than that of punishment issuing in annihilation. But difficulties of this kind beset every attempt to give a faithful account of Jewish eschatology.

On the whole, it appears that the academic, theological type of mind in the time of Jesus was no longer satisfied with that vague assertion of the general overthrow of the unrighteous which was the apocalyptic gospel, and was beginning to move towards a speculative doctrine of future destiny. It was not content with the prospect of the immediate triumph of the elect, and was seeking to attain some conception of the ultimate fate of mankind. Its ideas were still confused and uncertain, but we find in them the same elements of doctrine as appeared more clearly in the words of Akiba and other Rabbis of the second century, some of whom taught the annihilation and some the final pardon of the lost. To Hillel and his school we owe the beginnings, at least, of those free and bold thoughts about the Last Things which have generally characterised the Jewish theology throughout the ages. In any case, there can be no doubt that all the Rabbis of New Testament times believed that Gehenna was a state from which release was possible. They did not hold that every one who entered it had met his final doom. Some of them hoped that most of those who went down into the place of bondage would finally come up again. The Gehenna of the thoughtful Jew of those days is, therefore, not to be identified with the Hell of later Christian theology. If it was Hell, it was also Purgatory. There was no inscription over its gates—"All hope abandon, ye who enter here."¹

An extremely interesting picture of the state of Jewish thought, in some quarters, towards the end of the New Testament period, is presented in the *Salathiel* Apocalypse which forms the most important part of the Book of *Fourth Ezra*. This writing is called an apocalypse, but it is really a

¹ On Rabbinic teaching, cf. Stanton, *Jewish and Christian Messiah*, pp. 336-339; Salmond, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 367; Farrar, *Appendices to Eternal Hope and Mercy and Judgment*.

highly speculative, and even sceptical, polemic. Its creed is the darkest pessimism. The world has been created for the sake of Israel; but Israel is scattered and oppressed. Of the Chosen People itself only a few are predestined to salvation: the rest of humanity is altogether without hope. For all but the righteous of Israel, the doom of mankind is to live a short life and do a little evil here, and then to pass on to unspeakable torments and utter destruction. "The present age the Most High has made for many, but the age to come for few."¹ "Many have been created, but few shall be saved."² After this life is over, there is no hope of help or of pardon; fathers may not then intercede for sons, nor sons for fathers, nor friends for their dearest. "Perish the multitude which has been born in vain."³

Such is the creed which *Fourth Ezra* professes to expound. But the apocalypse is really one long protest against it, one varied exposition of its insuperable difficulties. Salathiel presents his doubts and perplexities before God and His Angel, and receives an answer—the dialogue being after the manner of the Book of Job. God has chosen, out of all the nations, Israel only, "out of all the flowers of the field, this one lily"; yet Israel is rejected and scattered abroad—Why is this? Of Israel itself but a few are righteous and the rest go to destruction, so that life altogether is but a tragedy of darkness—Why is this? The great world, the vast multitudes, perish without hope; "they are counted as smoke, are comparable unto the flame; they are fired, burn hotly, and are extinguished"—Why is this? Such are the questions which the seer urges against the Providence of God. He argues and pleads with wonderful force and pathetic beauty. He can see no good or joy in life, no value in immortality, since such is the lot of man. Far better that all human beings should perish utterly at death than that the world to come should only be hopeless anguish for all but two or three. The cattle of the field have reason to rejoice over man, since they die and are at peace, while men go to torment and judgment. "For it is far better with them than with us; for they have no

¹ 4 *Ezra* 8¹.² 8³.³ 9²².

judgment to look for, neither do they know of any torture or of any salvation promised to them after death. For what does it profit us that we shall be preserved alive, but yet suffer great torment?"¹

Such are the appeals and questions and laments of Salathiel as he presents his doubts and pitiful imaginings to the ear of God. It cannot be said that the answers attributed to the Deity are at all equal in force to the questions of the prophet, or that these questions are really met. The divine reply is that man cannot understand God; that the righteous of Israel shall be compensated for their sufferings in the Age to come; while, as for the unfaithful Jews, their destruction will be no loss or grief to God. "I will not concern Myself about the creation of those that have sinned, or their death, judgment, or perdition: but I will rejoice for the creation of the righteous, their pilgrimage, also, their salvation and their recompense."² As for Salathiel himself, he is to cease troubling about the fate of mankind and be content with the thought that his own blessedness is sure, and his own life appointed to eternal joy.

This is the answer which this apocalypse attributes to God; and it is an answer so insufficient, so shallow in its thought, so dreadful in its arrogant cruelty, that we can hardly suppose the author can have meant it as a serious reply to the questions he had raised, or as any real solution of his problems. One is almost led to suspect that the book is a covert attack on the theology it expounds. Certainly, the prophet does not profess himself satisfied with the answers he receives; and the controversy ends without being settled. In any case, this wonderful and suggestive book shows how restless some minds among the Jews were, how dissatisfied with the old exclusive view of things. It shows that some in New Testament times faced the problem of universal destiny and were troubled—that they felt

"the burden of the mystery . . .
Of all this unintelligible world."

¹ 4 *Ezra* 7⁶⁰⁻⁶⁹.

² 8³⁷⁻⁵⁹.

CHAPTER I.

FINAL DESTINY.

NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE.

INTRODUCTORY.

WE have now completed the first part of our study, which has concerned itself with the apocalyptic forms of belief — the Kingdom and Parousia, Resurrection, Judgment, Hades and Gehenna. There still remain to be considered those theories of ultimate destiny which have found a place in Christian thought. In proceeding to this second portion of our task we are not forsaking altogether the territory of Apocalypse ; since the doctrines of Everlasting Evil and of Conditional Immortality may both be said to have their roots in Jewish thought, and the hope of Universal Salvation may claim to be a development of the Old Testament belief in an all-embracing Kingdom of God, as well as of the apocalyptic prophecies of St. Paul. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to separate this field of eschatological thought from that which has engaged our attention hitherto. Those theological speculations which we have now to discuss do not belong to the realm of ancient symbol and sign. They pertain to a region wherein the religious mind is no longer content to express itself in terms of the imagination ; they go beyond the mere question of judgment and retribution. They are endeavours to answer the ultimate question—What is the goal to which the march of the race is tending ? What is to be its fate in the end of all things ? Are the evils which now so darkly beset humanity to endure for ever ; or has God reserved for it some better thing ? Does He intend, by ways

of death or ways of life, to bring it at last to a City of eternal peace?

Of course, this is a subject which wise men often think it better to ignore. They dislike the discussion it involves; and they advise us to leave the whole question of the End alone, in its universal aspect, and confine ourselves to a contemplation of heavenly glories and the consummation of the Kingdom. This view is held by many whom we all respect; also, it is in itself attractive. Who would not evade the ultimate problems if he could? And yet this is a position from which, on many grounds, there is reason to dissent. In the first place, the Christian Church has never agreed to be silent as to the fate of the lost; the majority of its representatives have asserted the doctrine of Eternal Evil with vigour and decision. The idea that we should have nothing to say about the final fortunes of humanity is a recent discovery, and is due to the pressure of sustained criticism, both within and without the Church.

In the second place, it is evident that we cannot expect our opponents to desist from attack because we find the conflict inconvenient. The enemies of the Faith have always found a suitable field of battle in the sphere of eschatology; and they will not withdraw their batteries though we withhold our fire. Those who reject the Christian view of the world commonly attack, especially, the traditional doctrine of destiny; and we cannot refuse to answer their protest unless we mean to make surrender. When they present us with long quotations from our great divines, and repeat the words of our Confessions, and say, "This is your belief," we cannot afford to make no reply.

Further, the doctrine of the End is one that cannot, in the nature of things, be left alone. It is essential to a complete presentation of truth. We may not deny this, unless we are prepared to say that Christianity is merely a practical message, intended to secure certain moral effects, and involves no rational "view of God and of the world." But if Christianity does involve such a view, we must at least try to state it; and we cannot make that endeavour under a statute of limitations, or begin it with the *proviso* that one particular realm of thought

is excluded from debate. Nor, indeed, could we adhere to such a condition, even if we laid it down. When we state the Christian doctrine of God, we are asked how we reconcile it with the painful facts of human life. In answer to this we assert our belief in a future state of perfect justice, retribution, and redress. But forthwith we are challenged to show that our view of immortality really secures an issue of absolute fairness and recompense for every soul. And so we find ourselves constrained to face the question we are anxious to avoid.

Moreover, it does appear quite hopeless to expect that men will continue to believe in immortality, and yet be content with silence as to its import for our race. We see the great stream of human life flowing for ever into eternity: we behold the countless hosts of mankind passing across this little space of sunlit earth, and marching onward to that bourn from which no traveller returns; and we cannot, even if we would, refrain from asking ourselves towards what goal these "unwearied feet of mortals" go their way. Even though we see that some battalions of this innumerable army carry the banner of the Cross and have an heavenly light upon their brows, we cannot confine our gaze to these alone, or content our hearts with a sure and certain hope for them. We may not forget that every one of all these multitudes derives his being from the Father of us all, is the heir of a limitless destiny, and has an appointed place in the universal purpose of "the Sovereign Lord, the Lover of Souls."

In any case, it is obvious that the problem of the End cannot be excluded from discussion in a treatise on Eschatology. And it is evident, also, that any historical study of this matter, from the Christian standpoint, must begin with the New Testament—must inquire at the outset whether Revelation has any clear light to shed on the destinies of man. It is to this inquiry, then, that we must now address ourselves; it will be our business to consider the basis which each of the great theories may claim for itself in the letter and in the spirit of the Gospel message.

I.

TEACHING OF JESUS.

It is natural to begin our study of the New Testament doctrine with the sayings of Jesus as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. It will not be necessary, however, to discuss His apocalyptic prophecies, as these have been considered in a former chapter. The question we have now before us concerns the extent to which His teaching, in its general drift and meaning, supports the belief that the lost will suffer either everlasting punishment or annihilation; or encourages a hope that reaches beyond the terrors of the Judgment.

1. *Its negative side.*—(a) The darker interpretation of our Lord's thought regarding things to come does not depend for its evidence on any distinct declaration of His, but rather on the solemn and warning note which sounds throughout His message. For instance, the condemnation passed on Judas, that it had been good for him if he had never been born,¹ is often said to involve the doom of unending punishment, inasmuch as no lesser evil than this could make it true of any man that he had better never have lived. But although this may be good logic it is not convincing. A logical way of treating this expression appears to us out of the question when we remember that it was a current saying, as old at least as the Second part of the *Book of Enoch*.² You really cannot translate a proverb into a syllogism.

A similar difficulty attends the interpretation of the passage in which our Lord declares that the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall never be forgiven.³ There is no doubt that this saying has made a powerful impression on the common Christian mind. You remember, for instance, how George Borrow, in his *Lavengro*, tells of one who believed that he had

¹ Matt. 26²⁴.

² 38², cf. also 2 Bar. 10⁶ (in neither of these cases is there reference to the future state).

³ Matt. 12²⁴⁻³², Mark 3²²⁻³⁰, Luke 12¹⁰.

committed this sin in childhood, and whose entire after-life was haunted by the memory of it and by the sense of impending doom. Many theologians, also, have found in this utterance conclusive evidence that Jesus taught the doctrine of everlasting punishment. Yet its precise theological import is not in the least plain. It was provoked by the attitude of the Scribes, who attributed the works of Jesus to His alliance with the evil powers. In so doing they blasphemed against that divine spirit of compassion which inspired the healing ministry of the Saviour. They sinned against love; and this was ever the kind of offence that was most hateful to Jesus. Hence He declared with passionate indignation that their attitude was beyond the reach of forgiveness. This pronouncement of His cannot, however, be said to convey a sentence of personal and irrevocable doom unless we can be sure that it was directed against individual men. And we cannot attain to such certainty. Rather does it seem that the offence of the Scribes was committed by them as a class or party, not as separate persons. This interpretation is rendered probable by the fact that the Jewish mind was accustomed to the idea that nations and bodies of men could commit an unforgiveable sin. Thus it is said in the *Book of Jubilees* that when the children of Israel break the law of circumcision, "there will be no more pardon or forgiveness unto them for all the sin of this eternal error."¹ This view is supported also by the context, since it is evident that the Scribes were inspired in their accusation against Jesus by official and professional prejudice, rather than by personal depravity. It is difficult to believe that Jesus meant to say that each individual Scribe, in allowing party passion to lead him so far astray, had placed himself beyond the reach of divine grace and mercy. We know, indeed, that the sect of the Pharisees included men of good and even beautiful character. The Apostle Paul himself belonged to it, and shared for a time its bitterest thoughts towards Jesus; and yet he was called out of this party and this state of mind, was granted forgiveness, and became the greatest of the servants of the Crucified.

¹ *Jub.* 15³⁴.

On the whole, then, it does not seem certain that this impressive declaration has a direct bearing on the subject of final destiny. It expresses an intensity of wrath against the loveless and uncompassionate spirit that Jesus saw to animate the Scribes—a spirit which He hated, wherever it appeared. He always warned men that those who did not forgive could not be forgiven,¹ that without works of charity none might enter the Kingdom,² that he who injured the little ones should wish that he were dead.³ Hence this anathema against the Scribes is characteristic of Christ. It bids us understand that sins against humanity and mercy are not tolerable under the government of God at any time or in any world. All this is clear; but the attempt to translate these prophetic words of the Master into the formal language of theology can only rob them of vitality and power.

And the disabilities which thus attend the dogmatic interpretation of this passage appear whenever we seek to show that any individual utterance of Jesus conforms exactly to the requirements of modern theory. When, for example, He declares that there are few that find the narrow way that leads to life, while many tread the easy path that leads to destruction,⁴ He certainly teaches that, as good and evil are opposed in their nature, so also are they opposed in the ends towards which they move. But, as soon as we proceed to ask what is meant by the "destruction" towards which evil tends, we find it impossible to provide an answer which is not at least debatable. One simply cannot show that "destruction" certainly means annihilation, as opposed to final ruin, or indeed that it is anything more than a synonym for "Gehenna." In the same way, the doctrine that "whosoever would save his life shall lose it"⁵ expresses one of the most profound principles in the teaching of the Master. But how we spoil this saying when we interpret it, not as a statement of universal moral truth but as a prophecy that the selfish life must end in total extinction. Indeed, the habit of applying the methods of minute verbal analysis to such words of Jesus

¹ Matt. 6¹⁶.

² 25⁴¹⁻⁴⁶.

³ 18⁶.

⁴ 7^{13, 14}.

⁵ 16²⁵.

is unhistorical in spirit, and is not conducive either to reverence or understanding. It distracts attention from the religious and prophetic force of the evangelic sayings, and directs the mind to the mere details of their expression. It thus subordinates that which is vital, and that of which we can be sure, to formal peculiarities which are usually doubtful and always of minor moment. Also, it compels us to bring the utterances of our Lord into the region of laboured controversy; and whatever is made the subject of prolonged debate begins to wear an aspect of uncertainty. The longer one studies the works of partisan divines the more one is convinced that the path of wisdom lies in refusing to base doctrinal conclusions on any single text or on any merely verbal grounds. No doctrine is secure that is not supported by a persistent element in the Gospel records.

(b) To say all this is not, however, to minimise the force and weight of our Saviour's message, on its ominous and negative side. While the sayings to which we have referred do not, when taken separately, bear any final dogmatic witness, their cumulative meaning is extremely impressive. They pertain to an aspect of the Galilean Gospel which is far from hopeful. There is, for instance, a characteristic of the apocalyptic parables so persistent and so independent of mere imagery as to imply a deeply rooted conviction. This characteristic is the continual prophecy of a decisive separation of the heirs of the Kingdom from the rest of humanity. The King is constantly depicted as closing the gate of the City against those who are without, and refusing to open it again—being deaf to all appeals, all entreaties, all knocking at the door.¹ This note of exclusion is so dominant as to suggest a most solemn thought in the mind of Jesus. It belongs to a minor strain which is heard in the voice of our Lord—a sadness of foreboding, a stern perception of ominous possibilities. There is a broad and easy way that leads to destruction;² it profits a man nothing if he gain the whole world and lose his own life;³ it had been well for Judas if he had never been born; apostate disciples are as salt that has lost its virtue

¹ Matt. 25¹⁻¹².

² 7¹³. 14.

³ 16²⁶.

and is henceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men;¹ there is an obscurity of the soul, wherein the very light is as darkness;² there are those whose lives are like painted tombs full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness;³ there are offenders for whom it were better that a millstone were hanged about the neck and they were drowned in the depth of the sea.⁴ These are all sayings that are weighted with a burden of prophetic warning. They compel us to recognise, with an awe of spirit which is the deeper the more humbly we acknowledge the authority of Jesus, that He believed in an immeasurable danger which threatened the souls of men; a horror of great darkness from which they had to be delivered; a desert of dreary exile towards which the beloved race of mortals was straying with careless feet.

2. *Its positive side.*—(a) Now, there can be no doubt that the perception of this element in the teaching of Jesus, combined with a dogmatic interpretation of His Gehenna sayings, has been the chief scriptural source of the Christian belief in everlasting perdition. It is probable, also, that a large number of New Testament experts in our time would affirm on critical grounds that Jesus taught either the everlasting torment or the total destruction of all who might be excluded from the Messianic Kingdom. And it is certain that the words of our Lord have extinguished in many reverent minds all hope of universal salvation.

From the standpoint adopted in these lectures, however, it does not appear certain that this confident interpretation of the Synoptic doctrine is altogether justified. If we exclude the idea that the Gehenna symbol was identified in our Lord's time with any fixed theory of destiny, and if we do not find it legitimate to build theological conclusions on those individual utterances to which we have referred, there does not remain evidence to show that the teaching of Jesus as to the fate of the lost went further than that message of retribution and judgment which is contained in His apocalyptic prophecies. But, apart from these considerations, we have to bear in mind

¹ Matt. 5¹³.² 6²³.³ 23²⁷.⁴ 18⁶.

that these warnings of wrath to come, which we find so impressive, represent only one side of the Galilean Gospel. It surely cannot be denied by any student of the doctrine of Jesus that there is an element in His teaching and an aspect of His character and ministry which do not suggest the idea that all mankind except the immediate heirs of the Kingdom are destined to a fate of torment and perdition.

But it is true of the brighter as well as the darker side of our Lord's message that it is undefined, and is a matter of principle rather than of distinct utterance. The separate sayings to which liberal scholars are accustomed to appeal will not bear the weight of great conclusions. Some theologians, for instance, find the doctrine that all penalty will have an end in the saying that some sinners will be beaten with few stripes and some with many. And no doubt the passage in which this expression occurs¹ is disconcerting to our orthodoxy. In it our Lord declares that the Son of Man at His coming will find among His servants three different classes—(1) the faithful, who shall receive the fulness of blessing; (2) the deliberately evil, who will be cut asunder and given a portion with the unbelievers; (3) those of lesser guilt, who will be chastised with a severity proportioned to their offences. And if this prophecy may be applied to the future state it certainly suggests a threefold doctrine of destiny like that of the Rabbis. Even if it be held to refer only to the servants of Jesus, it is inconsistent with established dogma. But it certainly does not even hint the idea that all the world will be saved.

Much weight, again, is attached by some writers to a phrase which occurs in St. Matthew's version of the declaration about the unpardonable sin—"shall not be forgiven, neither in this age nor in that which is to come."² It is held that this expression implies that every sin except one will be pardoned in the future life. But we cannot be sure that this saying refers to the world to come; it may refer only to the Messianic Age. Also, it is not certain that St. Matthew's version is an exact reproduction of the words of our Lord. And so we are unable to draw dogmatic conclusions from this

¹ Luke 12⁴¹⁻⁴⁸.

² Matt. 12³².

particular expression—in so far, at least, as the teaching of Jesus is concerned. No doubt the fact that the Evangelist believed our Lord to have said that only one sin was unforgiveable in the age to come, indicates a somewhat free state of opinion in the early Church. But nothing more than this can be affirmed.

Still less is it possible to attribute any doctrinal importance to the passage wherein our Lord counsels men to agree quickly with their adversary while they are in the way with him, rather than take their quarrel before the judge, who may cast them into a prison, where they will remain until they have paid all that they owe. This passage is often said to involve the doctrine that those who are condemned at the Judgment will endure penalty only until they have fulfilled the claims of justice. And it is true that St. Luke, unlike St. Mark, does give this word of Jesus in a context which shows it to refer to future retribution. The phrase, however, which theologians emphasise—"thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite"¹—belongs to the incident and circumstance of a parabolic saying, and cannot be treated as if it expressed the intention of the whole utterance. The purpose of Jesus here is to enforce the need of settling all accounts without delay in view of the coming of the Son of Man; and we cannot feel confident that He desired to state any opinion about the duration of penalty. We may conjecture, indeed, that if He had really declared any definite doctrine on this subject we would not have had to seek for it in obscure corners of the Gospel story, in the details of a picture, in the chance turning of a phrase.

On the whole, then, one is not disposed to agree with those who find the idea of universal salvation in any one of the sayings of Jesus. At the same time, we may admit that those passages to which I have referred belong to a strain in the Synoptic doctrine that is not easily harmonised with a rigorous eschatology. Jesus certainly taught that there would be degrees of future punishment and a greater and lesser condemnation. Also, we may find in His discourses some traces

¹ Luke 12⁵⁸. 59.

of Rabbinic thought regarding the age to come. Even though we may not be inclined, for our own part, to attach much dogmatic importance to any of the sayings in question, it must still be conceded that in their general import they discourage the idea that the world to come has nothing in it but uttermost doom on the one hand, and perfect blessedness on the other. In short, the three earlier Evangelists do ascribe sayings to Jesus which tend to modify the accepted doctrine of perdition, though they do not afford a basis for confident conclusions.

Christian optimists are perhaps on somewhat firmer ground when they appeal to certain general features of the Synoptic teaching, and certain principles which inform it. It is to be remembered, for instance, that the eschatology of Jesus is expressed in terms of the Kingdom of God. This peculiarity of our Lord's method renders it hazardous to argue in a rigorous way from the negative and exclusive side of His teaching. We can never be quite sure whether, in any given case, He is thinking of the Kingdom as a temporary Messianic state or as the condition of final blessedness in heaven. If the former thought were in His mind, then He need not have meant a sentence of eternal doom when He spoke of the penalty of exclusion. For it is evident that men who were not prepared for entrance to a temporary Kingdom when it was inaugurated on earth might yet come afterwards to be fit for the eternal City of God. It is to be borne in mind also that Jesus, as a rule, does not extend His prophecies further than the advent of the Son of Man and the beginning of His dominion. St. Paul carries his thought beyond this point, and seeks to picture the later history of the Kingdom as it goes on its way and conquers all its enemies. But Jesus stops short at its establishment, with the attendant circumstances of judgment and exclusion. And it is not safe to assume that His silence regarding things beyond must be interpreted in a hopeless sense. Indeed, there are one or two expressions in the Gospels which suggest something that resembles the doctrine of St. Paul. Thus the Kingdom is likened to a tiny seed that grows into a great spreading tree, and to the leaven which,

placed in a measure of meal, leavens the whole mass. These illustrations seem to imply that matters will not be settled all in a moment when the Kingdom appears—that, on the contrary, the Empire of God will go on gradually extending itself till it has attained an universal sway.

Some weight, also, must be attached to the view that our doctrine of immortality should be influenced, in a hopeful sense, by the principle of compensation which is enforced throughout the teaching of Jesus. The idea that the future will afford redress for the inequalities and hardships of this present state was a favourite thought in the mind of the Saviour. It is expressed, for instance, in the Parables of Dives and Lazarus and of the Talents, as well as in the blessings pronounced on the poor and the mourning and the persecuted, and in the sayings: "There are last that shall be first"; "To whom little is given, of him little shall be required." And, if this characteristic doctrine of Jesus be applied to the world to come, it certainly suggests the extension of opportunity, and of the ministry of grace, beyond the limits of this present life. It seems to encourage the hope that some kind of reparation will be made to the man who has been poorly endowed in this unequal world. Men must begin the future life in the condition which is theirs when they die, even though that condition may not be due to their own demerit. Suppose they enter the unseen world halt and maimed and blind, it matters little that they owe these disabilities to their earlier poverty of privilege. Their weakness is a reality, whatever its cause may have been; and no redress is accorded them if they are simply granted a minor degree of chastisement. Their actual spiritual state is their real penalty; and if that penalty is to be remitted, it can only be through their positive enjoyment of means of grace, such as may annul the privation of their earthly lot. In short, the doctrine of compensation involves the assurance that every man who has received small measure of advantage here shall receive much hereafter—much of opportunity, and of the healing grace of Christ.

(b) One may conjecture, however, that those who in all ages have entertained hopeful thoughts regarding the future of

the human race have not really been inspired by direct sayings of Jesus, or even by inferences drawn from general principles which underlie His teaching, but rather by the influence of His personality, His attitude to men, His doctrine of God, and especially His Cross and Passion. Just as John Tauler said that the Kingdom of God was God Himself, so we may say that the Gospel of Jesus is Jesus Himself. Especially is it that aspect of His character and ministry of which we are the more assured because it was the least according to tradition or the expectations of men. It is that benignant light of His spirit which all the fiery clouds of apocalypse could not obscure—that amazing breadth and tenderness of His humanity which not even the misunderstandings of His narrow generation have availed to hide from our eyes. It is that singular grace and truth which shone in the Galilean ministry and in all His companyings with the poor, the despised, and the outcast; which inspired the plea for His disciples, “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak,” and the prayer on the Cross—“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” and the serene confidence of the saying recorded by St. John—“I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” It is this in Jesus that constitutes His gospel, and is the real source of every Christian hope.

In complete harmony with this aspect of His mind is His doctrine of God. God is, for Him, essentially the universal Father, who sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,¹ and is kind to the unthankful and evil;² who receives back with a double joy the wandering son,³ and is not willing that one of the little ones should perish;⁴ whose passion it is to recover and to save; and who is as the shepherd that seeks for the one lost sheep till he finds it, and in whose presence there is more joy over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.⁵ This is our Lord’s consistent doctrine of God; and it is not more truly an account of the Father’s heart than it is of the spirit that dwelt in Jesus.

¹ Matt. 5⁴⁵.⁴ Matt. 18¹⁴.² Luke 6³⁵.⁵ Luke 15⁸⁻¹⁰.³ 15³².

It is almost certain, indeed, that this element was even more prominent in the teaching and thought of the Master than the Synoptic Gospels would lead us to suppose. These Gospels do not fully express the universal aspect of our Lord's mission; nor make it clear that He regarded Himself as the Saviour of mankind, or believed that He had been sent into the world because of the love of God for the whole human race. Yet, other New Testament writings express these truths without hesitation or doubt. This is, indeed, the most original note in the evangelic message. The idea that the Christ is the redeemer of all men, that His work has an unlimited reach, that He is the unspeakable gift of the Father to the world which He loves, was not suggested by tradition, nor was it congenial to the Jewish mind. Whence, then, did the Apostles derive it? From what source does St. John obtain confidence to say that Jesus is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,"¹ or St. Paul to affirm that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself"?² Evidently from Jesus; from the impression made by His personality; from the influence of His spirit; from memories of His life; from sayings of His which the Synoptists have not recorded. There is, perhaps, no fact that testifies more strongly than this to the measureless power which dwelt in Jesus Christ. He spoke in apocalyptic terms that were exclusive and narrow; He said things which suggested a limited purpose and mission; He was surrounded by influences that rendered men adverse to a gospel of boundless sweep. And yet the universality of His spirit overcame all these things, and compelled His followers, spite of themselves, to say—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son."³ And His Church throughout the ages, though it has clung to the literal meaning of His words and has accepted dogmatic teaching which has limited His gospel, has yet been constrained by His influence to call Him by names of universal import, and ascribe to Him the Lordship of all things—to call Him, not the Saviour of the elect, but *Salvator Mundi*; not the Light of the Church or of the Kingdom, but the "Light of the world."

¹ John 1²⁹.² 2 Cor. 5¹⁹.³ John 3¹⁶.

While, then, we do not find in the sayings of Jesus any clear doctrine of ultimate destiny, we do find a profoundly universal and hopeful element in His message and His work, in the light of which we must interpret those solemn warnings and forebodings that are not heard in the voice of any prophet more certainly than in that of the Prophet of Nazareth.

II.

APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE.

(St. Paul and St. John.)

When we pass from the Synoptic account of the teaching of Jesus to the interpretation of the Gospel presented in the other New Testament writings, we find the same apparently conflicting strains of thought—on the one hand, predictions of immeasurable doom; and, on the other, great assertions regarding the mind and purpose of God which encourage the widest hope. It is the harmonising of these two that constitutes the problem of apostolic eschatology.

In discussing this problem it will be convenient to confine our attention for the most part to the teaching of St. Paul and St. John. Indeed, the other New Testament writers have very little light to shed on the subject of universal destiny; their statements as to the doom of the impenitent being couched, as a rule, in the doubtful terms of Apocalypse. There are, however, two points which may be noted as characteristic of the sacred writings generally. In the first place, they declare that the work of Christ has a relation to all mankind. Thus, the Epistle to the Hebrews says that the Saviour “tasted death for every man”;¹ the First Epistle of St. Peter affirms that the ministry of our Lord extended beyond the grave; and in First Timothy we read—“God willeth that all men should be saved.” “Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.” “We have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe.”²

¹ Heb. 2⁹ “*should taste death for every man*” (ὅτι περ παντός).

² Tim. 2⁴, 6 4¹⁰.

In the second place, the element of dark prophecy in the New Testament books is chiefly expressed in those passages which speak of the state of spiritual "death" that awaits the children of this world. It is in the light of these utterances that we must interpret such words as "perdition" (*ἀπωλεία*), and "corruption" or "decay" (*φθορά*), and "destruction" (*ὄλεθρος*). The state of being lost, of decay, and of destruction, is equivalent to that mysterious condition of death which is declared to be the appointed lot of sinners beyond the Judgment. The Christian teachers affirm that the natural man is already dead in trespasses and sins; and they prophesy that if he continue in this state he must die, in some deeper sense, hereafter. Thus St. James tells us that desire is the mother of sin, and sin is the mother of death.¹ Hence, the controversy regarding the New Testament doctrine of final destiny, on its negative side, really turns on the interpretation of this term "death," in its application to the fate of the lost.

Having thus briefly observed these two elements in the Apostolic tradition, let us now proceed to discuss them as they appear in the writings of the two theologians of the New Testament. In discharging this task, it will be suitable for us to consider the doctrine of St. John before that of St. Paul. This is, of course, not the proper chronological order; but it is justified by the consideration that St. Paul's thought is more speculative than that of the later writer, and is far more directly applied to the subject of final destiny.

Teaching of St. John.

1. *Its "dualism."*—(a) The Johannine theology is presented in two works—the Gospel and the First Epistle of St. John. But it is not necessary, for purposes of exposition, to separate sayings that occur in the one of these books from those that appear in the other. Whether St. John is telling the story of Jesus Christ or is directly addressing the churches, his teaching remains the same. He does not distinguish between the message that was spoken by Jesus and the belief

¹ Jas. 1¹⁵.

which the Spirit of Jesus has created in his own mind. Neither of his writings contains direct predictions as to ultimate destiny. Both of them deal almost exclusively with the great facts and principles which are spiritual realities in this present world. The outcome of these facts and principles in the life to come is matter of "solemn conjecture." The Johannine doctrine gathers itself round the conception of eternal life. Those twice-born men who are possessed of this supreme gift are separated from other men by a great gulf. The unregenerate are, from the spiritual point of view, dead. Their existence belongs to the realm of illusion and vanity. It is occupied with the appearances and shadows of things; it is of the world that passeth away. And the purpose of Christ in His death and resurrection is to deliver men from this state of death and to give them the true eternal life which is of God and abideth for ever. Christ is, indeed, the only means whereby this redemption can be obtained. Apart from Him, and from communion with His spirit, there is no deliverance from the bondage of death. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."¹

Now, there can be no doubt that this view of things does present, at first sight, a hopeless opposition of thought. On the one hand is the world lying in the evil one, abiding under the wrath of God, in bondage to corruption, shrouded in darkness, buried in death. On the other hand is the fellowship of the redeemed, dwelling in celestial light, possessed of everlasting peace, nourished with heavenly bread, renewed with the water of eternal life. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."² Such is the dualism of St. John; and if we regard it as absolute and unreconciled and ask ourselves what kind of eschatology it suggests, we can only reply that it is one of extreme gloom. The apocalyptic conception of future torment is really more hopeful than the view of destiny which is founded on the Johannine idea of spiritual death. After all, there is hope in pain; there is purifying in fire; so long as there is suffering there is life. But if we are to believe that the state of utter death which belongs to the

¹ John 6⁵³.

² 1 John 5¹⁹.

unregenerate here is continued in an ever-deepening form hereafter, we can hardly conceive that there remains any ground for hope regarding the fate of the multitude. The only question that can arise is whether that fate is unending desolation or the absolute loss of existence.

(b) But if we apply ourselves to this latter problem we find no means of reaching a confident conclusion. It is customary to appeal to "Hellenistic" thought on such questions, as a key to all our perplexities. But this is a habit which is not to be followed with any great assurance. Some writers speak as if Hellenism were a thing of which we possessed a perfect knowledge, as if it were a defined and familiar system, like, for instance, Calvinism. Whereas, we have no sure information about it except such as we derive from Philo, the *Book of Wisdom*, and other Alexandrian works, a few fragmentary inscriptions, and some quotations from lost writings. As to its general features, we know that it was an attempt to combine Jewish belief with Greek philosophy; that it prevailed widely throughout certain regions in New Testament times; and that it commonly believed in the pre-existence of souls and held the doctrine of the Logos, denied the Resurrection, and was, perhaps, as much Stoical as anything else in its ethics. This elusive and vague type of thought attained to something like coherent utterance only in Philo. And Philo is no safe guide to the understanding of St. John. For one thing, the Christian writer, while he accepted many Philonic forms of thought, held them in a sense of his own, and used them with the freedom proper to one who was a disciple, not of the Alexandrian, but of Jesus. Also, Philo, great thinker and great soul as he was, is himself very difficult to interpret. His work is illumined by flashes of insight, fine turns of expression, and high mystical vision. But it is full of tentative endeavours and incomplete adventures, and is encumbered by an unattainable ambition to reconcile Judaism with the doctrines of the Academy and of the Porch. Evidently, then, Hellenism even as expressed by Philo, does not help us beyond a certain point in our study of St. John. And this is especially true in the matter of eschatology, since the Alexandrian doctrine of

destiny, as it concerns the unregenerate, is, as we have seen, very doubtful and obscure. Even though one may think that it tends towards the thought of conditional immortality, one recognises that this is a conclusion which cannot be stated in any confident or dogmatic way.

(c) It thus appears that contemporary literature, even of the Hellenistic type, does not afford us any complete guidance towards an understanding of the Johannine eschatology. The most it can do for us is to suggest that the dualism of the Fourth Evangelist may imply that the unspiritual will suffer either eternal perdition or actual loss of personal life. As between the claims of those who definitely assert either of these views against the other, it is therefore hardly possible to decide. Theologians who maintain the orthodox interpretation of St. John's teaching have certainly a strong case to present. Their position is supported by the consideration that "death" in the Johannine writings signifies that state which is the opposite of eternal life. It is reasonable to argue that, as eternal life is not mere existence but a spiritual quality of being, so the condition of death, which is the contrary of it, has nothing to do with physical dissolution or extinction of personality, but is rather a mode of existence which, from the moral point of view, is not worthy of being called life. If unregenerate men are dead already, and yet continue to be physically alive, they may go on in this condition hereafter and yet for ever remain in possession of self-conscious personality. This is a perfectly defensible interpretation of one element in St. John's teaching; and if we think it sound in itself, and also consistent with a due appreciation of other notes in his message, we may decide that he meant by spiritual death in its final issue a state of permanent exclusion from the Kingdom—of complete and incurable inability to experience the powers of the higher life.¹

(d) On the other hand, the contention that St. John believed in Conditional Immortality, or at least that his thought tended towards it, may be argued with a great deal of force, and has special weight with those of us who think

¹ Cf. E. F. Scott, *Fourth Gospel*, pp. 247-253.

that Philo's theory of immortality implied that the unspiritual must suffer the doom of final extinction. St. John certainly believed, as the Alexandrian did, that apart from communion with the Logos no man had any true life at all. And it must be confessed that his language does suggest that there is no such thing as immortality for any who do not abide in the Son of God, feed upon His flesh, drink His blood, receive from Him the new supernatural life which He alone bestows. This, at least, is the Conditionalist view of the matter. Those who maintain that view do not deny that "death," like "life," is used figuratively by St. John; but they say that this symbolic usage has, lying under it, conceptions that point to actual extinction as the ultimate fate of the unregenerate. The state of death in which these are is a state of mortality. It is not in the nature of things that it can endure for ever. Concerned as it is with unreality, bound up as it is with evil, it is of necessity transient. Just as eternal life involves perpetual existence though it is the possession of men who are appointed to physical dissolution, so spiritual death means final annihilation though it is compatible with a temporary existence in this world and beyond it. The "life" of the believer means immortality, because it makes him a part of the everlasting order; and the "death" of the unregenerate means evanescence, because it makes him a part of the transient world. He who has a portion, by faith, in the everlasting Kingdom is himself everlasting; he whose lot is cast with perishable things must himself perish. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."¹

2. *Reconciling element.*—(a) Now, this Conditionalist interpretation of St. John's doctrine has even more to be said for it than has the view that he believed in eternal evil. But the weakness of both these constructions is their assumption that the dualism of the Fourth Evangelist is absolute, and shows no signs of being mediated by a higher thought. Surely this is very far from being the case. It is true that both in the Gospel and in the Epistle the universe of moral and spiritual things is divided into opposing realms of light and darkness,

¹ 1 John 2⁷.

life and death; and this is the feature of their doctrine on which, up to this point, I have dwelt. But there is another and a reconciling element in Johannine thought which really transcends its oppositions. This third and unifying principle is St. John's doctrine of God and of His relation to the whole world in Jesus Christ. He declares that the mission of Christ had its origin in the nature of the Father,¹ who is love.² He says that every one that "dwelleth in love dwelleth in God,"³ and that such an one has "passed from death unto life."⁴ He asserts that the purpose of our Lord is universal salvation—"God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."⁵ He teaches that the sacrifice of the Cross was a sacrifice for all sins of all men. "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world."⁶ He assures us that Jesus was confident that if He were lifted up from the earth He would draw all men unto Himself.⁷ Finally, he teaches the necessary relation of Christ to every man, affirming that He is the eternal Word, or Reason, of God, by whom all things were created and in whom they all exist; that He embodies that spiritual principle which is the medium of all our seeing, is the light which coming into the world lighteth every man.⁸

(b) Now, it is surely impossible to give due weight to this element in the message of the Fourth Evangelist, and yet to say that the dualism of his thought is intractable and hopeless. His assertions regarding life and death, light and darkness, are true to one aspect of our Lord's teaching, and indeed to the results of all earnest moral reflection. Nevertheless, he had not so learned Christ as to see in the spiritual universe nothing but eternal conflict and invincible oppositions, or to suppose that the recognition of discords was the last word of faith. When we think of his doctrine that "God is love," we see that it involves the universality and everlasting persistence of divine grace. When we consider his declarations regarding the intention of our Lord in His ministry and sacrifice, we feel

¹ Gospel 3¹⁶.

⁴ 3¹⁴.

⁷ Gospel 12³².

² 1 Epistle 4⁸.

⁵ Gospel 3¹⁷.

⁸ 1¹⁻¹⁰.

³ 4¹⁶.

⁶ 1 Epistle 2².

that they imply a limitless purpose of salvation. When we remember, also, that this strain in his teaching is the peculiar and characteristic feature of it, we cannot hold it to be subordinate to other things in his message which are by comparison traditional and obvious. Surely it is not reasonable to think that convictions regarding the character and purpose of God, which he can have attained only through the Spirit of Christ, are to be limited by his sayings about "life" and "death" which, after all, might have been uttered by Philo as naturally as by Jesus or by John.

(c) It seems, then, that if we allow due value to the reconciling and universal note in the message of the beloved John, we are unable to accept the view that his Gospel did not transcend the dualism it so strongly affirmed. And this being so, we cannot agree with those who say that he held and taught either that the wicked would be destroyed or that evil would be eternal. We cannot do this, because both of these positions rest on the belief that there is nothing in St. John's thought that transcends its discords, and because they subordinate the universal and unique aspect of his doctrine to that which is limited and traditional. To say this, however, is not to affirm that the Evangelist taught the doctrine of universal restitution. His mind was of the direct mystical type which is not troubled by logical perplexities, and knows without labour that all things are reconciled in Love. And there is no evidence that he believed himself commissioned to declare any prophecy of the End. He certainly believed in the terrors of judgment, the wrath of God, the penalties of sin here and hereafter. But whether he held any fixed belief on the subject of final destiny, we cannot say. What we do know is that he was not conscious of teaching anything that limited or weakened the truth of his message concerning the love of the Father for the whole race of mankind, the sacrifice of Christ for all human sin, and the divine desire and purpose to work, in some sense, an universal salvation through Him who was called the "Resurrection and the Life."

Teaching of St. Paul.

1. *His doctrine of "death."*—The teaching of the Apostle Paul regarding life and death bears a resemblance to that of St. John, and its influence is evident in the later writer. But it is more varied, more individual, and more definitely applied to the future state. While eternal life is mainly conceived by St. John as a present possession, it always means in St. Paul's language something to be attained hereafter, and is the opposite of that state of death which is the appointed doom of the ungodly. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."¹

(a) Now, this Pauline doctrine, on its negative side, presents a most bewildering and discouraging subject of study. The idea of death, both as a physical fact and as a spiritual experience or state, seems to have had a peculiar fascination for the Apostle. His references to it are so frequent, and exceed so much in variety of meaning all contemporary example, as to suggest a personal characteristic. He has recourse to the symbolism of "death" whenever he is deeply moved by the sad and stern aspect of things, and whenever he wishes to describe painful experiences or any want of sensibility. Sometimes he uses it in an extremely rhetorical way, as when he says, "I die daily";² "death worketh in us, but life in you";³ "if Christ be in you, the body is dead."⁴ Again, this phraseology often indicates the idea that those who are under the sway of any one influence are free from the power of its opposite, as in the declaration that those who are alive to God are dead to sin.⁵ In this aspect, the symbol of death and dying is devoid of all colour of its own and takes a bright or a dark meaning according to the connection in which it occurs. Thus, baptism is likened to burial,⁶ and the experience of the Christian to crucifixion;⁷ and believers in Christ are described as dead.⁸ Once more, he occasionally indicates by this form of expression, want of power, as in the saying,

¹ Rom. 6²³.² 1 Cor. 15³¹.³ 2 Cor. 4¹².⁴ Rom. 8¹⁰.⁵ 6¹¹.⁶ 6⁴.⁷ Gal. 2²⁰.⁸ Col. 3³.

"apart from the law sin is dead."¹ An excellent example, also, of the hyperbolical way in which he speaks of "dying" is found in the statement, "sin revived, and I died."² Clearly, it was not the habit of the Apostle to weigh his terms with care, or to measure his language in a scientific spirit; and he employed the tremendous symbolism of death in cases where writers of a different temperament would have expressed themselves with more moderation and variety. And he thus lays himself open to the danger of being misunderstood by literal and laborious minds. We may conjecture that he never expected his words to be so carefully examined, and would have been surprised at the importance which has often been attached to his impetuous expressions.

(b) There can be no doubt, however, of the austerity of meaning which belongs to St. Paul's prophecy that death will be the wages of sin. Physical dissolution itself seemed a terrible thing to St. Paul. And it is probably to this, as much as to the influence of contemporary thought, that we must attribute his persistent habit of describing the state of perdition by likening it to that dreadful power which is the tyrant of creation. He saw in the king of terrors a fitting symbol of the uttermost spiritual doom. For him, as for Philo, to be unspiritual was to be dead now, and was to be moving towards a climax of death beyond the grave. To fail of eternal life at the last was to be given over to the powers of ruin and decay.³

(c) So far, we are on secure ground in interpreting the general doctrine of St. Paul regarding the wages of sin. The matter is different, however, when we come to ask ourselves whether his prophecy of coming death and corruption can be said to imply a theological conclusion on the subject of final destiny. The difficulties that beset an attempt to answer this question are, to some extent, similar to those which confront us when we seek to translate into dogma the parallel teaching of St. John. The task of doctrinal exposition is, however, much more complicated in the case of the Pauline writings than in that of the Johannine. The latter are the work of a

¹ Rom. 7⁸.

² 7⁹.

³ Cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul's Conceptions of Last Things*, chap. iii.

mind that belonged essentially to the mystical type, and their method is to present ideas in various aspects and relations rather than in orderly sequence of thought. The former, on the other hand, reveal a genius of "infinite variety." St. Paul was a mystic, but he was a logician as well. He was a master of emotional appeal, a prophet, a poet, an evangelist; but he was also a theologian. In him is to be found the source of many speculations which have shown astonishing vitality; also, unlike St. John, he was interested in the problem of the End. Hence one expects to find a deliberate meaning in his eschatological statements; nor is this expectation altogether disappointed. As we study his letters we discern in them a strain of independent thought regarding the Last Things, which shows itself in many ways and steadily increases in definiteness and power.

(d) An example of this element in the Apostle's teaching is to be found, for instance, in his silence about Gehenna and its torments. This is, indeed, a most significant feature of his doctrine. He had been trained in a Rabbinic school which constantly employed the symbol of the eternal fire. Also, he must have known the tradition as to the preaching of Jesus on this subject which is embodied in the Synoptic Gospels. Why, then, does he avoid the language with which he was familiar; and why does he not conform to the example of Jesus? The reason cannot have been that he addressed himself largely to Gentile Christians who were not acquainted with the Jewish forms. It is true that these might not have recognised the *term* "Gehenna," but they would have understood quite well the notion of torment by fire. Nor can we explain his silence by the idea that he held himself free to ignore the doctrine of his Master. Why, then, had he nothing to say regarding the Pit of fire and destruction? Most likely, because he did not wish to teach, or believe that Jesus had meant to enforce, the idea of perpetual torment. In all his writings there is only one saying which even suggests the latter conception.¹ It seems plain, then, that it was with intent that he spoke of death, decay, and perdition, rather than of the everlasting fire.

¹ Rom. 2⁸. 9.

And what can that intention have been, if it was not to convey a general and negative, rather than a concrete and sensuous, message of coming doom?

(e) This, then, is the first of the things that one notes as indicating the theological tendency of St. Paul's mind in this particular direction. Its effect, of course, is mainly negative; but it shows that, while he accepted all the other forms of Jewish prophecy, he rejected the Gehenna symbol as unsuited to his purpose. But the second feature of his doctrine is that the imagery which he chooses to employ in place of the apocalyptic emblem is used with such freedom and individuality as to convey no definite idea beyond that of uttermost retribution. No doubt, if we consider St. Paul's terms, "death" and "decay," as we might study words occurring in a legal document, without regard to the peculiarities of his style and without reference to other elements in his teaching, we may conclude that he believed that the doom reserved for the wicked was complete destruction, either of the moral nature or of personal existence. One need not illustrate this at length, as to do so would involve the repetition of much that has been said already in considering the doctrine of St. John. Of St. Paul, even more certainly than of the Fourth Evangelist, it must be said that his sayings will often bear the Conditionalist interpretation. For instance, the prophecy, "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption,"¹ expresses that foreboding and forewarning of the transience of all evil powers and all evil lives which is so characteristic of St. John. Many other declarations also might be quoted to show that St. Paul *may* have foreseen awaiting the impenitent, somewhere in the future, a second death which was death indeed.

On the other hand, it is quite possible to maintain that the Apostle always meant by final "death" a state that was the

¹ Gal. 6⁸; cf. *Test. Levi*:

"And sow good things in your souls,
That you may find them in your life;
But if ye sow evil things,
Ye shall reap every trouble and affliction."

opposite of eternal life. In this view, the significance of the warning, "If ye live after the flesh, ye must die," would be—If ye follow the law of the lower nature, ye must fail of the resurrection, must suffer exclusion from the Kingdom, must inherit a disembodied existence, shadowy and vain, without moral content or true reality, without God, without light and without hope. This is an interpretation that can be defended so long as we confine our attention to the negative side of St. Paul's message—though it is hardly to be reconciled with the universal aspect of his thought. But it evidently indicates a doctrine of moral destruction, and so does not differ in practical effect from the Conditionalist view.

(f) But, while a dogmatic conclusion of this kind may be deduced from the words of the Apostle, if they are considered without reference to his temperament and without allowance for his individual manner of using them, it is not so easy to be confident about their precise import when we bear these personal characteristics in mind. It may be true that Philo and the *Book of Wisdom* always mean to enforce the idea of extinction, either of personality or of moral life, when they speak of the death that awaits sinners. But it by no means follows that St. Paul conformed to their example. His vitality both of mind and of will rendered him more likely to create precedents than to follow them; and the Alexandrians were greatly inferior to him in originality and force of genius, as well as in power of clear expression. So that our knowledge of their opinions helps us little to determine the opinions of St. Paul. But the main source of our uncertainty as to the degree of definiteness which the Apostle intended to characterise his use of words like "death" and "corruption," is the extraordinary freedom which we have seen to distinguish his employment of this phraseology. For instance, we might be ready to say that the prophecy, "If ye live after the flesh, ye must die," pointed to a fixed and final event, if we did not remember the similar and clearly imaginative saying, "Sin revived, and I died." We have always to bear in mind that the terms of the "death" imagery had no such theological content for him as they have for us, to whom they represent a

long dogmatic tradition. He had been nurtured in the Jewish Church which had no assured doctrine of immortality, far less of ultimate destiny; and members of that Church had spoken of death as the wages of sin, without themselves having any faith in a life to come.¹ Also, St. Paul was a pupil of a Rabbinic school which was only beginning to consider the problems of future existence. Hence, words like "death" and "perdition" were for him still in a plastic state, and were ready to take many different forms of meaning under the touch of his individual and creative genius. And so it is not a safe thing to say that when they occur in his prophecies of judgment they are designed to "teach" this or that modern doctrine. It is much more reasonable to suppose that the Apostle, so far from employing these terms in the interests of a definite theory, chose them just because he was not prepared to be definite, and desired to confine himself to the warning that a dreadful and menacing doom was prepared for those who, with hard and impenitent hearts, persisted in the ways of death.

It thus appears that the theological bent of St. Paul's mind reveals itself even in the negative side of his eschatology; leading him to avoid the use of the Gehenna symbol, and to substitute for it terms which were in themselves of doubtful meaning and which he never sought to define. But this tendency is displayed, of course, in a much more emphatic way, in that universal strain in his message which indicates a steadily growing faith in the love of God for all mankind, and in the limitless sweep of that kingdom of life which was yet to be established through Jesus Christ the Lord.

2. *His doctrine of reconciliation.*—This evangelical and universal side of the Apostle's message is expressed, to some extent, in general statements as to the scope of the divine purpose in redemption. But it is to be found more explicitly in his prophecies of the final Consummation. These latter are couched for the most part in apocalyptic terms, but they

¹ E.g. *Sirach*, "So the godless man—from nothingness to nothingness" (41¹⁰); cf. also, 20²⁵ etc.; cf. also Prov. 8³⁶ 9¹⁸ etc.

sometimes owe their form to the influence of Alexandrian thought.

(a) Among the more remarkable of the sayings which express, in direct evangelical terms, the width of the gospel, we may note these—"God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all,"¹ "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."² It is true that the eschatological import of these utterances, and of others like them, has been the subject of much debate, but we may agree that they assert the universality of God's purpose in salvation, and are thus of great value for the light they shed on the meaning of those passages in which the Apostle predicts the triumph of the Kingdom and the Summing-up of all things in Christ.

(b) The earliest of those Pauline prophecies which are capable of bearing an universal interpretation is found in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians — a chapter which exhibits with wonderful completeness all the varied characteristics of the Apostle's genius; his impetuous logic, his rhetoric, his indignation and pathos, the electric leap of his thought from point to point, his passionate faith and hope. It is also a signal illustration of that originality of mind which enabled him to employ the old apocalyptic forms in such a way as to express through them his own distinctive gospel and to make them the instrument of his speculative thought.

The portion of this passage which concerns us here is that contained in vv.²²⁻²⁵. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, He put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that He is excepted who did subject all things unto Him. And when all things

¹ Rom. 11³².

² 2 Cor. 5¹⁹.

have been subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all."¹

Now, the impression produced by this prophecy on the average reader is that it predicts a perfect and universal triumph of Christ. But this is not the view of all New Testament scholars. Many of these, and among them some of the most distinguished, read the passage in a strictly limited sense.² These maintain that, as the resurrection of which the Apostle speaks throughout this chapter is that of believers only, so also the description of the final blessedness refers exclusively to them. It is they only that are to be made alive in Christ, and for them alone that God is to be all in all. A very restricted interpretation is thus given to the whole prophecy—an interpretation, too, that is undoubtedly supported by many features of the Apostle's statement, and is certainly in complete harmony with the general doctrine of Jewish apocalyptic.

This limited rendering is, however, not free from difficulty, as is evidenced by the number of theologians who do not accept it.³ These are not all agreed as to the means by which the Apostle expected the victory of Christ to be attained. But they all believe his doctrine to be that, whether through destruction or salvation, the purpose of God will consummate itself in a state of universal peace. Certainly there is much to be said for this interpretation. The narrower rendering appears hardly adequate to the strength of St. Paul's expressions. The prediction that death will be destroyed recalls the saying in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, that during Messiah's reign sin will come to an end,⁴ and seems to indicate the disappearance of that entire aspect of things, evil and negative, which is represented by death. It is difficult, also,

¹ R. V.

² Cf. Kennedy, *St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things*, p. 308 ff.; Charles, *Eschatology*, p. 448 ff.; Pusey, *What is of Faith*, etc., pp. 32-35; Weiss, *N.T. Theology*, p. 404 f.

³ Cf. Volz, p. 288; Beyschlag, *N.T. Theology*, ii. 276 ff.; Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, i. p. 271 ff.; Morgan, *Religion and Theology of Paul*, pp. 236-238.

⁴ *Levi*, 18⁹.

to limit the sweep of the statement that, excepting only the sovereignty of God, all things shall be subjected to Christ.

Of course it is necessary for us to understand these terms in a modified sense if we suppose that this whole chapter is one consistent exposition of the truth about the resurrection of Christ and of those who are united to Him by faith. But need we take this view? It is beyond doubt that the purpose of the Apostle throughout is to expound the doctrine that believers shall share with their Lord in His glorious rising from the dead. But is it equally certain that the prophecy of the Kingdom and its consummation forms an integral part of this argument, and that therefore St. Paul's vision of the end must be held to concern itself only with the lot that awaits the redeemed? It was not his custom to adhere with logical rigour to one fixed line of thought; he delighted always in digressions. And this prophecy of the final triumph is probably an illustration of his manner. It is not strictly relevant to his main theme of Resurrection, and might be left out of the chapter without impairing its completeness as a discussion of that subject. His imagination was fired by the emotional intensity of the argument which culminates in the exultant affirmation—"Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept," and he passed straightway from reasoning to prophecy, and from a defence of the Resurrection to a description of that glorious Kingdom of which the Resurrection was to form the prelude. Nor did he desist from this inspired irrelevance until his vision had culminated in that supreme assertion, beyond which neither thought nor language can reach,—“that God may be all in all.”

(c) This seems, on the whole, a reasonable interpretation, though one cannot profess any assurance on the matter. And it is very much strengthened when we compare this Corinthian prophecy with the later teaching of St. Paul. In the Epistles to the Colossians, the Ephesians, and the Philippians, the Apostle states in the clearest terms that it is the purpose of God to achieve a perfect reconciliation through His Son. In Ephesians and Colossians this doctrine is expressed in terms

of Alexandrian thought. Christ is identified with the eternal Reason of God, active in creation, providence, and redemption. "He is the likeness of the unseen God, born first before all the creation—for it was by Him that all things were created both in heaven and on earth, both the seen and the unseen, including Thrones, angelic Lords, celestial Powers and Rulers; all things have been created for Him and by Him; He is prior to all and all coheres in Him. . . . For it was in Him that the divine Fulness willed to settle without limit, and by Him it willed to reconcile in His own person all on earth and in heaven alike, in a peace made by the blood of His cross."¹ In Philippians the same doctrine is expressed with even more completeness, and in the language of apocalypse—"Therefore God raised Him high and conferred on Him a name above all names, so that before the Name of Jesus every knee should bend in heaven, on earth, and underneath the earth, and every tongue confess that 'Jesus Christ is Lord,' to the glory of God the Father."²

(d) Now the universal import of this teaching seems beyond question; and there can be no doubt that it is set forth with deliberate dogmatic purpose. If it had been expressed only in the terms of apocalypse, or only in those of the Philonic philosophy, we might have supposed that its apparent force was due to the traditional form in which it was uttered. But the matter assumes a very different aspect when we consider that the Apostle employs *both* the Logos doctrine and the Kingdom doctrine, to the end that he may predict a victory that is a reconciliation and that embraces all the regions of life. It cannot have been by accident that St. Paul combined the methods of Philo and of Enoch that he might convey a message that was not within the thought either of the Alexandrian philosopher or of the Jewish mystic. It is, indeed, difficult to see how the Apostle could have expressed his hope of an universal Kingdom of God with greater variety and clearness. (1) He stated in direct evangelical terms that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and

¹ Col. 1^{15, 20} (Moffatt's translation).

² Phil. 2⁹⁻¹¹ (Moffatt's translation).

that He had shut up all unto disobedience that He might have mercy upon all. (2) Again, in First Corinthians he so transfigured the traditional prophecy of the Messianic Reign as to give it a new comprehensiveness. (3) And, finally, in his latest writings, he asserted in terms of current speculation that God had created all things in Christ and intended to reconcile all things in Him; also, he affirmed in the imagery of apocalypse that God had exalted Jesus in order that every being in all regions of existence might confess that He was Lord. How is it possible to evade the force of all this, or to escape the conclusion that he regarded the message so variously expressed as a part of the Gospel that was given him to declare? I confess inability to understand those writers who emphasise the negative side of the Apostle's teaching, which is uttered in one vague form, and yet depreciate the force of a prophecy of good which is expressed in the most varied and vital terms.

3. *Dogmatic interpretations.*—We have thus considered the doctrine of St. Paul in its twofold bearing on the problem of destiny and tried to trace its dogmatic development. But there remains the difficulty of showing that his thought had attained to harmony—that his forewarnings of death can be reconciled with his prophecies of Reconciliation. The darker side of his message finds little place in the latest Epistles—only in two sayings of small importance.¹ But these suffice to prove that the Apostle continued to assert that there was such a thing as perdition and exclusion from the Kingdom. How, then, are we to harmonise the different strains in his thought, and to show that he had attained to a logical and consistent eschatology?

Evidently there are three ways in which this task may at least be attempted.

(1) It may be said that the Apostle thought of the wicked as sinking at last into a state of complete moral nonentity—continuing to exist, indeed, but descending to a level of life

¹ Phil. 3¹⁹ "Whose end is perdition" (ἀπώλεια). Part of a very rhetorical saying. Eph. 5⁹ Hath not any "inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God." In Phil. 1²⁸ ἀπώλεια has no clear eschatological import.

beneath that of responsible creatures. If this were his view, he would naturally regard the lost as ceasing to belong to the spiritual universe; so that their failure to be included in the final Reconciliation would not destroy its completeness, any more than if they had been actually dead. This interpretation does give a definite meaning to the warning that they who live after the flesh must "die"; and it does succeed after a fashion in harmonising the Apostle's doctrine. But it is highly artificial; it implies the very unlikely assertion that St. Paul did not believe in the resurrection of the wicked;¹ also, it overlooks the fact that he describes all the inhabitants of the underworld as confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord. It is absurd to suppose that creatures whose moral nature had been destroyed could be capable of making any confession of faith whatever.

(2) It may be urged that St. Paul believed in the annihilation of the impenitent, and that when he prophesied the reconciliation of all creatures he meant to speak of all who might remain in existence when the end should come. This is the view of many important authorities,² and has much to be said for it. It gives fulness of meaning to the term "death," as used by the Apostle, and presents his teaching as perfectly coherent and harmonious throughout. It is, however, difficult to believe that if St. Paul had held this clear-cut theological doctrine he would have refrained from expressing it in his prophecies of the End. Also, it is to be noted that the Apostle's doctrine is that as God had created *all things* in Christ, so it was His purpose to reconcile *all things* in Him. And it is surely hard to harmonise this doctrine with the idea that some who had been created through the Son of God would be destroyed. "Reconciliation" and "destruction" are not convertible terms.

(3) It is possible to maintain that St. Paul believed in the final salvation of all souls.³ This is a view which is at present

¹ I see no reason to reject St. Luke's testimony on this point; cf. Acts 24¹⁵.

² E.g. Morgan, *Religion and Theology of Paul*, pp. 237, 238.

³ See Beyschlag, vol. ii. ; Gordon's Ingersoll lecture: *Immortality and the New Theodicy*, p. 94.

much derided; and yet as good a case can be presented for it as for either of the other interpretations. It seems to be supported by the saying that all in heaven and earth and under the earth will unite in the Christian confession¹ that "Jesus Christ is Lord." Also, it is in harmony with the passage in Colossians which speaks of the principalities and powers being reconciled in Christ. If the Apostle thought that the lords of spiritual wickedness might be brought within the peace of God, he may surely have entertained the same hope for lost men. Further, this interpretation justifies, more fully than any other, the prophecy that Christ will attain a complete victory over death. It is evident that if death, before being itself destroyed, were able to make an end of many of God's creatures, it would not be utterly defeated, but would have attained to some degree of triumph. Finally, the idea that St. Paul taught universal salvation is encouraged by those sayings of his which express his predestinarian belief. A high doctrine of foreordination, combined with an universal view of the redemption wrought in Christ, would logically yield the conclusion that all men must be saved. Of course, many objections are taken to this rendering of St. Paul's thought, but they are not all of equal weight. For instance, there is no certainty that his prophecies of doom absolutely exclude the idea of redemption beyond the grave. He believed that unregenerate men were "dead" even in this world, and were under the dominion of "decay" and "perdition," and yet he taught that they might be aroused out of this death and might be delivered from this bondage. And so we cannot be quite sure that he thought of the state of loss and death and decay hereafter as completely endless and incurable. Neither is there much force in the argument that if he had believed that men could be saved beyond the grave he would have taught the doctrine of Future Probation. Thinkers of his time did not speak of "future probation"—did not conceive the life to come as a continuation of the present existence. They thought of it as a state of punishment and reward. And when they spoke, as some Rabbis did, of sinners emerging from Gehenna, they

¹ Cf. E. F. Scott, *Beginnings of the Church*, Lect. ii.

simply meant that their term of punishment ended. And it is an arguable position that the two sides of St. Paul's teaching, taken together, involve a doctrine of this kind. The most forcible objections to the Universalist view are that the Apostle's warnings of approaching doom do have a note of finality in them, and that his prophecies of a final reconciliation do not certainly imply that every man will enjoy the fulness of redemption. He sometimes speaks as if he distinguished between being "reconciled" and being "saved."¹ And he may have regarded the work of Christ as reconciling all men unto God, and delivering them from the uttermost doom, and yet not have believed that they would all come to the measure of the stature of the perfect man in Jesus Christ our Lord.

On the whole, it does not appear that any one of the attempts to bring the teachings of St. Paul into perfect harmony is altogether successful. The likelihood is that he had not attained to the goal of his thinking on this subject. He certainly faced the problem of destiny as well as other problems of faith. But the work of theological construction was not his main concern, nor was it easily pursued. When he brought to bear upon the content of his gospel his eager speculative mind, and sought to form a theory concerning the faith that had been delivered to him, he was beset with difficulties. His training, his inherited ideas, his contact with Gentile thought, his busy roaming life, all contributed to the burden of his task. It cannot be said that his explanation of any great element in the Evangel is free from perplexities. This is true of his teaching about Justification and the Person of Christ as well as the doctrine of the Last Things.

As to this latter subject he at first, in common with the majority of the early Christians, held the traditional Jewish view; and traces of this original belief remained with him to the end. But, from the hour of his conversion onwards, his

¹ *E.g.* Rom. 5¹⁰ "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled (*καταλλαγέντες*), we shall be saved (*σωθησόμεθα*) by His life."

faith in the Redeemer Christ was the dominating influence in all his thought. He might almost have used towards his Lord the words of the poet:

“Behold I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with Thee.”

And this personal devotion to the Saviour revolutionised his whole view of things, and especially his outlook on the Future. As his conception of the divine purpose in Christ widened, so his doctrine of destiny changed. The idea of foreordination had a very strong hold on his mind, as it had on the mind of every Jew; the thought of the will of God being defeated was alien to his whole mental habit. And this characteristic of his thought, when combined with Christian faith, naturally tended towards an ever wider eschatology. He started with the belief that God had chosen Israel; then he came to see that this choice of the holy people had been for the sake of a spiritual elect among all nations; finally, the conviction that God's purpose in His Son embraced humanity, as it grew upon his mind, led him to assert that this purpose would be fulfilled in an universal Kingdom of redemption. Till the last he spoke of those who were lost, whose end was perdition, but he became less and less able to set limit or bound to the reconciling energy of God in Jesus Christ the Lord. All this is clear; but beyond this we cannot go. We do not know that he ever held one definite, coherent theory as to the final state of mankind, or that on this subject he had “beat his music out,” and completed the development of his thought. “It is not incumbent on thee to finish thy work,” says the Talmud. And the Apostle had not been able to finish his work on the day when he went from the Roman prison where he had thought so profoundly on things divine—to pass by the way of martyrdom to that clearer light wherein, as he himself said, we see face to face, and know even as also we are known.

III.

REVIEW.

On a review of the whole matter it appears that the letter of the New Testament affords evidence that may be held to suggest any one, or all three, of the historical Christian doctrines of Destiny. If dogmatic meaning be attached to the apocalyptic imagery, and if the eschatological terms "death," "perdition," "decay," "destruction" be read in the light of Alexandrian teaching and considered apart from the entire apostolic thought—then it is legitimate to infer that the sacred writings enforce the theory either of Everlasting Evil or of Conditional Immortality. If, on the other hand, emphasis be laid on the evangelic message to the world which is embodied in the character and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in His attitude towards mankind, and in His doctrine of God, and which is expressed with growing intensity and breadth, especially, by the Apostle Paul—then it is reasonable to find in the Gospels and Epistles the sources of a faith which is as a well of water springing up to everlasting hope.

Which of these views we may incline to adopt as the more probable will depend generally on our method of interpretation, on our philosophical opinions, and above all on the individual temperament that happens to be ours. For there is no department of thought in which temperament counts for so much as it does in theology. One may conjecture that if the Christian Church ultimately comes to hold one unanimous belief respecting the destinies of mankind, that belief will be founded not on the import of scriptural texts, but on the general principles of the Gospel, as these are unfolded gradually by the interpreting Spirit of truth, and as the mind of universal humanity, now so largely under the sway of other religions, comes to accept the Christian revelation, and to direct the resources of its varied genius to the solution of the problems of the Faith. It is, perhaps, impossible that any mere section of humanity can attain to an abiding vision of the goal towards which the entire

race is moving. It may be that only the whole world can understand a message that was in the beginning intended for the world.

But, leaving this aside, we have always to remember that the New Testament is not a deliberate statement of doctrine. It affords the materials out of which dogma is constructed, but it does not itself declare dogma. It is not a work of systematic theology, but the record of a faith. It tells of the life and ministry, the sacrifice and the victory, on which that faith is founded; and shows how its first Apostles sought, using the language of their own time, to commend it to the hearts and consciences of men, to the end that these might be saved. The Apostles were, in the first place, pastors and preachers — the eager servants of a gospel, not the leisured students of a creed. This is true even of St. Paul and St. John. They declared a message that had been given them for the redemption of the world. Their mission was to proclaim the glory of Christ, and to witness to the realities of the spiritual and moral order, as these were revealed in the light of His face. Among these realities were the peril of sin, the avenging forces of retribution; the blessedness of obedience, love, and faith; the necessity of instant moral decision; the measureless love and immutable righteousness of God. To each of these they bore witness, as it presented itself to them; of each they spoke in turn as the circumstances of their work required. They saw with vivid clearness: and what they saw they taught.

It is not surprising that the writings of such men should contain apparent contradictions. The facts to which they witnessed are contradictory. Mercy and judgment are opposed to each other; so also is sin to salvation, the universal rule of God to the freedom of man, the conquering purpose of love to the obstinate human heart. How, then, could the witnesses to all these things maintain consistency in their words? When they saw the evil of the world, the terrible logic of sin working out its ends in human lives, they spoke of perdition and destruction—they said, "Ye shall die." When they felt the blessedness of communion with Christ they said that without

•

this communion there was no true life. Seeing with open vision the majesty of God, they declared the unreality of all things that were opposed to Him; they said that those who were out of fellowship with His spirit were living in a vain and passing show. Understanding the love of Christ and His universal purpose of salvation, they prophesied a complete redemption, an end of universal peace. These things are all true, and they declared them; but to show that they could all be reconciled in one great rational harmony was not their immediate task. The perplexities of their teaching, thus, are not of the nature of error; they are found in all moral experience; they belong to the content of faith. They are "contradictions" which must always appear in the practical enforcement of a gospel which applies itself to all the facts of our confused and difficult life.

It is probable that St. John did not feel these oppositions to be a burden. He was one of those for whom there are no discords in the world of truth—one of those

"With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime."

The Apostle Paul, as we have seen, belonged to a different type of mind. He saw that Christianity involved a rational view of things, and he strove to express that view. This task he pursued with a reverent daring and a splendid confidence in the reasonableness of faith which have been the inspiration of all who have come after him. Also, his sayings are a perennial fountain of hope. But it was not the will of God that Paul should bequeath to the Church a complete system of thought. It was ordained that he should labour, and that others should enter into his labours. It was decreed that he should know in part and prophesy in part, and should await the coming of the hour when that which is perfect is come and that which is in part is done away.

But however all this may be, there are three assertions which we may surely make regarding New Testament teaching—(1) Its doctrine of future punishment is perfectly clear, and is not in the least affected by any view we may take of

the bearing of that doctrine on the problem of destiny. That every man must reap what he has sown, and receive of the things which he has done in the flesh according to what he hath done whether it be good or evil—this is the unmistakable Christian message of judgment. Whatever else may be symbolised by Gehenna and its fires, or by “death” and “corruption,” they certainly mean retribution, just repayment and reward. They certainly imply that God will work a perfect recompense for every man. And when this has been said, all has been said. What more can any one desire, in the interests of morality, than the assurance of ordered retribution? Who can ask that sin should be punished beyond the demands of righteousness?

(2) But, again, we may affirm that the negative side of New Testament eschatology does not suggest belief in the eternity of *sin*. There is no evidence that Apostles and Evangelists, any more than other writers of their time, thought that men would go on for ever in a state of positive rebellion against God. If they believed in unending evil, it was in the sense of perpetual penalty, not of everlasting transgression. Whatever may be the speculative advantages of maintaining that the lost will never cease to suffer because they will never cease to work iniquity, this is not the doctrine of the New Testament, as it has not been the common teaching of the Christian Church. The idea of an eternal moral discord in the universe was probably as distasteful to Paul as it was to Augustine.

(3) Finally, the new Testament, in the positive aspect of its message, does distinctly affirm that, *in some sense*, the redeeming intention of God in Christ must attain to final victory. That this element in its message should be emphasised by Christian thought as the master note of Revelation is most reasonable, since it constitutes the originality and glory of apostolic teaching. It is altogether a fair thing to say that the assertion of God’s universal purpose in salvation was, in a peculiar sense, a direct inspiration of the spirit of Christ. The conviction it expresses was not inherited by Apostles and Evangelists. It is not in Philo; it is not in Enoch; it is but rarely suggested in old Rabbinic lore. That they might give

it fulness of utterance, the Christian teachers had to unlearn many things, and to depart from ancient forms of thought. To express it, the Apostle Paul was compelled to do violence to the apocalyptic genius; and to force that ancient prophet of wrath to proclaim the final domination of grace. The assurance that the end of things shall see the universal triumph of Christ is thus the supreme and dominant chord in the gospel message; achieved at a great price; not derived from man, nor obtained by tradition from the Fathers, but received indeed of the Lord. And although it be not exclusive of such solemn thoughts regarding the irreparable consequences of sin as are inspired by experience and revelation, it is yet the master of these; to it they must submit themselves, and with it they must be reconciled.

CHAPTER II.

EVERLASTING EVIL

(DUALISTIC SOLUTION).

IN an earlier chapter attention was directed to the apocalyptic conception of future punishment, and an endeavour was made to show that the doctrine of Gehenna was a prophecy of judgment and retribution, not a theory of final destiny. It is now our task to consider the dogma which asserts, on grounds of revelation, reason, and experience, that evil is everlasting. It is well thus to speak of "unending evil" rather than of "unending punishment," for the reason that while some theologians affirm only that *penalty* endures for ever, others assert that *sin* will last to all eternity and will continue to "register itself" in suffering. The phrase "everlasting evil" embraces both these views, and is, therefore, more accurate than the alternative expression. Besides this, it emphasises the point which is really at issue in the controversy regarding the probable end of things. The question is not, primarily, whether all men will ultimately be happy, but whether evil is a permanent fact in the universe.

Now, it will lend itself to an orderly study of this subject if we consider in succession the following points: (1) The claim of the theory in question to be the universal doctrine of the Christian Church. (2) Modern expositions of it. (3) The value of it as a speculative construction. (4) The spiritual and moral content to which it may be said to owe its power and persistence.

I.

HISTORICAL ASPECTS.

It is often said that the doctrine of Everlasting Evil is an essential part of the Christian religion—one of the distinctive characteristics of its historical witness. And if this contention could be admitted in all its force—if it could be shown that the solemn Councils of the successive ages had declared this dogma, that the great teachers of Christianity had, with one accord and in one form, confessed it, and that the authoritative Creeds had all confirmed it—then, indeed, an argument in its favour would be presented of the utmost weight and value. The universal belief of the Church, maintained throughout the centuries, is not a thing which we may lightly disregard. But, as a matter of historical fact, the claim in question can be acknowledged only in a very modified sense.

It is, no doubt, true in a general way that the great majority of Christians since the early times have believed that those who die impenitent are utterly lost. It is also true that this is the doctrine which has been commonly proclaimed in popular address. So that, if ordinary opinion is to be accepted as the testimony of the Church, we must hold this testimony to be that evil is everlasting. Nay, we must affirm that the Christian view of destiny implies that great multitudes of men will enter at death into a state of physical torment without relief and without end.

Things present a different aspect, however, if we assume that the witness of the Christian society, in matters of doctrine as distinct from faith, is to be found in the statements of the Creeds and in the teaching of thoughtful men. It is a remarkable fact that no important period of the Church's life, and no one of the great schools of theological thought, has shown complete harmony in its teaching on this subject. It is notable, also, that this want of agreement presents itself especially in the earliest and in the latest period of ecclesiastical history.

Early Church.—(a) During that formative age, which ended, perhaps, with Augustine, the primitive eschatological

belief developed through a stage of discussion and debate, and attained at last to something like dogmatic definition. But, little sign of speculative thought regarding the Last Things is to be found in the writings of those teachers who immediately succeeded the Apostles. In the works of the *Apostolic Fathers* we have to seek long and carefully for any definite references whatsoever to the subject of future destiny. We find, indeed, some sayings like the following: "Every one shall depart unto his proper place."¹ "Nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment if we disobey His commands."² "The way of darkness . . . is the way of eternal death with punishment."³ "For the day is at hand in which all things shall be destroyed, with the evil one."⁴ It is evident, however, that such sayings do not afford us very much light. Ignatius remarks that those who deny the reality of our Lord's bodily life shall have fitting punishment when, "being divested of the body, they shall become mere spirits."⁵ That is to say, that having denied the body of Jesus, they shall have no body themselves. And this is a prophecy which indicates an ingenious mind free from the shackles of definite opinion.

We shall have occasion to show later that the Greek Apologists, developing the doctrine of the Logos on the lines partly of Philo and partly of St. John, tended towards the doctrine of Conditional Immortality. The same tendency is shown also in Irenaeus; though in his case, as in that of earlier writers, it is confused by contradictory statements. On the other hand, Athenagoras, who is the most lucid writer among the Apologists, teaches with precision the necessary immortality of the whole human nature.⁶ Also, he significantly confines his doctrine of future punishment to the statement that "the reward or punishment of lives, ill or well spent, is proportioned to the merit of each."⁷ It is a pity that we do not possess more of the work of this man who seems to have been so fitted

¹ Ignatius, *Magn.* c. v.

² *Second Epist. of Clement* (so-called), c. vi.

³ *Epist. of Barnabas*, c. xx.

⁵ *Smyrn.* c. ii.

⁷ *Ibid.* c. xxv.

⁴ *Ibid.* c. xxi.

⁶ *De Resurrectione*, c. xv.

to guide the thought of the Church along the lines of sanity and moderation.

But if there was, thus, a want of dogmatic coherence in the teaching of the Apologists on this subject, much more was there a lack of unanimity among the teachers of the succeeding age. To labour this point would, indeed, be "wasteful and ridiculous excess." How can we say that there was harmony at the time when the greatest genius and most learned scholar of the Church was teaching Universal Restoration, or in the fourth century when Arnobius tranquilly expounded the doctrine of annihilation, and the Bishop of Nyssa elaborated the message of Origen?¹ How can there have been unity even in the fifth century when Augustine had to reason at length with the large party that denied Everlasting Torment?

(b) It is not necessary, then, to illustrate further the variety of eschatological opinion which reveals itself in the writings of the early theologians. Indeed, to do so would be to repeat what has been said in a former chapter, and also to anticipate much that must be stated in the course of our further discussion. It may be worth while, however, to remind ourselves, at this point, that the great Creeds² of the undivided Church maintain a singular silence regarding the doctrine of Eternal Evil. This feature of the early Confessions is sometimes explained by the supposition that the doctrine in question was a matter of general agreement, and therefore did not call for notice in statements of belief which referred to controversial issues. But we have seen that this is a view which cannot be entertained. The facts do not support it; Augustine himself is witness against it. More weight may be attached to the contention that the early Creeds were concerned with christological problems, and that, for this reason, the doctrine of the Last Things lay beyond their sphere. But this consideration does not apply to the Apostles' Creed, which was the complete expression of the primitive Rule of Faith, and attained to practically its final form during the period of

¹ *Recognitions of Clement* (probably third century) teaches quite clearly the doctrine of Everlasting Evil. Book v. ch. 28.

² Cf. App. IV.

eschatological debate. It is certainly remarkable that this venerable and truly catholic Confession should have nothing to say regarding the ultimate fate of the lost. It is quite fair to find in this characteristic of the Apostles' Creed conclusive evidence that no dogmatic belief on the subject of ultimate destiny was imposed upon the Christian mind of the earlier days.

Medieval period.—We may say, of course, that in later times the doctrine of Eternal Evil dominated the thought of the Church. But even this is a statement that cannot be made without comment or qualification. The theology of the Middle Ages, for instance, is commonly credited with a wonderful unanimity of opinion on the subject of destiny. But our later discussion will show reasons for modifying somewhat this general belief. We shall see that there was positive dissent from the prevailing dogma even during that period which we call "the Dark Ages." Allowance must also be made for the imperfection of our knowledge regarding that great era. But, especially, we must beware of concluding that the Catholic conception of theological conformity, as it is revealed in the work of the Schoolmen, was the same as that of the modern Calvinistic Churches. It would be foolish to suppose, in particular, that the scholastic theories of perdition would have satisfied a Presbyterian General Assembly of Victorian times. A study of the medieval period shows that the Roman eschatology permitted considerable variety of interpretation, and was susceptible of certain mitigations and reliefs. It retained Origen's belief in a purifying discipline beyond the grave; and it commonly asserted that future punishment would be proportionate in severity to the degree of individual guilt, that there would be intervals of relief from pain in hell, and even that positive suffering would have an end. Erigena was supposed to maintain his peace with the Church by saying that, while perdition would not last for ever, the "phantasm" of it would linger—the ghost of a dead terror haunting the soul. Also, it is to be remembered that the Church never defined the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment with any precision in its creeds. This element of freedom in medieval theology is, indeed, fully illustrated in the great

poem which is its best expression. Thus Dante describes Virgil as dwelling within the gates of Hell; but he does not indicate that Virgil suffered any torment or sorrow. The Roman poet is presented as the serene guide of the Christian through the regions of the lost. Also, Dante depicts the spiritual state of souls who inhabit the borderland of Hell as very much like the condition of those who live on the lower levels of Paradise. Mr. Gladstone remarked once that Dante's optimism was too facile, too easily reached;¹ and, while we may not go so far as this, we may yet agree that he was no pessimist, that his ultimate message was hopeful, and that, in the freedom and humanity of his outlook and the elusiveness of his thought not less than in the formal rigour and severity of his doctrine, he represents the true genius of medieval Christianity.

Modern Church.—(a) It cannot be said that the Reformation, in so far as its official statements were concerned, increased the freedom of eschatological belief. The Protestant Church affirmed the doctrine of Unending Perdition in an absolute way; and its Confessions of Faith left no room for diversity of opinion. It excluded the notion of remedial discipline after death; it did not encourage the idea that there would be degrees of future punishment; it entertained no hope that the lost might experience any times of ease from pain, or that positive suffering would have an end. In short, it swept away all the subtleties and illogical humanities of the older theology, and stated the dogma of Perpetual Torment in all its blank incredibility. It is true that the Socinians taught the annihilation of the wicked; that the Zwinglian Confession disclaimed knowledge as to the ultimate fate of the lost; and that the Anabaptists commonly entertained Universalist opinions, while the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England are silent on this subject. But, in the main, the Protestant creeds are in agreement with the teaching of the Westminster Confession. And so it would appear that, on the whole, the Reformed eschatology was more rigid and less humane than that of the ancient faith.

(b) On the other hand, it is, of course, to be remembered

¹ Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, iii. p. 488.

that the Reformation period witnessed a great revival of individual speculation on all religious questions, and especially on those which concern the life to come. The strictness of the Protestant doctrine, and, in particular, its departure from the idea of the Intermediate State, led of necessity to protest and revolt. The refusal of the Reformed Church to allow liberty of interpretation within the limits of dogma has been, perhaps, the main source of that agnostic indifference to the problems of immortality which prevails so widely in our day. It is, however, sufficient for our purpose here to state the incontestable truth that Protestant theologians have never been in agreement in their doctrine of the End.

The question we have before us is the extent to which it can be said that the dogma of Everlasting Evil represents the universal witness of Christian thought; and, in considering this matter, it is necessary to bear in mind the testimony of thinkers and scholars, as well as of ecclesiastics and preachers and religious laymen and the Assemblies that framed the creeds. And, when we look at the subject from this point of view, we see that no church, or school of thought, has been unanimous in affirming what is called the orthodox theory of destiny—not the Fathers, nor the Medieval thinkers, nor the Mystics; not the Romans, nor the Anglicans, nor the Calvinists, nor the Lutherans. It is plain, therefore, that the harmony of belief which is said to characterise the Christian Church has prevailed only in the popular mind and has not been found among theologians. Wherever trained reflection has been brought to bear on the problem of destiny, divergence of opinion has sooner or later appeared.

(c) We may, of course, be reminded that this variety of intellectual view has shown itself in all departments of religious inquiry; that it is not confined to eschatology, and therefore cannot be held to compromise in any peculiar way the claim of the traditional doctrine of destiny to represent the normal Christian faith. But the reply to this is that differences of opinion regarding other matters, as, for instance, the person of Christ, have been concerned, for the most part, with questions of definition and rational statement, whereas

eschatological controversy has been directed towards the fundamental issue—whether evil is everlasting. The only analogous case to the opposition between the orthodox view of the end of things and the Conditionalist or Universalist assertion is to be found in the difference between the Christology of the creeds and the purely naturalistic view of Jesus Christ. It is generally true to say that all thinkers who have remained within the orthodox Church have accepted, whatever their speculative opinions may have been, the Christian attitude towards Jesus as the Lord and Redeemer of the soul. But those who affirm that the wicked will be destroyed, or that all men will be saved, deny the *substance* of the accepted dogma, inasmuch as they assert that evil will pass away.

Our own times.—(a) Granting, however, that in the main Christian theology from the time of Augustine till quite recently has affirmed a theory of Everlasting Punishment, we are still confronted with the fact that in this latter age the mind of the Church is seen to be returning towards the free standpoint of the primitive time. Even within the *Roman Communion* the Modernist movement threatens to exercise a radical influence on eschatology. Books like Von Hügel's *Eternal Life* and Tyrrell's *Christianity at the Crossroads* are very significant, if only for the things they leave unsaid. Also, much allowance is to be made for the subtle and elusive genius of Catholicism which always serves to modify the definiteness of dogma. It is interesting to note that, in the biography of Mrs. Craigie, her spiritual director tells us that she was greatly troubled about the doctrine of eternal punishment, and that he assured her that many difficulties did not make one doubt, nor were many doubts equal to denial. If we think about this statement we see that the freedom it affords is almost without limit. There is emancipation in the knowledge that we may suspect ever so strongly that a door is open, and yet may believe that the door is shut.

(b) There is no need to dwell on the truth that the modern *Protestant Church* is reverting to the early mood of eschatological thought. Indeed it may be urged with considerable force that the practical power of the Gospel in our time is

being somewhat weakened by want of dogmatic assurance regarding the whole subject of future retribution. We are not altogether true to the apostolic tradition when we preach "righteousness and temperance" and fail to speak of "judgment to come." In any case, we must admit that the Reformed theology and the Evangelical pulpit of to-day are sparing in eschatological prophecy. We cannot doubt, also, that, if a creed were to be formulated at this hour, any endeavour to embody in it a clear statement of the old dogma would be opposed by many of our most trusted teachers.

(e) The most significant sign of the times, in this regard, is the increasing tendency among Evangelical theologians to adopt an "agnostic" attitude towards the whole problem of Destiny. This type of thought is, indeed, so prevalent and so influential that it may be well to indicate its general characteristics. For example, it always affirms that the scriptural evidence is inconclusive; it commonly accepts the theory of Future Probation or Opportunity; it is energetic in its criticism of more dogmatic views. But its most distinctive feature is that it is generally stated in such a way as to show that its advocate inclines towards some positive conclusion. It is rarely colourless; being usually touched with a hue either hopeful or despondent. Thus, Dr. Agar Beet, while he asserts, on scriptural grounds, an agnostic view, yet finds no speculative weakness in Conditionalism.¹ In like manner, Principal Griffith Jones refuses to affirm any assurance as to the issue of things; also he subjects the theory of Conditional Immortality to very severe criticism, and rejects the belief in Universal Salvation. Yet, in his constructive statement, he expounds the doctrine of Future Probation, and concludes, in effect, that all men will be saved except, perhaps, some obdurate souls whom *God will utterly destroy*. And so his own position seems to be a combination of two theories, each of which he rejects. It is Universalism, qualified by the thought of annihilation.² Principal Fairbairn, again, teaches that God will always seek to redeem men, but that He will respect the

¹ Cf. *The Last Things*, *passim*.

² *Faith and Immortality*, pp. 239-279, 292.

freedom of the will; He will neither force them to repent nor consign them to destruction. Hence his struggle against sin may be unavailing. But should God's purpose of universal salvation fail, "yet He will have been so manifested, by the attempt at it, that all the universe will feel as if there had come to it a vision of love that made it taste the ecstasy and beatitude of the divine."¹ Now this may be agnosticism, but it has hope in its heart.

Similarly, Dr. H. R. Mackintosh grants that the Universalist view is permissible, as a private opinion and a source of individual comfort, if it be held in the form of "a hope." Such a hope, he says, is "a natural infringement" of that "nearly complete agnosticism" which he believes to be involved in the nature of Christian faith.² In like manner, Dr. James Orr's eschatological teaching shows a progressive tendency towards optimism, though he thinks that we do not possess "a calculus" by which we can decide so vast a question as that of universal destiny.³ Dorner, again, although he asserts that "the ultimate fate of individuals remains veiled in mystery," and although he recognises great force in the orthodox contention, yet makes statements that are consistent only with belief in a final harmony. Thus he says that "the soul remains metaphysically good," and that "provision must be made somehow against a dualism being perpetuated for ever."⁴ His final statement on the subject of perdition lacks the coherence and vigour of his work as a whole, and is, indeed, a tissue of broken threads and discordant colours. But it is quite clear that, at this point, the optimism of his philosophy is at variance with his Lutheran orthodoxy.

Ritschl, on the other hand, teaches that the appointed end of the sinner is annihilation, but that we cannot know whether any will actually incur that doom.⁵ And Martensen, while he

¹ *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 468.

² *Immortality and the Future*, p. 205, etc.

³ Cf. *Christian View*, etc., pp. 336-347, and *Progress of Dogma*, pp. 15, 348-352.

⁴ *System of Christian Doctrine*, iv. 416-428.

⁵ Cf. Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 140; Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 261.

professes uncertainty as to the issue of things and finds the scriptural evidence inconclusive, yet writes generally in the tone of a firm believer in unending penalty.¹

(d) Thus, we may discern in the statements of all agnostic writers an inclination towards one or other of the positive theories. Even when their position is not merely one of personal doubt, but is the dogmatic assertion that nothing can be known on the subject of final destiny, they generally pursue a line of argument which is hostile to this or that solution of the problem in view. And it may be urged that in this respect they do not submit to the rigour of their own logic. It is evident that, if nothing can be discovered regarding the fate of mankind, no one theory on the matter can be preferred to its rivals. We cannot exclude any possibility when we are dealing with a theme that belongs to the unknowable. But however this may be, there can be no doubt that agnosticism is just as hostile to the traditional doctrine as Universalism itself. Nay, it is even more so; since one may hope to refute those who say that all men will be saved, whereas we have no weapon that we can use with effect against an opponent who denies us the right to make any assertion at all.²

(e) Now, all this must be kept in memory when we ask ourselves whether or no the traditional dogma is an essential part of our Christian faith. Surely the witness of the modern mind is as much to be respected as the testimony of medieval piety. Surely the one is not less worthy than the other to be taken into account in an endeavour to estimate the teaching of historical Christianity. If the state of divided opinion regarding human destiny which prevailed in the early days is appearing again, in a more vivid form, in these latter times, it is impossible to speak as if the testimony of the Church were unanimous and clear. That testimony was not harmonious in the beginning; it is not harmonious now; neither is it likely to be so in the years that are to come. And so we may conclude that, while the claim of the doctrine of Everlasting Evil to be the universal Christian belief has sufficient support

¹ *Christian Dogmatics*, pp. 474-479.

² Cf. also Garvie, *Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 360-362.

to secure respect and to compel the admission that it is the custodian of important truth, we are not constrained to say that this doctrine, in its dogmatic form, is binding on the Christian conscience, or is entitled to the veneration rightly accorded to whatever has been always, everywhere, and by all men believed.

II.

TYPES OF DOGMATIC STATEMENT.

Let this suffice, then, for a discussion of the first point in this chapter. We must now proceed to offer some illustration of the *forms* in which the doctrine of Everlasting Evil has been stated in modern theory. One need not allude, of course, to writers like Newman and Pusey who, following Augustine, have adhered to the apocalyptic tradition, since their teaching has been considered in an earlier part of our study. Nor is it necessary to take into account the work of theologians like Jonathan Edwards, who do not admit that the idea of unending misery presents any difficulties, and who discern in everlasting torment a glorious and necessary manifestation of the justice of God. To say that the perpetual pain of the creature is essential for the revelation of divine righteousness, implies that if men had never sinned, justice would never have been exercised. It is equal, also, to the absurd notion that equity would cease to exist in a country if jails and gibbets were no longer necessary therein. By "modern expositions" one means those which, whatever their date may be, respond to such influences as move the modern mind. Hence, I propose to refer chiefly to the greatest of Roman theologians, Thomas Aquinas; to the most systematic of Protestant mystics, Swedenborg; and to a typical work of evangelical orthodoxy, Salmond's *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*. I hope to show that these teachers, while they differ in many respects, have yet some common characteristics—that, for instance, they all suggest alleviations of the ancient doctrine, and all show a tendency towards compromise with opposing theories. No

doubt the same features of thought might be illustrated by the study of many other writers, as, for example, Julius Müller, who thinks that those only will be finally lost who commit the unpardonable sin, which consists in "hatred of whatever is known to be divine and god-like."¹ One might also allude to the opinion expressed by A. B. Bruce, that we may hope for the salvation of all who are not utterly conformed to the nature of devils.² But an account of the doctrine expounded by the three theologians mentioned above may be sufficient for the purpose one has in view.

1. *Aquinas*.—We find the main elements of many later constructions in the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas. Modern theologians might learn a great deal from the Angelic Doctor in the matter of fairness towards opponents, as well as of exact definition and of speculative courage. In studying the work of this great teacher, we find ourselves in presence of a mind which counts nothing that concerns the faith to be so small as not to merit careful attention, and, on the other hand, considers no mystery of the gospel too high, and no problem too hard, to be within the scope of reverent rational discussion. In him there dwelt a splendid confidence in the reasonableness of religion, a fine accuracy of thought, and a brave disdain of all resort to mere rhetoric and easy generalising. Also, we discern in his writings clear proof of a thing which the study of other medieval teachers leads us to suspect; namely, that the religious intelligence of those days was keenly alive to the difficulties of theological construction, and was confronted by the same objections as have been taken in later times to the teaching of Catholic Christianity.

(a) Aquinas expounds a doctrine of future retribution which is orthodox in form; but it is stated with characteristic subtlety and care; and when it is closely examined it suggests some dubious questionings. He teaches that character is fixed at death—being thereafter incapable of change, for good or for evil. The punishment of the lost is partly physical and intellectual torment, and partly spiritual privation. Divine

¹ *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, vol. ii. p. 422.

² *Kingdom of God*, p. 319.

mercy is, nevertheless, displayed even in retribution, as it is always less than is deserved.¹ The *physical* punishment of the condemned will be torture by fire. Their *intellectual* suffering will consist in regret for past sin, not because of its guilt, but because of its consequences. It will also be the pain which they will endure in seeing others enjoy a happiness which they cannot share. As to their moral state, they will desire and purpose only what is evil. Aquinas admits that the will of a man can be moved only by that which seems to him to be good; but then he holds that evil will appear to be good in the eyes of the reprobate, and so will determine their volition. They will not think of God except as their judge and the author of their woes, and will therefore have no emotion towards Him save that of utter terror and hatred.²

(b) Aquinas, of course, affirms the everlasting duration of future punishment. But he does not say, as some less careful thinkers have done, that finite offence deserves infinite penalty; nor does he assert that every kind of future punishment is unending, or that all the condemned endure the same degree of chastisement. He is enabled to escape these assertions by drawing a subtle distinction between different aspects of sin and their corresponding penalties. From one point of view sin is a "turning away from the immutable good (*incommutabile bonum*) which is infinite; therefore in this respect sin is infinite." From another standpoint it is "an inordinate turning to the mutable good (*commutabile bonum*)." In this respect it is finite, because "the mutable good is finite, and because the act of turning towards it is the act of a finite creature." In the former of these two aspects sin, being a turning away from God and from the supreme end of life, is a breach of the eternal order; is therefore irreparable and involves the penalty of loss (*poena damni*), which is infinite, since it is the loss of the infinite good—namely, God. In the latter aspect of it, however, sin, being finite in its character, incurs the penalty of sensible torment (*poena sensus*), which is also finite. So that, according to

¹ Pars I. *Quaest.* xxi. Art. 4.

² Pars III. *Quaest.* cxxix. *passim*.

Aquinas, the only punishment which is everlasting is that of spiritual loss.¹

(c) Now, it is evident that this construction presents remarkable features. In the first place, it asserts an austere and terrible doctrine of retribution, but at the same time frees us from the burden of belief in unending torment. In the second place, it describes the state of the impenitent as one, practically, of moral extinction. If these are, as Aquinas says they are, reduced to a condition in which evil has become their good, they have passed out of the moral universe as it is known to us. For it is an essential of the divine order as revealed to us in experience, that good is the reality of things, and evil is the negation of that reality. And so, if the lost have entered into a life in which that which is positive is seen to be negative, and that which is divine to be evil, they have gone into a state of perception which differs fundamentally from that which is ours, and is a reversal of all truth. They have passed into a world of dreams, and are themselves become as a dream. Also, inasmuch as they have become incapable of choosing good, they have lost ethical existence, for the power of choosing the right is of the substance of responsible being. Whoever has absolutely lost it, is no more a moral creature than is a stick or a stone. If it be objected that the blessed in heaven have become incapable of choosing evil, and that therefore they might, by parity of reasoning, be held also to have lost ethical existence, the answer, of course, is that the inability of the redeemed to sin is due to a continual exercise of free choice, inspired by the knowledge that sin is utterly vain and without attraction. Also, the state of being unable to do wrong is the normal, ideal condition of the soul, and, so far from being bondage, is the only true freedom.

In the third place, it is apparent that eternal punishment, which according to Aquinas is "the loss of God," need not necessarily imply positive misery, seeing that it means, not expulsion from the region of the divine government and presence (since God is present everywhere and governs all things), but only the loss of spiritual communion with Him

¹ Pars II. (1) *Quaest.* lxxxvii. Arts. 2, 3, 4, 5.

and the blessing of His grace. And this deprivation is a penalty which creatures who have lost moral life cannot feel to be a burden, or even be conscious of at all.

(d) It thus appears that this speculative statement of Aquinas agrees with the popular doctrine of Everlasting Evil only in form. It denies that pain will be unending—and this, apparently, in the sense both of physical and intellectual suffering. It is true that Aquinas speaks of the lost as finding continual sorrow in the spectacle of joys which the righteous in heaven possess. But it is evident that creatures to whom evil seems good, and good evil, cannot continue to regret the loss of joys which are based on goodness, or view with envy a happiness of the saints which must seem to them misery. Hence, Aquinas implies the possibility of the lost finding existence to be tolerable enough, at least in a negative way. Also, he does not really affirm the unending nature of sin, since creatures that are incapable of choice are incapable of guilt. Finally, while he asserts that all souls are physically immortal, he really denies their continued existence as citizens of the moral universe.

2. *Swedenborg*.—Now, these features of the doctrine of Aquinas are reproduced with wonderful fidelity in later teaching. For instance, Swedenborg explicitly affirms, what Aquinas only implies, that perdition will not be a state of unmingled misery. The inhabitants of hell will have their own pleasures, their own activities and interests. Horrid scents and tastes will seem sweet and pleasant to them; and they will find a delight in evil, just as the blessed will in goodness.¹ Swedenborg also, like the great Schoolman, teaches a doctrine of moral annihilation. He affirms that the lost will reach at last a condition of dull brutishness in which they will be incapable of any choice, and will have descended beneath the level of good and evil. This means, of course, that they will have ceased to exist as responsible beings. Their continuance in mere life will be of no moment in the moral world any more than that of snakes or vultures. As far as that world is concerned, they will be dead and done with. This doctrine thus

¹ *Angelic Wisdom*, p. 352 *passim*.

resembles that of Aquinas in that it does not really involve the permanence of human sin or suffering; since the lost will have ceased to be conscious of any good or evil, of any pain or misery.

3. *Salmond*.—But the standard statement of the modern Evangelical doctrine of Everlasting Evil is, perhaps, Principal Salmond's *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*; and the teaching of this book also does approach in some of its conclusions towards those of Aquinas and Swedenborg; though, of course, it differs widely from both of these in form and standpoint.

(a) Dr. Salmond's exposition presents some puzzling problems, and departs in many ways from the traditional view so widely that one is surprised at the cordial reception it enjoyed in orthodox circles. He says that the doctrine of eternal punishment "has to get the benefit of that finer moral sense, those purer and higher ideals of punishment, those humaner feelings, that deeper insight into the intrinsic nature of things, which are the result of the gradual informing of men's minds with the spirit of Christianity."¹ He also pleads that "the doctrine has no necessary connection with the ideas of punishment that were once current, or with those realistic pictures of hell with which it has been burdened."² And yet Dr. Salmond in an earlier part of his book appeals, in support of his position, to passages in the Gospels which embody those very ideas of punishment, and are the foundation of those very pictures of hell, which he deprecates.³ We cannot help asking how it comes to be that Jesus can be held to have taught the Jewish doctrine of torments, and yet to have informed men's minds with a spirit which has made that doctrine incredible.

As we study this writer's statement further, we see more and more clearly how far he has departed from the traditional position. He warns us that the dogma he defends "is not to be associated with metaphysical ideas of eternity"⁴—a saying that opens the door to much curious speculation. It is so difficult to think of any ideas of eternity that are *not* metaphysical! Dr. Salmond also says that, for many people, "death

¹ P. 664.

³ P. 359 ff.

² P. 664.

⁴ P. 664.

itself may be their purgatory. In multitudes of human beings there may be in the crisis of death or in the valley of the shadow the first workings of a change in the principle of their lives, and what may thus begin shall grow." Also, he affirms that "the heathen are to be judged by the light they have," and that there will be degrees of punishment. He thinks that "this doctrine of degrees gives all the relief which other theories of the future profess to give." His view is that all who die with the least turning of the soul to God will go on gradually rising to a higher and higher state of blessedness; while those who depart this life in a condition of impenitence will steadily descend lower and lower through successive stages of ever deepening weakness, misery, and death.¹

(b) Dr. Salmond's theory thus resembles very closely those of earlier writers. It embodies something very like the idea of purgatory, inasmuch as it teaches that those who pass the frontiers of death with their faces turned towards righteousness experience a process of development towards eternal life. On the other hand, it approaches closely, as do Aquinas and Swedenborg, to the doctrine of Conditional Immortality, since it maintains that the lost proceed continuously downward from depth to depth of ever increasing perdition. Where is this downward process to end? Surely, in a condition of moral futility which is, from the religious point of view, equal to annihilation.

General Analysis.—(a) I have thus endeavoured to illustrate the varieties of orthodox doctrine by reference to the teaching of the greatest of the Schoolmen, of the most powerful thinker among the later mystics, and of a standard work of modern evangelical theology. In the course of this study we have seen how important are the points in which these teachers resemble each other—their common desire to lighten the burden of the traditional dogma, their general agreement in describing the final state of the lost as empty of positive content, their unanimity in affirming that evil is everlasting, in some form of perdition.

(b) On the other hand, it is apparent that the expositions

¹ P. 671 ff.

of the writers we have named, as well as of many others who might have been mentioned, reveal the sharp and even radical oppositions which exist within the domain of traditional thought. We cannot find agreement among orthodox thinkers regarding some of the most important questions, as, for instance, these: Is eternal punishment the just penalty of a sinful life,¹ or is it to be said, rather, that men will suffer always because they will always continue to sin?² Does opportunity end at death,³ or does it extend to the Judgment?⁴ Does the state of the lost remain fixed and unchangeable,⁵ or is it a condition of progress downwards, from depth to depth and from hell to hell?⁶ Does God continue for ever to seek the salvation of men,⁷ or does He withdraw His grace from us when heart and flesh do faint and fail?⁸ Is the endless penalty of sin actual pain and misery,⁹ or is it simply moral loss and inability to reach the highest good?¹⁰ These are matters regarding which orthodox theologians are not, and never have been, agreed; and they are matters of the utmost moment. Divergences of opinion as to questions like these are of the most significant kind, and involve differences of view as to the whole problem of life, and even as to the nature of God's dealings with His creatures. If we were to restrict the orthodox position to those assertions in which its defenders are all agreed, it would mean little more than that, at some time or other, the destiny of the impenitent becomes fixed—that, at some point in the history of the sinner, salvation ceases to be possible, that irremediable, unending loss is a fact of the moral universe.

(c) But, of course, it would not be reasonable to attenuate the historical dogma to this extent. Very little would be left of any doctrine if it were reduced to those elements in it which

¹ Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, xxi.

² Salmond, etc.

³ Augustine, Aquinas, Pusey, etc.

⁴ Delitzsch, *System of Biblical Psychology*, 552-554; Martensen, *Dogmatik*, sec. 286.

⁵ Edwards, *Sermons*, xi.

⁶ Salmond.

⁷ Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, iv. 416-428.

⁸ Aquinas, *Par. II. Quæst. lxxxvii. Art. 5*; Dahle, *Life after Death*, p. 435.

⁹ Edwards, *Sermons*; Martensen, *Bib. Psych.* p. 162.

¹⁰ Leibnitz.

no one of its exponents has denied. We must find the meaning of any traditional teaching in its general characteristics, as taught by the great majority of its professors throughout the ages. And, if we interpret the belief in Everlasting Evil in this light, we find that it involves the assertions that destiny is unalterably fixed at death; and that, therefore, those who pass hence impenitent will inherit unending perdition—will continue always either in a state of sin or in the endurance of those penalties which sin entails according to the unalterable laws of God.

III.

SPECULATIVE ASPECTS.

1. Now, it must be admitted that this theory of human destiny does not show itself to the best advantage when it is regarded from the purely speculative point of view. We have seen the perplexities which characterise even the ablest endeavours to elaborate it in detail, and to present it to the mind in such a form as shall not imply logical contradictions or things that are morally incredible. But, even if we exclude from view the difficulties which are presented by any individual expression of it, the doctrine of Everlasting Evil remains, in its broad outlines, open to serious rational criticism. In so far as it asserts that the history of the moral universe is to end in a hopeless discord, it is not welcome to philosophy, which always seeks after unity of thought and does not rest content with unreconciled contradictions. A difficulty also emerges as soon as we assert that the negation of good is everlasting. No great Christian thinker, except perhaps Kant, has ever maintained that evil, as an object of thought, has any positive reality. Augustine and the Schoolmen teach, as clearly as later philosophers, that only a relative existence can be attributed to it. And it does seem almost incredible that a thing which is the mere negation of reality can be possessed of unending life.

2. (a) But, even if we set aside these objections, which may

be said, perhaps, to rest on debatable grounds, there remain other difficulties of a less metaphysical kind. In the first place, if we assert that some men *will certainly continue to sin for ever*, we imply that there comes a point in their moral history at which repentance and salvation cease to be possible. But, if we are asked what it is that brings about this state of incurable bondage to evil, we must confess to some perplexity. Some writers maintain that God at last withdraws His grace from the sinner, and so removes from him all possibility of redemption. And no doubt this is a logical enough position. But, surely, it is evident that whatever a man may do after he has been excluded from the ministry of grace cannot be called *sin*, since it does not involve guilt. Without the divine help we are incapable of good; but we are also incapable of evil, inasmuch as the moral choice is no longer within our reach. The man to whom grace is denied is cut off from the spiritual economy; the evil which he commits is no longer the act of a free, responsible creature. Hence, it is unreasonable to say that he continues in *sin*. All that remains to him is a state of penalty—a prison of darkness and death, from which he is denied either the power or the desire to escape. Other theologians, again, say that God never withdraws His grace from any man, but that the impenitent evil-doer becomes at last too hardened to accept it. The vital air continues to be around him; but he cannot breathe it. The bread of life remains within his reach; but he has lost the ability to take it. This view, however, does not differ in effect from the other. If the soul loses the power of receiving divine help, or of repenting its iniquities, it becomes also incapable of sin. Sin consists in the rejection of grace and the refusal to repent; and as soon as such rejection and refusal become impossible as an act of the free will, moral history is at an end. Existence goes on henceforth on a plane that is beneath the level of right and wrong; there remains no longer the privilege of being able to offend; all that endures is retribution.

Thus it does appear that whether we say that God withdraws His grace from the lost, or that they become unable to accept it, matters little. In either case they cease to be

sinner, inasmuch as they cease to be responsible for their acts. They enter the region of moral nonentity; they become as demoniacs that gibber among the tombs.

(b) But, in the second place, the doctrine that evil is everlasting may mean, not that sin will be unending, but *that penalty will never cease*. This is, indeed, the ancient and classical form of the doctrine; and it is more defensible on general grounds than the other view. It may even be so stated as not to exclude the hope of a final reconciliation of all things. But, considered as a phase of the dogma under discussion, the idea of everlasting penalty means something positive—either physical torment, or mental anguish, or the state of utter moral ruin. And in all of these senses it is open to criticism. The idea of endless *bodily suffering* has been sufficiently considered in an earlier chapter. The notion of perpetual *agony of mind* is subject to the fatal objection that mental suffering, such as remorse and regret, is a sign of spiritual life, and must therefore disappear from the experience of the lost as they go down into the depths of death and perdition. On the other hand, the belief that the soul may descend at last into a state of *complete moral ruin*, and so pass utterly out of the spiritual universe, does correspond to certain prophecies of the conscience, and is supported by some terrible facts of experience. It is an idea, also, that may easily be accepted by those who think that everything in the human personality has been developed out of lower forms of life. From their point of view it is quite conceivable that the individual may fall back into that non-moral state of existence from which the race has slowly ascended. It must be admitted, however, that evolutionists of this type will tend naturally to adopt the theory of Conditional Immortality. In any case, the thought of utter moral destruction cannot be accepted by those of us who hold that the soul is a spiritual substance, indestructible, the child of God. From our standpoint it is incredible that the human spirit can be divested of moral life, any more than of actual existence. To us it seems that freedom, the power to choose the right, belongs to the very idea of the soul and cannot be taken away. Just as it is the

nature of matter to be subject to necessity, so it is the nature of spirit to be free. There exists no power that is able to cut it off from its supernatural source. There are no chains that can bind it, if it desires to return to the heavenly city. There is no state of exile in which it can be robbed of the power to come to itself and to say, "I will arise and go to my Father."

3. These, then, are some of the difficulties which beset the theory of everlasting evil from the psychological standpoint. But there are others that connect themselves with the doctrine of God. For instance, the belief that evil will endure for ever cannot be deduced from a consideration of the character of God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ. No one can reason directly from the divine attributes to the conclusion that a thing which is the denial of all these attributes will never have an end. Once the doctrine of perpetual sin and misery has come into existence and been formulated, it may be possible to reconcile it with the Christian conception of divine goodness; but no one will assert that it can be deduced as a *necessary conclusion* from the idea of that goodness, or that it presents a view which suggests itself to the reason as that which is in perfect accord with our highest thoughts concerning the Most High.

4. This theory is, further, open to the criticism that it does not even tend in the least to solve any problem or to lighten any difficulty. Of course, a belief may be true and yet may cause perplexity, since there are many things which are painful and yet are facts. And so we cannot argue that because belief in everlasting punishment is a burden to us it is therefore false. But we are regarding matters at present from the speculative point of view; and the object of a speculation is to explain things that seem inexplicable, and to rationalise things that seem unreasonable. And so it is fair to say that the theory in question has this weakness, that it fails to explain or to rationalise. Indeed, it perplexes and puzzles faith in any attempt to solve the riddle of the universe. The pain and sorrow of the world, the manifold anguish of life, is a sore burden to every believer in God; and that burden is certainly increased by the thought that the suffering and the sorrow are

to endure for ever. The origin and existence of sin, also, with all the loss and ruin it has brought, presents a mystery that Christian Theism has never been able to penetrate. How greatly is that mystery deepened by the conviction that moral evil is never to end. Surely it cannot be denied that any theory which teaches the everlasting existence of sin and its dreadful attendants is no contribution to a rational view of the universe—enlightens no darkness, comforts no sorrow, eases no doubt. On the contrary, it presents the sorest puzzle to Christian thought, and clouds the joy of immortality. We cannot conceal from ourselves that it has rendered the belief in a life to come of no value to many not ignoble spirits, and changed it in their eyes from a sure and certain hope to the master of all the fears.

Such, then, are some of the objections which may be taken to this theory of destiny—that it asserts an everlasting discord, that it affirms the unending existence of something which is the negation of reality, that it presents grave psychological difficulties, that it cannot be directly deduced from the Christian doctrine of God, and that, if it be offered as a solution of the puzzle of the world, it fails, inasmuch as, so far from lightening the problem, it increases very greatly its perplexities.

IV.

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS SANCTIONS.

1. All this may be admitted; but it remains true that this ancient doctrine in its various forms stands for certain important elements in Christian faith. We do it a grave injustice if we judge it by merely speculative standards; if we forget that it was not in the beginning a creation of philosophy, or a deliberate attempt to construct a rational theory as to the End of things. It was developed out of apocalypse and a certain interpretation of New Testament teaching, and it owes its strength to its moral and religious content. It was founded on authority, and it has stood in experience. It has been held

with reverent sorrow by multitudes of devout and tender souls who, while they have felt its terror, have believed it true to facts. With a fine loyalty to truth, as they have seen it, they have faced the reality of things. Among the elements of this reality they have found the tragic nature of sin and its penalties, the possibility of making final choice of evil, a real peril in the moral life. They have measured the greatness of the danger that threatens the soul by the greatness of the sacrifice of Christ. Their attitude has been that of Butler when he says—"Things are what they are: and the consequences of them will be what they will be. Why then should we seek to deceive ourselves?" As to the masses of believers, no doubt they have accepted the traditional doctrine as a thing that had been given them, without much thought or question; but it is idle to suppose that it would have meant anything to them, had it not found an echo in the soul, had it not corresponded to a prophecy of the conscience. The common mind is never troubled by speculative difficulties about a doctrine if it instinctively discerns a moral truth in it. No dogma ever means for men more than that element in it which serves the uses of the spiritual life; and so, all the dreadful forms and pictures in which the thought of future punishment has clothed itself have never signified anything to the majority of people but the terror of the consequences of sin. These have shown themselves in the experience of mankind to be so fearful that men have often felt as if no prophecy about them could be so dark as to be incredible. Hamlet says that no evils of this present life are to be compared with "what we fear of death." And in so saying he reveals the secret of the popular belief. We know the horror and misery wrought by greed and lust and cruelty and pride in this world, and we look with dark forebodings to their issues in the life to come. If the consequences of evil are thus and thus here, what shall they be hereafter?

2. *Purpose of punishment.*—Most powerful perhaps among the convictions which underlie the orthodox doctrine is the belief that the penalty of sin is not merely remedial and redemptive, designed for the good of the sinner, but also, and

indeed mainly, retributive—that is to say, resulting from a moral necessity. To say that punishment is retributive is to assert that it follows on evil because it is just, because it is required by righteousness, because it vindicates moral law. It is inflicted, not that the sinner may be redeemed, but that the order he has broken may be established. It belongs to the nature of things, and falls upon the offender without immediate regard to his interests. Punishment may help a man, may save him, if he receives it in the right spirit, if it leads him to repentance. But this is his affair. Whatever he makes of it, he must suffer it.

“Who sets his feet in law’s firm track,
The universe is at his back.”

And, conversely, he who sets himself in opposition to law has the universe for his enemy; its august forces move against his soul. A man shall reap what he has sown, not because it is good for him, but because it cannot be otherwise.

This view, that punishment is in its nature retributive, is rooted deeply in moral experience. That experience does, indeed, reveal to us many forms of penalty, physical and spiritual, which are immediately corrective in their effect, and fitted to arrest evil and to produce a swift repentance. But this is not the obvious character of the most powerful and awe-inspiring penalty which we see to follow upon sin—namely, the hardening of the heart. There is a law by which every evil act weakens the moral nature, enfeebles the will, dulls the conscience. There is an ordinance which provides that every step downward shall make it harder to go upward—shall render the path to the heights longer, and take away some of the strength that is needed for the climb. There is a dreadful logic whereby evil deeds form into habit, and habit into character, and character into destiny. There is a stern decree that says, “From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.” This is the most certainly punitive of all the moral laws of God; and to say that it is for the good of the sinner is, surely, impossible. It cannot be to the advantage of the weak that they are weakened. It cannot

be for the healing of the infirm that the dim eyes and the dull ears are progressively robbed of sight and hearing. It cannot be a remedial law that imposes an ever heavier burden as the back grows less able to bear it—that renders the upward way longest and steepest for the most feeble feet. As well say that it is good for the wounded man that his blood should slowly ebb away, as that it is well for the sinner that his heart should be hardened, and that the chains wherewith he is bound should increase in weight week by week and year by year. So long as this law remains a fact in moral experience, it is impossible to deny that there is a retributive element in the justice of God, or to affirm that all His judgments are intended merely for the healing and education of men.

This is certainly the view of penalty that underlies the orthodox doctrine of future destiny. Of course, we cannot say that the one involves the other. Indeed, the retributive theory of punishment is not hostile to the hope even of universal salvation. Penalty is not the only force that is in the hands of God, nor is it even the dominant power in the spiritual economy; and repentance transmutes it at once from retribution into discipline. Even the law of moral degeneration may in the end, working together with other agencies, conduce to the blessing of men. But Christian optimism, unfortunately, has sometimes identified itself with the doctrine that all suffering here and hereafter has for its sole purpose the saving of the sinner. It has quite often depicted the universe as a kind of hospital for sick souls, and has argued that, since men are always punished that they may be saved, the penalties of the future life can have no other object than redemption. And the orthodox doctrine has been true to certain facts of experience when it has denied this. It has been right in saying that this is a view which really degrades humanity and does not square with the realities of life; that penalty, in this world and in that which is to come, is meant to vindicate the moral order, and is inflicted whether it does good to the sinner or no; that the consequences of sin are not always redemptive in their effects here, and may not be so hereafter; that punishment will work good in the future life, only if men

come to accept it in submission and reverence of heart, and so supply the conditions under which alone it can, in any state of being, work the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

3. *The irreparable past.*—Another great moral conviction which has enabled men to believe in Everlasting Evil is the sense that there is such a thing as the irreparable and the irrevocable—irretrievable loss, unavailing regret. This is, indeed, the universal affirmation of mankind. It is expressed by the poets and sages of all races and times—by Dante, Goethe, Milton, by Marcus Aurelius as by Thomas Carlyle, by Sophocles as by Shakespeare. It is the essence of all tragedy. It is in the anguish of Oedipus, in the remorse of Othello, in the “O Absalom, my son, my son,” of David. It is in the regret of Danton—“The sins of my youth, how they injure the public good!” This it is that lends such moral impressiveness to the drama of *Faust*; and to that most poignant scene in which Lady Macbeth, being asleep, keeps for ever trying to wash her hands of invisible stains—“Here’s the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.” We may hear it also in the saying of Jesus—“Sleep on now, and take your rest”; and in the wistful pathos of His lament—“Oh that thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things that belong unto thy peace: but now they are hid from thine eyes.”¹

Now this is, certainly, only one aspect of moral truth, and it is transcended by the Christian gospel of grace; but it is a side of things that cannot be ignored or denied, and it evidently harmonises readily with the idea of everlasting penalty. We recognise that if men find an element of irreparable loss in their present experience they are likely to find it also when, from the future state, they look back upon this earthly life. If we sometimes feel that things we have done or omitted to do must be a regret and a weakness to us till the end of our days, shall we not much more feel in eternity that our misuse of the years of our mortal life has meant for us an everlasting penalty? Does a man, come to the end of his pilgrimage, look back on things gone by and know that they can never be

¹ Cf. F. W. Robertson’s Sermon, *The Irreparable Past*.

repaired? And shall he not have a more bitter knowledge when he sees behind him a whole life misemployed; when he remembers that all the varied trials and opportunities, blessings and sorrows, of earthly existence failed to teach him moral wisdom, and that even the last solemn hour of dissolution itself did not bring him to repentance? The vision of human destiny does "take a sober colour from" a mind that is possessed by thoughts like these. The voice of the everlasting No is heard in these tones of memory and of prophecy. And nothing but the knowledge of the infinite resources of God can avail in the least to modify their austere and solemn meaning, or light the future with a living hope.

4. *Eternity of moral choice.*—There is yet another feature of moral experience which, while it cannot form the basis of dogma, does yet help to explain the willingness of the Christian mind to entertain the idea of unending evil. This is the sense that somehow *the act of moral choice belongs to the realm of eternal things*. Aquinas gives logical expression to this feeling when he argues that sin is a departure from the chief end of life and the immutable good; is therefore a breach of the eternal order and, as such, is itself everlasting both in nature and in consequences. He expresses this thought memorably in the saying—"He who has sinned in his own eternity will be punished in God's eternity."¹ No doubt this argument of Aquinas is open to the charge of forgetting that repentance repairs a breach in the eternal order, by a law which itself belongs to that order. If it were not so, no forgiveness would be possible for any sin. Also, the conclusion that future punishment must be everlasting, because sin is an offence against the unchanging moral government of the world, is defensible only if we agree that no repentance is possible after death. But while the contention of the great Schoolman is not convincing as a formal statement, it does symbolise a conviction of the conscience—indefinable, perhaps, but none the less real. We do feel as if in facing the great moral issues of life we were standing in a world which does not pass away.

¹ Pars. II. *Quaest.* lxxxvii. Art. 3: "Justum tamen quod qui in suo eterno peccavit contra Deum in eterno Dei punietur" (quoting Ambrose).

We do have the sense that in confronting the decisions that test the soul we are looking, not on the things which are temporal, but on those which are eternal. There is something in men that responds to the appeal :

“Choose well ; your choice is
Brief, and yet endless.”

These, then, are some of the great moral convictions which underlie the traditional doctrine of future destiny. They help to explain its wide acceptance among Christian people, and they have given it power in its appeal to the consciences of men. They represent the things which the teaching of the Church has emphasised, and the interests which it has guarded. They are considerations that must be kept in mind by those who are inclined to a very severe judgment of the old eschatology. Also, they stand for realities which no sound theory of the future state can ever neglect or ignore.

CONCLUSION.

We have thus seen, in the two chapters which have been devoted to the negative side of eschatological doctrine, how the belief in Everlasting Evil was developed by Christianity out of elements that it received from Judaism, and which Judaism, in turn, had inherited from the thoughts of other races—“long, long thoughts” that reach far back into other years. We have inferred that the Christian Church is not responsible for the dark and terrible forms which this doctrine has often taken—forms which it received by tradition from the Fathers. We have noted also that the Church, as such, has never been very definite or extreme in its dogmatic statements on this subject ; that its thinkers and masters have not been agreed in their teaching about it ; that there was in the beginning, as there is now, a large body of Christian opinion hostile to the idea of unending sin and misery. We have therefore concluded that the claim of the dogma of Everlasting Evil to be the authoritative testimony of Christianity cannot be accepted in its fulness. But we have recognised, also, that this dogma witnesses to certain abiding facts of religious and

moral experience. These facts, at least, explain its power and persistence, and go some way to justify it as an attempt to conserve certain important interests, to vindicate the testimony of conscience, and to enforce the urgency of the spiritual peril.

The Church has always been concerned with practical ends rather than with general views of things. It has been a prophet rather than a philosopher. Its care has been to guard the intuitions of faith and fruits of experience, more than to produce a rational scheme of the universe. It has been anxious about the masses of men—the simple, the careless, the unspiritual. Its desire has been to guard these from uttermost calamity, to bring them into the ways of peace, and finally to present them in the presence of God with exceeding joy. Hence it has been slow to teach or to entertain any thoughts about the future state which might even tend to weaken in men the sense of peril; or to take from the intensity of the moral appeal. Deep in its heart, as in the heart of its Master, has been the thought of the immeasurable danger that threatens the soul. The conviction that life has tragic issues and that the spiritual question is one that brooks no delay, is expressed in the prayers of the Church throughout all the ages, in the intensity of her warnings, in the witness of her saints. And this is the conviction, profound and unchanging, that she has uttered, sometimes, no doubt, in crude and cruel ways, but always with faithful and tender purpose, in her doctrine of future destiny—the eternal issues of life, and the solemn wages of sin.

CHAPTER III.

CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY

(MEDIATING SOLUTION).

INTRODUCTORY.

ANATOLE FRANCE remarks somewhere that the pretension to be without prejudice is itself a very great prejudice. And certainly very few theologians would even pretend impartiality in their attitude to the doctrine that the attainment of endless life is conditional on the possession of certain moral and spiritual qualities. This theory, somehow, has the faculty of creating, on the one hand, fervid partisans, and, on the other, very determined foes. One discerns in the writings of its advocates an amazing zeal and conviction, and in those of its opponents, often, a barely concealed intellectual contempt and aversion. Yet we must assume a virtue if we have it not: and at least try to give this doctrine careful and fair attention. It is a thing to be reckoned with. It is a formidable and a growing force. The strength of its position on New Testament grounds is considerable; and it has behind it forces which prevail in many regions of thought. It is congenial to the scientific mind; it appeals to persons of the intensely ethical type; it is encouraged by the dominant philosophies of our day; and it attracts those who revolt from the dogma of Everlasting Evil, and yet are afraid of the ethical aspects of Universalism. Also, Conditionalism is formidable in this respect, that it, more than any other eschatological speculation, influences the entire theology of those who adopt it, and would, if generally received, profoundly modify the whole Christian view of the world and of life.

Ancient doctrine.—The theory of Conditional Immortality has not, heretofore, been widely accepted at any time or among the adherents of any creed. The Greeks and Hebrews signified by their doctrine of Hades and of Sheol their inability to imagine the annihilation of the soul. The Hindu belief in an endless series of incarnations involves the denial of death. The Buddhist doctrine of Nirvana, even if we accept the view that Nirvana means the loss of personal existence, bears no resemblance to the notion that death is the wages of sin: the absorption of the finite in the infinite, so far from being the punishment of evil, is the ultimate prize of righteousness. The ancient religions of Babylon and Persia were quite unfriendly to the thought that personality could be destroyed. In the Norse mythology we do find a belief that the universe will be utterly consumed by fire, with all creatures that inhabit it, only one pair remaining to be the founders of a new race on a new earth; but this tradition does not belong to a doctrine of immortality. The records of the Egyptian religion, also, contain suggestions that the punishment of sin may be the destruction of individual self-consciousness, though not of the spiritual substance; but there is no proof that this was a popular opinion. So that, altogether, it appears that every great faith has inspired the conviction that the soul is in its nature indestructible. Conditional Immortality has not been in the past history of religion a doctrine that has won the allegiance of large masses of mankind.

Yet it cannot be denied that this theory of human destiny has kept appearing from time to time in the writings of the thoughtful. Some of the old pagan philosophers who believed that physical death was the end of all things, for ordinary men, yet indicated sometimes a hope that the virtuous and the wise might continue to exist beyond the grave. The Stoics, while they affirmed that all beings must ultimately suffer dissolution, did not exclude the possibility that the souls of the good might maintain an individual existence for, at least, some time after the destruction of the body. The notion that the wicked might suffer annihilation was, as we have seen, entertained by Jewish thinkers before and after the time of

Christ. It has been taught by many Rabbis throughout succeeding ages. Also, it was involved in the general trend of thought of the greatest of Jewish philosophers, Philo Judaeus.

The Christian Fathers.—(a) We have already discussed the Philonic type of teaching as it appears in the New Testament; but it is necessary to illustrate the important influence which it exerted over certain thinkers of the post-Apostolic Church. It must always be a matter of debate to what extent the writings of Philo were studied by any New Testament writer, but there can be little doubt that most of the Greek Apologists were directly influenced by that great master. These Christian writers accepted the apocalyptic doctrines which were prevalent in their time, and Justin argues distinctly in favour of everlasting punishment. "The wicked," he says, "undergo everlasting punishment; and not only, as Plato said, for a period of a thousand years."¹ Also, he declares that each man "goes to eternal punishment or salvation,"² and that "eternal punishment is laid up for the wicked."³ Yet he and many others of his time do, as Harnack says, "argue against the conception of the natural immortality of the soul."⁴ They regard Christ "as the bestower of incorruptibility, who thus has brought salvation to its goal";⁵ and they maintain that "men are neither mortal nor immortal, but capable of either death or immortality."⁶ Thus Tatian says concerning the soul—"If it continue solitary" (that is, apart from the Logos) "it tends downwards towards matter and dies with the flesh; but if it enters into union with the divine spirit it is no longer helpless, but ascends to the regions whither the spirit guides it."⁷ To the same effect is Justin's statement—"Souls are not then immortal; . . . the souls of the pious remain in a better place, while those of the unjust and wicked are in a worse, waiting for the time of judgment. Thus, some which have appeared worthy of God never die; but others are punished so long as God wills them

¹ *First Apology*, c. 8.

³ *Ibid.* c. 18.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 223.

⁷ *Ad Graecos*, c. 13.

² *Ibid.* c. 12.

⁴ *History of Dogma*, vol. ii. p. 213 (note).

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 213.

to exist and be punished. . . . Souls both die and are punished.”¹ Now this teaching is evidently Conditionalism, whether its authors knew it to be so or not. Dr. Plumptre is undoubtedly justified in saying that the language of Justin Martyr “tends towards the thought of a possible annihilation, and it has certainly been so understood by both Roman Catholic and Protestant writers.”²

(b) In the writings of Irenaeus, also, there occurs a passage which is in complete harmony with the sayings just quoted from the Apologists. It contains, for instance, the following expressions: “Things which proceed from God” (like the soul) “endure and extend their existence through a long series of ages.” “The soul herself is not life, but partakes in that life which is bestowed on her by God.” “The Father of all imparts continuance for ever and ever on *those who are saved*.” “He who has not recognised God . . . *deprives himself of continuance for ever and ever*.” “Those who in this life have shown themselves ungrateful . . . shall justly *not receive of Him* length of days for ever and ever.”³ Surely it is evident that these sayings clearly assert that the privilege of immortality belongs only to the redeemed. One would not, indeed, affirm that either Irenaeus or the other writers whom we have mentioned had attained to one clear doctrine on this subject, since they all made statements of an opposing kind, and since their teaching as a whole is so uncertainly expressed that it is interpreted by modern scholars sometimes in one sense and sometimes in another. Indeed, their writings afford conclusive evidence that eschatological thought in their time had not reached the dogmatic stage of development. But it may be agreed that all these early writers do keep saying things which encourage eager theologians to claim them as apostles of the belief that there is no immortal life apart from faith in Christ. And it may be admitted, also, that these utterances of theirs belong to a very characteristic element in their thought. They certainly indicate that there existed in

¹ *Trypho*, c. 5 ; cf. also Theophilus, *To Autolycus*, Book II. c. 27.

² *Spirits in Prison*, p. 314.

³ *Contra Haeres.*, Lib. II. c. 34. 3, 4.

the early Church a type of reflection which denied the natural immortality of the soul, and tended to interpret the New Testament in the light of that denial; and was thus the representative in those days of that attitude and temper of mind which has produced the modern doctrine of Conditional Immortality.

(c) But, indeed, this Conditionalist strain in early Christian thought attained to definite dogmatic expression in Arnobius, whose statement on the subject exhibits many of the characteristics of later constructions. Arnobius, a convert from paganism, wrote at the beginning of the fourth century, and probably suffered martyrdom early in that period. He is a writer of force and eloquence and considerable speculative ability. But he did not live long enough to mature his conception of Christian belief. In his reaction against the Greek idea of the eternity and divine nature of the soul he goes to the opposite extreme, and seems to delight to dwell on every fact that tends to discredit our humanity. Man is, in his view, only the highest of the animals; and he is not the direct creation of God, but owes his being to some lower power, "far enough removed" from the deity.¹ He is not immortal by nature; and, if left to himself, will utterly perish. The mortal character of the soul is, indeed, evident from the fact that man suffers pain. "For that which is liable and exposed to suffering is declared to be corruptible." "All suffering is a way leading to the grave."² An immortal creature cannot experience sorrow. Hence, if it were true that the soul is immortal, men would have nothing to fear from the threat of future punishment. "Imperishable spirits would remain safe and untouched by harm," even though they were "surrounded by all the flames of the raging streams of fire."³

But if the soul is thus not immortal, the question arises—Does it perish with the body? To this Arnobius replies that there is much to be said both for and against an affirmative answer; but that, for his part, he believes that "a cruel death" awaits the unbeliever beyond the grave, "not bringing sudden

¹ *Adversus Gentes*, Lib. II. c. 36.

² *Ibid.* cc. 26, 27.

³ *Ibid.* c. 30.

annihilation, but destroying by the bitterness of its long protracted punishment.”¹ To those who ask how, on this theory, any souls can attain to everlasting life, Arnobius rejoins that what is impossible with man is possible with God, and that He will preserve the faithful in unending existence by a miracle of His grace.²

Such is, in brief outline, the teaching of Arnobius; and it betrays some of the crudity of immature and hasty thought. But it, nevertheless, is marked by some of the qualities which have always appeared in Conditionalist doctrine—austerity of spirit, a certain contempt for human nature, and a tendency to compromise with materialism.

(d) It is evident, however, that this type of teaching had very little influence during the period of dogmatic construction. The endeavour to show that the opinions of Arnobius were shared by other important writers of that age is a task of great labour and small result. It means picking up here and there, from one teacher and another, occasional utterances and stray phrases; gathering these together as a miner may collect a few grains of gold from tons of unproductive soil. And the fruit of all this searching is a handful of sayings of little value. The truth is that the doctrine of the indestructibility of the soul proved itself congenial to the Christian mind, and very soon established itself in the theological schools. Before the sixth century the belief of Arnobius had ceased to be a real force. Augustine recognised in Universalism a living enemy, so powerful as to demand serious and respectful attention; but he evidently reckoned Conditionalism to be among the things that were dead and gone. He had not a word to say of it in criticism or in reproach, or even in commemoration.

Modern doctrine.—The Reformation era was, however, a great day of resurrection, a time when all manner of old speculations and heresies awoke to life again and stirred once more the hearts of men. And among the things that rose from the dead in that great Easter time was the doctrine of Conditional Immortality. The early Unitarians, even before

¹ *Adv. Gentes*, Lib. II. cc. 57, 61.

² *Ibid.* c. 35.

the appearance of the Socini, held this theory; and it was clearly expounded in the *Racovian Catechism*, the earliest Socinian Confession. And the fact that it failed to retain its position in the Unitarian Church is a striking illustration of its characteristic inability to secure the allegiance of the common Christian mind. It is probable, however, that in every age since the Reformation it has found a certain number of adherents, and it is at present part of the formal creed of the Christadelphians and several other peculiar sects. One would certainly expect it to appear from time to time in Protestant theology. The solution it offers is so simple, so clear, so easily grasped, and the scriptural evidence in its favour is so obvious, that it is sure to commend itself to a certain type of mind wherever ecclesiastical authority is not strong enough to deny it a hearing. Hence we are not surprised to find expressions of approval in the writings of some Anglican teachers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is certainly interesting and important to note that the theory of Conditional Immortality commended itself to a High Churchman like Jeremy Taylor, on the one hand, and to a Latitudinarian like Tillotson, on the other, as a view that was not inconsistent with the historic Christian faith.

Types of modern theory.—But it was not until the nineteenth century that this doctrine really attained to fulness of expression, or received the support of any considerable number of thinkers. During that century, however, it did achieve a position of considerable influence, and was expounded in several important works both of theology and of philosophy; and it is probable that it continues in our day to increase the number of its adherents. The prevailing opinion among advanced Lutheran theologians inclines to favour it. In England and America, also, as well as in France and in Switzerland, there is a decided drift in the same direction. Conditionalists are certainly justified in their claim that many things in the present aspect of religious thought encourage hopeful expectations for the future of their cause.

Now, there are *four different forms* in which this type of eschatology presents itself to us. (1) There is a purely

scientific, evolutionary theory, such as is elaborated by M. Armand Sabatier, and is at least suggested by Professor Henry Drummond.¹ (2) There is a *philosophical form* of this doctrine, of which the great exponent is Rothe. With him also may be mentioned Ritschl, and, some would add, Bergson. (3) There is a *general tendency towards Conditionalism*, which is expressed in varying degrees of definiteness by different writers, and is inspired by a variety of influences, scientific, ethical, literary, and religious. We may find this tendency illustrated by writers so unlike each other as Lotze, Matthew Arnold, and Father Tyrrell. (4) Lastly, there is a *theological and systematic form* of this speculation; represented by Edward White, Petavel, Menegoz, Haering, and many other professional divines, as well as by scholars and preachers like Huntingdon, Bushnell, Lyman Abbott, Beecher, Joseph Parker, R. W. Dale, and ever so many besides.

In making this division, of course, one does not claim absolute accuracy. It is evident that no strict line can be drawn between philosophy and theology. Also, some of the writers mentioned are both scientists and metaphysicians; some are at once theologians and preachers, and some are characterised by such varied accomplishment that it is difficult to describe their precise position. Still the division indicated does correspond, in a general way, to the facts of the case, and does mark real distinctions of thought and expression. We may, therefore, follow it in the present discussion.

EVOLUTIONARY FORM.

1. *Naturalistic theory*.—(a) The most brilliant exposition of this theory from the scientific standpoint, with which I am acquainted, is M. Armand Sabatier's *Essai sur l'Immortalité*. M. Sabatier deals with the subject from the position of one who accepts frankly the naturalistic theory of development. He is not, however, a materialist. In his view, "life and spirit were diffused in the cosmic germ." Each germ cellule of plasm has "a little soul" (*la petite âme*), a psychic element.

¹ See also McConnell, *Evolution of Immortality*.

It is, as one might say, both material and spiritual in nature. Every living thing is a bundle (*faisceau*), a group, of such elements; and every personality is a highly developed, closely knit form of the living creature. "Personality is a bundle firmly knit together, a group intimately harmonised, a powerful and admirable concatenation; but a bundle, a group, a complex being." Evolution tends to the creation of such personality; and it has attained this end, so far, in the production of the human kind. Each individual of our race has the power increasingly to personalise and strengthen himself, to bind together more and more closely the elements of his being. The brain is the instrument of this process. It is an "accumulator and organiser of spiritual force." It is not able to create spirit, "to make spirit out of that which has nothing in common with spirit; but it is able to make spirit with spirit." That is to say, the will can so move and direct the brain as to make it the means of attaining more and more spiritual force and cohesion. This it does by acting along the line of evolution, willing along the appointed path of development. This process means advance towards moral righteousness, virtue, the Good; for the end of evolution is the production of the Good. "The moral being is called into existence by its own will." "It is the artisan of its own evolution and of its vitality." "It is free to form its own moral orientation, and employ or refuse the means at its hands to defend its psychical cohesion (*faisceau*)."

Thus, on this somewhat curious theory, man makes himself into a spiritual being by working towards righteousness. In so doing he is advancing towards the appointed aim of evolution. He keeps storing up within himself more and more real life, keeps binding together always more closely the elements of his individuality, and so he at last attains to such a state of inward strength and unity that he is able to survive even the dissolution of the body, the disappearance of the brain which has been the organ of his development, and to live on beyond death. The man, on the other hand, who refuses the path of righteousness, and so sets his face against the current of evolution, moves backward toward the lower form out of which

humanity has developed, loses psychic force and cohesion, becomes less and less closely knit, more and more "dissolute." And so when death comes he is unable to meet the shock of it, has no energy left to maintain his personality, and is dissolved again into the elements out of which he was made.

(b) Now, this statement of Sabatier's expresses the only doctrine of Immortality which is possible for the evolutionist who does not admit that the spirit of man is a new element in the process of creation. According to the view he represents, all life is a development from some unknown substance which had in it from the beginning the "promise and potency" of all existing forms. The evolutionary process has moved upward from the inorganic to the organic, and through all lower vegetable and animal species to the human race, which is the crown of its achievement. In man is self-consciousness, volition, and creative mental energy. In him also is moral life—that is to say, the form of thought and conduct which experience has shown to conduce most to the well-being, strength, and progress of society and of the individual. The precepts and commandments of morality are "generalisations from experience"; they express the accumulative practical wisdom of all the generations, the "ancestral voices" of the past. The witness of conscience itself is but the utterance in the individual of common, inherited belief as to the manner of living which best subserves the general good. Religion is the moral life "touched with emotion," rising to the height of enthusiasm, inspired by the vision of what the perfect man shall be, and stretching out its hands to that ideal in a passionate longing for attainment.

(c) Now it is evident that if the hope of immortality is to be retained at all, on this view of things, it can only be in some such form as that which is stated by M. Sabatier. We must suppose that a spiritual element has been in the process from the beginning, and that it has been asserting itself more and more strongly, and determining the path of evolution, thus revealing the purpose of the Creator. Having produced the human race, it is now evolving a higher type of humanity in individual men so compacted, so well knit, so attuned to

the purpose of God, that they are able to survive even the shock of death and to retain personal identity in some loftier state of being.

(d) But Sabatier's brilliant discussion shows the difficulties which beset this theory when it descends from the region of general principles and attempts definite logical statement. What are we to make of the idea that spirit existed in the beginning in many minute forms; "little souls," each attached to a corresponding particle of matter? And how can we believe that these little souls, by a process of ever closer cohesion in separate groups, have produced conscious animal life, and then man, and finally a race of super-men endowed with immortality? Are we able to credit the notion that these spiritual atoms, even if so closely allied as to form one intense personality, are able at death to maintain their cohesion, and to continue together after all the material elements with which they have always been associated, and the very brain itself which has been their centre of unity, have utterly disappeared? We may doubt also whether experience supports the idea that evil always tends towards the dissolution of personality. The truth seems to be that while some sins do tend to weaken the individuality of a man and blur its outlines, other and worse vices, like pride, cruelty, and selfishness, do not appear to have any such effect. Milton's Satan and Goethe's Mephistopheles are certainly not wanting in distinct and coherent vitality. One notes also that the human species, on Sabatier's theory, has for one of its chief characteristics, not the actual possession of a certain quality, but the power of attaining it. Surely, if this be the case, mankind stands alone among all the species of creation. Every member of every other race and kind must conform itself to its type. Nothing but premature destruction can prevent a tadpole from becoming a frog, or a chrysalis a moth, or a rosebud a rose. Hence, if a man is possessed, not of immortality, but of the power of attaining it through the exertions of individual men, he is solitary and unique among all the species of which we have ever heard. Finally, Sabatier's theory does not provide for a sufficient punishment of sin. We cannot tolerate the idea

that a cruel oppressor, a destroyer of innocent lives, a mean betrayer of sacred trust, can go on without repentance to the end, and suffer no penalty except the mere loss of continued life—a loss of which he can never be aware. On this view of things a wicked man does as he will, and has his day, and at the end he sleeps.

2. *Christian evolutionary theory.*—(a) Those evolutionists who accept the Christian revelation and the authority of Scripture present the theory of Conditional Immortality in a form somewhat different from that expounded by Sabatier. They connect the attainment of everlasting life with the work of Jesus Christ. They teach that all who in every age have reached the higher manhood have been enabled to do so by the grace of God, which has never been denied to any one who has sought it according to the measure of his opportunity. This grace, this supernatural power to live ideally, appeared in its fulness in Jesus, by faith in whom it is possible to share it, and so to attain eternal life. It is difficult, however, to see how these thinkers can reconcile strict evolutionism with the belief in the moral perfection of our Lord, inasmuch as no rigid doctrine of development is able to admit that perfection can be attained by an individual while the species to which he belongs, and the environment in which he lives, remain in a lowly state of advancement. Such individual completeness of life could, in any case, appear only at the climax of the upward process; whereas, Jesus lived at a point very far from the goal of human history. It seems clear, also, that any doctrine of a real incarnation of God in Christ is inconsistent with a rigorous theory of evolution; since, if we admit such an intervention of the supernatural as is involved in the Incarnation, we cannot refuse to accept the idea that God may have introduced a new element into the world when humanity appeared therein. But, however this may be, Christian evolutionists do not differ, except in form, from writers like Sabatier, and their doctrine of immortality must be essentially his. Whether we say that men attain the higher life by faith in Christ or by their own moral endeavour matters very little. In either case their achievement is due to some peculiar virtue of their own,

some quality which belongs to them as the elect of the race, the flower of the moral process.

(b) Hence, the position of this entire school of thought is aristocratic and exclusive. It is true that a popular American exponent of Conditionalism urges that his doctrine harmonises with democratic principles, inasmuch as it leaves the individual free to live or to die as he may choose.¹ But this is a claim that is not to be taken seriously, since the right to commit suicide is not recognised by even the most democratic community. The evolutionary form of the Conditionalist theory regards the end and purpose of the world's history to be, not the creation of a redeemed humanity, but the production of a selected number of perfect individuals. All through the history of evolution the many have been sacrificed for the sake of the few; nature has been careful of the type but careless of the individual; and in the development of the human race also the Power that directs all things has intended the production of a type of super-man whose appearance should justify all the sacrifice it had cost. This way of looking at things is apparent, for instance, in Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. What Drummond's personal belief regarding ultimate destiny was I do not know; but the whole argument of his book, the illustrations he uses and even definite assertions he makes, can mean nothing else than the doctrine of Conditional Immortality. His conclusions might almost be expressed in the words of *Fourth Ezra*—"This world the most High has made for many, but the world to come for few." "Perish the multitude that has been born in vain."

PHILOSOPHICAL FORM.

1. *Rothe*.—(a) The more purely philosophical form of this theory is represented, especially, by Richard Rothe. Many, indeed, would say that Ritschl was the greatest speculative genius who ever held the doctrine of Conditional Immortality. This doctrine was, however, no essential part of Ritschl's system;

¹ Palmer, *Winning of Immortality*, p. 220.

it cannot be deduced from his general theory of things. Also, he does not assert it, but rather suggests that it indicates a possibility. He thinks that "the wrath of God means the resolve of God to annihilate" the finally impenitent; and he believes this view to be in harmony with Scripture. But he does not assert that some human beings will certainly be destroyed. "Whether there are such persons, and who they are, lies within the scope neither of our practical judgment nor of our theoretical knowledge." And so, we find the great representative of this position not in Ritschl but in Rothe, whose philosophical system involves of necessity the idea that immortality is a thing to be attained.¹

(b) Rothe begins by assuming two things—the idea of God and the idea of Something that is His opposite. This Something, as an object of pure thought, is without positive existence, inasmuch as it is opposed to Him who is the alone real. But in the world-process it presents itself as matter, the non-spiritual; and the divine activity is always at work on this matter seeking to spiritualise it, to make it a part of its own life. Age after age this work goes on; but in no one age is it perfectly successful, since there always remains at the close of it some matter unsubdued and unspiritualised. It does not appear that Rothe expected this struggle of the divine Spirit with its opposite ever to issue in complete victory and harmony. He, as Pfeiderer says, contemplated "an eternal process of stages of development succeeding each other in time." Matter was in his view "the primitive creature which is nothing in itself, *without* which God cannot begin to work, *with* which He cannot get His work completed."²

(c) The theological bearing of all this is quite apparent. Rothe teaches that the creation of men arose out of the love of God, out of His desire to bring into being a spiritual creature worthy to hold communion with Himself. It was not possible, however, for God to create men in the beginning with a spiritual nature, since matter is that substance on which alone He works. Nevertheless He made men with the

¹ *Dogmatik*, iii. : *Theologische Ethik*, *Stille Stunden*.

² Pfeiderer, *Philosophy of Religion*, vol. ii. pp. 288, 289.

power of becoming spiritual. In Rothe's language, "God can create the spiritual creature only indirectly, by creating a material creature which is specifically so organised that it is able to transubstantiate itself from materiality into spirituality, or in other words to spiritualise itself."¹ Man, therefore, in his present state is not conformed to his true nature. He is only in the making. It is his business to create himself; the vocation of the human creature is to subdue his material nature to spiritual ends, and so to become the son of God.

Moral evil emerged of necessity in the course of this development. It *had to be*; it is an incident of man's struggle to attain his destiny. He must pass through it in his pilgrimage towards the highest. This does not imply that the individual man is not responsible for his sins or that his sense of guilt is a delusion. He is not accountable for the moral evil which exists in him of necessity as a member of the human race; but he is accountable for every act and thought in which he yields obedience to that evil, in which he subordinates his higher nature to his lower. For he is free, and it is always within his power to choose the better part. And according to his choice is his fate. If he yields himself to the lower power he goes on towards destruction; if to the higher, he ascends towards eternal life. Every time he submits to that in him which is without reality he takes a step towards nothingness. So long as he remains impenitent he keeps steadily transmuting his living substance into death. "The human individual may permanently remain in sin and so bring himself to annihilation."² Although the race will be saved, the individual may be lost. Although the army must come to victory, it will leave many dead behind it on its line of march.

(d) Rothe, of course, does not teach that the possibilities of individual redemption are exhausted within this earthly life. He attaches the utmost importance to the idea of the Intermediate State; which is a condition of corporeal life wherein the warfare of the spiritual with the material nature goes on to an ultimate issue. The unrighteous who persist in

¹ *Still Hours*, p. 143.

² *Ibid.* p. 185.

their evil become more and more material and, therefore, more and more sensible of pain and misery. To use again Rothe's words—"The physical torments of hell will not be merely sensual, but neither will they be entirely unsensual, because the bodies of the lost did not achieve a pure and clean spirituality. That in them which approximated to spirit will be more and more resolved into matter, and they will thus become always more susceptible to material pain."¹ This suffering is their punishment; and it is ended at the close of the age when they, having become, of their own free will, entirely material, simply and necessarily cease to exist. Their lives become part of the rubbish, the waste, the useless element in the great world-process of which they have formed a part.

(e) Now it is evident that, in its general import, this construction of Rothe's resembles very closely that of Sabatier. The one is the work of a philosophic theologian, the other of a scientific evolutionist. The one is a dialectical system proceeding from certain rational assumptions, the other an argument based on a concrete view of things derived from the study of nature. But both arrive at the conclusion that man is a creature in the making; neither material nor spiritual, but capable of becoming one or the other; neither mortal nor immortal, but possessing the power to destroy or to perpetuate himself. Both theories also illustrate the difficulty of stating Conditionalism in such a way as to be at once definite and convincing. Rothe's system has always excited admiration by its brilliance, daring, and imaginative power, as well as by its moral austerity and its profound religious conviction. But it has never been taken seriously as a rational construction. Rothe begins by presenting himself with a dualistic foundation suited to the edifice he means to build; he conceives matter as unreal, and yet as possessed of such aggressive force that it is able to destroy the work of God; he asks us to think of the Creator as engaged continually at a task which He cannot complete. And these are all positions open to grave criticism. We naturally ask—Whence did matter obtain the energy that

¹ *Still Hours*, p. 272.

enables it to destroy the spiritual element in human nature, and even to defy the action of divine power? And this is a question very difficult to answer. Rothe's conception of human nature is also full of perplexity. The spiritual part of a man must be of the divine substance; since, by hypothesis, there exist only two original substances—God, and that which is His opposite. It thus appears that, in being asked to contemplate the possibility of the soul being destroyed, we are invited to believe that something which is divine can be put to death by an alien power. Further, this theory ascribes all sin to the material nature of man; whereas some sins are clearly spiritual. Also, it asserts an extreme doctrine of free will, *and yet affirms the necessity of evil*; and it fails to show how, on its view, there can be any true freedom either in God or in man. It does not tell us what becomes of the waste product of humanity—the spiritual element which has been subdued by the material; nor does it explain where the substance is to come from for the creation of the resurrection body. Finally, it presents God as exposing His creatures to the risk of dreadful torment ending in death—and this in order that He may create a being in whom He can take delight. Man's suffering and doom are thus an incident in the divine effort towards self-satisfaction. These are all grave difficulties; and they are illustrated by Rothe's doctrine of Christ. He quite evidently fails to find a necessary place for the Redeemer in his scheme of things; and he does not really affirm the sinlessness of Jesus, since he teaches that our Lord's earthly experience was one in which the spiritual achieved a gradual conquest over the material in His nature—a conquest only completed in the supreme hour of His Ascension.

Such are the defects in Rothe's theory which render it unacceptable as a rational and religious system. And similar problems are always found to arise whenever Conditionalism is wrought out with thoroughness and courage. That view of things is strong in its general imaginative and moral assertions; but wanting the power of presenting a formal doctrine which can endure the test of a careful analysis.

UNDOGMATIC FORM.

1. *Lotze, etc.*—The third type of Conditionalism which falls to be considered is rather a matter of tendency and general standpoint than of definite eschatological statement. It is to be deduced from the view of things expressed by certain writers, from the principles of their thought, from occasional things which they say, and also from their silence regarding certain subjects. The greatest of the writers of whom this may be said is Lotze, whose writings contain passages which suggest the idea of a contingent immortality. In his view God is the only being who is in the proper sense a person. Men are only in the process of becoming persons; and the inference from this is that only those who have attained to a certain advanced degree of individual development are likely to survive death. But Lotze, in this aspect of his thought, stands for a great many religious teachers who, without perhaps sharing Lotze's philosophy, agree with him in approaching all questions, especially that of immortality, along the line of moral and religious experience. These are prone to dwell on the truth that the Christian idea of a life to come developed out of pious convictions. Jewish saints possessed with the joy of communion with God became unable to think of that joy as belonging to this life only. In like manner, early Christians living in fellowship with Christ could not doubt that this fellowship would be everlasting; their experience of Jesus was full of immortality; they knew that He lived and that they should live also. Their hope rested on no rational grounds, or general ideas of justice and probability, but on their intuitions as religious men. Mere continued existence beyond the grave had no meaning for them except in so far as it might be filled with the glory of the Lord. And this original mood of the Christian mind remains the true religious attitude in all generations. It is only in so far as we are pious and believing people, possessed of a high spiritual and moral energy, that immortality can be desirable to us, or indeed possess any meaning for our minds.

Matthew Arnold favours this view of things in his

Literature and Dogma,¹ and he gives it full literary expression in his sonnet on Immortality:

“No, no! the energy of life may be
Kept on after the grave, but not begun;
And he who flagg’d not in the earthly strife,
From strength to strength advancing—only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.”

2. *Tyrrell*.—It is natural that those who reason in this way should tend generally to depreciate all arguments in favour of immortality that are founded on universal human instincts, like the desire to be reunited to the beloved dead, or on the consideration that belief in a God of love and justice involves the conviction that He has something better in store for men than this uncertain, unfair, bewildered and broken life. Arguments like these are held to have little weight; and the whole burden of proof is rested on the experience of the regenerate—their interests and desires, and the conviction that such a life as theirs is surely indestructible. Thus Father Tyrrell in his last book, *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, says that the natural man as he grows old and weary feels that he wants no more of this life. “Its prolongation would be hell.”² It is as the eternal life which is in a man asserts itself that “the thought of extinction becomes more intolerable and the faith in its perpetuity more imperative.”³ Life after death is “a continuation, expansion, and revelation of the life of the spirit as lived even now by the righteous.”⁴ Tyrrell’s whole discussion ignores the idea of a natural, universal immortality, for which he seems to hold that there can be no proof. The mere idea of endless existence belongs to a magical type of religious thought. Immortality is nothing else than the eternal life which is begun in the righteous here, unfolding itself hereafter in some condition of being, of which we can form no conception because it must be totally unlike anything that we have ever experienced or imagined.

¹ *Literature and Dogma*, pp. 222–224.

² *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, p. 133.

³ *Ibid.* p. 133.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 127.

Now it seems manifest that this way of thinking is practically Conditionalism, since we cannot argue from a partial experience to an universal conclusion. It is significant that Tyrrell is entirely silent as to the fate of the unregenerate, and that, while he dwells eloquently on the permanent value of all other apocalyptic forms, he has nothing to say about the Gehenna doctrine, which occupied so important a place in Jewish thought and has been so strongly emphasised in the Christian Church. This silence is convenient, but it is also natural and consistent. He, and all who share his general view, whether Catholic or Protestant, must regard the question of the immortality of the multitude as merely irritating and irrelevant. If the life to come be empty of significance except for the spiritual, it really follows that the rest of mankind had better perish utterly. If they live on, it must be in a kind of Sheol; a dreary, empty state that has no purpose or meaning in the universe of God—that can have no value for the Creator, and can only be a burden for the creature.

3. *Criticism.*—(a) One has great difficulty, however, in following those thinkers who thus found the whole argument for immortality on the experience of the righteous. It is, no doubt, perfectly true that the Christian belief in eternal life arose out of religious interests and emotions. But it is not the case that faith *created this belief out of nothing*—that it worked upon no already existing elements of thought. Men possessed from early days the conviction that existence did not end at death, that *something* in a man survived physical dissolution; and all that Jewish and Christian faith did was to give richness of content to that somewhat vague and negative idea. It inherited a belief in the future state; and it filled it with colour and light and song. It made the shadowy desert-land to rejoice and blossom like the rose. But who shall say that if no belief in a life to come had existed, faith would have created it out of its own experience? Who can affirm with confidence that if no foundation had been laid aforetime, religion would have been able to build its radiant City of God?

(b) It is also to be remembered that if faith did give intensity of meaning to the idea of immortality for the righteous, it also gave vividness to the thought of the future state as it concerned the unregenerate. It is not quite in accordance with historical fact to represent apocalypse, in Father Tyrrel's fashion, as concerning itself only with the notion that the world to come will be a development of the eternal life which is begun here in the experience of the saints. Apocalypse assumed belief in an universal survival of death, and it continued to assert that belief, and to inform it with wealth of meaning for all mankind. Whether or no the Jewish prophets believed in the final destruction of some men, they certainly taught that the evil life as well as the good entered into fulness of inheritance hereafter—the one of misery, as the other of bliss. And no view of the future state is true to Jewish and early Christian belief which leaves out of sight this universal element in its prophecy, or seeks to evade the burden of thought by confining our vision to the future of the City of God. Also, it is really as one-sided to think of the world to come in this exclusive way as it would be to have no concern for anything in this present life except the interests of the good, the religious, and the wise. Browning satirises this view in the lines :

“Dust and ashes, dead and done with,
 Venice spent what Venice earned.
 The soul doubtless is immortal—
 Where a soul can be discerned.
 Yours, for instance ; you know physics,
 Something of geology,
 Mathematics are your pastime.
 Souls shall rise in their degree ;
 Butterflies may dread extinction—
 You'll not die, it cannot be !”¹

(c) There is, indeed, some theological peril in any type of thought that denies the force of all general arguments for immortality, and stakes everything on the intuitions of faith. The great reason for believing in a life to come must ever be that it follows from belief in God, is an implicate of Theism. It

¹ *A Toccata of Galuppi's.*

will never be possible to maintain with success that this world was created and is governed by a perfectly wise and loving Being, who renders to every one his due and cares for every creature He has made, unless we can assert that there exists beyond the limit of this transitory life a state in which all wrong shall be righted, all inequalities done away, every promise redeemed, and every broken and frustrate life granted its fulfilment. If the problem of immortality be an ethical one, it is so in the widest possible sense. It is concerned with the claim which every man has, in virtue of his existence, on the Power who created him. The right to fulness of opportunity, to equality of privilege, to "answer and redress," belongs to every citizen of the kingdom of life, whether he be saint or whether he be sinner. And there are many not irreligious minds whose assurance of a life to come is founded less on the thought of the heroes and the righteous than on a compassionate understanding of the great masses of common men—especially the disappointed and the disinherited, the weary and the heavy laden. Hopes unrealised, dreams and visions unfulfilled, thoughts that are eternal, love that is "ever lord of death"—these are the possessions of all men, and these are the "intimations of Immortality."

THEOLOGICAL FORM.

Edward White, etc.—(a) We now pass to the consideration of the dogmatic, theological form of this theory. The classical exposition of Conditionalism from the point of view of Evangelical orthodoxy is Edward White's *Life in Christ*. It is true that there are many other works more modern than this, and in some ways more attractive, which might be taken as representative. The writings of Dr. Petavel, for instance, contain every argument, weak or strong, that can be advanced in favour of this doctrine; and they are characterised by admirable clearness and force, combined with a joyous confidence and assurance rare in these doubting times. But White's book, spite of its literal and antiquated methods of exegesis, remains on the whole the most massive defence of Conditional-

ism, and has done more than any other work to secure for that theory respectful and general consideration.

(b) White's position may be stated in few words:—Men were created with the gift of immortality, but lost it through the Fall. The doom of the sons of Adam is to perish utterly. But Christ came to restore the lost inheritance. "The object of the incarnation was to immortalise mankind."¹ Those, therefore, who hear the voice of Christ and by faith enter into a true fellowship with Him, attain to the possession of a life that is indestructible, a blessed existence exalted above the power of death. Those, on the other hand, who refuse to receive the Son of God remain under the bondage of corruption, and in due time become as though they had never been. We are not to suppose, however, that the unregenerate perish at the moment of physical dissolution. The usual arguments in favour of the belief in immortality are valid up to a certain point. They are unanswerable, "if they are taken for what they are worth, as simply probable evidence of survival or revival."² But they cannot be said to be evidence for "eternal survival." "The butterfly rises from the chrysalis, but the butterfly is not eternal."³ In short, we can infer from the usual arguments that there must be for all men a life of fuller opportunity than this—of redress, of fulfilment, of completed promise, of adequate punishment. But there is no reason to suppose that such future existence must of necessity be everlasting. If we are able to say that we have the sure and certain hope of *unending life*, we can only say it by faith in the gospel of Jesus; and that gospel contains no warrant for believing that perpetual existence is assured to any except those who believe in Christ. Rather does it expressly affirm that the doom of the impenitent is uttermost destruction. While, therefore, we may be sure that all men will survive death, we may also affirm that not all men will be everlasting.

(c) But as *existence* does not end with physical death, neither does *opportunity*. Our hope for humanity is not limited to this life. Final extinction will be the fate of those only who are found in the end to have rejected all offers of

¹ *Life in Christ*, p. 225.

² *Ibid.* p. 81.

³ *Ibid.* p. 82.

salvation and to have become hopelessly fixed in evil. "After God has gathered out of the world's population by methods of grace, on earth or in Hades, all salvable persons, there will remain for the judgment of the last day those alone who will deserve some terrible positive infliction as the antecedent to destruction."¹

(d) Such is, in barest outline, the system expounded by White; and it represents, generally, the view of those who maintain Conditionalism on purely theological and New Testament grounds. Thus Dr. R. W. Dale of Birmingham held, as his son tells us, that "as man had been created in Christ and redeemed by Him, he had no life save in Him, and it was not worthy either of the justice or the mercy of God to tolerate to all Eternity a dead universe, or a dead limb in a universe, which He had expressly redeemed from death."²

Strength of this theory.—(a) Now, it is quite evident that this position is not wanting in elements of speculative and practical strength. It has, especially, two great merits. *In the first place*, it evades a dualistic view of the issue of things, denies the immortality of evil, and affirms a final state of perfect unity and peace. Its vision of the End is a City of God which embraces in its sovereignty all surviving things. All sin and pain, crying and tears, shall utterly pass away. Evil shall disappear into the abyss of nothingness, carrying with it all souls that have chosen to live its unreal life, and so to share its ultimate death.

(b) *In the second place*, it combines with this assertion of a final peace and the victory of Christ an equally strong affirmation of the peril that besets the moral life—a real perdition, a fixed and inexorable doom. Thus it is able to attach a clear and definite meaning to the warnings of conscience and of revelation, and to press home upon the minds of men the solemnity of the moral choice and the immeasurable nature of the penalty that follows on the great refusal.

(c) These two characteristics of Conditionalism suffice to explain its attractiveness for many minds. Men like Dale of Birmingham have certainly found in this theory a way of

¹ *Life in Christ*, p. 530.

² *Biography*.

escape from the burden of the orthodox belief, on the one hand, and from the dangers of Universalism, on the other. Nor can we deny that this doctrine does seem to offer a simple and direct way of solving a heavy problem; enabling us to serve two masters—to satisfy the reason in its demand that there shall be no ultimate discord in the universe, and the conscience in its stern prophecy as to the end of an evil life. Also, the imagination is unable to refuse its tribute to the austere power and beauty of the statement of Rothe, and of all teaching which depicts the march of evil towards destruction, and declares with fulness of purpose that “the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

Criticism.—(a) But if Conditionalism thus presents attractive features when it is considered in broad outline, it exhibits grave difficulties when it is examined in detail. It is a mediating theory, seeking to act as a kind of Daysman between opposing views. It always endeavours to combine a materialistic with a spiritual view of things, a denial of immortality with an affirmation of it, the assertion that good will triumph with the prophecy that evil will also be in part victorious. This is its weakness, that it is not a true reconciliation or synthesis, but a compromise. The wit of man has never yet been able to endow any mere compromise with the attribute of enduring strength.

(b) One cannot, however, agree with those who argue that the theological type of Conditionalism would be in a stronger position if it were to say that the life of the sinner ends with this present world. Those critics who take this view think that the idea of God raising men out of death, only that they may undergo punishment before destruction, suggests a vengeful exercise of Almighty power. Also, they hold it unreasonable to suppose that any creature that is strong enough to survive physical dissolution will succumb later to the forces of annihilation. Surely the tremendous shock of the separation of soul and body must make an end of any being who is not inherently immortal. If personality can survive the crisis of death, it may well be counted indestructible.

It is to be remembered, however, that Conditionalists do not say that all who die impenitent are finally lost: they hope that many of them will be saved. Hence, they do not teach that God keeps men in life beyond the grave merely that they may suffer. He extends their existence that He may prolong their opportunity of salvation. To this, of course, it is objected that God foresees whether any man will finally be lost or no, and that, therefore, He must, on this theory, grant to some men a future existence which He knows will be an evil gift. But this is a criticism that may be urged against the doctrine of Eternal Evil as well as against that of Conditional Immortality. The supreme mystery is that life should be given to any who shall suffer final perdition. And this perplexity is not greatly increased by the thought that the history of these reaches out into the future state. As to the contention that those who are able to survive dissolution must be immortal, that the man who defeats "the last enemy" is not likely to encounter any other foe able to bring him to naught—this is an argument which assumes that we know what the experience of death really is, and what the extent of its power to shatter personality. But this is not an assumption that can be made. For all we know, the hour of death may not be so great a crisis as it seems, and may not even tend to destroy individual self-consciousness. It may rather increase the vital forces of personality by setting them free from elements that hinder their action and limit their expression. Death may, indeed, be a necessary part of the complete experience of a moral being. One cannot, therefore, feel that Conditionalism weakens its position by asserting the doctrine of Future Probation, and teaching that there is a *future* life for all, though an *endless* life for some. By doing this, it is able to admit, in some degree, the force of the natural arguments for immortality; it conserves the interests of justice; and it recognises the truth that the acceptance of Theism is possible for us only if we believe that somewhere, somehow, there shall be equality of privilege and fulness of opportunity for every soul of man. And it does all this without adding materially to the difficulty of understanding why the Heavenly

Father has created any man, knowing that it had been well for him if he had never been born. This is a perplexity which can be solved only by denying the foreknowledge of God, or else by affirming that none will ultimately be lost. The problem is not more difficult from the standpoint of Conditionalism than from that of Orthodoxy.

(c) The real weakness of Conditionalism lies in its two great denials. The first of these is its *denial that the soul is indestructible*. In this it rejects a belief which the Church has held ever since it began to give deliberate thought to the questions of faith—a belief, also, which seems to belong to every spiritual philosophy. Spirit is the supreme thing in the universe, the ultimate reality—since God is spirit. Hence it follows that if man possesses this quality of life he cannot be destroyed. Any power that could destroy spirit would be its master; and we cannot admit the existence of such a force. Nothing can be the master of that which shares the nature of God. Also, spirit is the one living thing that cannot will its own death. It cannot do so, any more than love can extinguish love, or truth make an end of truth. The assertion that a spiritual being can come to nothing is thus a saying without significance.

But apart altogether from such metaphysical objections, many rational perplexities beset us whenever we contemplate the idea of the soul's dissolution. If the human spirit does suffer extinction, it must be either by its own act or the act of God. If we adopt the first alternative, we have to ask ourselves by what means the soul is to bring about its own destruction. What deadly poison, what instrument, is it to turn against itself? No material weapon can destroy it. What spiritual agent is there that can be used? Does God, as it were, place the pistol in the hand of the soul? If so, He is accessory to its suicide, and is in effect the agent of its death.

Suppose, again, that we accept the second alternative and say that God destroys the personality. In this case the soul must agree to its own extinction, or else it must suffer death against its will. But the latter idea is inconsistent with

the Conditionalist assertion that the freedom of the will is sovereign and inviolate. And so we must suppose that somehow men will come to desire their own annihilation. But it is evident that if any creatures do come into such a state of mind, it must be either because existence is in itself intolerable, which is the purest pessimism, or else because the Almighty does by the action of His law make life unendurable for His creatures. This is, however, an idea of extreme severity. It carries over into the next life the worst horrors of human history, since it pictures a pain and misery so intense that the afflicted soul cries out for merciful death. It is a picture drawn from the torture-chamber or the place of pitiful disease. No living thing desires death unless it be driven mad by pain or sorrow; and so, if some do come in the future life to seek their own extinction, it must be because they shall have been brought to a state of insanity by sufferings beyond their power of endurance.

A third alternative may, indeed, be suggested. It may be said that men will not desire death, but will simply choose to remain in that state of sin which involves death. But this view would present evil as the executioner of the spirit. The condemned man does not wish to die, but he elects in spite of warnings to remain in the hands of a power which possesses the ability and the determination to slay him; and that power is sin. But it is evident that sin can be an executioner only if the law of God gives it the authority to kill. So that God is, after all, the ruler by whose ordinance death is brought about. He says to the sinner, "If you continue in sin you must die"; and if he answer, "I do not wish to die, but I desire to continue in my present state," his will is overridden and he is put to death. What comes, on this view, of the sacred freedom of the will, or of the contention that God does not destroy any soul? Conditionalists deal very severely with that extreme Universalism which teaches that all men will be constrained to *salvation*; but they never succeed in showing that, on their own theory, men will not be constrained to *death*.

Some writers, as we have seen, evade the difficulties that

beset the idea that spiritual beings can be destroyed, by asserting that men are not spiritual by nature, but become so at the moment of conversion. But this view renders the idea that all men survive death quite untenable, and certainly involves the denial that infants are immortal. If the unregenerate man belongs entirely to the natural order, there is evidently nothing in him that will be able to survive when he is withdrawn from that order. Further, the idea that the substance of a man's being is changed at conversion, that at a given point in his history he passes from the natural to the spiritual world, is a notion that belongs to the region of magic and fairy tale. It has no foundation in reason or ethics, but is created out of nothing to meet the necessities of a desperate cause. If spiritual life be only a high degree of moral attainment, it can be achieved by the individual; but it is impossible to show that such ethical accomplishment can effect an essential change in the nature of the personality, so as to translate it from the realm of birth and death into the region of the incorruptible and everlasting. If, on the other hand, spiritual life be a metaphysical quality of being, it cannot be achieved; it must be inherent in the substance of the soul. The corruptible cannot attain to incorruption, nor the natural to the transcendent, nor the animal to the likeness of the Divine. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

(d) The other great weakness of Conditionalism is that it *implicitly denies the organic unity of the human race*. That it does so is surely evident. No ingenuity of reasoning avails to show that the quality of immortality is, on this theory, an essential attribute of our common nature. Every essential property of any species is found in all its members. A quality which is the possession of some individuals only, of any given kind, or is capable of being developed by these, but is not the necessary characteristic of all the species, cannot be one of the distinguishing marks of that kind of creature. It does not belong to the idea of it, is an accident and not a property of its life. Hence it follows that an immortality which is not necessary and universal, but conditional and an attainment of individual men, cannot be called a human attribute, a part of the

essential nature of our race. But the idea that such a great thing as immortality can be a merely contingent and accidental quality is surely out of the question. The possession of unending life by any number of individuals really constitutes them a different species. The gulf between that which perishes and that which is everlasting is greater than the space which separates any kind of creature from another. And so it is evident that Conditionalism really destroys the unity of the race and divides it into two distinct and separate species. If there exist, at any given time, some men who are already immortal, or destined to achieve an endless life, and others who are, and will remain, evanescent and mortal, these two classes are so distinct as to belong to different orders of being. Their unlikeness is of the substance of things.

Now, it is unnecessary to show how far-reaching and destructive this conclusion is: how fatal it is to any rational psychology; how it cuts away the foundation of ethics; how it destroys the belief that Christ is the brother of every man, and that all souls are of equal value in the sight of God the Father. It is also repugnant to many generous human instincts; it suggests a certain want of race-loyalty in those who accept it; and it has small support in the facts of experience. "If," says W. D. Howells, "you have anything in common with your fellow creatures, it is something that God gave you; if you have anything that seems quite your own, it is from your own silly self and is a sort of perversion of what came to you from the Creator, who made you out of Himself and had nothing else to make you out of." This is a healthy and manly utterance, and has a bearing on the question before us. Men must rate very highly the value of human righteousness and faith if they suppose that these things are able to constitute a distinct and transcendent race of beings. Whittier showed a better perception of reality when he expressed the hope that his good and ill would be alike unreckoned, and "both forgiven through His abounding grace." The difference between one man and another in respect of virtue is so small when compared with the ideal, and the faith and merit of the best men are so defective and so in need of being forgiven,

that we cannot conceive how any moral superiority possessed by the saints can avail to secure for them the exclusive privilege of immortality. If, indeed, the infinitely precious qualities of courage and self-sacrifice were the peculiar possession of the regenerate, the question might bear a somewhat different aspect. But every one knows that this is as far as possible from being the case.

“Now may the good God pardon all good men.”

(e) It is true, of course, that evangelical Conditionalism does not say that the power to live for ever is attained as a matter of merit, but rather affirms that it is the free gift of divine grace. “The *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” But this feature of the theory, as it is stated by White and others, is really not of any importance. The grace of God is either offered to every man, or it is not. In the latter case it is not “a free gift,” but is bestowed only on such as are fitted to receive it. It has, therefore, never been really within the reach of any man who may be found in the end to be without it. He was destined from the beginning to inherit death. If, on the other hand, “the bread which endureth unto everlasting life” is truly offered to all men, we have to ask what it is that causes some to grasp a blessing which others refuse? Evidently it must be some moral and spiritual quality which they possess. The act by which a man casts himself on God in faith, and so is enabled to receive immortality, is an exercise of spiritual power, it is of the nature of virtue, it is a good deed. And so it is, after all, by an action of his own that a man comes to be immortal. Whether you say that he achieves everlasting existence by a long process of strenuous effort or by one decisive act of faith, matters very little. In either case it is to a spiritual activity of his own that he owes eternal life.

It seems, therefore, that Conditionalism must always describe life without end as a prize gained by the individual soul through the exercise of virtue, whether of faith or of works. The immortals will be able to say in the end, either, “We fought a good fight, we won our battle, and so we live

when our weaker brethren are dead"; or else, "We were given the power to lay hold on eternal life. By divine mercy we had the wisdom and the energy to stretch out our hand for the offered gift, and so to attain that grace of God by which we are what we are."

CONCLUSION.

1. Conditionalism, then, does not seem to be without grave speculative defects. It bears the aspect of a compromise and an after-thought—a theory devised to meet certain difficulties, rather than the spontaneous work of the religious genius. It affirms that a moral change can alter the metaphysical quality of the soul, or else that the spiritual substance can be destroyed. It denies the organic unity of the human race. It teaches that men will ultimately bring about their own destruction, thus implying that the right to commit suicide is recognised in the government of God, and that spirit can make an end of itself; or alternatively, it asserts that the Creator will slay His own creature, in spite of itself—which is utterly inconsistent with the Conditionalist insistence on the freedom and sanctity of the will. And, finally, while it seems to secure the triumph of God, it really fails to do so, inasmuch as it says that evil will be so far successful as to bring about the destruction of many souls, and thus to undo the creative work of the Most High.

2. These, then, are some of the objections which may be taken to Conditionalism as a reasoned systematic statement; and they have sufficient force to discredit somewhat the confident and even arrogant manner in which it is sometimes defended. But, however this may be, one recognises gladly the important elements of strength in its construction, and of practical value in its testimony. Its intense, though perhaps extreme, assertion of the moral aspect of religion is a bracing and wholesome corrective to certain tendencies of sentimental piety. It faces problems created by modern ways of thinking, especially by the scientific doctrine of development, and at least endeavours to present a solution. Also it seeks to

combine acceptance of the stern facts of the moral order with a merciful view of the end of things. Above all, it is admirable as an attempt to express, in a kind of rational symbolism, abiding moral and religious truths. Christian doctrines of destiny are, as has been already said, not to be valued merely on speculative grounds, or counted unworthy simply because they fail to satisfy the logical understanding, but are to be tested also by the extent to which they represent real spiritual interests. Judged by this standard, Conditionalism is worthy of respect. The instincts and beliefs which inspire it are of unquestionable validity. Faith does affirm that existence apart from communion with God is not worthy to be called life. An intense devotion to Christ does create the conviction that without Him there is no true being; and the experience of regeneration does often cause men to feel that they have entered into a higher state of life, and have inherited a world wherein all things have become new. Conscience does affirm that the wages of sin is death, and it is haunted by forebodings of illimitable disaster. There is abiding poetic truth in the thought that all things which oppose themselves to the divine purpose of love are stamped with mortality, empty and fleeting, ready to vanish away. Also, there can be no doubt that faith does predict the victory of goodness, the fulfilment of redemption, the final establishment, secure, unchallenged, unrivalled of the kingdom of God and Christ. These things are true; and it is because this theory of destiny affirms them with force and decision, redeems them from the danger of being forgotten, and applies them with courage to the old and baffling problem of the final state of man, that it holds a place among the great forms of Christian eschatology, receives the respect of thoughtful men, and even commends itself to many devout minds as the best solution of the great enigma.

CHAPTER IV.

UNIVERSAL RESTORATION

(OPTIMIST SOLUTION).

THE belief that evil will finally pass away through the reconciliation of all souls to God has been regarded with something akin to hatred by many devout minds. This dislike has been due in part to the conviction that it is contrary to the teaching of Scripture and of the Church; in some degree also to the idea that it exceeds the bounds of legitimate thought, and ventures into a dim and perilous region where the mind is left without the guidance of knowledge and experience; but mainly, no doubt, to a fear of its moral consequences, its practical effects on the conscience of mankind. And yet this doctrine of a limitless hope has many claims on the indulgence of the orthodox. If it errs, it is by excess of faith rather than of unbelief. It is possible only where there is a profound belief in immortality and in the omnipotence of love and righteousness; and it is at enmity with no great Christian assertion as to the nature of God, the Person of Christ, or the means of salvation. Also, no so-called heresy has received more powerful expression than this, or has had so many adherents illustrious alike for piety and learning. It may claim respect, too, because of the ability it has shown to endure from age to age, to assert itself with fresh energy after each period of defeat, and, on the whole, to increase rather than to diminish in the width and effect of its influence.

This last aspect of the matter is one of great historical importance. And it does not admit of reasonable doubt. Universalism has defied all attempts to exclude it from the evangelical Churches, and has been able to secure for itself

formal toleration in the great Anglican Communion.¹ Moreover, while it is true that this type of thought is at present out of favour in the theological schools, it certainly modifies general Protestant opinion, both lay and clerical. Indeed, an evangelical teacher of authority has recently said that "if at this moment a frank and confidential plebiscite of the English-speaking ministry were taken, the likelihood is that a considerable majority would adhere to Universalism."² Evidently, then, this is not a doctrine which can be ignored by any one who seeks to give an account of the forms of Christian Eschatology.

Now the discussion of this subject opens up a very wide field of speculation and research. In the study of Christian optimism one encounters many attractive personalities, in whose company it were good to linger. Also, there is a temptation to wander into side paths of literature and philosophy that are full of interest, but that carry us far from the line of direct advance. It will be necessary, therefore, to confine our attention to one or two of the main features of a rich and varied region. I propose (1) to show that Universalism belongs to a strain of optimistic thought which is a legitimate part of the Christian tradition; and to indicate some of the forms in which it has expressed itself in literature and theology; (2) to state its main dogmatic assertions; (3) to consider the objections that are urged against it, especially from the ethical standpoint.

I.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT.

1. *Ancient Church*.—(a) The belief in universal salvation has been so closely associated with the name of Origen that the very mention of it reminds us of that marvellous genius who has been called "the greatest gift which the Father of Lights bestowed upon the Church during fourteen centuries."³

¹ *Decision of Privy Council* (1863-1864), *Fendal versus Williams*.

² H. R. Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, p. 197.

³ Duff, *Early Church*, p. 302.

It is not to be supposed, however, that Origen was the first to entertain the hope of a limitless redemption. The idea that he was the creator of the doctrine in question rests on the supposition that the Church in the beginning held a dogmatic belief in Everlasting Evil, and that all who have since differed from that belief have been protesters and heretics, of whom the earliest was Origen. But neither the New Testament evidence nor the witness of early Christian history supports this idea. The primitive conception of judgment and torment to come was a fiery mist in which were concealed the promise and potency of all the later doctrines of destiny. When this began to evolve dogmatic forms, it produced the Orthodoxy of Augustine, the Conditionalism of Arnobius, and the Universalism whose first great apostle was Origen. We have seen that there were, from the beginning, tendencies of thought towards both the first and the second of these beliefs; and it is equally certain that there were forces at work in the speculation of the Church, from the time of St. Paul, which found their logical culmination in the teaching of Origen. There is, for instance, at least the suggestion of Universalism in Irenaeus. This writer affirms that Adam was saved, and his general doctrine is that the fortunes of the race correspond to those of the first man; so that his assertion of Adam's salvation involves the inference that all men will ultimately share his blessedness. Indeed, there are sayings in the writings of Irenaeus which indicate that he was prepared to contemplate this conclusion. Thus he says that "the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosened by the obedience of Mary." He further declares that God drove Adam out of Paradise "because He pitied him and did not desire that he should continue a sinner for ever, nor that the sin which surrounded him should be immortal, and evil without end and without remedy. But He set a bound to his sin by interposing death . . . so that man, ceasing at length to live to sin, and dying to it, might begin to live to God."¹ This is teaching which shows that, while this writer was inclined, for the most part, towards Conditionalism, there was something in his theology which favoured another

¹ *Contra Haeres.*, Lib. III. c. xxii. 4, c. xxiii. 6.

view. Hence Harnack says of him—"It was only his moralistic train of thought that saved him from the conclusion that there is a restoration of all individual men."¹

Again, we have seen that Tertullian uses expressions which suggest that some in his time believed that all men would be saved. We must also note a passage in the Second Book of the *Sibylline Oracles* which, although it is of uncertain date, is probably earlier than Origen—"The omnipotent, incorruptible God . . . shall save mankind from the pernicious fire and immortal agonies. . . . For, having gathered them, safely secured from the unwearied flame, and appointed them to another place, He shall send them, for His people's sake, into another and an eternal life with the immortals on the Elysian plains."²

There can be no doubt, also, that Clement of Alexandria asserted the doctrine of Future Probation, and that he followed the second part of the *Book of Wisdom* in teaching that all punishment is remedial in its purpose; and these two affirmations taken together, certainly lead to the idea of universal salvation, which is, indeed, at least suggested in some of Clement's rather cryptic sayings. So that the elements of Origen's system are contained in the writings of his master.

There are thus distinct indications that the hope of universal salvation existed in the Church before the time of Origen. And, indeed, the form in which the latter expresses himself does not suggest that he was conscious of proclaiming a new and startling doctrine. He speaks in one passage of the moral effects which the denial of eternal punishment had wrought in some cases,³ and it is plain that he could not have done this if Universalism had been a new thing. It is true that his system of thought was regarded with suspicion and dislike by many of his contemporaries; but there is no evidence that this antagonism was aroused entirely, or even chiefly, by his assertion that all men would be saved. Origen's

¹ *History of Dogma*, vol. ii. p. 275.

² Book II. p. 212 (Paris edit.); cf. Ballou, *Ancient History of Universalism*, pp. 37, 38.

³ Cf. Hagenbach, vol. i. p. 223 (6).

mind was so fertile in heresies that we cannot be sure which of these was the head and front of his offending. That it was not his eschatology is suggested by the fact that Gregory of Nyssa lived in the odour of orthodoxy, although he shared, and expressed clearly, Origen's hope that none would finally be lost.¹

(b) But if we agree to describe Origen as "the father of Universalism," we must yet remember that his teaching does not correspond altogether to certain modern types of Universalist thought. These latter often affirm the victory of the divine purpose with such emphasis that they are accused of denying the reality of human freedom; and they are characterised by an optimism which is sure that evil will utterly vanish away. Origen, on the contrary, pressed the doctrine of free will so far, sometimes, as to suggest that sin might go on appearing and reappearing for ever.² He taught, at least in his earlier works, that finite beings would always remain unstable in their moral condition, and that, as the lost would rise again from hell, so the redeemed might fall again from heaven. He thus foresaw a process of perpetual up-and-down through "life after life in unlimited series." Evidently this is very far from being a hopeful view. It offers a prospect of everlasting unrest, presents to the vision no sight of an ultimate goal, and denies the hope of attaining a city that cannot be moved. It reduces the spiritual universe to chaos, and makes an end of the government of God. Also, it involves a kind of moral scepticism, inasmuch as it implies a lack of faith in the ability of goodness to maintain its victory and to hold the ground it has won. It supposes that the divine grace that has sufficed to bring a man into the Kingdom will not suffice to preserve him there, that the power which has raised him from death will not avail to keep him from falling.

It is probable, indeed, that Origen felt the force of these objections, and that he outgrew this deplorable doctrine of the unstable balance. Neander points out that the references to

¹ Neander, vol. iv. p. 445.

² It is to be noted that the authority for this is mainly Jerome's testimony. Rufinus' version of the *De Principiis* does not contain this doctrine.

it in his later works are few and indistinct.¹ It is to be noted, also, that even in the *De Principiis* he expresses the belief that the whole process of change will issue in the attainment by all moral beings of a final and perfect salvation.² We may assume that as he grew older he put less confidence in the sufficiency of logic, and also in the absoluteness of man's free will, and became content to affirm simply the ultimate restoration of all souls. This is rendered probable by the fact that Gregory of Nyssa, who followed Origen very closely in all his thinking, shows no sign of having even remarked his master's doctrine of an endless possibility of falling from grace. Probably he knew that this idea had been a mere outpost of Origen's speculation, having no vital place in his thought.

(c) Further differences which separate Origen from some, at least, among modern teachers of universal salvation are these—that he professed to hold his doctrine in submission to Church authority;³ that he disclaimed dogmatic assurance on the subject of destiny;⁴ and that he recognised that an indelible mark might be left by sin on the substance of the soul,⁵ and thus affirmed the possibility of eternal loss. This latter point is worthy of note, in view of the charge of duplicity which is sometimes made against Origen. Sayings of his are quoted which declare that the truth of ultimate restoration should not be taught to the common people; and it is inferred from these that he was willing to affirm as a preacher the very doctrine which he denied as a theologian. One may question, however, the fairness of this charge. Origen speaks of "eternal punishment," not only in sermons but also in scientific works like the *De Principiis*;⁶ and this shows that he did not reject the truth contained in the idea of everlasting penalty. Like many later writers, including Gregory, Tauler, and William Law, he held his Universalist speculations to be consistent with assent to the doctrine of perdition. The conviction that

¹ *Church History*, vol. ii. pp. 404, 405.

² *De Principiis*, Lib. I. c. vi. 1, 2.

³ *Ibid.* Pref. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.* Lib. II. c. vi. 1.

⁵ Cf. Pusey, *What is of Faith*, etc., p. 130 note d.

⁶ *De Principiis*, Pref. 5.

good would ultimately attain to perfect triumph was for him a necessary resting-place alike for thought and for faith, but it was not a part of the immediate message of the Church to a sinful world. So far as the eye could reach, as it were, the prospect of punishment extended. The end in redemption lay beyond that, and was discerned by the vision of the soul. The doctrine of Eternal Punishment conveyed a true practical impression to the minds of men who were not concerned with problems of thought. It bore to them the immediate truth that an imminent and unspeakable peril besets the soul of man.

(d) *Gregory of Nyssa* (331–395), who carried on the tradition of Origen, is somewhat neglected by modern theologians; and this is surprising, for his habit of thought is not alien to the modern mind. Whoever takes the trouble to study his works becomes acquainted with one who is worth the knowing; a reverent, humane, alive and devout spirit: a lover of nature, of mankind, and of God. Gregory's doctrine of Universal Salvation is stated with absolute clearness; and it is remarkable that, in his various expositions of it, he shows no sign of feeling himself to be on dangerous ground, or even to be in a controversial region of thought. It is evident that his Universalism is associated with his doctrine of the Incarnation; but, apart from that, he seems to deduce it from his view of the *character of God*, the *nature of evil*, and the *purpose of punishment*. As to the first of these, his hope is founded on the goodness and wisdom of the Creator. "Being good, the Deity entertains pity for fallen man; being wise, He is not ignorant of the means for his recovery."¹ Concerning the nature of evil, again, Gregory holds that sin has no positive reality, and therefore must disappear. "In any and every case evil must be removed out of existence, so that the absolutely non-existent should cease to be at all."² Finally, as to the purpose of penalty, Gregory affirms this to be "to get the good separated from the evil and to attract it into the communion of blessedness."³ The pain of punishment occurs

¹ *The Great Catechism*, c. 21.

² *De Anima*, etc., p. 451 (English translation).

³ *Ibid.*

in the process of redemption "when the divine force, for God's very love of man, drags that which belongs to Him from the ruins of the irrational and material."¹ As gold with its alloy is put into the furnace that all its impurity may be burned away, so the soul, with its sin, is committed to the purgatorial fire "until the spurious material alloy is consumed and annihilated."² In other passages Gregory likens punishment to the surgeon's knife and the cautery, which are painful in their action but blessed in their results.³ And so, on all these grounds, he expects a time when every soul shall be brought into conformity with the divine image and shall wear the beauty of the Lord, when "a harmony of thanksgiving will arise from all creatures, as well from those who in the process of the purgation have suffered chastisement as from those who have needed no purgation at all."⁴

Such is a brief statement of Gregory's doctrine on this subject, drawn from various parts of his writings. His teaching is singularly catholic in tone; it is free from the speculative excesses of Origen; and it contains almost all the elements found in later constructions. One may repeat that it is surprising to find that a man of his time taught the theory of universal restitution, and yet was so far from being counted a heretic that he was held in honour as a foremost defender of the faith, an orthodox and trusted bishop, "the arbiter and moderator of the Churches."

2. *Medieval Church*.—(a) It has been a matter of debate whether Origen's eschatology was condemned by the so-called⁵ Fifth General Council (553); but the truth seems to be that while the tenets of this teacher were anathematised by the local Synod held at Constantinople in 544, the later Council did not concern itself in particular with Origen's doctrine, though it formally ratified the proceedings of the Synod.⁶

¹ *De Anima*, etc., p. 451 (English translation).

² *Ibid.*

³ *The Great Catechism*, c. 26 (p. 496, English translation).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ This Council was not truly Catholic. The Bishop of Rome was not present.

⁶ Cf. Gieseler, vol. ii. pp. 100–103. Also Ballou's *Ancient History of Universalism*, p. 281 (note). Also discussion between Pusey and Oxenham.

However this may be, there can be no doubt that Universalism prevailed widely throughout the Church during the fifth century. Probably it attained to the height of its influence in that age; which witnessed, on the other hand, the formulation of the orthodox doctrine and the triumph of that dreadful logic which led the Synod of Carthage to declare that everlasting torment was the fate of all infants who died without baptism. The extent to which Universalism prevailed at that time is evident from the direct testimony of Augustine, and from the tone in which he speaks of its defenders. But it is equally clear that after the sixth century the power of Christian optimism rapidly declined, and triumphant orthodoxy became able to prevent its obtaining definite utterance. It is true that the system of Maximus Confessor (seventh century) was certainly Universalist in its meaning, but he was evidently afraid to make this explicitly known.¹ Thereafter, for many ages, a hopeful view of destiny was never professed openly, except by men of unusual daring who generally held it along with a varied assortment of other heresies. The clearest expression given to it by any teacher of repute between the seventh century and the Reformation is to be found in the writings of John Scotus Erigena (ninth century), wherein we read:

"I wonder on what principle you deliberate and hesitate, thinking that evil and the death of eternal torments can remain for ever in that humanity the whole of which the Word of God took into Himself and redeemed; whereas true reason teaches that nothing contrary to the divine goodness and life and blessedness can be co-eternal with them. For the divine goodness will consume evil, eternal life will absorb death and misery."²

This Erigena is a dazzling and momentous figure. Appearing as he did at a time when the mind of the Church seemed asleep, he was the prophet of the far-off modern world. On the one hand, he took up again the broken succession of mystical thinkers which, beginning with Plato, went on

¹ Neander, v. 242.

² *De Divisione Naturae*, Lib. V.; cf. Maurice, *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, Book I. pp. 497-499.

through Philo and the later Christian Alexandrians to Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius. Begun again by Erigena, it stretched forward through the Schoolmen and the Friends of God to the great figures of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Transcendental movement. On the other hand, Erigena resumed that endeavour to rationalise theology which Origen and his school had begun, and which produced that elaborate and imposing structure of thought that is presented in the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas. In short, the spacious mind of this man contained elements of strict logical reasoning, which were fulfilled in Scholasticism, and others, mystic and poetical, which developed themselves in Master Eckhart and in John Tauler.

(b) These latter, Eckhart and Tauler and the Friends of God generally, never broke with the theology of the Church; but the ecclesiastical mind had reason for the suspicion with which it regarded them. Eckhart's thought was as daring as Erigena's; and his system contains elements which were developed later in the Hegelian dialectic. He asserted the unity of the soul with God so strongly as to be accused of Pantheism. He stated the doctrine of immortality sometimes in such a form as to indicate the final absorption of the finite being in the Infinite. And he affirmed the inability of good works to achieve salvation with such zeal as to suggest Antinomianism. Yet an Antinomian he was not, nor a Pantheist nor a Buddhist, but a good Churchman and devout believer; possessed, however, of that type of mystical genius which is incapable of orthodoxy. His eschatology was certainly optimistic. No one who affirmed, as he did, that all things came from God and returned to God, that the soul was identical in substance with the Creator, and that sin was mere defect of life, could believe in the eternity of evil. But he brought his speculation into apparent conformity with tradition by teaching that eternal punishment meant being deprived of God. By this, however, he could only mean the loss of that perfect intellectual knowledge of God which, in his view, constituted the blessedness of the soul.

(c) John Tauler, Eckhart's pupil, is one of the most attractive personalities in the history of the Church. His

Sermons are among the finest fruits of spiritual genius. Their message does not seem to come from a far-off time nor from an alien Church, since it belongs to that religion of the spirit which is the true catholicism, and is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Tauler's discourse ranges from the highest speculations to the simplest matters of Christian duty. He talks of the "school of the eternal light" and the things to be learned therein, of the joy of knowing God directly and seeing Him face to face, of Christ in His perfect blessedness and immeasurable sorrow, of the inability of works or sacraments to save the soul, of "the Kingdom of God which is God Himself," of forgiveness and mercy and brotherhood. On things like these he loves to dwell, and in all his teaching he combines the utmost clearness and simplicity of speech with a generous confidence that his hearers will be as interested as himself in the higher things of the spiritual life and the deeper problems of the Christian faith. The fact that the common people crowded to hear him suggests that the "dark ages" were not so very unenlightened after all. Or perhaps we may say that the very trouble and obscurity of men's lives in those days invested with a double grace and attractiveness the serene, benignant, and brave figure of this Friend of God.

The doctrine of Eternal Punishment was taught by Tauler as sincerely as it was by Origen. But the knowledge that he shared the philosophy of Eckhart, as well as one or two direct statements of his, justifies those who reckon him among the believers in the final triumph of good. Thus he says somewhere—"All beings exist through the same birth as the Son, and therefore shall they all come again to their original, that is, God the Father." Like all mystics, Tauler held the faith after a manner of his own, honestly but with a difference. In his teaching, as in his conduct, he was careless of consistency as commonly understood. Just as he sincerely professed profound submission to the Church authorities, and yet ministered to the plague-stricken people in defiance of the interdict of Rome, so in his doctrine he made assertions that were incapable of being logically harmonised. His mind dwelt in a region where things that seem at war with each

other present the promise of reconciliation; where necessity and freedom, justice and mercy, eternal loss and eternal salvation, are but different sides of one reality.¹

(d) It is very difficult to say whether the speculations of Eckhart and Tauler represented any considerable body of opinion in medieval times. There is no doubt that the popular mind of those days was in bondage unto fear, and was compassed about by apocalyptic terrors. But, on the other hand, the "ages of faith" were ages also of very intense unbelief; and a restless and daring type of thought had its home among the secret societies and heretical sects whose influence defied the rule of Holy Church. As we have seen, also, a very real freedom existed within the seeming prison of Scholasticism. It is noteworthy, too, that Aquinas, in his exposition of the orthodox doctrine of destiny, states most of the objections that are commonly taken to the dogma he defends. Of course, he may have produced these objections out of his own mind, or derived them from his study of ancient works; but the tone of his argument does suggest that he was facing difficulties that were actual and living in his own day. Much of the real life of those times is hidden from our eyes as completely as if it belonged to a vanished world; but there is reason enough for conjecture that the broad and tender humanity of St. Francis and the profound devotion of Thomas à Kempis had their intellectual counterpart in a strain of theological thought which was rich in hope and full of immortality.

3. *Modern Church.*—(a) We have had occasion to note in an earlier chapter that the Reformed Church was on the whole less liberal than the Roman in its official doctrine of destiny. But individual Protestant thinkers have, of course, diverged from the accepted eschatology far more decidedly than any of the medieval Doctors. In every age there have been found within the evangelical communions men who have represented the tradition of Christian optimism, and have been able to secure for it a measure of respect. These have not, indeed, always gone so far as to predict the salvation of all souls.

¹ *Life and Sermons of Dr. John Tauler.*

Sometimes their optimism has been no more than a disturbing influence leading them to make doubtful and ambiguous statements on the subject of destiny, as in the cases, for instance, of Butler,¹ Tillotson,² Jeremy Taylor,³ and Coleridge.⁴ An illustration of this uncertain state of mind is found in the ironical utterance of Sir Thomas Browne regarding Origen's doctrine—"Which error I fell into upon a serious contemplation of the great attribute of God, His mercy; and did a little cherish it in myself, because I found therein no malice, and ready weight to sway me from the other extreme of despair, whereunto melancholy and contemplative natures are too easily disposed."⁵

Sometimes, also, this optimistic type of thought has been content with the general assertion that somehow all things work together for good.

"All is for best, though we oft doubt
What the omnipotent dispose
Of perfect wisdom doth make out;
And ever best found in the close."⁶

(b) But, although Christian optimism has thus expressed itself with varying degrees of force, and has commonly refrained from any very definite attack upon the traditional doctrine of destiny, there can be no greater mistake than to suppose, as do some writers, that theological Universalism is a heresy of recent appearance in the Protestant Church. A glance at any bibliography of the subject is enough to dispel that delusion, since it shows us that this theory was supported in scores of books published before the eighteenth century.⁷ It had asserted itself even in Reformation times; and Petersen, in the seventeenth century, stated nearly every conceivable argument in its defence. With him, also, must be associated

¹ *Analogy* (Wheeler's ed.), pp. 26, 27, 48.

² *Eternity of Hell Torments*.

³ *Christ's Advent to Judgment*, etc.

⁴ E.g., *Notes on English Divines*, i. 235; *Table-Talk*, p. 327.

⁵ *Religio Medici*, sec. 7.

⁶ *Samson Agonistes*.

⁷ Cf. Abbott's *Bibliography*, in Appendix to Alger's *History of Doctrine of a Future Life*.

many English and German writers of those old days, whose names it were useless to mention. The truth is that the tradition which goes back to Origen, if not to the Apostle Paul, has never been wholly without its witnesses, either in literature or in theology, and has been increasing in influence since the Reformation time. Among the representatives of this tradition we may include all who have confessed the immortality of the soul, and have taught that evil is transitory, or at least have not affirmed the opposite. One would be inclined, for instance, to mention in this connection all exponents of the "larger hope"—such theologians as Dorner,¹ who have taught that the period of opportunity extends into the future state, and have admitted that it *may* issue in the redemption of all. But, if we decide to confine our view to those who may be described as positively Universalist in statement, we must trace the line of this tradition from Origen, Gregory, Maximus, Erigena, Eckhart, and Tauler, to certain of the Reformation teachers like John Denck,² and on to Bengel, Schleiermacher, Schelling, Neander, William Law, Erskine, Maurice,³ Martineau, the Neo-Kantian thinkers of the more conservative school, and the New England Transcendentalists. These may all be called Christian optimists, though they have not all made the doctrine of universal salvation a prominent feature in their teaching. For the *elaboration* of this view of ultimate destiny, we must refer to the works of men who have devoted themselves to this end. And it must be admitted that the study of this latter class of writers does sometimes become a little wearisome. For the most part, they attempt to prove their case by a somewhat one-sided and uncritical treatment of the New Testament evidence; they are often less than fair to the orthodox doctrine; and they seldom define with any clearness the nature of that salvation which they expect all men to attain. Like

¹ *System of Christian Doctrine*, vol. iv. pp. 423-428.

² Denck has suffered great injustice at the hands of Lutheran historians. For a fair and scholarly account of him, see Beard's *Hibbert Lectures* (1883), pp. 204-212.

³ Dogmatic Universalism is of the essence of Maurice's system, spite of his ambiguous sayings.

most polemical writers, they would be more convincing if they were less confident; they would gain much if they conceded a little; they provoke suspicion that the problem of destiny cannot be quite so simple as they represent it to be.

(c) It is not necessary for the purposes of this discussion that we should proceed further with our illustration of Christian optimism in the general line of its development; but it may be well to describe somewhat more fully the forms which this type of opinion assumed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the periods of its greatest power. In the eighteenth century the optimism of poets and philosophers was much more emphatic than that of religious thinkers. The former was extremely confident, while the latter was, as a rule, of a very different mood, differing, indeed, from orthodoxy only in this, that while it affirmed the doctrine of perdition in the fullest sense, it refused to assert that sin and pain would never end.

The philosophical system of Shaftesbury, for instance, is both weighty and ingenious, and he has been described with justice as enforcing "a most religious as well as a most profound view of the world."¹ But his optimism was so pronounced that Pope believed himself to be expressing it fairly in the saying:

"All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good."

Very different, however, was the tone even of the most hopeful theologians of that age. The clergyman and poet Crabbe (1754-1832), for example, says, with reference to the idea of universal salvation:

"The view is happy; we may think it just.
It may be true; but who shall say it must?"

And this is a saying that cannot be accused of audacity, any more than of poetic beauty. It may be questioned whether John Foster (1770-1843) ought to be included among men of the eighteenth century; but he is true to the spirit of that age, inasmuch as his Universalism does not go further than

¹ Pfleiderer, *Philosophy of Religion*, vol. i. p. 120.

the denial that evil is everlasting, and the hope that "somewhere in the endless futurity all God's erring creatures will be restored by Him to rectitude and happiness."¹ William Law is sometimes more dogmatic—as, for instance, in the often-quoted passage which affirms that "every number of destroyed sinners must, through the all seeking, all redeeming love of God which never ceaseth, come at last to know that they had lost and have found again such a God as this." But this is a saying which does not fairly represent the tone of Law's teaching as a whole. His intention in all his works is evangelical; it is to convert and edify. Hence his private speculation regarding the End of things seldom finds expression. Even a careful student, reading his books for the sake of their spiritual splendours, may easily miss those sayings which indicate his departure from orthodoxy; while, on the other hand, his warnings of death and perdition are many and vivid. Also, the influence of Boehme, which dominates his later thought, obscures the expression of his own personal beliefs. Yet there can be no doubt that the limitless hope remained with Law until the end. For instance, he teaches in one of the dialogues on the *Way to Divine Knowledge* that the fall of man was due to the fact that Adam had no experience to guide him in the act of moral choice which he was compelled to make; and the theological bearing of this doctrine is clear. Further, in the same book the question is put to him whether he teaches "that angels *as well as men* will be at last brought back to their first state." And his reply is that this is a matter on which we cannot obtain assurance. If the fallen angels have "nothing heavenly in them," they cannot be redeemed. But if they "are not essentially evil," they will "infallibly" be restored. "The boundless goodness of God will set no bounds to itself, but remove every misery from every creature that is capable of it."² It is plain that this teaching involves the conclusion that all men will be delivered. God will redeem all creatures except those who are incapable of it, and none are incapable of redemption who are not essentially and utterly evil. But, of course, men are not, in

¹ *Letter to a Young Clergyman.*

² *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 170–176.

Law's view, wholly evil; there is in every man "a heavenly angel that died in Paradise," and died only in the sense that it "is hid awhile."¹ And from this it follows that all men are capable of salvation, and therefore will be saved. The condition that creates doubt in the case of devils does not exist in the case of men. Thus this greatest of English mystics illustrates the temper of Christian optimism in his time; which accepted the doctrine of perdition, but discerned a light beyond it.

(d) There was thus, in the eighteenth century, a marked difference between the optimism that was expressed in literature and philosophy and that type of it which appeared in Christian theology. The former was assured, and sometimes rather facile; the latter was reverent, profound, and a little afraid to declare itself,² at least within the orthodox communions. Thus Dr. Thomas Burnett wrote an excellent defence of Universalism, but its publication was delayed till after his death.³ In the nineteenth century matters were very different. During the Victorian Age optimism reached its fullest and richest development; and its literary and theological forms corresponded very closely to each other. It was full of conviction, and it uttered itself with courage; but it was not facile, nor irreverent, nor wanting in perception of the pity and terror of things. The Idealist-Romantic philosophy, which was the dominant intellectual force of that time, was hopeful enough; but it was the enemy of all mere compromise and easy reconciliation. It insisted that no true harmony of thought could be reached except by asserting to the uttermost every element in its problems; that a real synthesis could be attained only through the fullest recognition of every discord. Similarly, the optimistic theology of the age was confident in its teaching, and its assault on the older eschatology was sustained and resolute. But it had a deep conviction of sin; it asserted retribution with the utmost force; and it saw, often with distressing clearness, the difficulties that beset a sanguine

¹ *Works*, vol. ii. p. 149.

² Cf., however, Bishop Newton, *Final State and Condition of Men*.

³ *De Statu Mortuorum*.

view of human destiny. The hopeful thinkers of that time saw the ultimate light through a world of doubt and shadows. Their enthusiasm of humanity was deeply touched with sadness, and was redeemed from despondency only by the power of faith. It was Browning, the sturdiest optimist of his day, that declared :

“There may be heaven ; there must be hell.”¹

And he praised Christianity because it

“taught original sin,
The corruption of man’s heart.”²

It is no wonder, then, that in an age when thought was of this temper there was found that sympathy with the Universalist protest which undoubtedly prevailed among many of those who then ruled in the world of letters. Literature has generally been sensitive to the same forces which have moved religious thought, and has responded to the influence of theology either in the way of agreement or opposition. While theology has seldom been good literature, literature has quite often been good theology. But there has rarely existed so close a sympathy between these two powers as was witnessed during the days of Maurice and Tennyson, when the doctrine of the limitless hope found as clear expression in poetry as it did in sermons and in the works of controversial divines. So true is this, that we cannot better indicate the various types of modern religious optimism than by illustrating the truth that not only the general position of Universalism, but even its different forms, find expression in the literature of the Victorian Age.

For instance, some Universalists, even as late as the beginning of last century, used to teach that there was *no punishment of sin after death*, that all iniquities received full retribution here, and that the world to come was one of immediate peace and blessedness for all. This doctrine was not without its value. It emphasised the often forgotten truth that evil is truly its own penalty, and always inflicts upon the sinner some present loss of life and joy. Also, it expressed

¹ *Time’s Revenges.*

² *Gold Hair.*

the hope, which we all entertain, that much of the fault and defilement that mar human character is due to inheritance and to physical defect, as well as to ignorance and false education, and may be expected to fall away like a garment at the touch of death.

“Such harmony is in immortal souls.
But while this muddy vesture of decay
So grossly wraps us round we cannot hear it.”

But, while this old Universalist heresy did have something of truth in its heart, it yet, as a dogmatic assertion, was plainly out of harmony with reason and scripture, and most dangerous in its practical results. It therefore very soon disappeared from theology. Nevertheless, it embodied a belief which continues to be held by multitudes of people, as is plain to every one who has observed the way in which the dead are commonly spoken of as being at rest and peace, whatever their manner of life may have been. And this popular sentiment has never ceased to find utterance of various kinds in literature. We all know how often modern writers express the view that death pays all debts, and cleanses the soul of all its stains.

“Past all dishonour,
Death hath left on her
Only the beautiful.”

There is, again, a type of Universalism which may be called *evangelical*, inasmuch as it is associated with belief in the incarnation and perfect sacrifice of Christ; and *has no hope for all men, or for any man, that does not rest upon the Cross*. It may be said that even Schleiermacher¹ represents this form of thought, since his theology is centred in Christ, though he supports the doctrine of ultimate restoration on many speculative and practical grounds. But more distinctly evangelical is the argument presented by Erskine in his *Letters*² and by Bishop Ewing,³ and by George Macdonald,⁴ whose sermons

¹ *Christliche Glaube*, ii. 503; cf. also Mackintosh, *Immortality and the Future*, pp. 199-201.

² *Letters of Thomas Erskine*, pp. 422-435.

³ *Memoirs*.

⁴ *Unspoken Sermons*, etc.

contain a most winning expression of the limitless hope. This view is elaborated also in works like Jukes' *Restitution of All Things*, and Cox's *Salvator Mundi*. And the literary embodiments of this type of belief have been, of course, many and striking. For illustration of this, one may refer especially to the writings of Whittier;¹ and also of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who declared that Christ suffered death, and cried upon the Cross, "I am forsaken," in order

"That of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation;
That earth's worst frenzies, marring hope, should mar not hope's
fruition."²

Once more, there is a form of optimism which, *although it is not divorced from historical Christianity nor fails to emphasise the work of Christ, is yet mainly inspired by abstract principles of thought*. Perhaps the chief representative of this school is Schelling,³ but to it also belong many theologians of the Hegelian type, like Principal John Caird.⁴ Probably, also, Maurice⁵ and Stanley may be classed with this group. Tennyson presents their point of view in the famous passage in *In Memoriam*, which is the classical expression of the Larger Hope. Whoever considers with a fair mind sections 54 and 55 of this poem is likely to recognise in them the best utterance of Christian optimism, in its combination of faith in ultimate good with intense perception of the weight and force of those darker elements in thought and experience which seem to give that faith the lie.

"Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring."

But, finally, there is a form of Universalism which *is not distinctively Christian except in the sense that it springs from the*

¹ Cf. Tauler, *Eternal Goodness*, etc.

² Cowper's *Grave*. See also *Drama of Exile*, etc.

³ *Sämmtliche Werke*, iv. 62 (on 1 Cor. 15²⁴).

⁴ Cf. sermon in *Scotch Sermons*.

⁵ *Theological Essays*, pp. 443–478.

Christian doctrine of God. The work of Christ is not an essential part of it. It does not bear the stamp of the Cross, but is simply a deduction from Theism. Martineau is a representative of this position; and the later Unitarians commonly adhere to it. Its most passionate and forcible exponent is Theodore Parker;¹ but perhaps the most complete expression of it is found in Frances Power Cobbe's essay, *Doomed to be Saved*.² This is the type of optimism that has received the most abundant utterance in literature. One example is afforded by Longfellow's lines:

"It is Lucifer,
The son of mystery.
And since God suffers him to be,
He also is God's minister,
And labours for some good
By us not understood."³

But the greatest apostle of this evangel is Robert Browning, who prophesies that

"There shall never be one lost good. What was shall live as before.
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound.
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round."⁴

I doubt, however, if even Browning expressed the optimist faith with such intensity of conviction as is found in Whitman's verse:

"whatever else withheld, withhold not from us
Belief in plan of Thee inclosed in time and space,
Health, peace, salvation universal.
Is it a dream?
Nay, but the lack of it a dream,
And, failing it, life's lore and wealth a dream,
And all the world a dream."⁵

(e) Let this suffice, then, for a general sketch of Christian optimism in its historical development. Enough has been

¹ *Discourse on Matters pertaining to Religion.*

² *Hopes of Human Race.*

⁴ *Abt Vogler.*

³ *Golden Legend.*

⁵ *Leaves of Grass.*

said to show that this type of religious opinion has a legitimate place in Christian theology, and to illustrate the impressive nature of its testimony. That testimony is reverent and humane; it is founded on deep things in thought and in faith; and it generally bears the mark of having been learned at a great cost. Meredith says somewhere that "it is impossible to think at all, and not to think hopefully"; and certainly it is not possible to attain to an abiding hopefulness without thinking a good deal. An unreflective geniality is not optimism, any more than ill-temper is pessimism. The face of the world is not to be read at a glance; the unthoughtful mind will see in it nothing but the reflection of its own passing moods. Extempore judgments as to the meaning of life are without the slightest value, and are as likely to be dark as bright. It is only among those who have thought long and carefully on the import and purpose of things that any assured conviction on the matter can be found. And it is certain that many of the most gifted and laborious thinkers have agreed with the testimony of Goethe—"I have ever believed in the victory of good over evil." In any case, those optimists who have been distinctively Christian in their standpoint have, as a rule, been men of learning and of thought, and their hope has not been easily reached or held. They have not been strangers to grief more than other men, nor unconvinced of sin, nor blind to the dreadful facts of life. And their belief, whether mistaken or no, was gained through an act of faith—a hard and difficult act. It is not easy to believe in the supremacy of goodness in a universe that groaneth and travaileth together in pain. Nor is it a simple matter to discern that

"love must be
The meaning of the earth and sea."

After all, the only really hopeful thing in the world is the vision of God—and the vision of God is not easily achieved.

II.

EXPOSITION.

1. Having thus completed the more general and historical part of this study, we must now go on to state and consider the chief dogmatic assertions which characterise the optimistic theory of destiny. In proceeding to this task, it will be necessary to keep in view the statement already made regarding the various forms which this doctrine has assumed. Also, I shall not seek to expound the position of any one thinker, but will endeavour rather to set down in order the main affirmations which are embodied in this system as a whole.

(a) Universalism assumes, in agreement with all Christian theology, that God is to be conceived as a "Person," in the sense that we can ascribe to Him thought, purpose, and will, and also love, justice, and truth. But it dwells with special emphasis on the belief that "God is love." It also postulates personal Immortality, not as a thing to be attained by faith and virtue, but as an original possession of the soul.

(b) Again, it generally affirms that evil has only a negative existence, inasmuch as it is the opposite of good which alone has positive being. Universalism, however, is not to be identified with this view of the nature of evil, and is often content to affirm simply that goodness is stronger than its opposite, and, therefore, must in the end prevail. Martineau's position, for instance, is that evil is in its nature self-destructive. "All dominant evil is in the last resort doomed to natural suicide, and we have a divine guarantee against a perpetuity of corruption."¹

(c) Further, Universalism teaches that God has a purpose for His creatures, which is to deliver them from sin and sorrow, and bring them to a state of final blessedness.

(d) Once more, this doctrine asserts the freedom of the

¹ *Study of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 116; cf. *Studies of Christianity*, pp. 187, 197, 198.

will; but it denies that this freedom is so absolute as to permit of eternal persistence in sin. It counts it incredible that God has bestowed on any creature the power to perpetuate evil, and work its own everlasting misery. Such an endowment would not be a good gift; and all the gifts of God are good.

(e) Finally, it maintains that God's purpose of salvation will certainly be effective in the case of every soul; and this, not through the action of any outward constraint, but by the persuasive ministries of grace. It holds that to deny this is to say that God will be defeated; which is a contradiction in terms, since He is God simply because He cannot be overcome. A king who can be made to suffer a final disaster is evidently confronted by a power that is stronger than himself; and such a king cannot be the supreme God. If it be urged that the everlasting continuance of some souls in sin does not involve the frustration of the divine will, inasmuch as His purpose does not include the salvation of all, Universalists reply that, if this be so, God cannot intend the total destruction of sin, which can only be achieved through the salvation of every sinner. But to say that God does not purpose to make an utter end of evil, is to assert that He is not wholly opposed to it, and is to deny that He is the God who is revealed in the Christian gospel and in the conscience of mankind. It is evident that if He be indeed the implacable enemy of sin, He cannot desire anything less than its complete extinction; and the New Testament undoubtedly declares that this is in fact His purpose. Moral experience also testifies to the same effect, since it finds the principle of goodness to be opposed to the principle of evil without reserve and to the uttermost. It is therefore plain that the loss of any soul, involving as it must the persistence of sin, would mean the defeat of the divine intention, which is *to make an end of sin*. And, seeing that we cannot entertain the idea of such a defeat, we must believe in the final redemption of every soul.

Of course, there is an obvious objection to this conclusion. It is urged that if the permanence of sin would mean the defeat of God, so does its present existence. Moral disorder is a fact

of the universe, although of that universe God is the Lord; and even though it were always to remain a fact, His sovereignty would stand. He willed that evil should not begin, yet it appeared; He wills that it should end, and yet it may endure. The one of these statements does not imply the frustration of His purpose any more than does the other. But the answer that is commonly given to this objection is that the existence of sin does not involve the defeat of God, since His purpose did not exclude its appearance in the world. He did not will that it should be, but He willed the conditions which made it possible. He permitted evil when He created a race of moral beings; for the power of doing right involves the danger of doing wrong. And we cannot say that such permission of sin is inconsistent with the divine goodness and sovereignty unless we make the same assertion as to the creation of mankind; since the one is a necessary part of the other. Also, it is unreasonable to say that the temporary continuance of sin is a frustration of the divine intention to make an end of it; for it is evident that a disorder which has its root in the free will of man cannot be cured suddenly or by force, but only through the patient working of spiritual influence. Further, the argument, that whatever God permits now He may permit for ever, is one that cannot be applied to all the facts of life. Malignant disease and physical death are facts of the present order, but no theologian argues that they may endure eternally. We can reconcile the existence of these things with our conception of the Divine character only on the supposition that they will cease to be. And, in like manner, we are able to harmonise our faith in God's goodness with the existence of sin, only if we believe that it will finally pass away.

Christian optimism thus finds its doctrine of the End to be justified from many points of view. When we think of the *Divine character*, we see that it is love; and infinite love has an infinite power to save and to reconcile. When we consider the *freedom of the human will*, we see that it is limited by the nature of things, by the moral necessity that good should prove itself stronger than evil. When we reflect on the

nature of evil, we see that it is transitory, carries in it the seeds of its own destruction, has no place among immortal things. Finally, when we think of God as *having a purpose*, we see that this purpose is universal, and must in the end prevail.¹

2. Now, this is a line of argument to which we must in fairness attribute considerable force. Nor does it represent the whole strength of the Universalist case. Apart altogether from its appeal to the character of God, this theory is able to draw a powerful argument from the pathos, inequality, heart-breaking insufficiency of the human lot in this present life. And thus it can present the doctrine of immortality with full confidence as the solution of our most difficult problems. We cannot disguise from ourselves that the apologetic value of belief in a future state is very much weakened when it is combined with the assertion that death is the end of opportunity. If the fate of all men be fixed when they leave this world, it is vain to say that the next world will afford them redress for the many injustices they may have suffered in this mortal life. It is quite impossible to maintain that only the righteous have endured wrongs here, and that the unregenerate have no claim for redress hereafter. Yet, in the orthodox view, none but the saints will derive any benefit from existence beyond the grave. For the rest of humanity, that existence will be simply the crown of sorrow. Universalism, on the other hand, is able to affirm that all wrongs will be righted, all injuries redressed, all injustice done away, and is thus in a position to give full value to the faith in immortality, and to the thought that "only the infinite pity is sufficient for the infinite pathos of life."

3. This doctrine is also able to give complete significance

¹ For expositions of Universalism other than those mentioned in this chapter, see James Freeman Clarke, *Orthodoxy: Its Truths and Errors*; Ballou, *Ancient History of Universalism*; Alger, *History of Doctrine of a Future Life*; Neander, *History of Planting of Christianity*, vol. ii.; Farrar, *Eternal Hope*, and *Mercy and Judgment*; Winchester, *Dialogues*, etc.; Stopford Brooke, *Sermons*; John Hamilton Thom, *Sermons*. Also *Latest Word of Universalism*, *Universalist Book of Reference*, and other publications of the Universalist Publishing House.

to the great ethical truth of the organic unity of the race. Universalists think that our theology has recognised clearly the oneness of humanity in its doctrines of the Fall and of the Atonement, and yet failed to discern the bearing of this truth on eschatology. If we are all members one of another, if every life is simply a part of a greater whole, if all our actions, whether good or evil, find their place in the vast complicated web of human history, then it is difficult to see how the perfect salvation of any is possible without the redemption of all. Suppose we divide the race into the two great classes of the lost and the saved, we yet cannot conceive these two as altogether dissociated from each other. A million subtle and unbreakable cords of moral relation stretch across the gulf between them. In the great credit and debt account of the universe, it cannot be said that the creditors are all found among the saved, and the debtors all among the lost. Who can doubt that many sinners have just claims against many saints? Who can doubt that many a man who has found salvation towards the end of an evil life will, on the great day of reckoning, see not a few of his victims among the multitudes of the lost? And this consideration is only one among many which bring home to us the truth that we are all bound together in one bundle of life, and show us how hard it is to believe that the perfect blessedness of some of us can be harmonised with the ultimate perdition of others. This is really a radical problem, and its weight is felt by many persons who are not in the least theological. I suppose, for instance, that it explains the saying of Abraham Lincoln, "it must be everybody or nobody." And Hawthorne expressed it with great force when he wrote, referring to the degraded poor of our cities—"Unless these slime-clogged nostrils can be made capable of inhaling celestial air, I know not how the purest and most intellectual of us can reasonably expect ever to taste a breath of it. The whole question of eternity is staked here. If a single one of these little ones be lost, the world is lost."

4. These, then, are some of the elements of speculative strength in the theory that evil will ultimately come to an end through the reconciliation of all souls to God. We are not

concerned to deny that they are important and impressive. It is, indeed, on its speculative side that this theory seems least open to attack. It is evident, however, that the argument it presents is founded partly on a philosophy that is not held by every one. Pragmatists and Pluralists, for instance, and those who are satisfied with a dualistic view of things, will not recognise the value of its contentions; nor will those who say, with Boehme, that evil as well as good has its origin in God. It is evident, too, that those who, believing in naturalistic evolution, do not accept the doctrine of a necessary immortality for all, are outside the range of the Universalist artillery. So are those who assert that we cannot attribute "purpose" to God, or who believe that He has so limited Himself, in the creation of a moral universe, that even the issue of things is beyond His control. No doubt, also, many will think that Christian optimism reasons too confidently from general principles, forgets that there may be elements in the problem of destiny which it overlooks, affirms as certain what can only at best be matter of hope, and shows unwarranted assurance in projecting the lines of present experience into the unknown future.

A recent writer of distinction, following Professor William James, describes Universalism as an "idyllic" theory. The phrase is not very fortunate or fair. An idyll has no tragedy or stress in it; and I am not aware of any important teacher of the optimistic school whose view of things is wanting in these elements. Who can see anything "idyllic" in Origen's doctrine of renewal by fire, or in the austere teaching of Martineau, who likens the sufferings of the lost soul to the torments of Prometheus?¹ But the fact that learned writers do describe Universalism in this way indicates a widespread conviction that its confidence arises from the ignoring of many grim and terrible facts; that it overlooks the desperate wickedness of the world; that it lives in an atmosphere of thought which is remote from reality, and sees things in a golden summer mist.

Now, the force of the considerations which inspire this

¹ *Studies of Christianity*, p. 197.

latter objection to Christian optimism is beyond doubt. Experience, alas! does reveal to us many things in life which give the lie to hope. One suspects that there are times when the strongest believer in the victory of goodness feels as if his creed were the emptiest of delusions unreal as the pageantry of dreams. And yet, Christian apologists do well to be cautious in their appeals to the dark and menacing side of things. Pessimism is a dangerous ally of religion. The very facts to which we point in order to destroy Universalism are the enemies of all belief in the spiritual view of the world, in the dignity of the soul, in immortality, in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The pettiness, the baseness, the cruelty and selfishness, the sheer brutality of the world—these are realities which, if we submit to their tyranny, will make an end of faith. Faith is in its very nature the assertion that there is a truth that transcends the dreadful truths of experience. It sees death, but believes in life eternal; it faces sin and suffering, but confesses a perfect Love and Pity; it recognises the cruelty of nature, but declares, "Behold the birds of the air . . . your heavenly Father feedeth them." And so, if we are to blame optimism because it prophesies the complete victory of good, in spite of the world, the flesh and the devil, we must see to it that we make clear our own grounds for affirming that

"God is love indeed,
And love Creation's final law."

III.

ETHICAL OBJECTIONS.

1. The speculative side of Christian optimism is not, however, the aspect of it which has mainly provoked attack. Objection has been taken to it chiefly on moral and practical grounds. And it is to this side of the controversy that we must now address ourselves.

It is frequently urged that Universalism *has a bad and*

even fatal, moral influence, inasmuch as it belittles sin, encourages a slack view of the moral government of God, and weakens our sense of the tremendous issues that depend upon the act of moral choice. Edward White, for instance, calls it "A death-dealing heresy."¹ Franz Delitzsch states directly that a glance into the life of Petersen convinces us that "even the noblest soul may be absolutely perverted in all its relations by this doctrine."² Dr. Pusey speaks of Dr. Farrar's book on *Eternal Hope*, not merely with intellectual dissent, but with moral indignation.³ And these are but examples of a tendency which we find to be very strong in certain quarters—a disposition to meet the advocates of Universal Restoration not only with arguments that appeal to reason and the Scriptures, but with the assertion that their position involves a certain want of earnestness on the part of its defenders, and is fraught with great danger to the souls of those who accept it.

This tendency seldom embodies itself in the definite statement that Universalist teachers throughout the ages have shown unusual depravity. Indeed it could not, in view of the plain facts of history. No doubt such a charge has been made sometimes; but only by perfervid theologians during an attack of that controversial intoxication which will occur even in blameless lives. Christian optimism, whatever its faults may be, has no reason to be ashamed when we call the roll of its apostles—beginning with Origen the Adamant, and ending, say, with Law, Erskine, Maurice, and Martineau.

Moral distrust of this theory has generally, however, taken the form of suggesting that it is dangerous as a practical gospel taught to the masses of men. These, it is urged, will see in the doctrine that all souls must finally be saved an encouragement to delay moral decision, a ground for believing that however they may live in this present world they are assured of final blessedness—a reason for saying, "We will risk the punishment that may await us hereafter, since we know

¹ *Life in Christ*, p. 532.

² *System of Biblical Psychology*, p. 552.

³ *What is of Faith*, etc., pp. 1, 2.

that beyond it lies eternal joy; we will venture hell since, however long it may last, it will be as but a moment in everlasting years." Thus may the spiritually unlearned pervert this doctrine to their own destruction.

Now this argument is perfectly legitimate, and has naturally peculiar weight with preachers of the gospel. It represents a widespread fear of the Christian mind. It is, indeed, the root of the dislike which is felt by many, not only for Universalism but also for the idea that probation extends beyond the grave, and for the theory which professes not to know whether all men will be saved or not. The old Evangelical doctrine owes its force as a practical appeal mainly to its assertion that death may come at any hour and end the day of grace. And whoever doubts this assertion, or is not sure about the issue of things, does, as certainly as the Universalist, lose the right to say, "In this life only there is hope." Altogether, it is not surprising that the fear of losing power in urging the call to decision has been a strong check on every kind of eschatological speculation.

This fear is, however, not a thing that can be tested by an appeal to history. The Larger Hope has never been preached to such an extent as to enable us to estimate its practical results. In the ancient Church it was for a time widely believed; but Augustine certainly makes no charge against the moral character of the "very many" who in his day held this heresy. History is thus practically silent on the question of the actual effects which have followed the denial of eternal punishment. And this is important, *since history is the only ultimate judge of the moral value of doctrines.* When that august and unerring authority withholds its verdict for want of evidence, other and less weighty tribunals are at serious disadvantage. On the other hand, history undoubtedly discourages confident judgments as to the practical fruits of religious opinion. It does not permit us to attach importance to evidence which goes to prove that in one or two cases a certain belief has had unfortunate moral effects. It shows that nearly every great doctrine has been misused, and that human nature exhibits a perverse ingenuity in turning

lofty truths to ignoble ends. It teaches us, further, that every creed that is worth professing has been accused of moral depravity by its opponents; and it records a hundred prophecies of the terrible evils that were to result from the adoption of certain opinions—most of them proved in the event to have been utterly vain. So that the general effect of an appeal to history is to enforce the lesson, "Judge nothing before the time." Also, those whom history chiefly calls us to admire were men who sought for truth as the pearl of great price, and left results to the God of truth; who were obedient to their visions, and found in the end that these visions had not deceived them.

As to the theoretical aspect of this question, we may grant that the mere speculative denial of endless evil is not likely to prove immoral. How can we weaken goodness by asserting its final triumph, or strengthen sin by saying that it must perish? But we may also agree that it would be a foolish and perilous thing for the Church to declare, as its practical message to sinful men—"You will certainly all be saved in the end." A perplexing gospel, indeed, to preach to unspiritual people closely beset by the many temptations of this our mortal life. We must admit, however, that if we belonged to a Universalist Society we would object to our position being put in any such way. We should probably say something like this:—The belief in final reconciliation is not a matter that concerns the immediate message of the gospel. It deals with an issue so remote as to have no bearing on the practical doctrine of future punishment. The important thing to remember about sin is that, whether it be endless or no, it is in its nature a bondage and a curse, the poison of life and the enemy of souls, working unspeakable misery and ruin both here and hereafter. Our doctrine of retribution is not gentle or indulgent, but full of terror. We deny that penalty is ever remitted; though we confess that repentance alters its character, changing it from mere pain and loss to a helpful and friendly discipline. We deny that any man can ever escape the consequences of an evil life by contrition in the article of death. We say that saint and sinner alike receives the

reward of his deeds—that “God is not mocked,” and that “whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.” We deny nothing as to future punishment except that it is absolutely without an end. And we make that denial because to assert the contrary would be inconsistent with our thoughts of God, and would mean the betrayal of that ideal of goodness which is the object of our worship. We are sure, also, that “nothing in the long run can strengthen the arm of moral appeal that is not in harmony with our highest conceptions of the divine character.”¹

In some such manner as this we would expect theological optimists to answer the charge of teaching an immoral doctrine. Indeed, this statement is drawn in substance from their works. Whether it is satisfactory or no, is, of course, a matter of personal opinion. But it certainly serves to remind us of the perplexing truth that the same moral sense which inspires some with a fear of Universalism, demands in others the assurance that evil shall have an end. There are unquestionably some men and women for whom belief in ultimate good is an anchor of the soul which, if it were to fail, would leave them adrift on the wintry seas of unbelief. And this feature of the situation is one that surely ought to be remembered by those who are honestly concerned about the practical results of a hopeful eschatology. One is sometimes disposed to think that the chief danger of the Church to-day, in this regard, is to be found, not in any believing message, whether orthodox or no, but rather in the cowardice that will not face the ultimate issues, in the inanity of mind that cares for none of these things, in the subtle spirit of unbelief that veils as with a creeping mist the faith in immortality.

2. Another objection to dogmatic Universalism, from the ethical point of view, is that it *implies the coercion of the will by the power of God*. “The power of grace,” says Dorner, “can never fall into the physical sphere. Therefore rejection of grace remains possible.”² That is to say—men, as such, are in possession of free will; they cannot lose it without

¹ Gordon, *Ingersoll Lecture*, p. 67.

² *System of Christian Doctrine*, iv. p. 428.

ceasing to be themselves. And therefore they may eternally choose evil. To deny this possibility is to suppose the existence of some compelling force which in subduing the soul to itself must at the same time destroy its very identity as a moral, responsible being. To maintain that, by the mere power of the evolving purpose of God, sin will certainly come to an end, is to confuse physical with moral things, and is to imply that the development of spiritual beings is of the same kind as that of material worlds. It makes an end of freedom, and therefore of morality, and introduces the idea of necessity into the kingdom of the soul.¹

Now there is certainly "vigour and rigour" in this contention, and it is, at first sight, very impressive. As we consider it, however, we begin to feel that there is something in it that is not quite sound. We begin to suspect that it is an unsympathetic and external sort of reasoning. We come to be troubled with the thought that it presents an argument which might be urged against every type of religious assurance and every kind of belief in the sovereignty of God. There is no form of Christian faith that does not rest its hope of coming good on the gracious intention of the Almighty. Every man who looks in humble expectation for a place among the blessed, every one who cherishes a good hope for his beloved dead, every one who believes that some at least of the human race will certainly be saved, places his confidence in the thought that God has a purpose of good towards us—a purpose which He will accomplish. The grace of God is the only security of man; and the grace of God is simply His power working by appointed means towards an end of redemption. Without the divine decree, no sacrament, no faith, no works, could convert and save the soul. To believe this is of the essence of piety. No confidence or trust, however limited, which draws its life from anything else than faith in the loving will of the Father has the slightest claim to call itself religious. But if this be so, it is evident that the hope of the Universalist rests on the same grounds as that of the Calvinist or the Roman Catholic or any other Christian. No Christian is a

¹ Cf. Griffith Jones, *Faith and Immortality*, pp. 241-248.

fatalist, nor thinks of God as achieving His ends in the spiritual sphere by means of mechanical compulsion. Every religious man believes that divine grace operates in a moral and rational way; working within us, leavening the thought, purifying the will, persuading the reason, and so subduing us to itself. And this is just as true of the Universalist as of any other Christian thinker. He differs from others simply in his conception of the extent of that redemption which it is the will of the Most High to accomplish. While they think that it is of limited sweep, he believes that it will be effective for all; but he and they are entirely agreed as to the nature of the agency which is to bring it about. He is not, therefore, peculiarly open to the charge of denying the freedom of the will; nor is the difficulty of reconciling liberty and necessity greater for him than for others. After all, predestination, in some sense, is undoubtedly a New Testament doctrine. It is also as inseparable from a speculative belief in God as it is inherent in religious faith. And the perplexities it creates, from the ethical point of view, are neither increased nor diminished by the assertion that the Divine purpose is of universal sweep. These remain of equal force, whether we say that God intends to redeem a chosen number of men, or whether we affirm that He wills the total destruction of evil in every soul. The grace that is able without compulsion to save some, may be able without compulsion to save all.

3. There remains, however, one objection to Universalism, on its ethical side, to which it is difficult to find a conclusive answer. This objection is that *to assert the final salvation of every man is really to deny the existence of any ultimate risk in the moral life*. The other two theories of future destiny do clearly conserve the idea of uttermost spiritual peril. According to the orthodox doctrine, that peril is the loss of all that makes life worth the while, and the falling into a state in which repentance, joy, light, hope, peace are all for ever out of reach. According to the theory of Conditional Immortality, again, the danger that threatens the soul is actual extinction of the whole personality. Thus these have both a definite answer to give to the question—What is

perdition? what is the peril that spiritually besets us? what are the stakes in the conflict with sin? Each of them says that if a man crosses a given line in his course of evil he falls into a pit out of which there is no release.

Now Christian optimism also has an answer to this question, and it is one to which we cannot deny the attributes of pity and terror. In its view, the peril of the sinner is the risk of protracted misery, of a long, long struggle to regain ground, of an inconceivable torment in the fire that purges the soul, of paying to the last mite the debt he owes to the order he has offended and the immutable law he has broken. The penalty of remaining impenitent throughout this age may be to spend the whole of the succeeding age in reaping the harvest of sin. He who spends to-day in evil will inherit a bitter to-morrow. He who will not be salted with the good flame of self-denial here, must be salted with the penal flame of retribution hereafter. Perdition is the state into which the soul falls that persists in evil until it has brought upon itself a fearful condition of weakness and misery, despair and hopelessness, out of which it will be impossible for the great Physician to deliver it, except by long and weary ways of pain and fire. In Browning's *Ring and the Book*, the Pope expresses the earnest prayer that the criminal Guido may see the truth and repent one instant ere his death, and so escape the awful process by which God redeems the soul that passes hence impenitent.

“So may the truth be flashed out by one blow,
And Guido see, one instant, and be saved.
Else I avert my face, nor follow him
Into that sad, obscure, sequestered state
Where God unmakes but to remake the soul
He else made first in vain; which must not be.”¹

Universalism can go as far as this in its thought of future doom. It says that the soul must ultimately be redeemed, since God can make nothing in vain. But it may well ask men to turn their eyes in awe and reverence from the contemplation of the sad, obscure, sequestered state

¹ *Ring and the Book*, x. lines 2127-2132; cf. Origen, *De Principiis*, Lib. II. c. x. 5.

where the impenitent dwell, and to bow in dread before the thought of those methods whereby God brings a soul to nothingness and uttermost destruction, in order that He may make it again according to His will. Even as this earth, according to old tradition, is to be destroyed by fire that a new earth may appear in purity and peace, so the obstinate soul has to be unmade by the fearful hand of God, broken down and resolved as in flame, that it may appear at last in the white garment of the redeemed. This is Universalist doctrine; and it is full enough of terror and judgment, weighty enough in awe and menace. Nothing can exceed the severity of the teaching that the world to come is for the obstinate evil-doer a place wherein "God unmakes but to remake the soul."

It may, however, still be said that Universalism does imply that there is no *ultimate* risk in the moral life, no capital penalty, no final doom. It sees a morning beyond the darkest night, recovery at the end of the direst disease, peace as the issue of the weariest pain, and home as the goal of the wandering feet. There is thus no limitless peril for the soul. Evil cannot inflict a final doom. It cannot make good its direst threats, or bring upon us the worst that we fear. The moral universe is like a country which does not inflict on the criminal either death or penal servitude for life. In the moral adventure of this mortal state, men are like mountain climbers with a life-line round their waist; they may fall far and deep, but they cannot crash to destruction at the foot of the precipice, and they are sure to be brought to safety again. They are like gamblers who cannot stake, or lose, their all, or like swimmers in shallow water who know that they cannot drown.

Universalist teaching does certainly lend itself to such a construction. Its assertion, that all men will attain to the fulness of beatitude, may be understood to mean not only that sin and suffering will cease, but that there is no such thing as the danger of permanent spiritual loss. And when Christian optimism goes so far as this it does seem to fail of complete harmony with the witness of the conscience, the forebodings of the soul. We do feel that, in the fight with evil, we face a foe who means the very worst. We do have

the conviction that the conflict with besetting sin is a conflict to the end. We set no limits to the danger that encompasses our life. We have the stern sense which belongs to the soldier when he marches into real battle—the sense that our risk is not only pain, disablement, defeat, but incurable wounds, ultimate disaster. There can be little doubt that this is the testimony, not only of the common conscience, but of the great moral fighters, the saints and the heroes of the spiritual life. Is it not the meaning of St. Paul's cry—"O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death"? Is it not implied in the saying of Jesus—"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul"?

This is the element in the witness of the moral sense that is emphasised by the doctrine of eternal punishment, and it is the fact that gives us pause when we are asked to believe that there is no such thing as final penalty. We may go a long way with optimism, and yet may dissent from it here. We may agree that all sin and suffering and all alienation from God and opposition to His will must finally cease, and yet may not be persuaded that every soul, no matter how long or how terribly it may have sinned, must attain at last to an equal blessedness with all the saints. We may hope that the discords will pass from the music of humanity, and yet may believe that the minor chords will remain—regret, impoverishment, irreparable loss. No soul may be lost, and yet many souls may lose. If, indeed, no final penalty can be incurred, and if it will be all the same at last for the worst and for the best of men, it is hard to explain the warnings of conscience, the urgency of the voice of Christ, or the pathos of the Christian appeal through all the bygone years. It may surely be that a man may persist so long in evil ways as to inflict incurable injury upon his nature. It may be that even after all the mysterious discipline of the judgment, all the terrors of spiritual death, all the patient efforts of the divine grace, he shall find himself, at last, for ever incapable of the highest and best, with something lost that might have been saved, and something dead that might have been alive.

Conclusion.

I have thus endeavoured to sketch the course of Universalist speculation and to give an account of its theoretic and practical aspects, with an examination of the arguments commonly used against it. Our discussion has served to show that this view of the End of things has its source in an element of New Testament teaching; and that it is entitled to a hearing within the Church, being, in fact, only the application to eschatology of that optimistic type of thought which has never ceased to be a part of the catholic tradition. We have seen that Universalism is able to present a strong case for itself on speculative grounds; also, that the ethical objections which are urged against it are not all of much force; and, finally, that its main weakness lies in its failure to affirm that there is an ultimate peril in the spiritual life—that this is the point at which it parts most distinctly from the general Christian tradition, and seems to present the greatest difficulty when regarded in the light of moral experience.

But whatever we may think of Universalist teaching, in the rigour of its dogmatic form, we must gladly admit that it stands for a priceless element in our religion—for the assurance that truth is stronger than error, good than evil, light than darkness; and that God has a purpose of redemption in His Son which exceeds in sweep and depth and beauty all that we have ever dreamed. Christian faith in all ages has cherished a secret hope richer and more tender than it has been able to express, and has always been the prophet of the victory of God. The things that finally abide in the light of the face of Christ are not fear and pain and death, but faith and hope and love. And God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we are able either to ask or to think.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER



REVIEW AND CONSTRUCTION.

INTRODUCTORY.

(a) AN enlightened perception of one's own ignorance is a desirable possession; and it is a thing which the student of eschatology is likely to acquire. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine any subject of research better fitted than this to discourage confidence and to chasten the spirit of assurance. It is little wonder, perhaps, that many scholars have given up this branch of theology in a kind of intellectual despair, and have betaken themselves to fields of inquiry where the ground is more secure and the prospects of a harvest less remote. And yet, however highly we may estimate the value of a lesson in humility, we are loath to admit that nothing better than this is to be obtained from the study of so great a theme. Still less are we able to agree that a general uncertainty of mind as to the Last Things can be the permanent mood of Christian thought. It is a somewhat dangerous thing to say that our religion has not, and never can have, a positive eschatology. The different branches of theological science are so closely related to each other that to paralyse any one of them is to weaken all the rest. If religious thought surrenders any of its ancient territories it may have to go on withdrawing itself from one position after another, until it is left with no dominion to defend, and without any place among the powers that rule the world. Moreover, it is especially perilous for theology to proclaim itself defeated and impotent in that region of thought with which we are here concerned. If men be told that the Christian religion has no definite message regarding the things of the world to come they will be apt to distrust its assurance in more immediate matters; they will

suspect a prophet that professes to lead them on their path of life, and yet is in doubt about the end of the journey; they will say—You know not whither we go, and how can you know the way?

(b) But apprehensions of this kind are really without foundation, since the Christian view of immortality is never likely to be governed by agnostic influences. It may be that the present mood of religious thought, in this as in some other departments of theology, is one of discouragement; but this mood will pass. It may be that the hope of the endless life burns to-day with a chastened light; but it will brighten again. It may be that we have tended of late towards a position that really denies the rationality of faith, and towards a temper of mind which shrinks from the greater adventures and shuns the ultimate problems; but this is so foreign to the genius of Christianity that it is certain to yield ere long to a braver and a more believing spirit. It is characteristic of our religion that it never despairs of knowledge, nor is willing to be divorced from form or separated from dogma. It has never been content to be "unclothed," but has always sought to be "clothed upon" with a better and more enduring garment of thought. If it is sometimes a pilgrim, it is always a stranger in the land of doubt. It is responsive to the intellectual demands of each succeeding age; and it always aspires to clearness of vision. It has never sought to evade the problems of faith, and least of all those that relate to belief in a life to come. We have seen how the great thinkers of the Church, like Origen and Augustine, Erigena and Aquinas, with so many later philosophers, mystics, and poets, have accepted the challenge of the future, and sought to meet its questions with a clear reply. And we cannot doubt that these have represented the true genius of our faith and the tradition which is likely to prevail. Christianity has always been a religion of the endless life and the resurrection from the dead; its treasure has always been stored, and its hope has ever been fixed, in that which is within the veil; and it cannot abate its testimony regarding these transcendent things, or its interest in the problems they create, without departing from its tradi-

tion, forgetting the Easter light in which it began, and ceasing to be the witness to the Conqueror of death.

(c) We may claim, indeed, that the line of historical study which has been indicated in these lectures does not encourage the notion that eschatological thought has reached its term and climax of development. It has enabled us to trace certain lines of movement in Christian speculation, which are seen to be advancing towards some point of agreement that is still, perhaps, a long way off. Their evolution is not complete; and if they were to be arrested at their present stage they would resemble streams which had been suddenly frozen in the midst of their career. If such an arrest in the process of thought were possible, history would have neither meaning nor purpose.

(d) But our discussion has done a little more than assure us that eschatology will proceed upon its way; it has foreshadowed the goal of its advance. It has shown us what are the abiding elements in our doctrine of the future life, and what the things in it that are doomed to pass away. If it has not brought us to the point of definite assertion as to the ultimate problems, it has at least led us on the road. If it has not enabled us to prophesy the form which the structure of dogmatic eschatology is likely to assume, it has, nevertheless, permitted us to discern the nature and outline of the foundation on which it must be built.

I.

PERMANENT VALUE OF APOCALYPSE.

(a) In the first place, the history of eschatology shows us that the *apocalyptic element in our religion is a permanent thing, belonging to its essential genius*. It was not by accident, nor merely by force of circumstance, that the forms of Jewish "revelation" were taken over by Christianity. These things were adopted by the new faith because they were congenial to it, and because the substance of their meaning was a part of its gospel. The Christian belief in immortality itself is

rooted in those same convictions which underlay the ancient hope of the age to come. If we strip apocalypse of all that is extreme, violent, and accidental, and ask ourselves what the source of its faith in immortality was, we find it to have been the conviction that the present order of things was not one that satisfied the instinct of justice and fitness, or one that conformed to the hopes which religion inspires, and that, therefore, men must look for the appearing of a better state. And this remains essentially the Christian belief. Of course, our religion has never been pessimistic in the Jewish sense. It has never really held that this world was so given over to evil that nothing remained for it but total and swift destruction. It has never believed that God fulfils His highest ends by violence and catastrophe, but has always put its trust mainly in the slow and patient methods of grace whereby the Spirit of life redeems and sanctifies the souls of men. It has always been in a measure, as the Master was, at home in the world, rejoicing in its glory and order, seeing in its august harmonies a revelation of God's eternal power and Godhead, believing that in some sense "earth is but the shadow of heaven, and things therein each to the other like." It has shown, indeed, how highly it values this material world by offering its worship to God through sensuous forms—architecture, sound, and colour. The faith that built the cathedrals and inspired the painting of Da Vinci and Angelo and the sacred music of Handel and Mozart, is not a faith that is a stranger in this world, or longs to see it pass away. It is evident, also, that the gospel, in requiring of us a spirit of generous and hopeful service towards our fellow-men, implies an estimate of human value and possibility which is as far as can be from apocalyptic pessimism. How should we be asked to serve a race that was worthless, or to labour hopefully in a world that was fit only for the burning?

(b) But, while Christianity thus departs from the extreme pessimism of the Jewish "revelation"-books, it yet agrees with them in that it declares the present world to be out of harmony with its ideal, and even at enmity with its loftier hopes. The evanescence of this life, its frustrations and

inequalities, its broken promises, its insoluble problems, its inability to afford time and room for the self-fulfilment of the soul—all these things have always been recognised by our religion and been asserted with passionate conviction by its prophets and saints. When the Christian mind has considered this earthly existence in the light of the knowledge of God, it has been unable to find in it a complete revelation of the Father, or even to reconcile some of its aspects with that conception of the Divine character which it received from Jesus Christ. It has been compelled to confess that if this life were the best gift which God had to bestow, it would be impossible to affirm His perfect justice, mercy, and love. Hence, it has staked all its possessions on the belief that there remains, beyond the horizon of our mortal sight, another world which is the fulfilment of all the hopes of faith and the complete expression of the Father's will—a world wherein there shall be found the vindication of Christ, and the establishment of justice and mercy in perfect retribution and redress.

(c) This has certainly been the mood in which historical Christianity has maintained its faith in the endless life. And it represents essentially the apocalyptic view. That it is likely to be the permanent attitude of our Religion may be inferred from the example of Jesus, whose doctrine of the coming Kingdom was always associated with the promise of retribution, compensation, and reward. Also, it is reasonable to say that the argument from the character of God, and especially from His justice, will always remain the strongest defence of faith in immortality. It is often said, of course, that this argument is of little value, inasmuch as nothing that may happen in a future state can possibly annul the inequality and injustice of this present world. This is an assertion that is made with assurance, as if it were self-evident, but it is difficult to see its ground in reasoning. If it rests on the idea that it is impossible to repair or retrieve evils that are past, we must agree that this is not an opinion which Christian thought can entertain. Our central doctrine of redemption, our whole gospel of salvation, implies that the lost can be restored, that wrong can be righted, and that things which are dark and hard and

cruel can be made to subserve a greater good. Moreover, the belief that reparation and redress are possible, is so universally accepted by mankind, and so constantly assumed by us in our dealings with each other, that it is quite unreasonable to exclude it from our doctrine of the world that is to come.

(d) A more definite objection to this argument for immortality is that which is stated by Hume.¹ His contention is that we must form our view of the Divine character entirely from the facts of this present order, and that we are not entitled to create out of our own imagination a certain belief about God, and then insist that there must be a world in which this belief shall be justified. "We must not assume," he says, "that God has attributes beyond what He has exerted in this universe, with which we are alone acquainted." "Whence," he asks, "do we infer the existence of such attributes?" He further says, "It is very safe for us to affirm that whatever we know the Deity to have actually done is best; but it is very dangerous to affirm that He must always do what seems to us best." Thus, Hume's argument is that our knowledge of God must be drawn from His revelation of Himself in this world, the only one of which we have experience, and that we must mould our view of His mind and will on the knowledge thus given us. It is not permitted us to say that God ought to do what He has not done, or that in another state of being He will reveal a righteousness or mercy which will be more according to our ideals than that which He manifests here. But this objection of Hume's overlooks the fact that our ideals of love and equity are themselves the creation of God, and are as much to be counted among His works as any of the stars. Not only so, but these ideals are a surer guide to the knowledge of God than any material thing can be. It is because the Spirit of the Highest has Himself taught us to think about Him in a way that is not encouraged by certain facts of present experience, it is because He has Himself inspired us with our discontent, that we have hope of a state to come which shall be the fulfilment of the promises made to our souls—that we look for a "new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth

¹ Essay on *Immortality* (Green's edit.), vol. ii. pp. 400-406.

righteousness." We see everywhere promise but not fulfilment, punishment but not a perfect judgment, recompense but not a fulness of reward, many beginnings but no completeness. And because we see all this, and yet believe in a God who is the Father of Jesus Christ and the maker of perfect things, we cannot but believe in immortality.

(e) But if Christianity retains essentially the apocalyptic standpoint in its assertion of immortality, it also employs the ancient Jewish symbols when it seeks to give *definite content* to its doctrine of the future state and the things that are to come. When we think about this matter we see that humanity has a twofold destiny—an end towards which the race is marching in this present world, and an end towards which the individual life proceeds here and hereafter. These two are separate and distinct, and yet they are related to each other and must ultimately merge into one when the goal of earthly history is reached. They are both apparent to every mind that looks out upon the future with the eyes of faith and hope, and they both contribute elements to the problem of eschatology. Jewish prophecy solved the puzzle thus suggested, by its doctrines of the Kingdom, Hades, Judgment, Resurrection, Gehenna, and Eternal Life; and Christianity has been content to accept these forms, while endeavouring to purify and enrich them and to render them increasingly fitted to express its larger thoughts as to the destiny alike of humanity and of the individual, both here and hereafter.

Thus our historical Faith has been loyal to its origins, and preaches immortality and retribution, fulfilment and redress, on the ancient grounds and under the ancient forms. Christianity is not "a purely spiritual religion," in the commonly accepted meaning of that much-abused phrase. It is not a religion of bare ideas and principles, but of ideas and principles embodied in concrete forms. It is a faith of symbol, sacrament, and sign. It does not speak of an abstract Word of God, but of a Word made flesh and dwelling among us. It does not witness to a process of redemption, but to a redemption wrought in Jesus Christ. In like manner, it does not proclaim immortality merely, but resurrection; not resurrection only

but judgment. These are but forms, if you will, only the coloured garments which spiritual realities assume in order that we may be conscious of their presence. But they are forms which have shown themselves to be in harmony with the genius of our religion. They stand for something which, without them, might be lost to Christian thought and life. No doubt a man may not accept them and yet may truly believe that there is a life to come, and that the eternal love of God will work a perfect righteousness, for each soul and for all souls, through everlasting years. But it may be doubted whether the theology of the Church Catholic will ever leave out of its message those pregnant words and picturesque teachings which were used by Jesus, and which bring home to the imaginations and hearts and consciences of men, truths that are not capable of being expressed in the rigid terms of the understanding. We cannot express the Christian doctrine of immortality without the symbol of resurrection. We cannot enforce the lesson of responsibility better than by the Parable of the Judgment. Nor can we hope to give vividness of meaning to the thought of the everlasting future, if we cease to use those symbols which speak of the intermediate state, the dreadful forces of retribution, the manifold blessing of eternal life, and the beauty and order of the City of God. Wisely, then, may all who hold the historic faith adhere to these ancient forms of sound words, which are so simple and concrete and yet so capable of varied and free interpretation. It is well to say, "I believe in righteous retribution here and hereafter"; but it is better to say, "I believe in the Judgment, and in the Kingdom of God." It is well to assert the immortality of the soul; but it is better to adhere to the old confession, "I believe in the resurrection of the body, and in the life everlasting."

II.

DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL DESTINY.

This, then, is one positive result that is yielded by the study of eschatology from the historical standpoint — the assurance that the apocalyptic element in religious faith is of permanent meaning and value. But, in the second place, this method of inquiry does cast some light on the Christian doctrine of ultimate destiny, inasmuch as it enables us to trace certain speculative tendencies which have been at work in the Church from the beginning, have always modified the teaching of theologians on this subject, and are seen to be constantly moving through conflict and opposition towards an harmonious issue.

In the discussion of this problem of the End we enter into a region of thought which reaches beyond the sphere of ancient prophecy and symbol. No doubt, the three great theories of final destiny can all be stated in terms of the Kingdom of God ; no doubt, they all find suggestions in apocalyptic predictions, and have all been coloured in their expression by old conceptions of future pain and blessedness. Nevertheless, it remains true that religious reflection has not been dominated by Jewish influences in its endeavours to forecast the issue of things. The problem of the End, as it has presented itself to the Christian mind, has been created by the spirit of the Gospel, has been complicated by many historical forces, and has increased in weight and urgency as advancing knowledge and experience have revealed the immensity of the universe, the vastness of the evolutionary process, and the complexity of human life.

1. *Meaning of Church doctrine.*—Looking back on the course of history, one sees that it would be unfair to blame the Church for having refused to formulate the hope of salvation beyond the grave, or to proclaim the message of a final blessedness for all. Jesus, perhaps, set it an example in this sense when He

limited His prophecies to the coming of the Kingdom and the day of Judgment. The Church might thus claim to have His sanction when it declared the decisive importance of this life and the permanence of its issues. Also, in doing this, it may be said to have confined itself within the limits of its commission. The Church's cure of souls is a matter of this present world. The gospel which it proclaims declares a redemption that was accomplished under terrestrial conditions, through a Life in the flesh and the suffering of death. All its sacraments and ordinances are designed to sustain men amid the trials of their present existence, to enable them to achieve a moral victory now, and to prepare them for the judgment of God hereafter. Also, the morality it enforces presupposes the circumstances of this mortal state—its complicated social relations, its desires and needs, its conflict of flesh and spirit, its change and decay, its perpetual pilgrimage towards death. Hence, if the Church fails to save men in this life it fails finally. It has no further opportunity of extending to them its help and service. It sees them pass in a state of loss into a region which is beyond its reach, where the things that constitute moral probation here may not repeat themselves, nor the sacred opportunities of this world any more return. This is the inner meaning of the Church's doctrine of Eternal Punishment. Perdition signifies failure to achieve a peace with God during the life that is lived in the flesh, the only life with which the Church is concerned and in which the moral battle, as we know it, can be either lost or won.

2. *Theological perplexities.*—But while we may thus have a sympathetic understanding of the traditional doctrine, and may recognise its practical truth and force, we must admit that it creates many perplexities for the theologian, whose business it is to show that the Gospel is a reasonable thing. These perplexities religious thinkers have had to face; and they have felt the burden of them in all ages. We have seen that they have always been of divided opinion on the subject of ultimate destiny, and that even those who have defended the same doctrine have differed widely in their interpretation of it. Indeed, this feature of Christian thought has been so

marked as to create a certain degree of wonder and distrust. We may well marvel to find that our authorities have not been able to agree in their answer to the question whether all men are immortal, or in assuring us that evil will have an end, or even in declaring that God really intends the salvation of every man. Christianity believes in a future state of retribution and redress, and yet its teachers are not certain that moral history extends beyond the grave; it is a religion of redemption, and yet its interpreters are in doubt as to the scope of that redemption; it is a prophet of the Kingdom, and yet they cannot tell us whether or no that Kingdom is appointed to a perfect triumph.

This is certainly a perplexing state of things, and it affords opportunity for unsympathetic criticism. We may fairly urge, however, that it has its origin in certain features of New Testament teaching, and in the contradictory nature of the evidence that is supplied by reason and conscience and the facts of life. The differences of eschatological theory are, no doubt, due in large measure to the faithfulness with which theologians have endeavoured to interpret Revelation, and to their steadfast courage in facing all the aspects of a great and baffling problem. But, however this may be, the important thing to be noted here is that this conflict of theological opinion does show a tendency to pass away. Indeed, one of the best rewards of historical study in this field of doctrine is the perception that forms of thought which seem most utterly opposed, exhibit signs of underlying harmony and afford the promise of reconciliation.

3. *Harmonising tendencies.*—(a) When, for instance, we consider the different theories of destiny we see that, while they contradict each other as intellectual statements, they each assert an aspect of religious truth, and together bear witness to certain convictions which are not opposed but are complementary and harmonious. Also, it is to be remembered that they are at one in maintaining a very stern and searching doctrine of retribution. It is quite unfair to say that the theory of Conditional Immortality or of Universal Restoration attenuates in any degree the terror of judgment to come. The

mere denial that sin and pain are everlasting takes nothing from the prophecy of punishment. Indeed, those who make this denial often assert the doctrine of penalty with greater rigour than do those who maintain the eternity of evil. Conditionalists, while they take away the element of dread which lies in the belief that pain will never end, substitute for it the menace of annihilation. And Universalist teachers commonly affirm with peculiar emphasis that every man must reap as he has sown. They do not, as a rule, admit that death or any other creature can separate sin from its consequences, or that any sudden crisis of repentance can destroy the results of a misspent life. They offer no hope to any one of escaping the entail of evil years, or of attaining to final peace until he has paid the debt he has incurred. And so it is true that all theories of destiny are agreed in practical effect. If any one of them take from the prophecy of judgment in one respect, it adds to it in another; and whichever of them be accepted, the terror of the Lord remains.

(b) It is evident, also, that each of these theories is at some point in intellectual agreement with one or other of its rivals. Thus the orthodox doctrine is at one with Universalism in asserting the unending existence of every soul. On the other hand, Conditionalism, while it is opposed on this point to both of these, agrees with orthodoxy in teaching that there is such a thing as final perdition, and with Universalism in asserting that evil will pass away and that the universe will reach a state of perfect moral harmony. Again, if one considers the doctrine of Eternal Punishment, as it is stated by many writers, one sees that it comes very close to Conditionalism in its view of perdition. The state of final loss, as depicted by these teachers, is one in which there is no freedom of choice, no sensibility to moral distinctions, no hope, no movement, no variety of experience. It is a state in which existence is emptied of everything that is positive—of everything except weakness, darkness, and misery. Now, it is evident that creatures who were reduced to such a condition as this would really have suffered destruction. They would have no place in the moral or intelligent universe, would retain no real like-

ness to humanity, would be only ghosts and phantoms and empty masks. Theologians who believe in such a destiny for men might as well affirm annihilation. They are separated from Conditionalists by a mere metaphysical opinion as to the indestructibility of the soul. This is at the best a weak partition, and it is wearing very thin.

(c) On the other hand, the great exponents of the orthodox dogma have shown a tendency to approach at one point or another to the position of the Optimists. When Augustine, for instance, maintained that all souls must remain essentially good, that perdition must be conceived in such a way as to have a place in the harmony of the universe, and that the purpose of God would suffer no defeat, he made assertions that are hardly to be reconciled with the doctrine of eternal evil. Similarly, Aquinas, in affirming that positive suffering would have an end and only the penalty of spiritual loss remain, not only departed from the popular view, but opened the door to hopeful speculation. And these great teachers have set the example to many later theorists who have modified in different ways the notion of everlasting punishment; some denying the eternity of pain, some the unending duration of sin; others rejecting the idea that perdition will be a state of unmingled misery, and others suggesting either that very few will suffer the ultimate doom, or that the only penalty that will endure may be of such a kind as can be accepted with reverent and willing submission by those to whom it is appointed. In all this there is a distinct approach to the conception of an universal salvation. It is evident, also, that those evangelical theologians who affirm that repentance unto life will always remain possible, or who hold that all punishment is meant for the good of the sinner, or who say that God really purposes the redemption of the whole world—it is evident that all of these really affirm that every man *may* finally be saved. If effectual repentance be for ever possible, it may take place at last in every life; if punishment be always remedial, it may in the end work a cure in all to whom it is applied; and if God has taken in hand the salvation of all mankind, it is conceivable that He may succeed.

(d) Thus the traditional doctrine of destiny has always shown signs of unstable equilibrium—inclining either, on the one hand, to the idea of ultimate death, or, on the other, to that of final restoration. Nor can we wonder at this. Acute pain lasting for ever with unchanging intensity, and issuing in nothing, is not within our power to imagine and is contrary to all experience. In like manner, we cannot imagine any moral life going on and on without movement in one direction or another. Every moral being grows better or worse as the days and years go by; indeed, it is of the essence of the matter that this should be so. Hence orthodox thinkers, whether they have thought of perdition chiefly as a state of punishment or as a state of sin, have generally come to recognise that there must be progress in the life of the lost, either downwards, through increasing weakness to complete futility or even death, or else gradually upwards towards some higher level of being. It may thus be said with confidence that very few theologians of the first rank have defended the traditional belief without compromise, without showing signs of embarrassment, and without suggesting alleviations of their doctrine, more or less subtle, more or less important in their logical effect.

4. *Historical construction.*—But what is the fruit of this analysis? Has it anything more than an academic interest? Does it yield any constructive results by enabling us to indicate the type of doctrine which is likely to be developed in the future? Surely it does. It shows that certain elements of belief bear the aspect of permanence, have kept asserting their vitality, and have always been affirmed again after every period of neglect. And in doing this, it certainly supplies grounds for rational prediction, since prophecy of the future is nothing else than an intelligent interpretation of the past and of the present. When history testifies that some beliefs have survived throughout the Christian ages, and that some speculations have appeared again and again in the thought of the Church, and have manifested in later times increasing life and force, it is reasonable to expect that these beliefs and speculations will be found to have a place in the final statement of the faith. Adopting this view, then, it will be fitting to close

this discussion with an endeavour to indicate the more important of those eschatological opinions which have been so persistent that they may be counted among the things that the theology of the future will recognise. If we believe that there is a Spirit of revelation at work in the Christian society, we are compelled to admit that the dominant tendencies of Christian thought are possessed of authority, and are guides which, if we can only understand them aright, will lead us towards the truth. Of course, a statement that seeks, from this standpoint, to interpret the historic witness of the Church is not only, though it certainly implies, a declaration of personal opinion, nor can it be an account of things presently believed among us. It is one thing to write down what we would like to think, or what contemporary theologians think, but quite another matter to study the tendencies that have prevailed throughout the centuries and to conjecture the goal towards which they are moving.

(1) In the first place, then, we may attribute permanent value to the belief that underlies the ancient *threefold doctrine of immediate destiny*. This doctrine is stated in a very definite form by the Roman and the Greek Churches, though the latter does not formulate it in the terms of the Western theology. The Protestant communions do not, of course, accept it, nor are likely to do so, in a strict dogmatic sense. The Roman idea that the redeemed will suffer *retributive pain* hereafter is foreign to our habits of thought, and seems to us out of harmony with the spirit of the Gospel. Nevertheless, later Protestant opinion does often tend to assert the *substance* of the old belief. It admits that there are many who pass from this life, repentant and reconciled to God, but yet in a low state of spiritual attainment. And for these it anticipates an experience of gradual education, training, and enlightenment, leading upwards to the fulness of beatitude. It thus inclines to surrender the opinion that a miracle takes place at death which suddenly effects the complete sanctification of all who are saved. Also, it very commonly accepts the idea of future probation or opportunity, and so affirms the existence of an intermediate state. And in all this it shows a recognition of

those things that have given vitality to the Roman dogma, though it displays not the least sign of assenting to that dogma in its historical form.

Thus, we may say that Christian theology as a whole¹ has certainly tended to teach or imply that the souls of men when they leave this world may be divided into three classes. (a) There are those who may be described as saints of God, learned in the mysteries of Christ, graduates in the school of the eternal light, lovers of love and of all good things; and for such the eternal day will break in a revelation of unspeakable glory. (b) Again, there are multitudes for whom this immediate perfection of blessedness cannot confidently be predicted. These are in a state of peace with God, inasmuch as, whether consciously or no, they are possessed of saving faith, and their lives as a whole move towards righteousness and truth. Nevertheless, they are not prepared to enter forthwith into the full inheritance of the saints in light. There are others, also, who come to repentance only towards the end of their selfish and evil years, and never attain in this world to any elevation of spiritual or moral tone. Further, there are very many who have never had opportunity on earth to make the great decision, as well as great numbers whose aspirations have been thwarted by inheritance, evil surroundings, and physical defect. These all enter at death into a state which is, in varying degrees, one of education, development, and discipline. They do not experience retributive penalty or any of the evils of mortal life; they are in a condition of salvation and are safe with God. But their spiritual powers must be strengthened, and their vision enlarged, before they can appreciate the harmonies, and discern the splendours, that God has reserved for them that love Him.

(c) But, finally, there are those who have definitely made the supreme refusal, have identified their lives more or less completely with the principle of evil, and who pass impenitent and unconverted into the awful spaces of eternity. These experience the full weight of the forces of retribution which

¹ *I.e.* Greek and Roman, *plus* an increasing weight of Anglican, Lutheran, and Reformed opinion (*e.g.* Pusey, Dorner, Salmond).

dwell in the moral order and are its safeguards and avengers. This is the eternal fire; the self-fulfilment of evil, the revelation of its true character, the full manifestation of its power to work misery and confusion. It is that horror of great darkness of which men have occasional glimpses in this world. It is that dreary sea of penal sorrow whose ominous voice is heard far up the stream of the evil life which moves toward it continually through all the windings of its course. This state of perdition may be described as "eternal," since it belongs to eternity, and since the moral history which leads to it remains a part of the indelible record of the soul.

(2) But, in the second place, Christian thought inclines to assert that *the history of the moral universe will end in a state of peace and harmony*. This was the direct teaching of St. Paul; it is involved in those predictions of the perfect triumph of Christ which the Church has never ceased to utter in all the ages; it is the conviction which has produced the theories of universal salvation and of conditional immortality; and it has influenced, as we have seen, many of the greatest orthodox teachers, who have sought to state the traditional view in such a way as not to contradict belief in a final harmony of things. This belief, therefore, may be counted among those elements of religious thought which have shown persistent vitality, have tended to express themselves with increasing definiteness and force, and so may be reckoned to possess the power of enduring life.

(a) But, if this be so, theology has to face the problem of *reconciling the doctrine of perdition with faith in an ultimate reconciliation of all things to God*. And it seems evident that this task cannot be accomplished without some modification of the traditional belief in everlasting evil. Indeed, we have seen that the latter belief has been profoundly affected already by the pressure of various rational and moral forces. The idea that future punishment means an everlasting state of fixed and measureless misery, "an eternal petrification" of grief, with no movement in it for better or worse, may be said to have passed out of the sphere of scientific theology. The arguments against it are overwhelming. Apart from

considerations which have been already stated, it is clear that perdition cannot be a final state. The condition of heavenly blessedness is final because it is the goal of redemption, the end of the moral process, the manifestation of reality. But perdition is contrary to the issue which is purposed of God, and is the fulfilment of all unreal and negative things. Therefore it cannot be ultimate, but must merge in something beyond. Only if this be so can its existence be justified as part of the rational universe. In such an universe nothing can remain which is not of itself a good, or does not serve a purpose of good. But a state of mere penalty cannot be said to be a good in itself; nor can it serve a beneficent end if it endures for ever. The intention of punishment is to work righteous retribution, and to show the nature of sin in its final issues. But this is not an intention that requires endless time for its fulfilment. Finite sin does not demand an eternity for its self-revelation, nor can it merit perpetual pain. The purpose of perdition must *sometime* be achieved, and when this is accomplished it must cease, in so far at least as it is a state of positive suffering. The argument of Aquinas on this point is quite conclusive.

(b) But, if this view be accepted, we have to ask what is likely to be the character of *that state which lies beyond perdition*? If retributive suffering is to pass away, in what is it to issue? Many, as we have seen, suppose that it will result either in the dissolution of personal life or else in the destruction of the moral nature; and it may be admitted that either of these alternatives would, in some fashion, achieve the harmony of the spiritual universe. But both of these possibilities are excluded for those who hold, in agreement with general Christian tradition, that the soul of man can neither be destroyed nor sink beneath the level of moral life. And so these are constrained to believe that perdition must resolve itself at last in some form of betterment, of reconciliation with God, of submission to His holy will declared in Jesus Christ. Those who accept this solution assert, or at least hope, that whensoever any soul has reached the state of submission and repentance, penalty will cease to bear the aspect of mere

retribution and become an agent of good, to discipline and develop, and lead upwards towards that abode of peace, without sin and without pain, which is called the City of God.

(e) Of course, this view is open to the objection that it *limits the freedom of the human will*, inasmuch as it professes to be confident that all men will finally submit themselves to God. This is a difficulty which has been considered already in the chapter on Universal Restoration. But one may add here that we do not offend against the doctrine of moral liberty by affirming that every soul will come to repentance, any more than we do by the contrary statement that some men will always continue to sin. Indeed, this latter belief rests on the conviction that evil will go on always increasing its hold upon the will, and binding it with heavier and heavier chains, until the power of choosing good has been for ever lost. And it is difficult to see how those who maintain such a doctrine can plume themselves on being the champions of freedom. What they really contend for is not the power of the will to determine its own destiny, but the power of evil to make an end of liberty. Do we indeed infringe the prerogative of the spiritual creature by saying that it will conform at last to the nature of things, that experience of evil will teach it that good is best, and that the patience of God will bring it to repentance? And do we exalt the attribute of freedom by affirming that, spite of the utter unreason of sin, spite of its bitter fruit, spite of the divine grace and the perseverance of Christ, sin will be able to establish a complete dominion over the soul and bind it to itself for ever? Surely it is clear, also, that if God has any purpose at all for the human race, He must have kept the end of things in His own hands. There is no meaning in speaking of a purpose that does not reveal itself in the end that is attained. However wide the freedom of the will, and however much its action may achieve that is evil and contrary to the will of God, it cannot possess the power to compass moral anarchy or to prevent the consummation which eternal wisdom has in view. The divine intention which underlies the whole process of history goes on its way through all confusion and conflict, through all contingent and lawless

things, towards an appointed End. That End is good; and it will be attained not by the enslavement of the soul to any outward law, but by such means of judgment and mercy as shall lead it to that willing obedience in which alone is freedom.

(3) But, in the third place, Christian thought does persistently affirm belief in *everlasting penalty*, and is therefore likely to maintain the doctrine, that while perdition, in the fulness of its meaning, must pass away, something of it may remain—spiritual privation, loss of the highest good. The idea that theology will come to adopt a perfectly optimistic view of ultimate destiny is one that has small sanction in the facts of history. It cannot be said that St. Paul's prophecies of an universal Kingdom of God require the conclusion that every trace of the results of sin shall utterly vanish away. Even Origen and Erigena admitted, in differing forms of thought, that some degree of penalty might remain. Also, the doctrine of Eternal Punishment has shown such power to survive the strongest attacks, as proves it the guardian of moral truth. A belief so unattractive to the heart and mind, and so beset with speculative difficulties, could never have maintained itself had it not expressed a premonition of the soul. There can be no doubt that the theory of Conditional Immortality owes its influence to the fact that it recognises this, and seeks to combine the hope of a final reconciliation with the assertion of everlasting penalty. Also, writers of the Universalist school tend to admit, with increasing frankness, that the Church has not been altogether wrong in refusing to adopt an unqualified form of optimism. No doubt there is a logical completeness in the assertion that "all the wounds of the spirit shall be healed, leaving not a scar behind"; no doubt it may be urged that if the soul cannot be destroyed neither can it suffer any permanent injury; no doubt, also, belief in a final reconciliation of all things seems to involve the entire disappearance of every shadow of sin and every memory of regret. But Christian thought has never been, and never can be, under the sole dominion of logic. All its speculations are limited by the value which it attaches to the testimony of conscience; and conscience does affirm the existence of an

ultimate moral danger, does assert that there is such a thing as the irreparable and the too late. It is mainly this testimony which compels many to accompany the hope of a final state of universal peace with the admission that if the soul goes beyond a certain point in evil it renders itself subject to some measure of eternal disability and loss.

This is, indeed, an admission that can only be made with the reserve that befits our ignorance, and with profound sorrow ;

“For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these : It might have been.”

Yet, how can we escape it? Not to have known the life eternal under the conditions of mortal existence must surely mean that there will always be something wanting to the complete experience of the soul. Also, if any man becomes an heir of perdition, the memory of perdition will remain. Such an one, further, earns for himself separation at death from the fellowship of the faithful ; and this must be a matter of enduring regret. It is reasonable to suppose, also, that he may bring upon himself permanent inability to attain the higher forms of knowledge and of service. Dante, as you remember, describes the lower level of Paradise as a condition very like the outpost of the Inferno. And if we borrow his imagery, we may say that the soul that passes through the dark region of retributive punishment, and through the fires of the place of cleansing, and attains at last to a state of reconciliation, may yet never pass beyond the lower degrees of blessedness. Such a destiny would not involve any positive defect of being, or any alienation from God. The soul would possess the secret of eternal peace, would reverently accept the limitations of knowledge and life which it had imposed upon itself under the immutable laws of the Almighty, and would be satisfied that there was room and place for it, however humble, in the Kingdom of a redeemed humanity. Though much might have been lost to it, there would remain

“A sympathy august and pure,
Ennobled by a vast regret,
And by contrition sealed thrice sure.”

(a) Now, no one who might hold this doctrine of destiny could be accused of taking an easy view of the nature and consequences of sin. To say that he did would be to forget the burden of terror that lies in the thought of perdition. We know what dreadful possibilities of torment are latent in our physical frame, and we cannot doubt that similar capacity for suffering is hidden in the nature of the soul. Nor can we think lightly of the penalty that is called spiritual privation when we remember the pathos that was in the voice of Jesus when He spoke of "that which was lost."

(b) But it may be said, on the other hand, that if we affirm anything in perdition to be everlasting we really assert the eternity of evil; inasmuch as failure to attain the best is a form of evil, and its perpetual existence would mean the triumph of sin. And the formal force of this argument may be admitted. In effect, however, privation of the highest good is not so much evil as what Erigena called the "phantasm" of it. It is not sin; it is not pain; it is nothing that is able to render life less than a good and precious gift; it involves no opposition to the will of God. Certainly, it is the result of moral disorder; it is a subdued colour in the pattern of life, a minor note in its music; and it would not have existed if man had never fallen, if evil had never been. This may be admitted. But then it is not possible on any theory to say that the final consummation will show no trace of the sin that was once in the world. If we say that the lost will suffer annihilation, we affirm that evil will have for its perpetual memorial a multitude of the slain, will leave its record in a graveyard of souls. Even if we assert absolute Universalism we must still admit that the nature of the End shall bear witness to the struggle and tragedy through which it has been reached. Nay, the very conception of heaven itself, as held by Christian faith, is the vision of a beatitude that bears the mark of the conflict that is past. The joy of Paradise is the joy of those who have known many sorrows; its victory is that of soldiers who have suffered many defeats; its purity is that of sinners who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of Christ. Thus there will be even in

perfect blessedness a memorial of evil; the walls of the heavenly City will witness to the travail which has built them; and in the midst of the throne there will be a Lamb that has been slain. Unless the Cross passes utterly out of the memory of the soul, there will always remain a testimony in the universe to the power and the curse of sin. And so it should not be urged against any theory that it admits the permanence of evil in the marks it leaves behind. Such admission, in some form, is a necessity of the case.

(c) But, however this may be, one cannot allow that the view I have indicated *would involve the defeat of the purpose of God* in the creation of mankind. We may be sure that He cannot intend anything less than the destruction of sin and pain. Since He is good, He must be determined to destroy evil; and since He is Love, He cannot have given to any creature an existence which He knew would prove a curse; nor can He be satisfied until He has reconciled all souls to Himself. Of this we may be confident. But there is no reason whatever for saying that God must have decreed that every one of His creatures shall attain to the highest good. It is altogether likely that He has granted to human freedom the utmost possible scope that is consistent with the nature of things and the essential goodness of life. And it is reasonable to believe that such a measure of freedom involves liability to suffer great and permanent loss. The moral life, as we know it, is fraught with adventure and compassed with peril; it has wonderful depths and heights; and the risks it presents are limited only by the purpose of God to redeem His creatures and to subdue all things unto Himself. Our knowledge of the universe does not encourage the thought that the Creator is unwilling to permit the existence of many different grades and orders of being. The Cosmos is one great system of rank and gradation, rising in level above level from the lowest form of life to the multitude of the heavenly host. God has not granted to us all an equal measure of gift or an equal wealth of understanding, and there are as many degrees of attainment and power in the moral as in the intellectual world. It is, therefore, without ground in reason or experience that we

affirm the purpose of God to forbid the existence of many different levels of glory and power in His Kingdom of reconciliation. Men may be found to have appointed themselves to varying degrees of spiritual rank and service, each finding his own place according to the fitness he has achieved. And it may be that this variety and inequality of attainment, though it be in a measure the result of sin, shall be so ordered by divine grace as to conduce to the harmony and beauty of things. We cannot tell how low some of the grades of life may be, any more than we can forecast the heights to which some may rise; but all will be found within the walls of redemption and within the bounds of the peace of God.

Such, then, is a general statement of the type of doctrine which may be expected to result from the development of eschatological thought. No particular importance is to be attached to the terms in which it is expressed; nor is it, as I have said, to be mistaken for a purely speculative construction, or the mere utterance of an individual opinion. It is mainly an endeavour to interpret the testimony of the New Testament and of the Christian Church in such a way as to exclude nothing in it that has shown abiding power, and to harmonise in some fashion its apparent contradictions. At the least, it is an attempt to indicate the nature of the problem which the theology of the future will be required to solve. No rational theory which claims to be a development of Christian thought can altogether reject any one of the great elements in the witness of the Church throughout the ages. It must accept these, in a broad catholic understanding of them, and seek to show that they are in their substance reasonable, and capable of being harmonised in the unity of faith. I have tried to indicate the main features of eschatological belief which may thus claim to be accepted as part of the historic witness—the threefold doctrine of immediate destiny; the foreboding of judgment and perdition; and the hope of the final triumph of Christ in an universal Kingdom of peace. These are persistent and assured features of traditional doctrine;

and the theology of the future will have to recognise them as essentially true, *in their substance as distinguished from their varying forms*. But, having done this, it will have to consider how these things are all to be justified as elements in a reasonable belief, and shown to be parts of one harmonious whole. And, in fulfilling this portion of its task, it will be compelled to take for its guide that great assertion which is the distinctive glory of the Gospel, the assertion of God's redeeming purpose for all mankind through Jesus Christ His Son. It will have to prove that the doctrine of future retribution can be so conceived as not to contradict the sovereignty of grace. It will be constrained to vindicate the witness of conscience and of Scripture to the reality of perdition; and yet to interpret that witness in such a way as not to weaken or attenuate the supreme message of Revelation, which is that it is the good purpose of the Father to reconcile all things to Himself, through the ministries of the Spirit, through the terrors of the Judgment, through the blood of the Cross.

III.

ETERNAL LIFE.

1. *Two types of thought*.—When we turn to the positive aspect of the Christian belief in Immortality—the doctrine of heavenly blessedness—we find ourselves in a region of general agreement. Also, we return to a sphere of thought which has been coloured always by the old imaginative forms, and has owed its concrete imagery to the ancient presentations of the Kingdom of God. The common type of Christian faith has generally conceived the life to come as an endless existence in time, an everlasting succession of blessed experiences. But there has existed, along with this, a form of belief which has thought of eternal life as a spiritual quality of being, a state of mind so elevated, so possessed with devout emotion, as to be independent of time, above the flux of temporal things, enjoying even in this present world the peace and joy of

abiding communion with God. This latter is the mystical type of the Christian hope. It is not to be sharply distinguished from the more general form of belief; since its influence is manifest in all profoundly religious minds. But it has sometimes been developed so far as to deny that there will be any movement or change in the heavenly life, and even to approach the idea of absorption in the infinite.

Both of these types of thought are found in the New Testament, though some of its books emphasise the one and some the other. The teaching of Jesus, of St. Paul, and of St. John, combine the imaginative and mystical forms of faith in life eternal. Even the Book of Revelation shows the same characteristic. It expresses the substance of the mystical doctrine in the decree that "there should be time no longer";¹ but its conception as a whole is concrete, and takes its colour from the things of this temporal world. And so it is throughout the sacred writings. The thought of the life to come is expressed in terms of the Kingdom of God; and thus it is mainly presented in the form of a shining hope, although it is recognised that the substance and secret of eternal blessedness is already the possession of all believers. Also, it is prefigured in such symbolism as belongs to the vision of a terrestrial state, freed from all that is corruptible and defiled, and containing the fulfilment of every earthly good.

2. *The Apocalyptic tradition.*—And later Christian thought has remained faithful to the New Testament tradition. It has not been unmindful of St. John's teaching, nor ever ceased to believe that eternal life is attainable in this present world; but it has dwelt mainly on the idea of a world blessed and everlasting which we hope to attain beyond the gates of death. It has cherished the promise of something that is to come, "afar from the sphere of our sorrow." It has believed that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, and that this mortal must put on immortality before it can attain to the heart's desire. And it has continued to invest the thought of the future State with a garment of

¹ Rev. 10⁶.

glory that is coloured with the hues of ancient prophetic symbol.¹

Now this symbolic imagery of the Christian tradition, as embodied, for instance, in the Book of Revelation, has been made the subject of much derisive comment. A recent writer speaks of the "bric-à-brac heaven of St. John"; and many modern authors seem to object to the idea of the angels and the archangels and all the heavenly host. A good deal of contempt, also, is expressed for the old pictures of the New Jerusalem—the white robes, the palms of victory, the choirs of everlasting praise, the golden streets and the gates of pearl, the tree of life and the fountains of living waters. But all this criticism is external and unsympathetic, the foolishness of the wise, the unintelligence of intellectuality. St. John and the other prophets of his kind were no such childish literalists as their censors suppose them to have been. A writer capable of such profound sayings as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" was quite able to distinguish form from substance, and to perceive the spiritual meanings of his own symbolism. These pictures of St. John signify victory, peace, consolation, worship, knowledge, and the fulness of perfect being. And no modern writer has ever been able to suggest imagery that can take their place—to offer us anything in their stead but barren abstractions, and chilly assertions of ignorance, which do nothing but empty the future of all reality and all attraction for wistful human souls. The apocalyptic imagery of future blessedness, like the apocalyptic forms of belief, is consecrated by immemorial tradition; it is the fruit of history; and it has a message for the simplest mind as well as for the wise and understanding. It is vivid; it is fraught with plain spiritual meanings; it appeals to tender human emotions; and it is the symbol of a high romance. For all these reasons it has endured, and is likely to endure unto the end.

3. *The mystical form of belief.*—(a) We do not, however, attain to a full conception of the Christian hope unless we

¹ Cf. Dante, *Paradiso*; Augustine, *City of God*, xxii. 29, 30; à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*.

recognise, not only this concrete pictorial form of belief, but also that mystical type of thought which likewise has its origin in the New Testament witness. The mystical mind has always tended to dwell on the vision of God as a thing attainable in this present state, to minimise the opposition between time and eternity, and the contrast between this life and that which is to come. Thus Jacob Boehme wrote in the album of a friend the famous and characteristic lines :

“When time is as eternity,
Eternity as time to thee,
From strife of all kinds thou art free.”

Or, as they are quaintly rendered by the original translator of Boehme's great work into English :

“Unto that man whose Time and Ever
Is all the same and all together ;
His battles done, his strife is ended,
His soul is safe, his life amended.”¹

This saying is a memorable expression of the type of piety which Boehme represents. It always dislikes any insistence on the temporal side of religious experience. Faith is communion with the Eternal One, and according to the measure of its perfection raises the soul above time, and secures it in the possession of a state of peace to which all change, even death itself, is indifferent or irrelevant. This is an idea that is familiar to the students of Frederick Denison Maurice, and it is illustrated for us by the passage in Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, in which he speaks of the monk who, “going out into the wood to meditate, was detained there by the song of a bird for three hundred years, which to his consciousness passed as only one hour.” “The song of the bird that the monk heard, without taking note of the passage of time, might have been, ‘And they shall reign for ever and ever’ ; though of the many thousand times of the bird's repeating the words, they sounded in the monk's ear but one song, once sung.” Mystical religion makes much of this timeless strain in our experience—these hours when, under the influence of high emotion or access of

¹ *Musterium Magnum*, Eng. edit. 1654.

thought, lapsing moments are forgotten, cease to be, are lost in the tide of the soul's intenser life. And it finds in these lofty experiences "sweet forewarnings" of the state of final blessedness, wherein men shall enjoy an existence in which time is brought to nothingness by the supreme emotion and enraptured vision of eternal life.

This thought, that future blessedness is a timeless state of being, has been expressed by poets and thinkers of every age. It was implicit in Plato's understanding of the term "eternal," which generally signifies, in his writings, not so much endless duration as a quality of life. We have seen that St. John embodies it in the saying, "there should be time no longer." And the author of the *Secrets of Enoch* says, in like manner, "There all time shall perish, and the years, and thenceforward there shall be neither days nor months nor hours." But the classical literary expression of this thought is found in the closing lines of Spenser's *Faerie Queen*:¹

"Then gin I thinke on that which Nature sayd
Of that same time when no more Change shall be,
But stedfast rest of all things, firmly stayd
Upon the pillours of eternity,
That is contrayr to Mutabilitie;
For all that moveth doth in Change delight:
But thenceforth all shall rest eternally
With Him that is the God of Sabaoth hight:
Oh! that great Sabaoth God, grant me that Sabaoth's sight."

Now, one can have no doubt as to the truth of this mystical doctrine of eternal life as *a religious affirmation*. It rests on realities of experience and intuitions of the soul, and it expresses that longing to be free of the change and instability and insecurity of things, and the wearying succession of "the slow, sad hours," which is an enduring instinct of faith. But when it is translated from terms of religion into forms of philosophy, when it becomes the assertion that the soul will actually pass into a mode of existence that is above time, that has no past and no future and no movement, it goes beyond the limits of Christian thought and approaches perilously near

¹ Globe edition, p. 436.

to the idea that personal life will be utterly merged in the ocean of absolute Being. Indeed, some writers go so far as to assert that the consummation of heavenly experience will be the loss of individual consciousness; companion souls who have attained together the supreme height of beatitude will clasp hands on the mountain top and say, "Farewell, we lose ourselves in light."¹

When we speak in this way, however, we are not only exceeding the limits of Christian faith, we are also deceiving ourselves with imaginative terms which correspond to no experience of ours, and express nothing that has definite meaning for our minds. The notion of being "absorbed in the Infinite," of attaining some supra-personal state of being, is not an idea that can appear reasonable to any one who holds the Christian doctrine of God. How can we attain impersonality by union with a personal Spirit? Is it not evident that the closer our fellowship with such an One becomes, the more shall we fulfil the conception of personality? We may ask, also, how a moral life that tends to ever fuller self-realisation can end in the loss of self? Has not our Lord said that whosoever will lose his life shall keep it unto life eternal? How is it possible to conceive of a time when the soul that has followed after the ideal good shall say, "I have completed my last moral action; henceforth I become nothing." How can we even picture the future of the child of God as ending suddenly, like a road that drops into a gulf? Nay, the very thought of a timeless state of existence is the symbol of something lower, and not higher, than our present life. Succession, a before and an after, is an essential characteristic of spiritual being. Without it there can be no progress, no service, no fellowship with kindred souls, no hope and no memory. To think of the future state as without these things is to deny that it has any attribute of life, as life is known to us here. It is really to assert that existence, such as we have experienced or can imagine, ends at death.²

¹ Tennyson, *In Memoriam*; see, also, Shelley's *Adonais*.

² For full discussion of this subject see von Hügel, *Eternal Life*; Maurice, *Theological Essays*; Mellone, *Eternal Life Here and Hereafter*, p. 250 ff.

But why should we revolt against the thought of living for ever under temporal conditions? Why should we count it desirable to escape from the realm of change? There is no evil in succession, if it be a succession of blessed hours. It is only in moods of fatigue and weakness that we long for release from the world of the rising and setting suns. It is only to the wearied eyes that the monotone is dear. For the normal heart and mind, it is a pleasing thing to believe that good will ever give place to good, and knowledge to knowledge, and service to service. What we really seek, in our thoughts of everlasting life, is a timeless emotion and rest of soul, not a timeless *existence*. What the spirit of man truly desires is conformity, within its own measure, to that law which dwells in the being of God. We know that He is the Eternal One, transcending all mutability and all the things that come and go, and yet is within the realm of the temporal and fleeting, in so far as He shares in the life of the universe. We believe that He rests for ever, self-centred and alone, yet continually fulfils Himself in His manifold creation and His ministries of grace. And so we hold it true that the immortals who reflect His glory and bear His image inhabit eternity, and remain in time. Theirs is a state which, in the inmost heart and secret of it, is above all flux, all evanescence and decay; but, also, it is a state wherein they remember and hope, and labour harmoniously in the tireless service of their brethren and of God.

Thus there remain two elements in the Christian hope of life everlasting, the one resting on the mystical side of faith, the other derived from the ancient belief in the Kingdom of God. These present the appearance of a logical opposition, but they are really only different aspects of one transcendent truth. Immortal blessedness is the beatific vision of God, direct, immediate, perfect; but it is also a continuous growth in the understanding of things both human and divine—it is “to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.” It is rest and peace beyond what we are able to ask or to think; and it is the constant doing of the holy will of God. It is

final and complete; nevertheless it is unceasing movement towards an end which, when it is reached, is seen to be only a beginning. It dwells with the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning, but it is more changeful than the passing years, and of a richer variety than the light and colour and form of this our manifold world. In it men see face to face and know even as also they are known; none the less, there abide in it faith and hope and love. The company of the redeemed, as Dante tells us, shines like a great white rose unfolding itself petal upon petal in the presence of the glory of God; and this unfolding of the splendours of the soul is accomplished through obedience to that perfect law of love which is the law of life eternal.

“But, as moved evenly a wheel appears,
So my desire, and will, now swayed aright
The Love, that moves the sun and other stars.”

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

GENERAL VIEW OF ESCHATOLOGICAL DOCTRINE IN TWELVE JEWISH BOOKS.

TITLE OF BOOK.	DOCTRINE OF HADES.	DOCTRINE OF RESURRECTION.	DOCTRINE OF JUDGMENT.	DOCTRINE OF KINGDOM.	DOCTRINE OF GEHENNA.	DATE.
<p>BOOK OF ENOCH (1 Enoch).</p>	<p>(a) Intermediate State (51¹). (b) Final abode of some (45³). (c) Final place of all the lost (63⁴⁰).</p>	<p>(a) OF BODY, except in sec. 5 (92⁸). (b) OF ALL ISRAEL (sec. 1) (cf. 92²⁸). (c) OF <i>RIGHTEOUS</i> ISRAELITES (secs. 4 and 5) (90⁸³ 92²⁸). (d) OF ALL MEN (sec. 2) (51¹).</p>	<p>OF ALL CREATURES (1¹). (b) GOD is JUDGE; except in sec. 2, where MESSIAH is JUDGE (cf. 1⁸ et seq., 37-71 <i>passim</i>).</p>	<p>(a) In sec. 1, EARTHLY PARADISE (10¹⁶⁻²⁰). (b) In secs. 2, 4, SPIRITUAL KINGDOM in new Earth. In sec. 5, HEAVENLY STATE (45³⁻⁶ 90⁸³⁻⁸⁶ 92⁸⁻⁹). (c) In sec. 1, No MESSIAH. In sec. 5, No MESSIAH. In sec. 4, MESSIAH is unimportant (90⁸⁷). In sec. 2, MESSIAH is Lord of all (37-71 <i>passim</i>).</p>	<p>Torment by fire. Some suggestions of Annihilation of Wicked (48³ etc.).</p>	<p>c. 170-64 B.C. Sec. 1 (6-36) (c. 170 B.C.). Sec. 2 (37-71) (94-64 B.C.). Sec. 4 (83-90) (166 - 161 B.C.). Sec. 5 (91-104) (104-95 B.C.).</p>

<p>BOOK OF JUBILEES.</p>	<p>WICKED "descend into Sheol" (ap- parently a final state) (22²²).</p>	<p>NO RESURRECTION OF BODY (23^{30, 31}).</p>	<p>JUDGMENT here and hereafter without respect of persons: ac- cording to oppor- tunity (5¹³⁻¹⁶).</p>	<p>(a) TEMPORARY KINGDOM. (b) MESSIAH ex- pected, but vaguely con- ceived. (c) KINGDOM to come gradu- ally (31¹⁸⁻²⁰ 23^{26, 27, 30}).</p>	<p>NO CLEAR TEACH- ING.</p>	<p>109-105 B.C.</p>
<p>TESTAMENTS OF THE TWELVE PATRI- ARCHS.</p>	<p>NO CLEAR DOC- TINE.</p>	<p>(a) First RESUR- RECTION of Heroes and Patriarchs. (b) Second RESUR- RECTION of all Men (<i>Benj.</i> 10⁶⁻⁸).</p>	<p>JUDGMENT of ALL by MESSIAH (<i>Benj.</i> 10^{3, 10}).</p>	<p>(a) ETERNAL KINGDOM on EARTH (<i>Levi</i> 18, etc.) (b) MESSIAH—Sin- less (<i>Jud.</i> 24¹). Prophet, Priest, Mediator, King, War- rior, has keys of Paradise (<i>Levi</i> 8^{14, 16} <i>Reub.</i> 6^{11, 12} (<i>Levi</i> 18¹⁰).</p>	<p>"ETERNAL FIRE," "DESTRUCTION" (<i>Zeb.</i> 10³).</p>	<p>109-107 B.C.</p>

APPENDIX I.—Continued.

GENERAL VIEW OF ESCHATOLOGICAL DOCTRINE IN TWELVE JEWISH BOOKS—Continued.

TITLE OF BOOK.	DOCTRINE OF HADES.	DOCTRINE OF RESURRECTION.	DOCTRINE OF JUDGMENT.	DOCTRINE OF KINGDOM.	DOCTRINE OF GEHENNA.	DATE.
PSALMS OF SOLOMON.	UNDERWORLD. "in-Sheol is the heritage" of the wicked (<i>Ps.</i> 14 ⁹).	(a) NO RESURRECTION of Wicked (<i>Ps.</i> 33. 14). (b) SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION OF JUST (<i>Ps.</i> 33 ⁶).	JUDGMENT OF ALL (<i>Ps.</i> 236-40).	(a) KINGDOM at Jerusalem (<i>Ps.</i> 17, 18). (b) MESSIAH—"Holy," "Anointed of the Lord," "King," "Judge," "Shepherd," "Destroyer of Gentiles" (<i>Ps.</i> 17 ³⁶ . 48. 45. 23-25). (c) "Life ETERNAL" (<i>Ps.</i> 33 ⁶).	DESTRUCTION for ever (<i>Ps.</i> 33. 14 etc.).	70-40 B. C.
SECOND MACCABEES.	INTERMEDIATE STATE. Prayers avail for Dead (1239-45).	(a) Bodily Resurrection (711. 22. 23). (b) Of Israel only (714).	JUDGMENT OF ALL. No Doctrine of Judgment Day (613-15).	(a) KINGDOM ON EARTH (Probably everlasting). (b) NO MESSIAH (79. 23).	Wicked have no share in Resurrection. "Due punishments" (719-27).	100-50 B. C.

FOURTH MACCABEES.	No DOCTRINE.	No RESURRECTION (18 ²³).	No DOCTRINE. PUNISHMENT begins at Death (18 ⁵).	No DOCTRINE of MESSIAH or KINGDOM. Righteous attain glorious Immor- tality (10 ¹⁵ 13 ¹⁷ 18 ²⁴).	Perpetual Tor- ments by fire (9 ⁶ etc.).	Before 70 A.D.
WISDOM OF SOLOMON.	No DOCTRINE.	No DOCTRINE.	"DAY OF DE- CISION" (3 ¹⁸).	(a) EARTHLY KINGDOM vaguely sug- gested (3 ⁶⁻⁸). (b) Blessed Immor- tality of Righteous (2 ²¹ -3 ⁴).	"Death," "An- guish," "De- struction" 4 ¹⁹).	c. 50 B.C.-10 A.D.
ASSUMPTION OF MOSES.	No DOCTRINE.	Israel to be exalted to Heaven (10 ⁹).	No DOCTRINE.	No MESSIAH. Theocratic King- dom at hand (10 ¹⁻¹⁰).	No Doctrine of In- dividual Destiny.	7-30 A.D.
SECRETS OF ENOCH (2 Enoch)	PLACE OF PUNISH- MENT— (a) Under earth for Angels (18 ⁷). (b) Under earth for Sinners (40 ^{12, 13}). (c) In Second Heaven (7 ¹⁻³).	DOCTRINE NOT CLEAR.	(a) JUDGMENT OF ALL (46 ³). (b) Just to escape Final Judge- ment (65 ⁸).	(a) No MESSIAH. (b) Millennium (32 ² -33 ²). (c) Eternal, time- less State of blessedness (65 ⁶⁻¹⁰).	Perpetual and mer- ciless torments (10 ²⁻⁴ <i>et passim</i>).	c. 50 A.D.

APPENDIX I.—Continued.

GENERAL VIEW OF ESCHATOLOGICAL DOCTRINE IN TWELVE JEWISH BOOKS—Continued.

TITLE OF BOOK.	DOCTRINE OF HADES.	DOCTRINE OF RESURRECTION.	DOCTRINE OF JUDGMENT.	DOCTRINE OF KINGDOM.	DOCTRINE OF GEHENNA.	DATE.
APOCALYPSE OF BARUCH (2 Baruch).	INTERMEDIATE STATE of rewards and punishments (52 ²⁻⁷).	RESURRECTION OF ALL. (In mortal bodies, which are to be endowed with im- mortality) (49 ¹ - 51 ⁶).	JUDGMENT OF ALL. End of hope and of intercession (83 ⁷ 85 ¹²).	(a) Temporary Kingdom on Earth (29 ¹ - 30 ¹). (b) Some parts of book expect MESSIAH, some do not. (c) Final State of Eternal blessedness (51 ¹⁰).	Torture by fire (59 ²).	50-100 A.D.
FOURTH EZRA.	INTERMEDIATE STATE of rewards and punishments (77 ⁸⁻¹⁰).	RESURRECTION OF ALL. (But no account of Resurrection Body) (7 ³²).	JUDGMENT OF ALL. End of hope. Lasts for "a week of years" (7 ³³⁻⁴¹).	(a) Temporary MESSIANIC KINGDOM (6 ²⁸⁻²⁹). (b) At its close MESSIAH dies (7 ²⁸⁻³⁰). (c) Eternal blessed- ness (8 ²²⁻⁵⁴).	Torments and De- struction (7 ⁶¹ etc.).	60-100 A.D.

**BOOKS OF
ADAM
AND
EVE.**

<p>PLACE OF PURIFICATION (V.A. 48¹⁻³). Prayers avail for Departed (<i>Apoc. Mos</i>is 33¹⁻³⁷⁶).</p>	<p>BODILY RESURRECTION (of "all Adam's race") (<i>Apoc. M.</i> 41¹⁻³).</p>	<p>An appointed Day of Judgment (V.A. 48²).</p>	<p>(a) "GOD will dwell with men on earth" (V.A. 29⁷). (b) "Just shall shine like the sun" (V.A. 29⁸). (c) "Sorrow shall be turned to joy" (V.A. 48²).</p>	<p>"The LORD shall repel from Himself the wicked" (V.A. 29⁹).</p>	<p>c. 100-A.D.</p>
--	---	--	--	--	--------------------

APPENDIX

SHORT COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF

JEWISH DOCTRINE.

I.

MESSIAH.

“The Anointed of the Lord”—“The Son of Man”—“The King”—“He shall open the gates of Paradise”—“Priest,” “Prophet,” “Judge”—“Mediator”—“Destroyer”—“Sinless, and Holy One”¹

O.T. references—Isa. 9⁶. 7 32¹. 2 42¹⁻³ 52¹³ 53¹² etc.

II.

MESSIANIC WOES AND PAROUSIA.

“Quakings of places; tumults of people; confusion of leaders; the foundations of the earth shall tremble and be shaken. The trumpet shall sound. The earth shall be stricken with fear.” “The Heavenly One will arise from His royal throne, and come forth from His holy habitation, with indignation and wrath for His sons. And earth will tremble to its utmost bounds, and the high mountains be brought low and the forests fall. The sun will not give light, and the horns of the moon will become dark; they will be broken, and it all will be turned into blood, and the circle of the stars will be shattered. The seas will sink into the abyss, the fountains of water will fail, and the rivers will be afraid: for the Most High will arise, the Eternal God alone” (4 *Ezra* 9³–6¹⁴⁻²⁴, *Ass. Moses* 10³⁻⁷).

“And behold! He cometh with ten thousand of His holy ones” (*En.* 1⁹).

“Now that lightning shone exceedingly so as to illuminate the whole earth” (*Apoc. Bar.* 53⁹).

O.T. references—Isa. 13⁶⁻¹³, Joel 21¹¹ etc.

¹ For references see preceding Table.

I I.

JEWISH AND NEW TESTAMENT ESCHATOLOGY.

NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE.

I.

MESSIAH.

"The Christ, the Son of the living God." "The Son of Man." "The King." "I have the keys of death and of Hades." "The Son of Man is come not to be ministered unto but to minister." "A priest for ever." "Without sin" (Matt. 17¹³⁻¹⁶ 25³⁴ 20²⁸, Rev. 1¹⁸, Heb. 4¹⁵ 5⁶).

II.

MESSIANIC WOES AND PAROUSIA.

"And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows. . . . For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. . . . But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. . . . But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. . . . And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall He send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. . . . For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mark 13⁶⁻⁸. 19. 23. 24-27, Matt. 24²⁷).

JEWISH DOCTRINE—*Continued.*

III.

THE RESURRECTION.

1. OF BELIEVERS.

"Then shall ye see Enoch, Noah, and Shem, and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, rising on the right hand in gladness." . . . "They that fear the Lord shall rise to life eternal." . . . "All who have fallen asleep in hope of Him shall rise again" (*Test. Benj.* 10⁶⁻⁸, *Apoc. Bar.* 30²).

"The earth shall assuredly restore the dead. . . . As it has received, so shall it restore them. . . . For it will be necessary to show to the living that the dead have come to life again. . . . Then shall the aspect of those who are condemned be afterwards changed, and the glory of those who are justified. . . . The glory of those who have been justified in My law shall be glorified in changes . . . that they may be able to acquire and receive the world which does not die" (*Apoc. Bar.* 50²⁻⁵¹³).

O.T. references—Ps. 16⁹⁻¹¹, Isa. 26¹⁹, Ezek. 37¹⁻¹⁴, Dan. 12² etc.

2. OF ALL MEN.

"Then also all men shall rise, some unto glory and some unto shame." "And in those days shall the earth also give back that which has been entrusted to it, and Sheol also shall give back that which it had received" (*Test. Benj.* 10⁸, *En.* 51¹).

NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE—*Continued.*

III.

THE RESURRECTION.

1. OF BELIEVERS.

"I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John 11^{25. 26}).

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; 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. For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." . . . "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (1 Cor. 15⁵¹⁻⁵⁴, 2 Cor. 5¹⁻⁴).

2. OF ALL MEN.

"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 5^{28. 29}).

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and Death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them" (Rev. 20¹³).

JEWISH DOCTRINE—*Continued.*

IV.

JUDGMENT.

1. PERSONAL.

"The judgment of the lofty One who has no respect of persons."
 "He will judge the great according to his greatness, and the small according to his smallness, and each according to his way" (*Bar.* 13⁸, *Jub.* 5¹⁵).

O.T. references—*Mal.* 3¹⁻³ 16-18, *Isa.* 26²¹, *Ps.* 96¹³ etc.

2. UNIVERSAL.

"The Lord of Spirits seated the Elect One on the throne of His glory, and the spirit of righteousness was poured out before Him. . . . And there will stand up in that day all the kings and the mighty and the exalted and those who hold the earth, and they will see and recognise Him how He sits on the throne of His glory and righteousness is judged before Him and no lying word is spoken before Him . . . and one portion of them will look on the other and they will be terrified, and their countenance will fall and pain will seize them when they see that Son of Man sitting on the throne of His glory, . . . and all the elect will stand before Him on that day. And all the kings and the mighty . . . will supplicate for mercy at His hand. Nevertheless . . . the angels of punishment will take them in charge to execute vengeance upon them, because they have oppressed His children and His elect. And they will be a spectacle for the righteous and for His elect, . . . and the righteous and the elect will be saved on that day . . . and the Lord of Spirits will abide over them and with that Son of Man will they eat and lie down and rise up for ever and ever."¹

"And there is nothing in heaven or on earth, or in light or in darkness, or in Sheol, that is not judged" (*Jub.* 5¹⁴).

¹ Burkitt's shortened version of Judgment scene in *En.* 62.

NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE—*Continued.*

IV.

JUDGMENT.

1. PERSONAL.

“But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Matt. 12³⁶).

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5¹⁰).

2. UNIVERSAL.

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. 20^{11, 12}).

“When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all the nations; and He shall separate them as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: sick and ye visited me, in prison and ye came unto Me,” etc. (Matt. 25³¹⁻⁴⁶).

“There is nothing covered up that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known” (Mark 4²²).

JEWISH DOCTRINE—*Continued.*

IV.

JUDGMENT—*Continued.*3. MORE DETAILED COMPARISON OF MATT. 25³¹⁻⁴⁶ WITH
JEWISH APOCALYPSE.

"The Son of Man"; "He cometh with ten thousand of His holy ones," "The holy angels." "They shall see that Son of Man seated on the throne of His glory."

"And then shall He judge all the Gentiles" (*Test. Benj.* 10⁹).

"And He shall choose the righteous and holy from among them" (*En.* 51²).

"Rising on the right hand in gladness" (*Test. Benj.* 10⁶).

"The righteous shall all be blessed" (*En.* 1⁸).

"Inherit eternal life"; "for each one there is a place prepared" (*En.* 40⁹, *Sec. of En.* 49²).

"I was beset with hunger, and the Lord Himself nourished me.

I was alone, and God comforted me :

I was sick, and the Lord visited me :

I was in prison, and my God showed favour unto me" (*Test. Jos.* 15⁶).

"The godless shall be driven from the presence of the righteous."

"Ye sinners shall be cursed for ever" (*En.* 38³ 102³).

"Eternal fire"—"prepared for the hosts of Azazel."

"Eternal punishment," "eternal life" (*Test. Zeb.* 10³, *En.* 54⁵).

Note.—References not given here are to be found in preceding pages, or in Appendix I. In *Test. Benj.* 10⁶ "the right hand," of course, implies "the left."

NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE—*Continued.*

IV.

JUDGMENT—*Continued.*3. MORE DETAILED COMPARISON OF MATT. 25³¹⁻⁴⁶ WITH
JEWISH APOCALYPSE.

“When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him,” etc.

“And before Him shall be gathered all nations.”

“And He shall separate them,” etc.

“On His right hand, . . . on the left.”

“Ye blessed of My Father.”

“Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.”

“For I was an hungered,” etc.

“Depart from Me, ye cursed.”

“Eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

“Eternal punishment,” “eternal life.”

JEWISH DOCTRINE—*Continued.*

V.

HADES.

1. A STATE OF SLEEP.

"Though the righteous sleep a long sleep, yet shall they have nought to fear." "The righteous shall arise out of sleep" (*En.* 100⁵ 91¹⁰).

O.T. references—*Isa.* 14⁹⁻²⁰, *Job* 3¹⁷⁻¹⁹ 10¹⁹⁻²² 17¹³⁻¹⁶ etc.

2. A STATE OF PUNISHMENT.

"Here their spirits shall be . . . in great pain until the great day of judgment" (*En.* 22¹¹).

3. A STATE OF REWARD.

"Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob shall receive us." "And Paradise is between corruptibility and incorruptibility . . . and every place is blessed. . . . This place is prepared for the righteous" (*4 Macc.* 13¹⁷, *Sec. of En.* 8⁵⁻⁹).

4. HELP FOR THOSE IN HADES.

"Wherefore Judas made a propitiation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin" (*2 Macc.* 12⁴⁵).

"Then Seth saw the hand of God stretched out holding Adam, and he handed him over to Michael, saying: Let him be in thy charge till the day of judgment in punishment till the last years, when I will convert his sorrow into joy. Then shall he sit on the throne of him who hath been his supplanter" (*Books of Adam and Eve* (V.A.E.) 481⁻³).

5. HADES TO PASS AWAY.

"And death is hidden, Hades fled away" (*4 Ezra* 8⁵³).

For further references see preceding Table.

NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE—*Continued.*

V.

HADES.

1. A STATE OF SLEEP.

“Sleep in Jesus” (1 Thess. 4¹⁴). “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth” (John 11¹¹).

2. A STATE OF PUNISHMENT.

“In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment” (Luke 16²³).

3. A STATE OF REWARD.

“And the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.” “To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 16²², Rev. 14¹³, Luke 23⁴³).

4. HELP FOR THOSE IN HADES.

“Christ . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit: in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison. . . . For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (1 Pet. 3^{18, 19} 4⁶).

“What shall they do who are baptized for the dead?” (1 Cor. 15²⁹).

“I have the keys of Death and of Hades” (Rev. 1¹⁸).

5. HADES TO PASS AWAY.

“And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20¹⁴).

JEWISH DOCTRINE—*Continued.*

VI.

GEHENNA.

"As straw in fire shall they burn before the face of the holy and no trace of them shall any more be found" . . . "in blazing flames burning worse than fire shall you burn." . . . "Darkness and unilluminated gloom." . . . "The voice of crying and lamentation and weeping." . . . "There shall be the spectacle of righteous judgement, in the presence of the righteous for ever" (*En.* 48⁹ 100⁹, *Sec. of En.* 10², *En.* 108^{5.6} 27³).

O.T. references—Ps. 9¹⁷, Isa. 30³³ 34⁸⁻¹⁰ 66²⁴, Deut. 32²² etc.

VII.

KINGDOM AND HEAVENLY BLESSEDNESS.

1. TO COME GRADUALLY.

"And in those days the children shall begin . . . to seek the commandments. And their days shall begin to grow many . . . and all their days shall they complete and live in peace and joy" (*Jub.* 23²⁶⁻²⁹).

2. AN EARTHL Y STATE.

"And all the children of men shall become righteous and shall offer adoration, and shall honour Me and shall worship Me. And the earth shall be cleansed from all defilement and from all sin, and from all punishment and from all torment" (*En.* 10¹⁶⁻²², cf. also *En.* 25).

3. TEMPORARY KINGDOM.

"And it shall come to pass after all these things, when the time of the advent of the Messiah is fulfilled, that He shall return in glory" (*Apoc. Bar.* 30¹).

4. A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH.

"And I will transform the heaven and make it an eternal blessing and light; and I will transform the earth and make it a blessing" (*En.* 45⁵).

NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE—*Continued.*

VI.

GEHENNA.

“He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” “The eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” “Where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.” “The outer darkness” . . . “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” “And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of his torment ascendeth up for ever and ever” (Matt. 3¹² 25⁴¹, Mark 9⁴⁴, Matt. 22¹⁸, Rev. 14¹⁰).

VII.

KINGDOM AND HEAVENLY BLESSEDNESS.

1. TO COME GRADUALLY.

“The Kingdom of Heaven is as leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened” (Matt. 13³³).

“The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation” (Luke 17²⁰).

2. AN EARTHLY STATE.

“Then shall ye sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” “Many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom.” “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 19²⁸ 8¹¹ 6¹⁰).

3. TEMPORARY KINGDOM.

“Then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15²⁸).

4. A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH.

“We look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3¹³).

JEWISH DOCTRINE—*Continued.*KINGDOM AND HEAVENLY BLESSEDNESS—*Continued.*

5. AN HEAVENLY STATE, AND ETERNAL LIFE.

"The world which does not die." "Then all time shall perish and the years, and henceforward there shall be neither months nor days nor hours." "Eternal life." "Ye shall have great joy as the angels" (*Apoc. Bar.* 51³, *Sec. of En.* 65⁷, *Test. of Asher* 5³, *En.* 10¹⁰ 104⁵).

O.T. references—*Zech.* 9⁸⁻¹², *Mic.* 5²⁻⁴, *Isa.* 11¹⁻¹⁰ 40⁹⁻¹¹ 60–65¹⁷⁻²⁵ etc.

6. POETIC DESCRIPTION.

"For you is opened Paradise, planted the Tree of life; the future Age prepared, plenteousness made ready; a City builded, a Rest appointed; good works established, wisdom reconstituted; the evil root is sealed up from you, infirmity from your path extinguished; And Death is hidden, Hades fled away; Corruption forgotten, sorrows past away; and in the end the treasures of immortality are made manifest."

"And I saw all the sweet-flowering trees. . . . And in the midst of the trees that of life, in that place whereon the Lord rests when He goes up into Paradise; and this tree is of ineffable goodness and fragrance, and adorned more than every existing thing; and on all sides it is in form gold-looking and vermilion and fire-like and covers all, and it has produce from all fruits. Its root is in the garden at the earth's end. . . . And here there is no unfruitful tree, and every place is blessed. And there are three hundred angels very bright, who keep the garden, and with incessant sweet singing and never-silent voices serve the Lord throughout all days and hours" (*4 Ez.* 52–54, *2 En.* 8).

See also *Apoc. Bar.* 51¹⁰, *En.* 90²⁸⁻⁴².

Note.—This statement is, of course, far from complete. It aims only at giving one or two examples under each heading. The quotations from the Jewish literature are, for the most part, taken from the *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, edited by Dr. Charles.

On Jewish books, cf. also Charles, *Book of Enoch, Apocalypse of Baruch*; Volz, *Jüdische Eschatologie*; Moffatt, *Expos. Greek Test.—Revelation of St. John*; Dean, *Book of Revelation*; Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, etc.

NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE—*Continued.*KINGDOM AND HEAVENLY BLESSEDNESS—*Continued.*

5. AN HEAVENLY STATE, AND ETERNAL LIFE.

“An inheritance . . . reserved in heaven,” “the heavenly Jerusalem,” “an heavenly country.” “They that are accounted worthy to attain unto that world . . . are equal unto the Angels.” “There shall be time no longer.” “Eternal life” (1 Pet. 1⁴, Heb. 12²² 11¹⁶, Luke 20^{35. 36}, Rev. 10⁶, Matt. 25⁴⁶ etc.).

6. POETIC DESCRIPTION.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away ; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God : and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes ; and death shall be no more ; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more : the first things are passed away” (Rev. 21¹⁻⁴).

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat : for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life : and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 7^{16. 17}).

APPENDIX III.

ON THE MEANING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TERM "ETERNAL."

(αἰώνιος, *aiionios*.)

I.

OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS.

DORNER.—"By no means denotes everywhere endless duration." Applied to punishment, it denotes "a duration of immeasurable length, but not an eternity of duration" (*Christian Doctrine*, iv. p. 419). Also STANTON (*Jewish and Christian Messiah*, p. 342).

PLUMPTRE.—Its "received connotation" is "indefinite duration," "in every book of the New Testament, except the writing of St. John" (*Spirits in Prison*, p. 366). So also SALMOND (*Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, pp. 516-517).

STEVENS.—"*Aionios* means pertaining to an age, age-long. It no more means endless (necessarily) than *aeon* means eternity" (*Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, p. 526). So also KINGSLEY (quoted by Cox, *Salvator Mundi*, p. 122); FARRAR (*Eternal Hope*, p. 78).

COX.—"Aeonial life means life in Christ, the spiritual life distinctive of the Christian Aeon; and aeonial punishment is the discipline, the punishment, distinctive of the Christian Aeon" (*Salvator Mundi*, p. 140).

CHEYNE.—"Eternal means in Synoptics and New Testament generally—(1) endless, (2) Messianic." In St. John, "the life which is life indeed" (*Encyc. Bib.*, art. *Eternity and Eternal*, sec. 4).

CHARLES, in his *Book of Enoch*, repeatedly shows the variable and uncertain meaning of the word *aeonios* (p. 72). But he evidently holds that, as applied to punishment in the New Testament, it means "unending," since he says, "Punishment is generally conceived in the Gospels as everlasting" (*Encyc. Bib.*, art. *Eschatology*). So also GOULBURN (*Everlasting Punishment*, pp. 82-88); HAUSRATH (*N.T. Times*, ii. 238); WENDT (*Teaching of Jesus*, ii. 88).

BRUCE (*Exp. Greek Test.*, vol. i. p. 396).—"Strict meaning is age-long, not everlasting."

JUKES.—"This word describes not the quantity or duration, but the quality, of that of which it is predicated" (*Restitution*, etc., p. 129); cf. also DE QUINCEY (in *Theological Essays*).

BLACKIE.—"Does not signify eternity absolutely and metaphysically, but only popularly" (*Nat. Hist. of Ath.*, p. 207).

TAYLER LEWIS.—"In Matt. 25⁴⁶ it would be in accordance with etymological usage to give it the sense of *olamic* or *aeonic*, or to regard it as denoting, like the Jewish *olam habba*, 'the world to come'—'These shall go away into the punishment of the world to come, and these into the life of the world to come.' And so it is in the old Syriac Version, where the rendering is still more unmistakably clear. These shall go away to the pain of the *olam* and these to the life of the *olam* (*olam* signifies age or world to come)" (*Notes on Lange's Ecclesiastes*, 1⁸).

PUSEY.—"It means endless, within the sphere of its own existence" (*Everlasting Punishment*, p. 38 ff.).

WESTCOTT.—"Eternal life is not an endless duration of being in time, but being of which time is not a measure (*Epistles of St. John*, p. 215). So also MAURICE (*Theological Essays*, pp. 447-450). Also ERSKINE of Linlathen (*Life and Letters*, p. 425).

H. A. A. KENNEDY holds that "eternal," when applied to doom, in the N.T. means "everlasting"—"The evidence . . . tells completely against the modern hypothesis" (*St. Paul's Conceptions*, etc., p. 316).

H. R. MACKINTOSH.—"Attempts . . . to evacuate the word 'eternal' of its natural meaning have come to nothing" (*Immortality and the Future*, p. 204).

NOTE.

These quotations are only a few out of many that might be given. But they may suffice for illustration. Where such difference of opinion exists among competent scholars, there must be room for doubt.—If the N.T. writers had used the word ἀτελεύτητος when they meant to signify “without end,” much trouble might have been spared. The Emperor Justinian, in his declaration against Origen, added *ateleutētos* to *aeonios*, to make it clear that he meant endless.—But vagueness and variety of meaning attaches in all languages to this phraseology. Thus, in English, we speak colloquially of “*eternal* worry,” etc.; in legal documents property is assigned to a man “and to his heirs *for ever*”; Stevenson uses the phrase, “the *endless* song was ended at last”; Carlyle, “an *everlasting* barren simper”; Blake writes, “*eternity* in an hour”; Shakespeare speaks of “Brass *eternal*, prey to mortal rage”; philosophers mean by eternal, “without beginning or end”; orthodox theologians have in mind true eternity when they speak of the *Eternal* God, but unending duration when they say “*eternal* punishment.” Thus the English use of this phraseology corresponds in variety to the Greek.

II.

PLATO'S USE OF TERM “ETERNAL.”

Aeon (αἰών) in Ionic usage signified a “lifetime” or “time”; but it had acquired solemnity of meaning from poetic association. Hence, Plato found it the most suitable word to express his idea of true eternity—that which is without beginning or end or succession.

He probably coined the adjective αἰώνιος to correspond to the particular sense he gave to the noun. *Aeonios* commonly means, in his writings, not indefinite continuance of time, but that which is above time or is its metaphysical opposite. *Aeonios* occurs in three passages, all in the later Dialogues.

1. *Republic* (ii. c. 6). Here we are told that certain poets deem “eternal intoxication (μέθην αἰώνιον) to be the best reward of virtue” in Hades. “Aeonian” here means “unending,” but in a popular and ironic sense.

2. *Laws* (x. c. 12): “Both soul and body are a thing indestructible (ἀνώλεθρον) yet not eternal (αἰώνιον) like the gods, existing according to law.” *Aeonian* here cannot denote true eternity, since it is applied to the gods as distinguished from the soul of man. Plato's doctrine is

that the soul is a thing deathless and indestructible (*ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον*) by nature—truly eternal, without beginning or end. The gods, on the other hand, are created beings, *not deathless by nature*, but secured against death by a special decree of their Maker. *Aeonian* thus connotes “deathless existence according to law”—the life of mortal beings secured from flux and change and decay by the direct exercise of divine power. It describes a state or quality of being peculiar to the gods—not endless life, nor life limited in duration, but one that is above time, in so far as time means age and corruption. This use of the term *aeonian* thus approximates intellectually to the Johannine.

3. But the classic passage is in the *Timaeus* (sec. x. in Greek edition, Herrmann's; secs. xiii., xiv., Bohn's trans.).

The universe, body and soul, is a created image of the eternal (*αἰδῖος*) gods. Having a body and soul, and thus being alive, it is called an “eternal (*αἰδῖος*) animal.” The nature (*φύσις*) of this living universe is “eternal” (*αἰώνιος*), and therefore “could not be entirely adopted into anything subject to generation” (*γένεσις*). Hence God resolved to create “a movable image of eternity” (*αἰών*). He “out of that eternity which rests in unity formed an eternal (*αἰώνιος*) image.” This image, or imitation of eternity is Time. Time, like the universe, is itself perishable: for these “may together be dissolved.” But it is formed on the model of an eternal (*αἰώνιος*) nature. This aeonian model on which Time is formed “exists through all eternity.” But the thing formed on it “exists through all time.”

In this passage the term *aeonios*, as nearly as possible, connotes true metaphysical eternity. Time is, indeed, called “an aeonian image.” But context shows that this means an image made on an aeonian model. The whole reasoning throughout shows that the *aeonian* model belongs to that eternity which “is the same and indivisible; neither becomes at any time older nor younger; neither has been generated in the past nor will be in the future.”

Plato thus means by *aeonian*—(1) “everlasting,” in a popular and literary sense; (2) the quality of life peculiar to the gods; (3) true eternity.

III.

PHILO'S USE OF TERM ETERNAL

(1) Philo sometimes uses *aeonios* in the Platonic sense of true eternity, for he likes to be as Platonic as possible. (2) But, so far as I know, he never applies it to future punishment. (3) He often employs

the phraseology in question to denote limited periods of time. Two illustrations of this are given in the chapter on Gehenna. The passage in which "eternal punishment" occurs is as follows :

"It is better not to promise than not to give prompt assistance ; for no blame follows in the former case, but in the latter there is dissatisfaction from the weaker class, and a deep hatred and everlasting punishment from such as are more powerful" (*Fragmenta*, tome ii. p. 667, Mangey's edition).

This passage is to be found in Rendel Harris's Greek and Latin edition of the *Fragmenta* of Philo, p. 10.

IV.

'FOR EVER' USED OF A LIMITED TIME IN APOCALYPTIC AND OTHER JEWISH WRITINGS.

Book of Enoch.

93⁷ "And after this, in the fifth week, at its close, will the house of glory and dominion be built for ever." This is said of the temple which was to pass away.

5⁹. Righteous are to dwell in the earthly Paradise "in eternal happiness"; and yet they are to die.

10⁵. Azazel is bound in the wilderness in darkness "for ever." "For ever" here means for seventy generations.

10¹⁰ "They hope to live an eternal life, and that each one of them will live five hundred years." "Eternal" here means "five hundred years."

39⁵. The angels are represented as interceding for men "for ever and ever" after the judgment. Unless the writer means to indicate that there is no end to the period during which intercession avails, he is using the words "for ever and ever" here to equal "continually."

The Mosaic law is called "the eternal law" (99²). The writer of this section cannot have meant that the law of Moses was everlasting.

Reference is also made to the "eternal heritage of their fathers" (99¹⁴). Yet in this section of the *Book of Enoch* the whole earth is to pass away.

Apocalypse of Baruch.

In *Apocalypse of Baruch* (later half of 1st century A.D.) the phrase "for ever" (*εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*) is twice used to equal "for the age," or "till the end of the age" (40³ 73¹).

(See Charles, *Eschatology*, p. 327.)

V.

GREEK TERM "ETERNAL" IN THE N.T.

Dr. Pusey gives an analysis of the use of *aeonios* in the N.T. (*Everlasting Punishment*, pp. 38, 39), *q.v.*

It is used of *Fire* three times (Matt. 18^s 25⁴¹, Jude 7).

„ „ *Punishment* once (Matt. 25⁴⁶).

„ „ *Judgment* once or possibly twice (Mark 3²⁹ (?), Heb. 6²).

„ „ *Sin* possibly once (Mark 3²⁹).

„ „ *Destruction* once (2 Thess. 1⁹).

The term is thus applied to future Retribution seven times in all. Whereas it is applied to *Life* forty-four times. Dr. Pusey remarks that "of the future it is nowhere used in the N.T. except of eternal life or punishment" (*Everlasting Punishment*, p. 39).

Of these seven instances, the three in Matt. are not of high authority, being peculiar to that Gospel. The one in Jude ⁷ refers to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha. The phrase "*aeonian sin*," in Mark 3²⁹, is without parallel in the N.T. Also, it is applied in Jewish literature to national and temporal sins. "*Eternal Judgment*," in Heb. 6², means *final* judgment. Also, some passages in Hebrews indicate the annihilation of the wicked (see Chapter on Gehenna). "Eternal destruction" in 2 Thess. 1⁹ seems to me to signify annihilation.

(2) *Aeonian* = unending duration in, *e.g.*, 2 Tim. 2¹⁰, Heb. 9¹⁵, 2 Cor. 4¹⁷.

(3) *Aeonian* = true eternity in, *e.g.*, 1 Tim. 1¹⁷, Heb. 9¹⁴.

(4) *Aeonian life* in St. John = "life that is life indeed," "life of which time is no measure." Plato foreshadowed this idea in the *Laws*. But, whereas Plato's "eternal life" was an elevated, privileged state of existence, John's is an elevated state of thought, feeling, and purpose.

(5) *Aeonian* = limited duration, *e.g.* Rom. 16²⁵.

(6) In the Synoptics and N.T. generally, "eternal life" is "the life of the Kingdom" (Matt. 19¹⁶, Mark 10¹⁷, Luke 10²⁵ etc.). This is the meaning of "eternal life" also in Jewish Apocalypse. The heirs of the Kingdom are said to enjoy life eternal even when the Kingdom is regarded as temporary. The Kingdom is eternal in the sense that it issues from eternity and cannot be conquered by anything that is of this world. Its citizens, therefore, enjoy a peculiar quality of life, whatever its duration—triumphant, secure, part of the eternal order.

The Synoptic doctrine corresponds to this. No doubt, Jesus thought of the Kingdom life as endless. Whether He believed that the Messianic

State would be everlasting or temporary, He certainly believed that it could only merge in something higher than itself, the Kingdom of the Father in heaven. Hence, those who inherited the Kingdom inherited final blessedness. But He thought more of the religious and moral quality of the life of the Age to come than of its duration.

St. John's presentation of our Lord's teaching, in this respect, did not differ essentially from that of the Synoptics. For him also eternal life = the Kingdom (John 3^{s. 5}). The Kingdom is eternal life realised in community.

(7) Of the phrases cited from St. Matt. *aeonian punishment* = "the punishment of the Messianic Age," and includes the idea of finality; *aeonian fire* = "unquenchable fire," "Gehenna."

APPENDIX IV.

FUTURE PUNISHMENT IN THE CREEDS.

I.

RULE OF FAITH—FINAL FORM; APOSTLES' CREED.

Statement by Ignatius: No doctrine. (Early in 2nd century.)

„ Irenaeus (*circ.* 180 A.D.): “Eternal Fire.”

„ Tertullian (*circ.* 200 A.D.): “Eternal Fire.”

„ Cyril (350): No doctrine.

Apostolic Constitutions (*circ.* 350): No doctrine.

Marcellus' version of Creed (*circ.* 341): No doctrine.

Rufinus' „ (400) „

Apostles' Creed (8th century). „

II.

CHRISTOLOGICAL CREEDS.

No doctrine; except *Quicumque Vult*, which teaches everlasting perdition.

III.

GRECO-RUSSIAN.

Larger Catechism (1846): “everlasting fire,” “everlasting torment.”

IV.

PROTESTANT CREEDS.

Augsburg (1530): “torments” (art. 17).

Anglican 39 Articles (1563): No doctrine.

Zwinglian 67 Articles of Zurich (1523): "The judgment of the deceased is known to God alone" (58).

Westminster Confession (1646-47): "Everlasting torments."

Racovian Confession of the Socinians (1605-9): Annihilation of wicked.

Congregational Statement of Doctrine (1883): "Everlasting punishment" (12).

Salvation Army (19th century): "Everlasting torments."

Christadelphian (19th century): Annihilation of wicked.

Unitarian (19th century): Universal salvation.

Moravian Confession (1911): No doctrine.

Union Articles of Indian Presbyterian Churches (1904).

"The wicked . . . shall suffer the punishment due to their sins."

Cf. Curtis, *History of Creeds*, etc. ; also Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*.

INDICES.

I. SUBJECTS.

- Acts of the Apostles, 75 n., 179 n.
Adam and Eve, Books of, 46, 72, 331, 340.
 Advent, Second, Part I. Chap. II.: Jesus' predictions of, 54-8.
 Agnosticism in eschatology, 196-8, 293-4.
 Akiba, 142-3.
 Alexandrian School, eschatology of, 29-30, 134-40, 163-4. See also "Philo" (Index II.), *Wisdom, Book of*.
 Anabaptists, 193.
 Annihilation, in Jewish eschatology, 15 f., 71, 105, 139, 142-3, 326-30; in N.T., 107-8, 111, 113-4, 164-5, 171-2, 179; in Christian thought, 191, 193, 195, 205, 354, and Part II. Chap. III. *passim*.
 Antinomianism, 261.
 Apocalypse: literary characteristics of, 7-11; its roots in ancient religions, 8; a development of O.T. prophecy, 8; its problem and solution, 11-3; its view of the universe compared with mediæval view, 13-4; its optimism and pessimism, 13, 46-7, 144; undogmatic character of its thought, 14-7, 24, 26, 33, 58-60, 78-9, 103-8, 128; its imaginative freedom, 17-9; its importance, 19-26; its influence on literature of Europe, 19-20; its influence on N.T. language, 20-2; on teaching of Jesus, 22-3, 34-62; its permanent value, 295-300, 318-9.
 Apocalypse of John. See Revelation, Book of.
 Apostles' Creed, 67, 92, 353.
Apostolic Constitutions, 353.
Assumption of Moses, 17, 42, 50, 329, 332.
 Baptism for the dead, 89.
Barnabas, Epistle of, 190.
Baruch, Apocalypse of (2 *Baruch*), 11, 12, 16, 17, 47, 106, 330, 332, 334, 336, 342, 344, 350.
 Battle Hymn of American Republic, 20.
 Blasphemy against Holy Spirit, 149-51, 154.
 Carthage, Synod of, 260.
 Christadelphians, 225, 354.
 Christology, 195.
 Church, in teaching of Jesus, 56-7, 66.
Clement, Recognitions of, 191 n.
Clement, Second Epistle of, 190.
 Compensation, in teaching of Jesus, 157; as an argument for immortality, 297-8.
 Conditional Immortality, Part II. Chap. III.; in Jewish thought, 71, 106, 134, 137-40; in Philo, 137-9; in N.T. teaching, 164, 171, 183; in Paul, 171, 179, 183; in John, 164-5, 171; in ancient (non-Jewish) thought, 220; in the Christian Fathers, 190, 221-4; in modern thought, 205, 224-50; in Unitarian

- teaching, 224-5; the four modern forms of the doctrine: evolutionary form (Armand Sabatier, etc.), 209, 226-31; philosophical form (Rothe, Ritschl, etc.), 231-5; undogmatic form (Lotze, Matthew Arnold, Tyrrell), 236-40; theological form (Edw. White, Petavel, etc.), 240-50; appreciation and criticism of theory, 229-31, 234-5, 238-40, 242-51, 303-4, 312.
- Conscience, as ground for belief in Future Judgment, 86.
- Constantinople, Synod of (A.D. 544), 259.
- Credo of Christendom, on Future Punishment, App. IV.
- Crisis, element of, in human experience, 86-8.
- Daniel, Book of, 334.
- Danton, 215.
- Death, use of the term in N.T., 161; by John, 162-7; by Paul, 168-73.
- Descent into Hades* (book), 92.
- Destiny, threefold doctrine of: its permanent value, 307-9.
- Destiny, Final: Jewish doctrine, Part I. *passim* (see "Gehenna," "Hades"); Jewish opinion in N.T. times, 133-45; N.T. teaching, Part II. Chap. I.; teaching of Jesus, 149-60; apostolic teaching, 160-82; teaching of John, 161-7; of Paul, 168-82.
- Deuteronomy, 342.
- Dionysius the Areopagite, 261.
- Dualism, in Johannine thought, 161-5.
- Egyptian religion, 220.
- Enoch*, Book of, 10, 15-6, 18, 24, 29, 45, 53, 54, 71, 72, 79, 89 n., 106, 109-10, 112, 113, 149, 186, 326, 334, 338, 340, 342, 350.
- Enoch*, *Secrets of* (2 *Enoch*), 17, 18, 72 n., 139-40, 321, 329, 338, 340, 342, 344.
- Eschatology: its importance and necessity, 3-4, 147-8; its difficulties, 4-7; its conflict of authorities, 4; symbolic nature of its language, 5-6; variety and confusion of its forms, 6;—Jewish eschatology, Part I. *passim*, 133-145, App. I.; compared with N.T., App. II.; place of eschatology in teaching of Jesus, 39-43; agnosticism in eschatology, 196-8, 293-4; forecast of future eschatology, 306-17.
- Eschatological interpretation of the Gospels (Weiss, Schweitzer), 38-43.
- Essenes, 134.
- "Eternal" in N.T. terminology, 112, App. III.; Plato's use of the term, 348-9; Philo's use, 112, 349-50.
- Eternal Life, two ways of conceiving it, 317-24; the apocalyptic way, 318-9; the mystical way, 319-23; teaching of N.T., 318, 345. See also App. III.
- Eucharist, 56, 67.
- Evil conceived as unreal, 123, 207, 274.
- Evil, Everlasting, dogma of, 103, 119, 138, 183, 186, Part II. Chap. II., 254, 309-10; in early Church, 189-92; in teaching of Augustine, 121-5, 191; in medieval Church, 192-3; in Aquinas (denies eternal torment, teaches only eternal loss), 200-3; in modern Church, 193-5; in our own times, 195-9; three main forms of the doctrine (Aquinas, Swedenborg, Salmond), 199-205; its speculative aspects, 207-11; its moral and religious sanctions, 211-7, 302.
- Evolution and immortality, 209, 226-31.
- Extinction. See "Annihilation."
- Ezekiel, 334.
- Ezra*, Fourth, 17, 106, 143-5, 231, 330, 332, 340.
- Fendal versus Williams (*Decision of Privy Council*, 1863-4), 253.
- Fire as a N.T. symbol, 107-15, 170. See also "Gehenna."
- "For ever," use of phrase in Jewish writings, 350.
- Francis of Assisi, 263.

Freedom of the Will, 284-6, 311-2, 315.

Friends of God, 261.

Gehenna, Part I. Chap. iv. ; undogmatic nature of the conception (sometimes = annihilation, sometimes = eternal torment), 103-4, and this chapter, *passim* ; origin and development of conception, 103-4 ; older than belief in personal immortality, 104-5 ; in Jewish thought, 15, 71, 72, 105-6, 133-45 *passim*, App. I. ; in N.T. teaching, 107-15, 186, 352 ; Jewish and N.T. teaching compared, 342-3 ; in teaching of Jesus, 108-15, 151, 153 ; absent from teaching of Paul, 107-8, 170-1 ; in early Church, 115-7 ; development into dogmatic form (Tertullian, Origen, Augustine) 117-25 ; in popular thought of Christianity, 118-9 ; in modern thought (Newman, Pusey), 126-7 ; true value of the conception, 129-30. See also "Evil, Everlasting."

General Council, Fifth (A.D. 553), 259.

Hades, see Intermediate State ;

Descent of Christ into, 89, 90-3.

Heavenly blessedness, Jewish and N.T. conceptions compared, 342-5.

Hebrews, Epistle to the : its idea of the Kingdom, 32, 59, 345 ; of the Judgment, 80 ; its use of the term "fire," 108.

Hegelianism, 261.

Hellenistic theology, 163-4.

Hermas, *Shepherd of*, 92.

Hillel, 105, 141-3.

Holy Grail, 65.

Holy Roman Empire, 65.

Holy Spirit, blasphemy against, 149-51, 154.

Imitation of Christ, 67.

Indestructibility of the soul (as an objection to Conditionalism), 245.

Infancy, fate of those who die in, 96-8.

Intermediate State (Hades) : Jewish conception of, 69-73, App. I. ; logically connected with idea of Kingdom, 68, 69-70 ; origins of the idea, 70-1 ; relation of Hades and Gehenna in Jewish thought, 71, 72-3 ; N.T. doctrine, 74, 88-93 ; Paul and Peter on Christ's descent into Hades, 90-3 ; Jewish and N.T. doctrines compared, 340-1 ; theological developments of the idea, 93-5 ; in Greek Church, 93-4 ; in Roman Church, 94 ; in Protestant thought ("Future Probation"), 94-9 ; permanent value of belief in intermediate state, 101-2.

Isaiah, 9 n., 29, 70 n., 104, 332, 334, 336, 340, 342, 344.

Jesus : His conception of the Kingdom of God, 34-63, 156 ; His unique religious consciousness, 44-5 ; His Messianic consciousness, 45-6 ; His "optimism," 46-51 ; His predictions of the Parousia, 54-8 ; His teaching on Final Destiny ; its negative side, 149-53 ; its positive side, 153-60 ; His idea of God, 158.

Job, Book of, 340.

Jochanan ben Nuri, 142.

Joel, 332.

Johannine dualism and reconciliation, 161-7 ; Johannine and Hellenistic thought, 163-5.

Johannine teaching ; on Kingdom of God, 32, 33, 352 ; on Second Advent, 32 ; on Resurrection, 75, 76, 77 ; on Judgment, 80, 81 ; on Hades and Gehenna, 89, 107 ; on Final Destiny, 161-7 ; suggests conditional immortality, 164-5, 171 ; universalism, 167 ; conception of Eternal Life, 318, 319, 345, 346, 351, 352.

John, Apocalypse of. See Revelation, Book of.

Jubilees, Book of, 16, 18, 29, 150, 327, 336, 342.

Jude, Epistle of, 351.

Judgment : Jewish ideas of, 69, App. I. ; logically involved in idea of

- Kingdom, 68, 69; N.T. doctrine, 74, 80-4; its twofold aspect, universal and personal, 81-4; Jewish and N.T. doctrines compared, 336-9; theological interpretation of the idea, 84-6; its rational basis, 86-8; Christian modifications, 81, 88.
- Kingdom of God, Part I. Chap. II.; the central thought of Apocalypse, 27; Jewish doctrine of, 27-31; its conflicting elements (earthly paradise, heavenly kingdom, etc.), 27-31, App. I., 342-4; Rabbinic ideas of, 31; N.T. doctrine of, 31-63; in Hebrews, 32, 59, 345; in 1 Peter, 32, 345; in 2 Peter, 32, 343; in Johannine writings, 32, 33, 352; in Paul, 33, 174-8; in teaching of Jesus, 34-63, 156; "eschatological" interpretation of, 38-43; Jewish and N.T. doctrine compared, 342-5; the idea in Church Tradition, 63-7.
- "Larger Hope, The," 265, 271. See also "Universal Restoration."
- Logos doctrine, 135, 137-8, 140, 163.
- Lord's Supper, 56.
- Maccabees, Second*, 17, 72, 89 n., 328, 340.
- Maccabees, Fourth*, 89 n., 116, 139 n., 329, 340.
- Malachi, 336.
- Messiah: fluctuations of the idea in Jewish thought, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 29, 30, App. I., 332; Jewish and N.T. ideas compared, 332-3; the idea in N.T., 24, 31, 32, 74, 333; in teaching and consciousness of Jesus, 34-62 *passim*, esp. 45-6, 333.
- Messianic Age, Reign, etc. See "Kingdom of God."
- Messianic consciousness of Jesus, 45-6.
- Messianic woes, 29, 36, 332-3.
- Micah, 344.
- Modernism, 195.
- Mysticism, 261-3, 319-23.
- Neo-Platonism, 122.
- Nicodemus, Gospel of*, 92.
- Nirvana, 220.
- Norse mythology, 220.
- Optimism, Christian (on question of Final Destiny): see "Universal Restoration."
- "Optimism" of Jesus, 46-51. See also 153-60.
- Pantheism, 261.
- Parousia. See "Advent, Second."
- Paul: his teaching on the Kingdom, 33, 174-8, 343; on Resurrection, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 174-6, 335; on Judgment, 83-4, 337; suggests belief in Hades, 89, 90; does not use Gehenna idea, 107-8, 170-1; his teaching on Final Destiny, 168-82; his doctrine of "death," 168-73; his doctrine of reconciliation, 173-8, 309; problem of dogmatic interpretation, 178-82.
- Personal and impersonal immortality, 322.
- Pessimism in Jewish apocalypse, 13, 46-7, 144.
- Peter, First Epistle of: on Kingdom of God, 32, 345; on Judgment, 80, 83; on Christ's Descent into Hades, 89, 90-3, 160, 341; use of symbol "fire," 108.
- Peter, Second Epistle of, 32, 343.
- Pharisees, eschatology of, 133-4.
- Platonism, 135, 163. See "Plato" (Index II.).
- Pragmatism, 279.
- Prayer for the Dead: sanctioned in Jewish thought, 72, 73, 340; practised in early Church, 99; among Protestants, 99; the practice discussed, 100-1.
- Prayer-book of the Jews, 73.
- Predestination, in Augustine, 122; in Paul, 180, 182.
- Probation, Future, in Protestant thought, 94-8, 196, 307; in Clemens Alex., 255; as a feature of Conditionalism, 244.
- Proverbs, Book of, 173 n.
- Punishment, Future: see "Gehenna"

- and "Evil, Everlasting"; in the Creeds, App. IV.
- Punishment, remedial and retributive views of, 212-5, 255, 258-9.
- Purgatory, 94, 120-1, 205. See also "Intermediate State."
- Rabbinic doctrine: of the Kingdom of God, 31; of Hades and Gehenna, 72-3, 140-3.
- Racovian Catechism, 225, 354.
- Reconciliation, Pauline doctrine of, 173-8.
- Reincarnation: the idea criticised, 79; in Jewish thought, 133-4, 136.
- Resurrection: Jewish ideas of, 68-9, 134, 135, App. I., 334; determined by the Kingdom idea, 68-9; Jewish and N.T. ideas compared, 74-7, 334-5; N.T. doctrine, 74-8, 174-6; dogmatic difficulties in the idea, 78-80.
- Revelation, Book of, 21, 33, 80, 89, 107, 129, 318, 319, 333, 335, 337, 341, 343, 345. See also "Johannine teaching."
- "Revelation" Books, Jewish: permanent value of their teaching, 25-6. See also "Apocalypse."
- Shammai, 105, 106, 141, 142.
- Sheol, 70-1, 138, 327, 328.
- Sirach*, Book of, 70, 173 n.
- Sleep, as a figure for death, 89-90, 340, 341.
- Socinians, 193, 225.
- Solomon*, *Psalms of*, 16-7, 42, 328.
- Son of Man, 45 and note, 55, 57, 332, 333.
- Stoicism, 135, 163.
- Sibylline Oracles*, 255.
- Te Deum*, 67.
- Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 16, 46, 89, 112, 171, 175, 327, 334, 338, 344.
- Thirty-nine Articles of Anglican Church, 193, 353.
- Torment, Everlasting. See "Gehenna" and "Evil, Everlasting."
- Unitarians, 224-5, 272, 354.
- Unity of human race: underlying idea of judgment and of intermediate state, 84-6, 101-2; as an objection to Conditionalism, 247-9; as recognised in Universalist doctrine, 277-8.
- Universal Restoration, doctrine of, Part II. Chap. iv.; in *Book of Wisdom*, 139-40; in relation to teaching of Jesus, 153-60; to teaching of John, 166-7; of Paul, 174-8, 179-81, 312; in N.T. generally, 160; in ancient Church before Origen (Irenaeus, Clemens Alex., etc.), 253-5; in Origen, 255-8; in Gregory of Nyssa, 258-9; in Medieval Church (Maximus, Erigena, the Friends of God), 259-63; in modern Church, 193, 197, 253, 263-72, 354; its various forms in Victorian literature, 269-72; general exposition of doctrine, 274-80; ethical objections considered, 280-9; significance of the doctrine, 290, 303-4, 305, 309.
- Universalist Publishing House, publications of, 277 n.
- Wisdom*, Book of, 139-40, 163, 172, 255, 329; its universalism, 139-40.
- Wisdom literature, 140 n.
- Westminster Confession, 354.
- Zechariah, 344.
- Zoroastrianism, 104, 113 n.
- Zwinglian Confession, 193, 354.

II. AUTHORS (NON-BIBLICAL).

(For ancient anonymous and pseudonymous works, see Index I.)

- Abbott, Ezra, 264 n.
 Abbott, Lyman, 226.
 Acton, Lord, 82.
 Alger, 119 n., 264 n., 277 n.
 Aquinas, 200-3, 206 n., 216, 261, 305, 310.
 Archer-Hind, 79 n.
 Arnobius, 99, 117, 191, 223-4, 254.
 Arnold, Matthew, 226, 236-7.
 Athenagoras, 190.
 Augustine, 64, 67, 121-5, 191, 206, 207, 224, 254, 282, 305, 319 n.
 Bacon, Lord, 65.
 Ballou, 255 n., 259 n., 277 n.
 Beard, 265 n.
 Beecher, H. W., 226.
 Beet, Agar, 196.
 Bengel, 265.
 Bergson, 226.
 Bernard of Cluny, 19, 67.
 Beyschlag, 107 n., 175 n., 179 n.
 Blackie, 347.
 Blake, 20, 348.
 Boehme, 267, 279, 320.
 Borrow, George, 149-50.
 Briggs, 91.
 Brooke, Stopford, 277 n.
 Browne, Sir Thos., 264.
 Browning, E. B., 271.
 Browning, R., 34, 239, 269, 272, 287.
 Bruce, A. B., 108 n., 200, 347.
 Burkitt, 14, 113, 336 n., 344 n.
 Burnett, Thos., 268.
 Bushnell, 226.
 Butler, Bp., 212, 264.
 Caird, Edward, 47.
 Caird, John, 271.
 Cairns, D. S., 66.
 Calvin, 91.
 Carlyle, 84, 215, 348.
 Charles, R. H., 17 n., 45 n., 53 n., 136 n., 175 n., 344 n., 347, 350.
 Cheyne, 346.
 Clarke, J. F., 277 n.
 Clement of Alexandria, 91, 255.
 Cobbe, F. P., 272.
 Coleridge, 264.
 Cox, 271, 346.
 Crabbe, 266.
 Craigie, Mrs., 195.
 Curtis, 354.
 Cyril, 353.
 Dahle, 206 n.
 Dale, 226, 242.
 Dalman, 45 n.
 Dante, 14, 19, 65, 92, 97, 118, 193, 215, 313, 319 n., 324.
 Dean, 344 n.
 Delitzsch, 95, 206 n., 281.
 Denck, 265.
 Denney, 138 n.
 De Quincey, 347.
 Deutsch, Em., 140-1.
 Dörner, 95, 197, 206 n., 265, 284, 308 n., 346.
 Drummond, Henry, 226, 231.
 Drummond, James, 136 n.
 Duff, 253.
 Eckhart, Master, 261-3, 265.
 Edersheim, 141-2.
 Edwards, Jon., 199, 206 n.
 Erigena, 192, 260-1, 312, 314.
 Erskine, Thos., 265, 270, 281, 347.
 Ewing, Bp., 270.
 Fairbairn, 196-7.
 Fairweather, 136 n.
 Farrar, 141 n., 143 n., 277 n., 281, 346.
 Foster, John, 266-7.
 Francee, Anatole, 219.
 Garvie, 197 n., 198 n.
 Gibbon, 116.
 Gieseler, 259 n.

- Gladstone, 193.
 Godet, 95.
 Goethe, 91, 215, 229.
 Gordon, 179 n., 284.
 Goulburn, 347.
 Gregory of Nyssa, 97 n., 256, 257, 258-9, 261, 265.
 Griffith Jones, 196, 258 n.
- Haering, 226.
 Hagenbach, 118 n., 255 n.
 Harnack, 221, 255.
 Hausrath, 347.
 Hawthorne, 278.
 Hippolytus, 91.
 Howells, W. D., 248.
 Hume, 298.
 Huntingdon, 226.
- Ignatius, 91, 190, 353.
 Irenaeus, 91, 117, 190, 222, 254, 353.
- James, W., 279.
 Jerome, 256 n.
Jewish Encyclopaedia, 106.
 Johnson, Samuel, 99.
 Josephus, 133-4.
 Jukes, 271, 347.
 Justin Martyr, 91, 117, 221-2.
- Kant, 207.
 Kennedy, H. A. A., 169 n., 175 n., 347.
 Kingsley, 346.
 Kuenen, 139.
- Law, William, 257, 265, 267-8, 281.
 Leibnitz, 206 n.
 Lincoln, Abr., 278.
 Longfellow, 272.
 Lotze, 226, 236.
 Luther, 65, 67, 91.
- McConnell, 226 n.
 Macdonald, George, 270-1.
 Mackintosh, H. R., 101 n., 197, 253, 347.
 Marcellus, 353.
 Marcus Aurelius, 215.
 Martensen, 197-8, 206 n.
 Martineau, 265, 272, 274, 279, 281.
- Maurice, 260 n., 265, 269, 271, 281, 320, 322 n., 347.
 Maximus, 260, 265.
 Mellone, 322 n.
 Menegoz, 226.
 Mills, L. H., 104 n., 113 n.
 Milton, 20, 215, 229, 264.
 Moehler, 94 n., 126.
 Moffatt, 53 n., 177, 344 n.
 More, Sir Thos., 65.
 Morgan, 175 n., 179 n.
 Müller, 95, 200.
- Neander, 256 n., 260 n., 265, 277 n.
 Newman, 121, 126-7, 320.
 Newton, Bp., 268 n.
- Origen, 91, 117, 120-1, 191, 192, 253-8, 265, 279, 281, 287 n., 312, 348.
 Orr, 197.
 Oxenham, 259 n.
- Palmer, F., 231.
 Palmer, W., 93-4.
 Parker, Joseph, 226.
 Parker, Theodore, 272.
 Pascal, 47.
 Petavel, 226, 240.
 Petersen, 264, 281.
 Pfeleiderer, 175 n., 232, 266 n.
 Philo, 9 n., 30, 76, 107, 112, 134-9, 140, 163, 169, 172, 186, 190, 221, 261, 349-50.
 Plato, 19, 79, 221, 260, 321, 348-9.
 Plotinus, 122.
 Plumptre, 222, 346.
 Pollok, 119 n.
 Polycarp, 91.
 Pope, 266.
 Pusey, 116 n., 127, 141, 175 n., 206 n., 257 n., 259 n., 281, 308 n., 347, 351.
- Rendel Harris, 140 n., 350.
 Ritschl, 197, 226, 231-2.
 Robertson, F. W., 215 n.
 Rothe, 226, 231-5.
 Rufinus, 353.
- Sabatier, Armand, 226-30.

- Salmond, S. D. F., 143 n., 199, 204 f., 308 n., 346.
 Schaff, 354.
 Schechter, 31 n., 141 n.
 Schelling, 265, 271.
 Schleiermacher, 265, 270.
 Schultz, 106 n.
 Schweitzer, 39-42.
 Scott, E. F., 45 n., 53 n., 57 n., 164 n., 180 n.
 Shaftesbury, 266.
 Shakespeare, 215, 348.
 Shelley, 119 n., 322 n.
 Sophocles, 215.
 Spenser, 321.
 Stanley, Dean, 271.
 Stanton, 143 n., 346.
 Stevens, 346.
 Stevenson, 348.
 Suso, 118.
 Swedenborg, 199, 203-4.
 Tatian, 221.
 Tauler, 158, 257, 261-3, 265.
 Taylor, Jeremy, 225, 264.
 Tayler Lewis, 347.
 Tennyson, 20, 269, 271, 322.
 Tertullian, 91, 117, 120, 255, 353.
 Thom, J. H., 277 n.
 Thomas à Kempis, 263, 319 n.
 Tillotson, 225, 264.
 Tyrrell, 195, 226, 237-9.
 Volz, 142, 175 n., 344 n.
 Von Hügel, 195, 322 n.
 Weiss, Joh., 39-43, 44 n., 49 n., 53 n., 59.
 Welch, A. C., 8 n.
 Wendt, 347.
 Westcott, 347.
 White, Edw., 226, 240-2, 281.
 Whitman, 272.
 Whittier, 248, 271.
 Winchester, 277 n.

The following Standard Works are all referred to in this Volume, and are recommended for further study.

PUBLISHED BY
Messrs. T. & T. CLARK,

38 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH.

London: At Stationers' Hall.

-
- APOSTOLIC FATHERS** ('Ante-Nicene Christian Library').
7s. 6d. net.
- ARNOBIUS**, 'Contra Gentes' ('Ante-Nicene Christian Library').
7s. 6d. net.
- AUGUSTINE** (Saint)—The City of God. 2 Vols. 15s. net.
- BEYSCHLAG** (Prof. W.)—New Testament Theology. 2 Vols.
21s. net.
- BRIGGS** (Prof. C. A.)—The Fundamental Christian Faith. 7s. 6d.
net.
- CLEMENT**, 'Recognitions' ('Ante-Nicene Library'). 7s. 6d. net.
- CURTIS** (Prof. W. A.)—A History of Creeds and Confessions of
Faith in Christendom and Beyond. 12s. net.
- DALMAN** (Prof. G.)—The Words of Jesus. 10s. net.
- DORNER** (Prof. I. A.)—System of Christian Doctrine. 4 Vols.
24s. net.
- FAIRWEATHER** (W., D.D.)—The Background of the Gospels.
Judaism in the Period between the Old and New Testaments (Kerr Lecture).
12s. net.
- GODET** (Prof. F.)—Commentary on St. John's Gospel. 3 Vols.
18s. net.
- GREGORY**, 'De Anima'—('Ante-Nicene Christian Library').
7s. 6d. net.
- HAGENBACH** (Prof.)—Christian Doctrine. 2 Vols. 12s. net.
- MORGAN** (Prof. W.)—The Religion and Theology of Paul (Kerr
Lecture). 10s. net.
- SALMOND** (Principal S. D. F.)—The Christian Doctrine of Im-
mortality. 10s. net.
- SCOTT** (Prof. E. F.)—The Kingdom and the Messiah. 8s. net.
Do. The Fourth Gospel: Its Purpose and Theology.
10s. net.
- SCHULTZ** (Prof. H.)—Old Testament Theology. 2 Vols. 18s. net.
- TERTULLIAN**, 'Apologia' ('Ante-Nicene Christian Library').
7s. 6d. net.
- WELCH** (Prof. A. C.)—The Religion of Israel under the Kingdom
(Kerr Lecture). 10s. net.
-

Messrs. CLARK extend a cordial invitation to all interested in their Publications to visit their Offices at 38 George Street, Edinburgh, or at Stationers' Hall, London, where the Books may be examined at leisure.

The International Theological Library

'A Series which has won a distinct place in theological literature by precision of workmanship and quite remarkable completeness of treatment.'—*Literary World*.

VOLUMES NOW PUBLISHED.

- AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.**
Prof. S. R. DRIVER, D.D. 15s.
- CHRISTIAN ETHICS.**
NEWMAN SMYTH, D.D. 14s.
- APOLOGETICS; OR, CHRISTIANITY DEFENSIVELY STATED.**
Prof. A. B. BRUCE, D.D. 12s.
- HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.**
Prof. G. P. FISHER, D.D., LL.D. 14s.
- A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE.**
Prof. A. C. MCGIFFERT, Ph.D., D.D. 14s.
- CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS.**
Prof. A. V. G. ALLEN, D.D. 14s.
- THE CHRISTIAN PASTOR AND THE WORKING CHURCH.**
WASHINGTON GLADDEN, D.D., LL.D. 12s.
- CANON AND TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.**
Prof. CASPAR RENÉ GREGORY, D.D., LL.D. 14s.
- THE THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.**
Prof. G. B. STEVENS, D.D. 14s.
- THE ANCIENT CATHOLIC CHURCH (A.D. 98-451).**
Principal R. RAINY, D.D. 14s.
- THE GREEK AND EASTERN CHURCHES.**
Principal W. F. ADENEY, D.D. 14s.
- OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.**
Prof. H. P. SMITH, D.D. 14s.
- THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.**
Prof. A. B. DAVIDSON, D.D., LL.D. 14s.
- THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF SALVATION.**
Prof. G. B. STEVENS, D.D. 14s.
- HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION.**
Principal T. M. LINDSAY, D.D.
Vol. I. The Reformation in Germany. 12s.
Vol. II. In Lands beyond Germany. 12s.
- THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD.**
Prof. W. N. CLARKE, D.D. 12s.
- AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.**
Prof. JAMES MOFFATT, D.D. 15s.
- THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.**
Prof. H. R. MACKINTOSH, D.Phil., D.D. 14s.
- THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.**
Principal GEORGE GALLOWAY, D.Phil., D.D. 15s.
- THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS. Two Volumes.**
Prof. GEORGE F. MOORE, D.D. each 14s.
- THEOLOGICAL SYMBOLICS.**
Prof. C. A. BRIGGS, D.D. 12s.
- THE LATIN CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES.**
ANDRÉ LAGARDE. 14s.
- A HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.**
Canon C. H. ROBINSON, D.D. 12s.
- THE CHRISTIAN PREACHER.**
Principal A. E. GARVIE, D.D. 18s.

T. & T. CLARK'S PUBLICATIONS

The International Critical Commentary

‘Scarcely higher praise can be afforded to a volume than by the statement that it is well worthy of the “International Critical Commentary” Series.’—*Church Quarterly Review*.

<i>VOLUMES NOW PUBLISHED.</i>		
GENESIS.	Principal JOHN SKINNER, D.D.	14s.
NUMBERS.	Prof. G. BUCHANAN GRAY, D.D.	14s.
DEUTERONOMY.	Prof. S. R. DRIVER, D.D. Third Edition.	14s.
JUDGES.	Prof. G. F. MOORE, D.D. Second Edition.	14s.
SAMUEL I. and II.	Prof. H. P. SMITH, D.D.	14s.
CHRONICLES I. and II.	Prof. E. L. CURTIS, D.D.	14s.
EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.	Prof. L. W. BATTEN, D.D.	12s.
ESTHER.	Prof. L. B. PATON, Ph.D.	12s.
JOB.	Prof. S. R. DRIVER, D.D., and Prof. G. BUCHANAN GRAY, D.D.	35s.
PSALMS.	Prof. C. A. BRIGGS, D.D. Two Vols.	each 12s.
PROVERBS.	Prof. C. H. TOY, D.D.	14s.
ECCLESIASTES.	Prof. G. A. BARTON, Ph.D.	12s.
ISAIAH.	Vol. I (Ch. i.–xxvii.). Prof. G. BUCHANAN GRAY, D.D., D.Litt.	14s.
AMOS AND HOSEA.	President W. R. HARPER, Ph.D.	14s.
MICAH, ZEPHANIAH, AND NAHUM,	Prof. J. M. P. SMITH;	
HABAKKUK,	Prof. W. H. WARD; and OBADIAH AND JOEL,	
	Prof. J. A. BEWER. One Vol.	14s.
HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH,	Prof. H. G. MITCHELL; MALACHI,	
	Prof. J. M. P. SMITH; and JONAH,	
	Prof. J. A. BEWER.	14s.
ST. MATTHEW.	Principal W. C. ALLEN, M.A. Third Edition.	14s.
ST. MARK.	Prof. E. P. GOULD, D.D.	12s.
ST. LUKE.	ALFRED PLUMMER, D.D. Fourth Edition.	14s.
ROMANS.	Prof. W. SANDAY, D.D., and A. C. HEADLAM, D.D. Fifth Ed.	14s.
I. CORINTHIANS.	The BISHOP OF EXETER and Dr. A. PLUMMER. Second Ed.	14s.
II. CORINTHIANS.	ALFRED PLUMMER, D.D.	14s.
GALATIANS,	Prof. E. D. BURTON.	35s.
EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS.	Prof. T. K. ABBOTT, D.Litt.	12s.
PHILIPPIANS AND PHILEMON.	Prof. M. R. VINCENT, D.D.	12s.
THESSALONIANS.	Prof. J. E. FRAME, M.A.	12s.
ST. PETER AND ST. JUDE.	Prof. CHAS. BIGG, D.D. Second Edition.	12s.
ST. JAMES	Prof. J. H. ROPES, D.D.	12s.
THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES.	A. E. BROOKE, D.D.	12s.
REVELATION.	Archdeacon R. H. CHARLES, D.Litt., D.D. 2 Vols.	each 20s.

EDITED BY DR. JAMES HASTINGS.

A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels

In Two Vols. Price per Vol., in cloth binding, 26s.

In half-morocco, gilt top (*Price on application*).

The purpose of this Dictionary is to give an account of everything that relates to CHRIST—His Person, Life, Work, and Teaching.

'A triumphant and unqualified success. Indispensable to ministers and Bible students.'—Sir W. ROBERTSON NICOLL, LL.D.

'The preacher's purpose is better served than it has ever been before.'—*Times*.

'No more useful present could be made to a young clergyman than a copy of this admirable work. The articles are by competent and scholarly writers, and are full of information and suggestiveness.'—*Guardian*.

A Dictionary of The Apostolic Church

In Two Volumes. Price per volume, 26s., in cloth binding.

In half-morocco (*Price on application*).

It has often been said that the 'Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels' is of more practical value than a Dictionary of the Bible. And from all parts of the world has come the request that what that Dictionary has done for the Gospels another should do for the rest of the New Testament. The 'Dictionary of the Apostolic Church' is the answer. It carries the history of the Church as far as the end of the first century. Together with the 'Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels' it forms a complete and independent Dictionary of the New Testament.

Dictionary of the Bible

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME

Crown quarto, 1008 Pages, with Four Maps, price 24s.

In half-leather binding (*Price on application*).

This Dictionary is entirely distinct from the Five-Volume Dictionary. It brings the contents of the Bible, in accordance with present scholarship, within reach of those who have not the means to buy or the knowledge to use the larger Work. It contains no Hebrew or Greek except in transliteration.

'A very fine achievement, worthy to stand beside his larger Dictionaries, and by far the most scholarly yet produced in one volume in English-speaking countries, perhaps it may be said in the world.'—*Christian World*.

'For presentation and library purposes the book outstrips all its rivals, and its closely packed pages are a perfect mine for teachers and ministers.'—*Sunday School Chronicle*.

Detailed Prospectus, with Specimen Pages, of the above Works free.

T. & T. CLARK'S PUBLICATIONS

The Short Course Series

Edited by the Rev. JOHN ADAMS, B.D.

IN 22 NEAT CROWN 8VO VOLS. PRICE 3s. EACH.

This Series is designed to encourage a healthy reaction in the direction of expository preaching, but the appeal is to all—not only to ministers and preachers—who desire a scholarly and practical exposition of Bible History and Doctrine.

- | | |
|--|---|
| The Psalm of Psalms — Prof. J. STALKER, D.D. | The Divine Drama of Job — C. F. AKED, D.D. |
| A Cry for Justice : A Study in Amos — Prof. J. E. MCFADYEN, D.D. | In the Upper Room — D. J. BURRELL, D.D. |
| The Beatitudes — R. H. FISHER, D.D. | The Son of Man — Prof. A. C. ZENOS, D.D. |
| Jehovah-Jesus — THOMAS WHITELAW, D.D. | The Joy of Finding — Princ. A. E. GARVIE, D.D. |
| The Lenten Psalms — The EDITOR. | The Prayers of St. Paul. — Prof. W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS, D.D. |
| The Song and the Soil — Prof. W. G. JORDAN, D.D. | The Emotions of Jesus — Prof. ROBERT LAW, D.D. |
| The Sevenfold "I AM" — T. MARJORIBANKS, B.D. | The Prophecy of Micah — Principa A. J. TAIT, M.A. |
| The Higher Powers of the Soul — GEORGE M'HARDY, D.D. | The Expository Value of the Revised Version — Prof. G. MILLIGAN, D.D. |
| The Man among the Myrtles : A Study in Zechariah's Visions — The EDITOR. | Belief and Life : Exposition in the Fourth Gospel — Princ. W. B. SELBIE, D.D. |
| The Story of Joseph — Prof. A. C. WELCH, Th.D. | The Power of the Spirit — F. STUART-GARDINER, B.D. |
| A Mirror of the Soul : Studies in the Psalter — Canon VAUGHAN. | The Redemption of Man — Prof. T. B. KILPATRICK, D.D. |

The World's Epoch-Makers

Edited by OLIPHANT SMEATON, M.A.

IN NEAT CROWN 8VO VOLUMES. PRICE 4s. EACH.

'An excellent series of biographical studies.'—*Athenæum*.

- | | |
|---|--|
| Buddha and Buddhism — ARTHUR LILLIE. | Wycliffe and the Lollards — Rev. J. C. CARRICK, B.D. |
| Luther and the German Reformation — Principal T. M. LINDSAY, D.D. | Pascal and the Port Royalists — Prof. W. R. CLARK, LL.D. |
| Wesley and Methodism — F. J. SNELL, M.A. | Euclid — Prof. THOMAS SMITH, LL.D. |
| Cranmer and the English Reformation — A. D. INNES, M.A. | Hegel and Hegelianism — Prof. R. MACKINTOSH, D.D. |
| William Herschel and his Work — JAMES SIME, M.A. | Hume and his Influence on Philosophy and Theology — Prof. J. ORR, D.D. |
| Francis and Dominic — Prof. Sir J. HERKLESS, D.D. | Rousseau and Naturalism in Life and Thought — Prof. W. H. HUDSON, M.A. |
| Savonarola — G. M'HARDY, D.D. | Descartes, Spinoza, and the New Philosophy — Principal J. IVERACH, D.D. |
| Anselm and his Work — Prof. A. C. WELCH, Theol.D. | Socrates — Rev. J. T. FORBES, M.A. |
| Origen and Greek Patristic Theology — W. FAIRWEATHER, D.D. | Newman and his Influence on Religious Life and Thought — Prof. C. SAROLEA, Ph.D. |
| Muhammad and his Power — P. DE LACY JOHNSTONE, M.A.(Oxon.). | Marcus Aurelius and the Later Stoics — F. W. BUSSELL, D.D. |
| The Medici and the Italian Renaissance — OLIPHANT SMEATON, M.A. | Kant and his Philosophical Revolution — Prof. R. M. WENLEY, D.Sc. |
| Plato — Prof. D. G. RITCHIE, LL.D. | |

Sir W. ROBERTSON NICOLL says: '*We cannot praise too highly the unperturbed courage with which Dr. Hastings pursues his mighty task. The ability and knowledge which have gone to the making of these Dictionaries are astounding.*'

TWELVE VOLUMES NOW PUBLISHED.

(An Index Volume is in preparation.)

Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics

EDITED BY

Dr. JAMES HASTINGS.

THE purpose of this Encyclopædia is to give a complete account of Religion and Ethics so far as they are known. It contains articles on every separate religious belief and practice, and on every ethical or philosophical idea and custom. Persons and places that have contributed to the History of religion and morals are also described.

The Encyclopædia covers a distinct department of knowledge. It is the department which has always exercised the greatest influence over men's lives, and its interest at least, if not its influence, is probably greater at the present time than ever. Within the scope of 'Religion and Ethics' come all the questions that are most keenly debated in PSYCHOLOGY and in SOCIALISM, while the title is used to embrace the whole of THEOLOGY and PHILOSOPHY. Ethics and Morality are handled as thoroughly as Religion.

Vol. I. A—Art.

- „ II. Arthur—Bunyan.
- „ III. Burial—Confessions.
- „ IV. Confirmation—Drama.
- „ V. Dravidians—Fichte.
- „ VI. Fiction—Hyksos.

Vol. VII. Hymns—Liberty.

- „ VIII. Life—Mulla.
- „ IX. Mundas—Phrygians.
- „ X. Picts—Sacraments.
- „ XI. Sacrifice—Sudra.
- „ XII. Suffering—Zwingli.

In Half-Morocco Binding (price on application). In Cloth, per volume, **35s.**

Each Volume contains over 900 pages, double columns. Size 11½" × 9".

A clergyman who recently received a gift of this Work writes as follows:—

'I really do not know how to express what I feel with regard to this simply magnificent gift. It is a perfect treasure—an inexhaustible gold mine. I find it much wider in its scope and more masterly than I had expected. It is the most adequate thing which I have on my shelves, and it ought really to have been there before now.'

'The general result of our examination enables us to say that the editor has risen to the height of his great undertaking. The work deserves the fullest and best encouragement which the world of readers and investigators can give it.'—*Athenæum*.

'A superb achievement . . . bound to occupy a unique position in the scholarly world for many a long day to come. For all relating to comparative religion there is absolutely no other publication that even attempts to cover the ground as this does, and no serious student, in this department especially, can afford to be without these volumes. There is no other work that can compare with it, in any language.'—*Scotsman*.

A full Prospectus may be had on application.

er
The
ies



BT 901 .L42 1922 SMC

Leckie, Joseph H.

The world to come and
final destiny /
AWN-7794 (mcsk)





