

THE TEACHING OF JESUS

CONCERNING

THE FUTURE LIFE

By

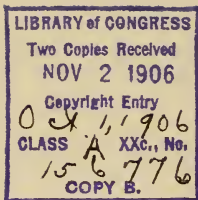
Willis Judson Beecher, D. D.

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THE TEACHING OF JESUS
CONCERNING
THE FUTURE LIFE

WILLIS JUDSON BEECHER, D. D.

THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS

CONCERNING

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CHAPTER I

Our Sources of Information

FROM His own words, as recorded in the Gospels and in a few *logia* extant elsewhere, we may learn what Jesus taught concerning a future life; but our sources are not limited to these. In addition we have accounts of His life and personal experiences, and some of these bear upon the life that follows death—particularly His miracles of raising the dead, and His manifestations of Himself after His own resurrection. Further, we may bring into the question the teachings which His earliest disci-

ples promulgated in His name. As they went everywhere preaching Christ, their preaching was to the effect that He had risen from the dead, and that He was to be the Judge of men, who also exist in a life that follows death. Statements of this kind they reiterate and emphasize, amplifying them in numberless details. It is impossible to think that they were wholly mistaken in testifying that these were the teachings which Jesus had committed to them. So far forth as they present a formulated theology, one of its staple doctrines is that of a future life, and of Jesus as dominating the future life. And even more marked, if that were possible, is the testimony they give in the form of indirect statements and implications. Directly and indirectly their theme is "Our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel" (II Tim. i. 10).

In this little volume, the citations from

Our Sources of Information 3

other sources than the words of Jesus are used only for the light they throw upon His teaching. Either they illustrate the meaning of the terms in which He expressed Himself, or they indicate what those who were nearest to Him understood Him to teach, or in some other way they help us to know what He taught.

How to use the Sources

The records of these sources are mostly included in the New Testament, though some information may be gleaned elsewhere. And the gravest question of current criticism is the question how we are to use these records. Personally I have no doubt that the records are in the highest degree trustworthy in their statements of fact. But I am confronted with men who deny this, who affirm that a large proportion of the statements are untrue, or are true only as ideas and not as presenting facts. I desire to say some-

thing that shall carry conviction to men of this way of thinking, and not merely to those who already think as I do. How can this be accomplished?

One who has not given much thought to the problem will probably reply: Why, the whole thing is very simple; first settle the question of the trustworthiness of your witnesses, and then take their testimony. But that is not the way they do in a court of justice. They take the testimony of the witness first. They determine the trustworthiness largely by the nature of his testimony itself, and by his manner of giving it; and afterward by cross-examination and rebuttal and surrebuttal and other processes. Suppose we deal in the same way with the New Testament writings as witnesses concerning the teachings of Jesus.

If some one thinks that it is true, or at least may supposably be true, that the apostles and evangelists sometimes at-

tribute to Jesus ideas that He did not hold ; that in reporting His ideas they sometimes got them mistakenly confused with their own ; or that Jesus may sometimes have uttered statements which He would on second thought have revised, that person has a point of view different from mine. In case we study together he would say that I ought not to expect him to adopt my theory of the trustworthiness of the records, not even if I regard the trustworthiness as a proven fact. But equally he ought not to expect me to adopt his theory of the untrustworthiness of the records, not even if he regards it as the only up-to-date idea. Evidently we must begin by leaving open the questions on which we differ. The records themselves constitute the one undisputed fact in the case. No one doubts that this fact exists, and in a million of details. Differences of opinion concerning its contents and text, however numerous, are so unimportant as to be a

negligible quantity for the purposes now in hand. We will begin by simply ascertaining what the records say, leaving for later consideration the question whether the teaching of Jesus concerning the future life actually was what the records represent it to have been. Of course we will use our materials critically, but we will remember that an uncritical rejection of a statement is as bad as an uncritical acceptance of it. By the process of carefully inquiring what the records say we shall apply to them the one test for trustworthiness that is practically worth more than all others. By accurately understanding what they say we shall prepare ourselves to judge whether it is characterized by consistency and soberness and verisimilitude; and also to judge of the validity of any reasons that may be alleged for modifying it or refusing to believe it.

CHAPTER II

Before Jesus.—Ethnical Ideas of a Future State

IT is sometimes said that Jesus first introduced among men the belief in a life after death. This is a mistake. The belief had previously been current, and not in Israel only, but in pre-Israelite civilizations. Long before Abraham it was a religious doctrine in Egypt and Babylonia and elsewhere. In His human character Jesus inherited the ideas on the subject that had been handed down to Him from His predecessors. He found in existence certain opinions

concerning it. We can the better depict His teaching if we use these previous teachings as a background.

The Egyptian Book of the Dead

The most authentic source of information concerning the attitude of early religions toward a life after death is probably the celebrated Egyptian "Book of the Dead."* To get an idea as to what the Egyptian priests taught concerning the condition of a human being after death, one should turn over these volumes, should look at the numerous vignettes with which the ancient Egyptian documents were illustrated, and should read at least parts of the translated text. The teachings concerning judgment after death and punishment and reward and conditions of existence are voluminous and specific. The teachings are different

*Now conveniently accessible in more forms than one, and especially in the popular edition published by Mr. E. A. Wallis Budge in 1901, in three small volumes.

from those to which we Christians are accustomed, though they have many points of contact with ours. If one should make from them a tabulated scheme of wrongs to be avoided and of duties and motives, the scheme would be surprisingly in agreement with our Christian ethics. We feel an approving admiration for the ethical intelligence and for the lofty religious conceptions that appear, even though they are mingled with elements less worthy; and we feel a disapproving admiration for the skill in priestcraft that permeates and deteriorates the whole. Everywhere appears the consciousness that a person's own merits, however great, do not suffice for obtaining a favorable verdict from the judges of the dead, but must be supplemented by good offices that the priesthood may render. Everywhere is the moral that in one's lifetime one should be generous to the temples as the means of securing good fortune after one's death. And

the fact that the scheme was successful, that the priests and the temples heaped up riches and honors, is sufficient proof that the Egyptians believed in the reality of the teachings of their religion concerning the future.

What was true in the Egyptian religion was also true, with the requisite changes of terms, in other great early religions. In various ages and countries embalming has been practised, and has been connected with the idea of preserving the body for the use of the still surviving soul. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls has been widely and variously held, with its implications of a certain kind of life after death.

The World of the Dead

One of the most universal of human conceptions is that of the world of the dead. Perhaps this has its origin in a certain essential necessity of human thinking. Even the crudest materialist, who says

that thought and feeling are merely the transient result of certain conformations of matter, and that personality vanishes when the body disintegrates, will none the less speak of his deceased friend as sleeping in the grave, as having gone over to the great majority. If we should assume that death ends all, that neither the bodies nor the spirits of the dead are any longer in existence, that there is nothing left except certain particles of matter that used to be in their bodies but have now gone into different organisms; nevertheless the remembrance of the dead is a reality, the emotions they stir in us are a reality, and their influence over us is a reality. We are compelled to think of the dead as the sources of these realities, and not merely as so much decomposing matter that has changed or is changing into something else. Much more do we think in this way if we hold that men are spiritual beings and not mere combinations of matter. As a mode of speaking, at least, as

a figure of speech, we construct a world of the dead, where the dead are conceived of as existing and as having relations with the universe, analagous to those which living persons have.

Whether the habit of thinking arose in this way or in some other, it is one of the most widespread of human habits. The Hebrew has his sheol, the Greek his hades, the Anglo-Saxon his hell, and other peoples their world of the dead under other names.

And the moment human beings begin to talk in this way about the dead they begin to let their imaginations play in the construction of the environment which constitutes the world of the dead. They diversify it with rivers and lakes and plains and mountains. They speak of its occupations and its officials and its gods. They create for it Acheron and Styx and Charon and Pluto. To differentiate its inhabitants from those of the realms of the living they are perhaps pictured as

shadows. It is overhung by the atmosphere of horror and gloom which is suggested by our natural fear of death and by the sorrow that death brings. It must be geographically located, and, by our natural way of thinking of the high and the low, the place for it is not on the surface of the earth, nor in the sky, but beneath. The world of the dead becomes the underworld, the infernal region, often specifically a subterranean region. This mental construction, once begun, is handed down from generation to generation, and handed along from race to race, constantly receiving accretions. Sometimes it is made the vehicle of serious spiritual meanings. Oftener the constructing process becomes grotesque, and the regions of the dead are peopled with beings as ridiculous as they are frightful. To some extent, though less than is commonly assumed, men lose the consciousness that the scenes thus constructed are imaginary, and in a confused way come to regard them as real.

There is nothing in this to contradict the doctrine that we have actual information, by direct revelation or otherwise, concerning human beings who have died; and nothing to contradict the opinion that some of the stories concerning the nether world are nature myths, and that others may be legends with a historical basis. Whatever real knowledge we have on the subject, and whatever elements of myth or legend have entered into the treatments of it, we need to recognize by itself this perpetual process of the human mind in all ages, this never ceasing effort in which thought constructs a home for the dead, with conditions and interests, and limitations like and yet unlike those of the living.

An early Babylonian poet sings how Ishtar, goddess of love and of procreation, descends for some purpose into the world of the dead, passing through seven strongly barred gates, leaving her adornments successively at one gate after an-

other, and coming naked into the presence of the infernal goddess Eresh-Kigal, who causes her to be afflicted with many diseases. While she is detained there, men and animals on earth cease to reproduce their kind, and are in danger of becoming extinct, and the gods have to devise a plan for the return of Ishtar. This parallels at some points the Greek story in which Persephone is carried to the lower world by its god Aidoneus, while her mother Demeter, the goddess of the harvests, wanders in search of her, leaving men to suffer by reason of the failing crops. Any classical dictionary gives us the story of Orpheus visiting the underworld in search of his beloved Eurydice, charming the infernal deities by his music, but failing because he cannot resist turning to look at her before they reach the upper air. Homer presents a detailed story of the visit of Ulysses to the realms of the dead, and Virgil does the same for Æneas. In some editions

of Josephus we find his alleged discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades. In the Norse stories Hermod visits the world of the dead to procure the release of Balder, but fails because one being refuses to weep for Balder.

Narratives of this sort are in all early literatures. Commonly, but not always, they represent the world of the dead as underground. Uniformly it is an abode of gloom and pain, and sometimes a place of punishment. In some of the presentations it includes a region of Tartarus, where men who are displeasing to the gods suffer for their deeds, and a region of Elysium where pleasures come to those who are pleasing to the gods. And it is not merely a primitive way of thinking that long since ceased to exist. Poets and others renew the theme from generation to generation. Dante's *Inferno* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Pollock's *Course of Time* are repetitions of the themes of Homer and Virgil. In Fénelon's *Tele-*

machus is a visit to the world of shades which exactly parallels those of the classic poets. Few of Matthew Arnold's poems attract the reader more than his *Balder Dead*. Within a few years past Stephen Phillips has reproduced the descent of Ulysses into Hades, and Jean Ingelow and Miss Sherwood have written charming poems on the theme of Demeter and Persephone. In our current accounts of the happy hunting grounds of the American Indian, who is able to distinguish between the original tradition and the embellishment added by the white men who have written on the subject?*

Reality, or Figure of Speech?

What was the character of representa-

* Read some of the literary masterpieces on this theme, in a form as near the original as is possible for you, for example on Ishtar in George Smith's *Chaldaean Account of Genesis*, pp. 226-236, or in other works on Babylonia; on Balder in Matthew Arnold; on Persephone in the Classical Dictionaries and in *Persephone* by Miss Margaret Sherwood; on Ulysses in the *Odyssey* XI and *Ulysses* by Stephen Phillips; the *Aeneid* VI; *Telemachus* XVIII.

tions of this kind, as they existed in early times? In a recent book, *The Greek View of Life*, by Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson, it is said: "The mythology which we regard merely as a collection of fables was to the Greeks actually true; or at least, to nine Greeks out of ten it would never occur that it might be false, might be, as we say, mere stories." To keep this statement from being misleading, it needs all the limitations which the author gives it in the context. When we follow the current fashion and speak of early peoples as naïve and childlike in their beliefs, we should do well to remember that there are children and children. At Christmas three or four little children out of twenty appreciate the fictitious character of Santa Claus as well as their elders, three or four are blindly credulous, and the rest are in confusion of mind between the two attitudes. We should also do well to remember that in many matters of observation these early

peoples had better trained judgments than we.

Commonly in the ethnical religions the condition of the dead was regarded as depending on rites of sepulture. Until the body was buried or burned with due religious ceremonies, it was held that the departed shade was wandering and restless and wretched. In this there was an outreach of tender sentiment toward the dead, and it was one which the interests of the priests did not require them to discourage.

It is impossible accurately to dissect the pre-Christian pictures of the world of the dead, and decide what parts were regarded as reality. Different persons looked at them differently. There was in them an element of reality of the character of natural fact. There was in them an element of reality of the character of moral and spiritual truth. There was sober figure of speech for the presentation of these realities. There

was the confusion that comes when men understand literally that which was uttered figuratively. There was the deliberate adding of pictorial features, often of grotesque features, to the representation as it previously existed. There was again the attempt to understand seriously that which had become fanciful. On the whole, the mechanical view taken by books of reference when they tell us that the ancient Babylonians or Greeks or Scandinavians or others held such and such doctrines concerning a future state, is to be but partially depended upon. Minds differ now and differed anciently in their conception of such matters as these.

All the same such matters were prominent elements in human thinking in the generations before Jesus. The Jews, scattered everywhere among the nations came into contact with them, and their own thinking was affected by them. Romans and the various Greek-speaking

elements of the population brought them into Palestine in the time of Jesus. They were an element in the mental furniture of the persons with whom He associated when on earth.

CHAPTER III

Before Jesus.—Israelitish Ideas of a Future State

THERE is no more marked characteristic of the Old Testament than the relative absence from it of such phenomena as those treated in the preceding chapter. Both its silences and its utterances on this subject are worthy of careful attention.

Sheol, the World of the Dead

It uses abundantly the conception of the world of the dead. The word *Sheol*, the proper word for this conception, oc-

curs sixty-five times, and other words are often used in the same sense, for example "the pit," "Abaddon." It represents Sheol as an underworld, using such phrases as "beneath," "lowest Sheol," "deeper than Sheol," "go down into," "bring up from," "though they dig into Sheol" (*e. g.* Isa. xiv. 9; Ps. lxxxvi. 13; Job xi. 8, vii. 9; Ps. xxx. 3; Amos ix. 2). In some instances its underworld is distinctly subterranean. It is full of darkness and gloom and pain; perhaps in some passages a place of punishment.

Seven times the Old Testament denotes the inhabitants of the underworld by the noun *rephaim*, "giants," perhaps conceiving of them as abnormal, frightful beings, shadowy and unsubstantial, possibly as palpable to the eye and the ear in some circumstances, but not to the touch; its representations being in these respects similar to those in the ethnical traditions.

But here the resemblances end. The Old Testament is reticent. It omits details. It marks out no route by which one can sail or ride or walk, as in the case of Ulysses or Hermod or Æneas, to the infernal regions. There is no Cerberus at the gate, and no Stygian ferryman; no Pluto or Frigga or Ereshkigal, or other god or goddess of Sheol; no Minos and Rhadamanthus, judges of the dead; no details of punishment, no wheel of Ixion or stone of Sisyphus or thirst of Tantalus; no Tartarus and Elysium.

When a recent writer says that in Proverbs vii. 27 "Sheol is said to have distinct divisions," he is stretching the natural figure of speech "the chambers of death" beyond all recognition. When another speaks of "the old belief that in Sheol the dead would be known by their dress, the king by his diadem, the soldier by his sword, the prophet by his mantle," citing Ezekiel xxxii. 27 and

I Samuel xxviii. 14 in proof, he outrages the fine pictorial language of Ezekiel by putting it into a mechanical strait-jacket. In the passage he refers to in Samuel there is no Sheol, and no recognizing the prophet by his mantle. The same writer says, commenting on Ezekiel xxxii. 23 and Isaiah xiv. 15, etc., that "the spirits of the unburied dead wander restlessly about, and in Sheol are condemned to lie in the corners." The dead spoken of in Ezekiel are not unburied, but are in their graves, and neither passage says anything about spirits or corners. All comments of this kind on the Old Testament are importations of foreign ideas. The absence of such details is a marked feature of the primary sacred literature of Israel.

Ordinarily in the Old Testament to say that a person goes down to Sheol is simply a figurative way of saying that he dies (*e. g.* Gen. xxxvii. 35, xlii. 38, xliv. 29, 31; Job xvii. 13-16). To say that

he is in Sheol is the same as to say that he is one of the dead. To speak of *rephaim* is the same as to speak of dead persons (*e. g.* Prov. ii. 18, ix. 18, xxi. 16). And all the other uses of these terms are simply expansions of this use. As this mode of speaking calls the world of the dead the lower world, Sheol is sometimes used as the equivalent of that which is lowest down, physically, intellectually or morally (Deut. xxxii. 22; Ps. cxxxix. 8; Job xi. 8; Isa. lvii. 9). As death is the great destroyer, Sheol is a synonym for destroying forces. It is all-devouring, cruel, implacable, unappeasable (*e. g.* Isa. v. 14; Cant. viii. 6; Prov. i. 12, xxvii. 20, xxx. 16; Hab. ii 5).

As death is commonly thought of as the cessation of activity, so Sheol is often mentioned as a place of rest where there is no action or device or feeling or worship or praise (*e. g.* Job xiv. 13; Ps. vi. 5, xxxi. 17, *cf.* 22, xlix. 14, lxxxviii. 3-6,

10-12; Ec. ix. 10; Isa. xxxviii. 18). It is a mistake to infer from such expressions as these that those who used them had no knowledge of immortality, or that they "believed that when a man died he was removed from the jurisdiction of Jehovah, and relations between them ceased." Death and its sequences constitute a matter which has different phases, and those who think at all look at it sometimes from one aspect and sometimes from another. We Christians believe in immortality, and believe that God's jurisdiction is universal in all worlds; but we have hymns that speak of the dead as asleep in the ground, as unconscious and helpless. Jesus Himself speaks of the night that cometh when no man can work (John ix. 4). In the Israelite literature as in our own, when we find statements that seem to mean that death ends all, we must understand them in the light of other statements that affirm the contrary.

There are instances in which consciousness is verbally attributed to men in Sheol, and instances when men are said to be raised up from Sheol, when the meaning is no more than that they suffer sheol-like troubles, or that they are in Sheol in the sense of being on its verge, and are brought back thence.

Though the Old Testament introduces us to no gods of the infernal regions, Sheol is once or twice spoken of as a realm capable of taking official action. Certain persons make a covenant with Sheol (Isa. xxviii. 15, 18). Sheol is represented as having "enlarged herself" (Isa. v. 14) to provide accommodations for the vast numbers of the slain who are coming down thither. Evidently these expressions are capable of being understood as vivid figures of speech, not intended to give information concerning the infernal regions.

Details concerning Sheol

Three passages come nearer than others to being statements of details concerning the world of the dead. In Ezekiel xxxii. 17-32, Sheol is mainly a vast field of graves where lie the men of the different nations, victors and vanquished alike, slain by the sword. The point of the prophecy is that Pharaoh king of Egypt shall join them. The description begins by the statement that "godlike warriors shall speak to him out of the midst of Sheol" (21). Near the close is the statement that "Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude: even Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword" (31). It is only to this limited extent that we find here consciousness and activity among the denizens of the world of the dead.

In Job xxvi. 5, 6, God's omniscience is said to extend to the underworld, and this is instanced along with His hanging

the earth upon nothing, and with other creative works.

“ The *rephaim* writhe
from beneath the waters and their inhabitants ;
Sheol is naked before Him,
and Abaddon hath no covering.”

It is easy to interpret this as giving the same picture of restless, writhing, wandering shades that we find in the ethnical literatures, but can we be sure that this is the intended meaning ?

More in full is Isaiah xiv. 9-11, spoken concerning the deceased king of Babylon.

“ Sheol from beneath is excited for thee,
to meet thy coming.
The shades are aroused for thee,
all that were great on earth ;
They are made to rise up from their thrones,
all kings of nations.

“ All of them answer,
yea, they say unto thee :
‘ Art thou also become weak as we ?
art thou become like unto us ? ’

“Thy pomp is brought down to sheol,
the noise of thy viols.
Maggots are spread out beneath thee,
and thy coverlet is worms.”

Here we have something that is superficially very much like the ethnical conceptions of the underworld—Sheol inhabited by a thronging multitude of shades, who are conscious of being perpetually weak and sickened and miserable, among them kings and chieftains, an excitable populace, capable of malignant exultation over the distinguished newcomer who arrives among them. But the picture is a flashlight, and has no successor. As the view dissolves it gives place not to another scene from the world of the dead, but to a purely material terrestrial picture, that of the decomposing corpse of the king of Babylon, lying on a mattress of maggots and covered with a blanket of worms. There are in the passage no further disclosures from Sheol, though Sheol is mentioned. The kings

who have died in the past are represented as sleeping not in Sheol, but in stately sepulchres at their own homes (18). The king of Babylon is deprived of sepulture, and this is spoken of as a misfortune and an ignominy, but not as having any effect on his standing in the world of the dead (19, 20). In short we have even here a burst of pictorial imagery, rather than a presentation of views soberly held concerning conscious existence after death.

The same is true of the passages which connect Sheol with the punishment of sin (*e. g.* Job xxiv. 19, Ps. ix. 17), for who can be sure that the penalty in these cases is anything else than death itself? What proof can one give that it is something inflicted after death?

Life from Sheol

It does not follow, however, that the Old Testament, in what it says concerning Sheol, is silent on the matter of life

after death. There remains a class of passages which are in this respect in contrast with those that have been thus far considered. These are the passages that represent God as supreme or victorious over Sheol, over the pit, over destruction, over death, as able to rescue men from these, and as actually rescuing men. These passages are numerous and of great variety (*e. g.* Ps. xlix. 14-15, xvi, 10, 11, xvii. 15, lxxiii. 24-26, ciii. 4; Job xiv. 14 and context, xix. 25-27; Ezek. xxxvii. 12, 13; Isa. xxvi. 19, xxv. 8; Hos. xiii. 14, Dan. xii. 2). Some of them are national and some individual. As contributions to a specific scheme of eschatology they are of unlike values. But they agree in emphasizing the truth that death cannot defeat God. Those that sleep in death may awake. The dead may live. They that are buried may come up from their graves. Release will come, though the waiting be long. He that trusts in God is not abandoned to Sheol. God redeems

men from Sheol, ransoms them from its power. Death and Sheol are taunted with their defeat: "O death, where are thy plagues? O Sheol, where is thy destroying power?" It is said that Jehovah God "hath swallowed up death forever," and "will wipe away tears from off all faces." The believer shall "see God," personally see Him, behold His face in righteousness, "be sated" "in His presence" with "fulness of joy." God who is "my portion forever" will guide me with His counsel, "and afterward receive me to glory."

Besides what it has to say concerning the world of the dead the Old Testament has other ways of speaking of a future state. We must dismiss them for the present with a bare mention, though some of them will come up for consideration in the next chapter. A belief in angels and spirits is commonly accompanied by a belief in a future state, and the Old Testament has much to say con-

cerning angels and spirits. It makes much of the doctrine that man is in the likeness of God, and it teaches that God is ever living. It presents us with such cases as those of Enoch and Elijah, transferred to the other world without death. One of its customary phrases for death is that a person lies down to sleep with his fathers, and it is not too much to say that sleep implies at least the possibility of awaking. The Old Testament is permeated with the idea that Jehovah is in present relations with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and others who have died in the past.

Further, in its doctrine of a divine promise that is to be eternally fulfilled, a divine kingdom among men that is to be eternal, the participation of men of every date in these operations that are to be eternal, it at least fixes our thoughts on activities that are beyond the finite life of any man. In its presentations of Jehovah coming to judgment, and of the

day of Jehovah, it at least provides the phraseology for a doctrine of future judgment. And occasionally, especially in the later of its writings, we find glimpses of resurrection and future punishment or blessedness.

The Doctrine of the Scribes

The Jewish scribes, who lived after the prophets, came to hold very pronounced doctrines concerning the future. Perhaps it will help us to clearness of thought here if we understand that the most explicit and trustworthy information we have in this matter comes from the New Testament, though of course fuller details are obtainable elsewhere. Opposite opinions were hotly disputed as between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees quoted all parts of the Old Testament in proof of the doctrine of the resurrection, often basing their arguments on the tenses of verbs or on subtleties of interpretation. They

developed special uses of the Hebrew word *olam*, eternity, and its Greek equivalent "æon." From the horrible Hinnom ravine, south of Jerusalem, they framed the word *gehenna* to denote the future world of punishment. They framed other terminology to express the views concerning the future that seemed to them important. They drew from ethnical sources as well as from the Old Testament, and established a definite scheme of eschatological doctrine.

Jesus made His advent in the midst of social conditions that were saturated with ideas of this type.

CHAPTER IV

Jesus Interpreting the Older Teachings

IN the Sermon on the Mount Jesus assumes that His hearers have a familiarity with the contents of the Old Testament, and that they have gained it through the teachings of the scribes. In citing the Old Testament He does not say "ye have read," but uniformly "ye have heard that it was said." He aims His address at persons whose mental equipment has come from the Scriptures as expounded by the scribes, and into the scribal interpreta-

tions had filtered many ideas drawn from the nations among whom the Jews had been for many generations dispersed. When He spoke of a future life Jesus did not address minds that were blank on the subject, but minds that were already furnished with theories. His work was largely the interpreting and purging and supplementing of knowledge that men already possessed.

Jesus Opposing the Sadducees

As in the case of most other theological doctrines, Jesus was in accord with the Pharisees in His interpretation of the Old Testament as teaching that there is life after death. In His modes of interpretation, however, He differed with them. When the Sadducees attempted to pose Him with the instance of the seven brothers who successively married one woman, His argument took this form: "That the dead are raised even Moses shewed in the place con-

cerning the Bush when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for to Him all are living” (Luke xx. 37, 38, *cf.* 27–39 and Matt. xxii. 23–33 and Mark xii. 18–27).

A similar exegesis would apply to a vast number of other passages in the Old Testament. If Jesus is exegetically correct, then the Old Testament is full of the doctrines of immortality and resurrection. Strange to say, however, this conclusion is denied even by many who profess to accept implicitly the authority of Jesus. At least from the years when Bishop Warburton published his “*Divine Legation of Moses*” (A. D. 1738–41), many have been accustomed to assert that Moses and the other men of the Old Testament, up to a late period, knew nothing of the doctrine of immortality. In the circumstances we are not permitted to take this matter for

granted, but are compelled to argue it, though the argument must be brief.

Certainly the Pentateuch contains no such elaborate statements concerning a future state as are found in the New Testament, or in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. This may be accounted for by supposing that the men of that generation knew nothing of a future state. Can it equally well be accounted for by supposing that they were familiar with the doctrine, but that there was no occasion for giving it a formal mention in the writings that have been handed down to us? And if this latter hypothesis is admissible, which of the two is to be preferred?

The books of Moses do not profess to teach a complete theology, nor to give a system of ethics. This being the case, their silence on even a great religious doctrine does not by itself prove that generation to have been either ignorant of it or uninfluenced by it. And it is

difficult to think it possible that people so intelligent as Abraham and his tribe lived for a long time within the boundaries of the Babylonian civilization, and yet remained ignorant of the ideas of a future state that prevailed there. It is equally difficult to think that Israel in Egypt failed of being familiar with the doctrines that were taught there. And at any time from Moses to the Maccabees, how could men so intelligent as the writers of the Scriptures be utterly ignorant of the ideas of immortality that prevailed among the peoples with whom Israel came into contact?

But some one rejoins that so wise a man as Moses, if he had known of the doctrine of immortality, so vital in itself, so potent, so well adapted to the purposes of civil and religious legislation, would not have failed to make prominent use of it; and that his silence therefore proves that he did not know.

This reasoning might be valid in a state

of things in which the doctrine of immortality was unknown or imperfectly known, so that it would need to be newly stated and enforced; it does not apply in conditions where the doctrine is well known. If the belief in immortality was generally accepted by the generations to which the Mosaic legislation was given, if everybody was familiar with it as all Christians are in our day, then there may have been no occasion for restating it. Just to take it for granted may have been the wiser course.

It is a mistake to assume that because immortality was a matter of speculation, rather than of earnest opinion, among the later Greeks and Romans, therefore the same must previously have been always and everywhere the case. What was vague conjecture in the time of Seneca may have been a living belief a thousand years earlier. Opinions that were once bright and vivid fade out in the lapse of centuries, and revive after

other centuries. That the human belief in immortality has passed through these stages is now a matter of information, and no longer of conjecture.

If the fathers of Israel found such a belief current, they had no need to reiterate formally the doctrine of a future state. They might take it for granted, just as they take the being of God for granted. The need of more elaborate revelation might arise at a later period, when the original faith had become dull; but the temper of mind of the early generations was such that they needed to have their attention drawn to God's dealings with men in the present world rather than in the world to come.

This hypothesis, then, is as tenable as the other. It is as fair to suppose that the Mosaic books omit extended instruction concerning the future world because none was needed as to suppose that such instruction was then beyond human reach. And this latter hypoth-

esis is contradicted by phenomena that appear throughout the Old Testament.

“Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.” Can this be prevented from meaning that for Enoch there was another life beyond the present? And if the writer understood that Enoch, by the unusual door of translation, departed out of this life into another, whither did he suppose those go who depart this life by the usual door of death? Does he not imply another life for them also? Having clearly in mind the fact of a future state for one or more human beings, can he have failed to consider whether there might be such a state for other human beings? And if he raised this question, how is he likely to have disposed of it?

When we are told that man was made “in the image of God,” can we disconnect this thought from that of immortality? The Sadducees were not alone in joining a disbelief in angels and spirits

with their disbelief in a resurrection. It is contrary to all analogies of human thinking to suppose that these writers, who constantly present to us angels and spirits, good and evil, were without the conception of human beings surviving the death of the body. They and their contemporaries practised religious burial, the mode of sepulture that naturally connects itself with the expectation of life after death.

Very prominent both in the Pentateuch and the other Old Testament books is the appeal to the future, even when it is not in terms an appeal to the future life. The covenant after the flood was with Noah and his descendants to "perpetual generations." The promises to the patriarchs are to them and their posterity. The second commandment mentions the third and fourth generations of those that hate God, and thousands of those that love Him. The promises and threats made to

Israel are largely for remote generations. And in all these appeals to the future not one word is said about fame, not one word about the gratitude which posterity will feel to the memory of one who has done them a benefit, not one word about the undying glory which he might win in their estimation. In this the old Scriptures are peculiar. Their view of the future differs from the common worldly view. They urge motives drawn from the future, not as to one thirsting for fame, or for remembrance after one is dead, but as if one might be expected to take an interest in things that will occur after his death, just as he does in things that surround him while living. It is something else than mere accident of idiom that Jehovah's covenant is with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, not with the memory of them, not with their heirs and assigns, not with their posthumous reputation, but always with the men themselves. It is assumed

that they are somehow still alive, to have faith kept with them.

By parity of reasoning we might find similar meanings in many other passages, in those, for example, that concern David and other worthies. The old Scriptures from beginning to end, instead of ignoring the idea of a future state, take that idea for granted as too well known to need explanation. They are saturated with it rather than destitute of it.

*Jesus' Use of Terms that had become
Current*

The Old Testament word *sheol* and its synonyms (translated "pit," "destruction," etc.) are represented in the New Testament by the Greek word *hades* and its synonyms. We have the record of the use by Jesus of the word Hades on three occasions. The gates of Hades shall not prevail against the church (Matt. xvi. 18). Capernaum shall be

thrust down to Hades (Matt. xi. 23; Luke x. 15). In these cases the word stands for forces of disintegration, such as we associate with death. Capernaum shall perish, and the church shall not. But in the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus Hades is properly the world of the dead. Jesus gives details beyond any found in the Old Testament. The rich man is in Hades, "in torments." There, too, is Lazarus, within reach of communication, but "afar off" beyond the impassable gulf, in Abraham's bosom, whither the angels have carried him (Luke xvi. 22-31). Apparently Jesus is here using modes of representation which the scribes had made familiar. Unmistakably His language is figurative, but just as unmistakably He regards it as standing for reality.

The Old Testament never speaks of heaven as a place of blessedness for men who have departed this life, though we might perhaps infer a heaven for men

from what it says of heaven as the abode of God. But the doctrine of a heaven of reward is conspicuous, as we shall see in the following chapters, in the teaching of Jesus and His early disciples. Heaven is not the only term employed for this purpose. Jesus also speaks of a person's being in Abraham's bosom, of sitting with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, of being at the feast, and so forth. Presumably these were terms which He found in current use.

The same is true of the terms in which He expresses the future of the lost. Such phrases as "the outer darkness," "the weeping and gnashing of teeth," are used with the definite article, as being familiar and current (*e. g.* Matt. viii. 12, xiii. 42, 50, xxii. 13, xxiv. 51, xxv. 30; Luke xiii. 28). "Unquenchable fire" and "the furnace of fire" (Matt. iii. 12; Luke iii. 17; Mark ix. 43 and Matt. xiii. 42, 50) are Old Testament phrases, though there applied to punishment in

the present world. The gehenna of fire, the worm that dies not and the fire that is not quenched, the fire and brimstone and smoke of the pit, are reminiscent of the dreadful valley of Hinnom and of the horrible region north of the Dead Sea where Sodom perished, and of the use which the scribes made of these Old Testament materials.

The terms in which Jesus speaks of the kingdom, the Messiah, the promise, salvation, the day of Jehovah, the judgment, and especially His treatment of the ideas of eternity and of the present age and the age to come will be treated in some of the following chapters. For the present, note the importance of the fact that Jesus had to deal not with the Old Testament alone, but with the Old Testament as taught by the scribes. He and they alike regarded many of these phrases as figures of speech, but as figures that stand for something that is most solemnly real. And the fact that

He chose to teach in terms that others had made ready does not render the teaching any the less His. It sometimes importantly modifies our interpretation of His teaching; but He is responsible for that which He accepted and passed along, as well as for that which He originated.

In Contrast with His Predecessors

While Jesus thus freely uses the ideas and phrases that had then become traditional, His teaching as to a future life is nevertheless peculiarly His own. For example, He differs from many teachers ancient and modern in that He treats of the future life as a matter of revelation from God. Constantly He appeals either directly or indirectly to the Scriptures, or else testifies from what he affirms to be personal knowledge. As the result of this His statements are never abstruse, and never lacking in positiveness of conviction. Contrast the personality which

He attributes to men in Hades with the presentations made by the classic poets. His Dives and Lazarus are not half-conscious, irresponsible shades, suffering the common misfortune of being dead, but are themselves, having each his own consciousness, alert and responsible. In preparation for writing this little book I have read several of the recently published treatises by eminent men on immortality. Some of them, most admirable as pieces of workmanship, are yet elusive, dependant on fine-drawn theories, not intelligible to untechnical minds, dominated by a note of uncertainty. Such treatments, however meritorious, are sharply unlike the clear, intelligible, undoubting statements of Jesus.

Again, Jesus differs from many others in His division of the emphasis between the present and the future. Unlike the ancient Egyptian priests and some modern religious teachers, He does not re-

move the emphasis from present character and conduct in order to place it upon future destiny. Unlike many at the present time, He does not ignore the future for the sake of insisting upon the present. On the contrary, He recognizes the continuity of the present and the future, and so emphasizes each as to increase the emphasis upon the other.

Further, Jesus removes the emphasis from death, and places it on life. This is true, notwithstanding the fact that His utterances concerning punishment after death are numerous, and are perhaps more severe and more really dreadful than can be found elsewhere in literature. Others had depicted an underworld of gloom and pain and weakness, of bloodless shades that moan and shriek and swirl. Even if they located an Elysium somewhere, they mainly thought of the world of the dead as dismal alike for the good and the evil. Jesus everywhere places life in the fore-

ground, life that is triumphant over death, life that is real and rich and abundant.

Finally, a differentiating fact even more marked than the others is His persistently connecting the future life of men with His own personality. "Because I live ye shall live also." He is to be the Judge of the righteous and the wicked. This is one of the marks of the extraordinary character of the teachings of Jesus. We have in Him no mere philosopher, speculatively inquiring whether death ends all, but a person who represents Himself as in partnership with each one of us in the matter of our personal life after death.

CHAPTER V

The Kingdom and the Future Life

THE Old Testament is the literature of the promise made by God through Abraham to mankind, and of Israel as the people of the promise. From the time of David the promise is prominently of a kingdom of God on earth. Narrowly the kingdom is Israel, but the promise is that it shall become world-wide, and shall be eternal. It is described in political phraseology, but also with spiritual aspects. Its king is to be eternally of the seed of David, and is described as Jehovah's "anointed," that is, His Messiah, His Christ.

The New Testament is the literature of the fulfilment of this promise in the person of Jesus. In affirming the promise it employs many of the ancient terms and phrases, but especially emphasizes the kingdom and its anointed king, the Christ. The phrase "the kingdom of God" occurs often and in many of the books. "Kingdom of heaven" is the preferred form in Matthew. Other expressions appear occasionally.

In childhood many of us got the impression that "kingdom of heaven" is little else than a synonym for heaven, the world of reward. We have all learned, however, that the kingdom as presented by Jesus is emphatically concerned with the things of the present world, and some make the mistake of excluding the world to come from their conception of it.

The teaching of Jesus concerning the kingdom has been admirably set forth by Dr. Vos in one of the volumes of the

present series, and the discussion of it is no part of the purpose now in hand. We have to do here only with the fact that the kingdom, in addition to its provinces in the present world, includes the realm of the world to come.

Its terrestrial provinces are important. Not to discuss the relations of the kingdom to the church, I think that some of the existing differences of opinion might be made matters of definition. Personally I should prefer to identify the kingdom with the church throughout, and then to distinguish between the organic church and the organized church, the organic church being the divine aggregate of persons and forces that is represented in the church as humanly organized.

We are very familiar with the old distinction of the church militant and the church triumphant.

“Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.”

To no idea has the consciousness of Christians been more hospitable than to that of the kingdom of God as lying on both sides of the river of Death. Is this consonant with the mind of Christ?

*The Unending Kingdom promised to David
and Israel*

Jesus assumes that the kingdom is the one promised of old, that there is a sense in which persons of Israelitish blood have especial relations to it. He speaks of certain conditions in which "the sons of the kingdom" shall be deprived of its privileges (Matt. viii. 12; Luke xiii. 28). He says that on account of their obduracy "the kingdom of God shall be taken away from them," and given to others (Matt. xxi. 43). When He insists (John iii) that Nicodemus and other Jews must be born anew in order to enter the kingdom, He recognizes the existence of their claim that they are already in the kingdom through their

Jewish birth. The teachings of Jesus are in accord with the message of the angel who assigns to Him "the throne of His father David," and with the cry of the multitudes that rejoiced in the coming kingdom "of our father David" (Luke i. 32; Mark xi. 10).

Doubtless Jesus agreed with His early disciples in recognizing the eternal duration attributed in the Old Testament to the kingdom (*e. g.* Matt. vi. 13, A. V.; Luke i. 33; II Pet. i. 11). And, however He and they may have substituted the idea of a kingdom of influence, or a kingdom of spiritual forces, for that of a political kingdom, they certainly located the kingdom here on the earth, just as had been the case with the ancient kingdom of David and Solomon. According to their view it is to endure in the earth as long as anything shall endure.

We are not necessarily compelled to see anything more than this in what Jesus said when He told Pilate that His

kingdom is not of this world (John xviii. 36). Pilate understood Him in the light of the scene, then recent, when the multitude had escorted Jesus into Jerusalem, with acclamations to Him as "the king that cometh in the name of the Lord." The governor knew that this kingdom belonged to a world of spiritual and altruistic ideas, very different from the common political world in which insurrections against Rome were fomented. Whether he or Jesus at the moment thought of this other world as related to the world of future blessedness is another question.

*The Kingdom and Men who live after
Death*

There are other passages, however, in which Jesus unmistakably connects the kingdom with matters that follow death. We have the picture of certain ones who have been "cast forth into the outer darkness" where is "the weeping

and gnashing of teeth," who "shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God," along with many that "shall come from the east and the west" (Matt. viii. 11, 12; Luke xiii. 28, 29). The patriarchs and prophets are here presented as participating in the life of the kingdom. It is life after death for them, whatever it may be for the others.

The phrase "enter into the kingdom of God" is used as equivalent to "enter into life" (Mark ix. 47, 43, 45), and the alternative is being cast into *gehenna* and the unquenchable fire.

Similar language is used in the passages that speak of the "end of the world," "the consummation of the age." The question what this expression means we must defer to our eleventh chapter. For the present we note that the kingdom is an element in these eschatological representations. In the parable, "the kingdom of heaven is lik-

ened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field," whose enemy sowed tares there. We are told that the good seed "are the sons of the kingdom." At the "harvest," "at the end of the world," the angels "shall gather out of His kingdom . . . them that do iniquity," and the righteous shall shine "as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 24-43). In the parable in which "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net," the sorting of the fishes is an emblem of what shall occur "in the end of the world" (Matt. xiii. 47-50). When the Son of man separates the sheep from the goats He will say to those on His right hand: "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34).

These expressions are paralleled by others. Jesus, soon to die, looks forward to drinking the new fruit of the vine with His disciples "in the kingdom of God" (Mark xiv. 25, Matt. xxvi. 29).

The dying thief hopes that Jesus will remember him "when thou comest in thy kingdom" (Luke xxiii. 42). In the Lord's prayer, rightly punctuated, we recognize our Father's kingdom in heaven as the antitype of His kingdom on earth. The binding and loosing on earth is connected with that in heaven (Matt. xvi. 16-19, xviii. 18).

Other expressions are to be understood in the light of these. Most of the passages that speak of the kingly or the judicial authority of Christ, or of the rewards of heaven or the pains of exclusion therefrom, may doubtless be fairly interpreted as implying that the kingdom extends to the future world. Paul does not go beyond the warrant of the teaching of Jesus when he looks to the Lord to save him "unto His heavenly kingdom" (II Tim. iv. 18), or when in speaking of the resurrection life he says "that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. xv. 50).

Antecedent to investigation it was supposable that the term "kingdom of heaven" might be a mere variant for "kingdom of God," and that both alike might denote exclusively a historical movement among men on earth. But our study of the matter has shown us that the meaning is not thus limited, and that the processes of the kingdom extend through both the earthly and the future world. According to the teaching of Jesus the kingdom is eternal not only in the sense that it will without limit maintain a succession on the earth, but also in the enduring life of the persons who people the world of blessedness.

CHAPTER VI

Salvation and the Future Life

SALVATION is even more prominent in the teachings of Jesus than our English Bibles would indicate. "One who saves" is the meaning of the name Jesus. "Thy faith hath saved thee" is repeatedly His language to those whom He heals physically. In the Old Testament the word is commonly used of peoples, but in the New of persons. The saving of individuals one by one is the generic process in which the great salvation, the work of the kingdom, is wrought out.

The Soul that is to be Saved

It is a correct instinct which leads religious people to speak of the salvation of the "soul," though this expression may be misunderstood, and so may be misleading. What is the soul?

An unsophisticated person seems to himself to perceive that a human being is a material body united with a spiritual part that remembers and reasons and loves and rejoices and purposes. We often use the word "soul" as the equivalent of the "spirit," to denote the non-material part of a human person. We are also familiar with the different ways of speaking in which we represent man as made up of body and soul and spirit. Without criticizing these uses of the term, give attention to a third use. Antecedent to metaphysical thinking, men feel the need of a general term for designating individuals, each a spirit in combination with its body. In our present English we might manufacture a noun for this pur-

pose, calling any particular spirit-and-body a "self." Myself is my spirit-and-body as differentiated from every other self. Yourself is not your spirit nor your body, but your personality in which the two coexist.

Properly speaking the English word soul denotes the self. When we say that the ship went down and fifty souls perished in her, we do not mean that the spirits of those fifty perished; we mean that the fifty ceased to be living human persons, ceased to be the unions of spirit and body which they had been. Such a use indicates the primary and proper conception expressed by the word "soul" and its equivalents in other languages. The other meanings are secondary, expressive of our conviction that the essential self is the spiritual part of us rather than the physical part. The spirit is the soul only as the gold of the half-eagle is the coin. Properly the soul is an entity of a different kind from the

spirit, as in the case of the coin and the gold.

Jesus asks: "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" (Mark viii. 36, Matt. xvi. 26), the word for soul occurring several times in the context. The revised versions open the way to an entirely wrong understanding by rendering "his life" instead of "his soul." The true meaning is indicated by the form in which the same utterance of our Lord appears in Luke (ix. 25), where the reflexive pronoun is used instead of the noun: "if he gain the whole world and lose or forfeit himself." Carry this meaning through the context, and you perceive what Jesus here teaches. "What should a man give in exchange for himself?" "Whosoever is principally concerned to save himself shall lose himself; and whosoever shall submit himself to loss for my sake and the Gospel's shall save himself." As here presented, the salvation of one's soul

depends upon the surrendering of that soul to whatever loss may be demanded for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. In other words, it depends, as Jesus has just said in different words, on denying one's "self" and taking up the cross and following Him.

Doubtless men will persist in the mode of thinking in which we conceive of the soul as something residing in the body, and passing from it at death, because that is a mode of thinking which has its uses. We shall not be misled by it if we keep steadily in mind the limiting conception that our souls are nothing else than ourselves. In particular this should be our conception when we are thinking of salvation. It is ourselves that are to be saved or lost, and not some fractional part of us.

Save, Saved, Saviour, Salvation

The words of this stem occur nearly two hundred times in the Greek of the

New Testament, more than a score of times in the recorded sayings of Jesus. They are applied to the saving of men from bodily diseases or other temporal troubles, but their principal use is to denote the rescue from sin and its consequences. Christ's mission is the "bringing salvation to all men," the saving of the world (Tit. ii. 11 ; John iii. 17), and the salvation of individuals is one of the commonplaces of the primary Christian teaching. The antithetical word, very often used, is translated "lost." A thing is lost when it has passed out of the reach or knowledge of the loser. Such a lost thing perishes, goes to ruin for lack of care, or is in danger of doing so. It is in this derivative sense that being lost is properly antithetical to being saved.

Being saved, in the phraseology of Jesus, does not differ greatly from being in the kingdom. As Jesus teaches that men are outside the kingdom until they enter it by the new birth (John iii), so

He counts men among the lost until they receive salvation. They are in darkness and need to be brought into the light (John iii. 19). They are in their sins and need to be saved from them (Matt. i. 21 ; Luke i. 77). He is a Saviour for "remission of sins" (Acts v. 31). It is "that which was lost" that "the Son of man came to seek and to save" (Luke xix. 10).

The act of passing from the unsaved to the saved condition is repentance, the same as the act of passing from the outside into the kingdom (Acts v. 31 ; II Cor. vii. 10 ; Matt. iv. 17 ; Luke xiii. 3, 5). Not repentance merely in the sense of sorrow for sin, but in the sense of change of mind—a transformed mental attitude resulting in transformation of character and conduct.

Jesus and His early disciples teach unmistakably though not very insistently, so far as the use of these words are concerned, that salvation is not for the

present world only, but also for the future life. Echoing Old Testament phraseology, they speak of salvation itself as eternal (Heb. v. 9; II Tim. ii. 10; *cf.* Isa. xlv. 17, li. 6, 8). So far forth as salvation is synonymous with the kingdom, the eternity of the kingdom attaches to it. And expressions of this kind are interpreted by those which connect salvation with the second coming of Christ, and with the contrast between that and the present world (Heb. ix. 28; Tit. ii. 11-13). In virtue of our salvation we "live together with Him" "whether we wake or sleep." Jesus Himself emphasizes the doctrine that our saving or losing of ourselves is in close relations with the coming of the Son of man (Matt. xvi. 25-27; Mark viii. 35-38; Luke ix. 24-27).

Eternal Life

There is another phrase which Jesus uses in connection with these matters, in

which the future life is more strongly emphasized—the phrase “eternal life.” We will consider later the question whether the word “eternal” in this use strictly denotes time without end, and in order not to anticipate, we will for the present use instead of “eternal” the transferred Greek word “æonial.”

The English word “life” is used to translate three frequent New Testament words. One of these is the word for soul, already mentioned in this chapter, the word on which are built such English words as psychology, psychical. A second, the basis for such words as biography, biology, denotes life as a series of processes or experiences, as in the prayer “that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life” (I Tim. ii. 2). Neither of these two words is used in the phrase “æonial life.” In that phrase the third word is used, the basis of such English words as zoology, protozoa, the word that sets forth life in antithesis to death

or to inanimate existence. It is perhaps impossible to conceive of one's being alive eternally or throughout an age without also conceiving of him as passing through a succession of experiences that is eternal or age-lasting; but the æonial life is the being alive, not the succession of experiences.

The phrase "æonial life" occurs more than forty times in the New Testament, more than half the occurrences being in the words of Jesus, or of persons conversing with Him. Its usual antitheses are "judgment," "wrath of God," *apoleia* (a word strictly antithetical to "salvation," and commonly translated by "destruction" or "perdition"), or other expressions of the divine disapproval or punishment. Its variants are such phrases as "æonial comfort," "æonial glory," "æonial redemption" (II Thess. ii. 16; II Tim. ii. 10; I Pet. v. 10; Heb. ix. 12). As defined by its use the æonial life is not merely a being alive,

but such a being alive as signally implies the divine favor, such a being alive as includes whatever is most desirable and delightful.

As in the case of the kingdom and of salvation, the teaching of Jesus is to the effect that man has not the æonial life until he receives it, though all may receive it who will. The fact that one is a murderer proves that he has not "æonial life abiding in him" (I John iii. 15), but this is not an intimation as to the possession of it by others. Concerning him "that obeyeth not the Son" it is not said that æonial life shall be taken away from him, but that he "shall not see life"; not that "the wrath of God" shall come upon him, but that it "abideth on him" (John iii. 36).

The teaching is that men in the present world receive this life. "He that believeth on the Son hath æonial life" (John iii. 36). Not shall have it, but

hath it. "Hath æonial life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (John v. 24). The water that Jesus gives one becomes "in him a well of water springing up unto æonial life" (John iv. 14). By exhibiting "all His long-suffering" in the case of Paul, Christ made him "an ensample of them which should hereafter believe on Him unto æonial life" (I Tim. i. 16). The same is taught in many passages, and explicitly.

The teaching is, further, that the æonial life, begun in the present, continues after death. Paul says that we shall reap what we sow; "he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap æonial life" (Gal. vi. 8). Jesus says that the believer shall "not be lost, but have æonial life," that he "hath æonial life, and I will raise him up at the last day"; and He urges our working "for the meat which abideth unto æonial life" (John iii. 16, vi. 54,

27). The Father's "commandment is life æonial," and is "the word" that shall judge us "in the last day" (John xii. 50, 48).

But though the teaching is that the æonial life belongs to both worlds, it places emphasis on the future as distinguished from the present. The æonial life is something to be inherited (Matt. xix. 29; Mark x. 17; Luke x. 25, xviii. 18), and inheriting implies a forward look into the future. We are "heirs, according to hope, of æonial life" (Tit. iii. 7). It is a life which we are to "enter into," this being sometimes contrasted with "the æonial fire" (Matt. xix. 17, xviii. 8, 9; Mark ix. 43). In places the æonial life is connected with "the æon to come" as distinguished from "now in this time" (Mark x. 30; Luke xviii. 30). We are told that "he that hateth his soul in the present order of things (*kosmos*) shall preserve it unto æonial life," and that those who, emancipated from sin, are God's

servants, have their "fruit unto sanctification, and the end æonial life" (John xii. 25; Rom. vi. 22).

Future Abodes of Reward and Punishment

The idea of æonial life is further illustrated in that which Jesus and His first disciples say concerning future reward and punishment. Over against the æonial life is æonial fire, æonial punishment, æonial sin, æonial destruction (*e. g.* Matt. xviii. 8, xxv. 41, 46; Mark iii. 29; II Thess. i. 9; Jude 7), and the æonial fire is defined as unquenchable, and as "the gehenna of fire." There is an æonial judgment (Heb. vi. 2). And on the other hand, the man who is seeking æonial life is promised "treasure in heaven," where we are all counselled to lay up our treasures (Mark x. 21; Luke xviii. 22, xii. 33; Matt. vi. 20). There are "æonial tabernacles," and a house "æonial, in the heavens" (Luke xvi. 9;

II Cor. v. 1) to which we aspire when this earthly "tabernacle" is dissolved.

With the connection thus established between the teachings concerning heaven on the one hand and those concerning the kingdom, salvation, æonial life, on the other, the way is open for adducing here all the passages that speak of heaven as the abode of blessedness; but a few must suffice. We are to be saved "unto His heavenly kingdom" (II Tim. iv. 18). Disciples have their reward in heaven (Matt. v. 12; Luke vi. 23). Their names are written in heaven, and there is a hope laid up for them in the heavens (Luke x. 20; Col. i. 5). Heaven and earth are mentioned in combination as the twofold sphere of their activities (Eph. i. 10, iii. 15; Rev. v. 3; I Cor. xv. 49; II Cor. v). On earth they are citizens of a commonwealth that is located in heaven (Phil. iii. 20).

Æonial Life as a Gift

Men are brought within the sphere of the æonial life, as within that of the kingdom or of salvation, by the free grace of God on the one hand, and on the other hand by their own faith, new birth, change of mind, obedience. The phrase of this kind which particularly connects itself with the æonial life is the phrase which represents it as the gift of God or of Christ. Jesus says concerning His sheep: "I give unto them æonial life, and they shall never perish." He says that the Father has given Him authority that "to them He should give æonial life." His early disciples teach that "the free gift of God is æonial life in Christ Jesus our Lord"; "that God gave unto us æonial life." See John x. 28, xvii. 2; Rom. vi. 23; I John v. 11, *cf.* John vi. 68 and many other places.

It should be added that these views concerning salvation and the æonial life are characteristically the views of Jesus

Himself. Some of the phraseology is borrowed. The ideas are in part those with which his auditors were already familiar. But He gives to them a new aspect in virtue of which they are peculiarly His own. A single peculiarity of grammar may be mentioned to illustrate this. When Jesus speaks of the outer darkness, for example, He always uses the article. The implication is: "this dreadful fact which our scribes are accustomed to describe as the outer darkness." He avoids this use of the article when He is speaking of the æonial life. As in the other case, He is perhaps using an old phrase, but it is a phrase which He has made His own, and into which He has breathed His own meaning. The men of the New Testament follow Him in this usage. In speaking of "æonial life" they omit the article except in instances (*e. g.* I Tim vi. 12; I John i. 2, ii. 25; Acts xiii. 46) where something in the context requires that the phrase be

noted as definite. What we have here is not merely a contemporary way of speaking, used by Jesus for convenience, but one which He has carefully marked with His approval.

CHAPTER VII

Realities in the Future Life

OF necessity figurative language enters largely into what any one says concerning a future life. It is not in all cases easy to draw the line between what is intended for fact and what for figure of speech. The facts are not all definable. On the border land of the finite and the infinite we are often at a loss to distinguish between what we know and what we only conceive. Even where we are sure that there is an underlying reality we are not always able to determine the character and limits of that reality.

There is no doubt, however, that Jesus thought of the future life as a fact, including details that are facts, as reality and not merely ideal. In this chapter let us try to differentiate some of these elements of real fact.

We need to pause a few seconds for a matter of definition. The future life, as we have seen, the æonial life, is not properly a life in the sense of being a course of events, a succession of experiences, but rather life as distinguished from dead or inanimate being. Nevertheless it is a being alive that is attended by a course of life, that has its succession of experiences. While we need to define the two, and sometimes to think of them separately, neither of them exists unaccompanied by the other, and we need not be solicitous always to keep the ideas separate.

Negative Facts

Concerning the future life of blessedness there are many negative statements which we may receive as expressing realities. We are told that there will be no sin in that life, no evil disappointments or sorrows, no treacheries, no falsehood, no corruption, no pain that is of the nature of evil. On the basis of this testimony we are accustomed to think of a condition of rest, where we lay down wearying burdens and wearing anxieties, where we are rid of strain and tension; as calm after storm, haven after tempestuous voyage, peace after hard-fought campaign. All this, though negative, is in the light of the earliest Christian teachings to be regarded as genuine fact.

Jesus gives us a few negative details of a different class. "The sons of this world (*æon*) marry, . . . but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world (*æon*), and the resurrection from

the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Luke xx. 34, *cf.* Matt. xxii. 30; Mark xii. 25).

How far is it proper for us to regard this statement as typical, and extend it to other classes of human experiences? To this question Jesus gives us no answer. We simply learn from Him that there are great contrasts as well as genuine resemblances between the present life and the future life.

Generalities

Again, in our conception of future blessedness we are apt to be content with ideas that are merely general. We find statements of this character, or we draw inferences from the figures of speech that are used in the Scriptures. We think of heaven as characterized by joy, in contrast with the pains of earth and the misery of hell; as having whatever is desirable, to the exclusion of whatever is undesirable; as possessing happiness in distinction from all kinds of wretchedness.

Or we speak of being at the right hand among the sheep, or of being forever with the Lord. These things are true and real, but they are generalities. Jesus says that "when they shall rise from the dead, they . . . are as angels in heaven," that they "are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Mark xii. 25; Luke xx. 36, *cf.* Matt. xxii. 30). We are to "bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. xv. 49), to touch æonial things that are "unseen" and "not made with hands" (II Cor. iv. 18, v. 1). Here are realities, but what are these realities?

It is plain that these various statements assume that there will be conscious individual existence in the future life. It is not a mere persistence of the type, nor a merging of finite being with infinite being, but it is we ourselves that persist, and we continue to be ourselves. This, according to the teaching of Jesus, is one of the realities of the future life.

A further reality is that the future life is social, not a persisting of isolated individual existence. Jesus says: "I come again and will receive you unto myself; that where I am ye may be also" (John xiv. 3). "I will that where I am they also may be with me; that they may behold my glory" (John xvii. 24). These chapters of John are saturated with this idea of the personal presence of the disciples with the Master, and that of course implies their presence one with another. "Because I live ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19). Paul learned from Jesus how to sum up his description in the words, "And so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. iv. 17). Notice the plural pronouns in these and like passages. What room is there for doubt that Jesus and His apostles teach the doctrine of the reunion of those who have been parted by death?

*Teachings that are Literal, Positive,
Specific*

There is one passage in which the realities of the future life are very remarkably grouped, the passage being I Corinthians xiii. 8-13. In it Paul does not use the word heaven, nor say expressly that he is speaking of æonial blessedness. But he is speaking of a never failing, abiding, perfect future life, and we need not scruple to apply his words to the only imaginable life of that kind. We shall find it even more significant than the utterances that we are more in the habit of citing in connection with the future life—those that mention palms and crowns and white robes and golden harps. Of such phrases, provided we have a right to connect them with the future life, it is true that they express realities. But we are not always able to dissect them, and separate the reality from the metaphor. In contrast with this, Paul's

statements in I Corinthians xiii deal with simple, exact facts. The things mentioned are real in their own character, and not merely in virtue of their standing for something else which is real.

Further, in contrast with the negative statements we have been considering, this passage gives us positive facts: the things that are present in the perfect world, not the things that are absent; the experiences that are in that life rather than those that are not therein. We may come to it not to learn what the future life is not, but to learn what it is. And in contrast with the merely general statements we have been considering, these verses bring out four or five perfectly specific facts as entering into the perfect life of the future. And in each of these points we shall find that Paul's teaching is a formulation of the teaching of Jesus.

Knowledge, Faith, Hope, Love

First, Paul says that the gaining and possessing of knowledge is a factor in the experiences that attend the perfect life of the future.

He declares, "Then shall I know adequately, even as also I have been known." He asserts that "then" we shall see "face to face," that our knowing then, as compared with now, will be like that of a mature person compared with childish notions.

This necessarily implies the use, and therefore the exercise and training and growth, of our powers of knowing and thinking. The purpose Paul has in mind leads him here to emphasize the superiority of the knowledge and the knowing of the perfect world, as contrasted with that of the present world; the fact that here we know in part, but shall then know adequately; that here we see as in a mirror, perplexingly, with self reflected back as the

center of everything, while then we shall see in a direct, and no longer in a reflected light; that here we understand as babies understand, while then our understanding will be ripe, so that "when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." But he does not say that the knowledge which comes in the perfect world is omniscience. He does not say that there is an effortless, passive condition of being flooded with knowledge. The condition of things he describes is one in which we observe and learn and think, in which we put forth mental energy, governed by spiritual energy, and become conscious of the joy there is in energy and in achievement.

There is no need of delaying to prove that in this Paul echoes the mind of Jesus, the mind of Jesus as expressed, for example, in such a typical utterance as this: "And this is life æonial, that they should know Thee the only true God,

and Him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John xvii. 3). If knowing here means acknowledging, recognizing, still all recognition implies cognition.

Again, Paul teaches that faith will be an element in the course of living which attends the perfect future life. "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three" (I Cor. xiii. 13).

It is one of the curiosities of Christian religious thinking that at this point we have to stop to defend Paul's position against what has some claim to be called the common opinion of Christendom. Wherever the English language is spoken devout people sing with unction the hymn of Watts in celebration of the grace of love, including the stanza :

"This is the grace that lives and sings
When faith and hope shall cease;
'Tis this shall strike our joyful strings
In the sweet realms of bliss."

That is, we sing that there will be no faith in the sweet realms of bliss, and no hope there; that love will remain, but faith and hope will cease. The same sentiment is found in a score of our familiar hymns, old and new, Protestant and hierarchical, and in sermons and meditations and prayers without number. In these utterances prayer is very commonly and naturally joined with faith and hope as among the things that shall cease.

“Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise.”

Multitudes say these things, and say them very devoutly, and imagine that they hold them to be true. Of course this arises from the confusing of faith with imperfect knowledge, from not distinguishing between the exercise of faith and certain struggles which faith has in the present life. But no one who

once stops to think the matter over will ever thereafter rejoice in the idea that prayer and faith and hope become obsolete for us when we cross the threshold of the blessedness after death. Asking God for things and receiving them as His gift is delightful to us, and He says that it is delightful to Him ; is there in eternity an order of events in which His children no longer have occasion to ask Him for anything? In the exercise of faith one rests in the infinite strength of God because that is a mighty good resting-place, and not merely because the exigencies of this present life deprive him of other resting-places. Is there any conceivable world in which the finite will be self-sufficient, and so will not need to trust the Infinite? And life with no hope for the future would be dreary even to one on the topmost pinnacle of present happiness.

We are glad to find, therefore, that Paul is explicit on this point. He says

that love is greater than faith and hope, but not that it is more lasting. The three alike are among the things that abide.

What is faith? A well-known Christian symbol gives this definition: "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel." Faith is the receiving and resting upon Christ. Faith in any person or truth is the receiving and resting upon that person or truth. Faith in the truth that one knows gives to knowledge the character of earnest conviction, makes the man a man of convictions. Faith is all this, as well as that grace which enables one to be patient in tribulation, and to trust in God for the pardon of his sins.

If it had been called for by Paul's purpose, perhaps he would have given details concerning faith as well as concerning knowledge. In the environment

of the perfect world there will doubtless be changed conditions for faith as well as for knowledge. But as long as men sing to Him that was slain and hath redeemed us by His blood, so long will they need to trust in Him as redeemer from sin, no matter how many millions of years they may have left sin behind them. As long as human wisdom lacks something of being omniscience, so long will men need to trust in God for the things they do not understand. In all the ages in which there is fresh truth to acquire or fresh activity to engage in, faith will be requisite to bring life under the dominion of strong conviction and joyful earnestness. Doubtless there are certain struggles of faith that will cease when knowledge ceases to be imperfect; but faith itself will find an ever widening scope, world without end.

Does this teaching of Paul differ from that of the Master? Answer such statements as the following: "This is the

will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have æonial life ; and I will raise him up at the last day." "He that believeth hath æonial life" (John vi. 40, 47). Who does not see that in such utterances the æonial life begins when the faith begins, and the faith endures as long as the æonial life endures? Faith is the act of possession by which we appropriate God's gifts. Eternal possession implies eternal faith. And we are told "that God gave unto us æonial life, and this life is in His Son ; he that hath the Son hath the life" (I John v. 11, 12).

Yet again, Paul teaches that hope will be an element in the experiences of the perfect future life. We must not delay to expand this statement. In the present life we think much of those aspects of hope in which its light is set off by the contrast of dark shadows, but hope will not cease to be hope if it comes into the different environment of a world where

there are no shadows that are baleful. The highest joy may be made more joyful by the anticipation of yet higher facilities for enjoying.

Once more, Paul says that love will be an element of the life of the perfect future, and that it will be the most important of the elements here mentioned.

He does not say that love is the greatest thing in the world. Whether love is greater than justice or than holiness is, perhaps, a question of terms rather than of facts. At any rate love must submit to be ruled by justice, or it forfeits its prerogatives as love. What he says is that love enters into the course of life in the world of perfection as a larger element than knowledge or faith or hope, however important these may be.

At this point, I think there is danger of going too far in making fine distinctions in regard to love. We make a mistake if we refine away all the natural flavor there is in the term. We know

what love is through our experiences of loving, and we have no other means of knowing. The habit of eager kindly feeling toward other beings—kindly feeling such as is the due of each—this, Paul says, is chief among the things that make heaven to be heaven. The friendliness toward all, in virtue of which we find all to be interesting, and desire to help all; especial friendship in the case of a few; passionate tenderness between wife and husband or between parent and child; loyalty; comradely warmth; self-devoting compassion to the unfortunate; religious fellowship—these are forms of love with which we are now familiar. High above the others, but not excluding them, is the love that exists between the believer and his Lord. The objects and the forms of love may change, to adapt them to the environment of the future life, but the passion itself will remain as a permanent part of our being. And who can give a reason for doubting

that particular loves and friendships, existing in that part of the æonial life which is this side the grave, will continue in that part of it which is beyond the grave?

It would be superfluous to adduce even a single clause in proof that in what he says concerning love Paul is simply formulating the teaching of Jesus. But observe that Jesus connects the loving of God and our neighbor with æonial life (Luke x. 25ff.; Matt. xix. 16ff.).

Paul has not set out in this passage to name all the elements of the perfect life of the future. If he had, we do not know whether he would have mentioned holiness and justice and obedience and altruistic self-renunciation by themselves, or whether he would have left all the virtues to be implied in the three graces. He certainly would agree with Jesus in making unselfishness an essential of the æonial life (John xii. 25). That the perfect future life is joyful is

implied in the passage throughout, and everywhere else in the teachings of Jesus and of Paul. It is a life of memories and of emotions and of interests; witness what Jesus says about the joy in heaven over a repenting sinner (Luke xv. 7, 10), for you cannot utterly disconnect the heaven of the redeemed from the heaven of the angels. The consciousness of divine approval is constantly presented (*e. g.* Matt. x. 32) as a particularly satisfying element of the heavenly existence.

Heaven and Character

These are the literal, specific, positive facts concerning the future life of blessedness, as taught by Jesus and His first disciples. They present this life as something very different from the long holiday that some seem to imagine it to be. It is not a condition of inactivity, not idleness, not a never-ending play-spell. Its rest consists in freedom from

evil and disharmony and consequent strain, not in indolence or inertness. Constituted as we are, interminable quietude would be dreadfully irksome; but instead of expecting this we may look forward to the eager exertion of all our energies; to the invigorating pursuit and mastery of truth; to a confident, victorious resting in truth and in right and in God, giving us assured convictions, and leading us to earnest action; to hope ever, forecasting a future that is more and more happy as the ages go by; to the gladness of love, in its manifold forms; to divine approval; to whatever else enters into the most complete filling out of our personality.

There have been those who have exploited the idea of salvation by character in opposition to that of salvation by free grace. The teaching we have just traversed presents to us the idea of a salvation which is wholly of free grace, but which consists essentially in char-

acter. In this salvation heaven is character, and character is either heaven or hell. A certain type of character is determined by one's having knowledge according to his ability, and exercising faith and hope and love. And character as thus determined is or implies everything, all else, if sundered from character, being nothing.

Some one has admirably said that when we have best learned the doctrine of Jesus we think of heaven less as a place for saints to go to when they die than as an ideal for us all to live by. But even so, heaven cannot furnish us the ideal which we need except by being itself a reality. We have noted the nature of the future realities in the case of those who enter into the æonial life. What they may be in the case of those who do not so enter can be best considered when we reach the consideration of the terms in which Jesus presents them.

CHAPTER VIII

Physical Expressions for the Future Life

THE phraseology used in speaking of the future life is of great variety. In this chapter we will take a general view of certain ways of speaking which I call "physical expressions" rather than "figures of speech," in order not to prejudice the question of their relations to reality. Deferring to future chapters such of these expressions as refer to the resurrection and the judgment day, we now take up those that refer to such matters as the attire, the

occupations, the pains and pleasures, the place of residence, of the redeemed and the unredeemed in the future world.

The New Jerusalem Imagery

The expressions that have found their way most abundantly into our hymns and other devotional utterances are those connected with the new Jerusalem—the streets paved with gold, the walls of precious stones, the gates of pearl, the water of life, the trees beside it, the crystal sea, the holiday throngs of worshippers, the songs they sing, their crowns, their white raiment, their golden harps, and all the other expressions for abundance and magnificence and rejoicing which connect themselves with these. The fact that this imagery is found principally in the book of Revelation, and not directly in the utterances of Jesus, is not a sufficient reason why we should here

omit the consideration of it ; for, within limits, we have a right to infer the teachings of Jesus from those of His early disciples. Nor are we precluded from considering these expressions by the fact that some scholars now refer the statements of the book of Revelation to matters occurring on this earth rather than to another state of existence ; for, even if one goes to an extreme in approving this interpretation, it still remains true that there are close analogies between the terrestrial and the celestial future of the kingdom. Nevertheless we must here content ourselves with the merest cursory mention, and for two reasons. First, the limits of this volume afford no room for adequate treatment. Second, we are now concerned with the realities in the case, rather than with the modes in which they are uttered.

It is sufficient to say that in all the Christian ages, alike in the earliest songs of the fathers and in the latest Sunday

School jingles, when devout persons sing of Jerusalem the golden and the palms of glory and the harps and the crowns, they are conscious that they are using this splendid imagery in an effort to express realities which they nevertheless think of as beyond expression. Religion is contact of the finite with the infinite. Religious utterance is sometimes consciously an attempt to utter the unutterable. If we say that we do not know, mechanically, the nature of the things described in these phrases, that does not diminish our conviction that they are actual facts. Probably no two worshipping minds conceive them alike, but they are not on that account meaningless or unreal. They stand for the various aspects of the realities of the future life—such realities as we have glanced at in the preceding chapter. If we do not know what more they stand for, we need not be ashamed of our ignorance.

Heaven as Spoken of by Jesus

Connected with the New Jerusalem presentations, on a somewhat different footing from them, is Christ's own mention of heaven as the abode of God, and the place of future reward. It is beyond dispute that He deals much in phraseology of this kind, and that He applies to the heaven of reward the terms that naturally denote space and place.

This usage has already been spoken of in our fourth chapter. The words heaven, heavens, heavenly, occur scores of times in the Gospels. Jesus teaches us to pray to our Father in heaven, with the suggestion of a possible home for the children in heaven with the Father. It is before His Father in heaven that He will confess those who confess Him before men (Matt. x. 32, 33). He insists on our laying up our treasures in heaven (Matt. vi. 19 and four other places). No one fails to identify heaven, in some way, with the paradise to

which He would receive the dying thief (Luke xxiii. 43), or with the Father's house and the mansions to which He promises to receive His followers (John xiv. 3). He identifies heaven with the æonial life, and the narrow way that leads to life is the road to heaven (Matt. xix. 16-21, vii. 13).

In my boyhood I used to hear plain Christian people discuss the question whether heaven is a place or a state. There can be no doubt that Jesus teaches, verbally, that heaven is a place. But when you ask where that place is, and what sort of a place it is, the answers are not so obvious. Physically, heaven is the sky. But what is the sky? At first thought it is simple to speak of the personality of a dying person as passing off through space to some other locality, and remaining there; but is this, on reflection, a satisfactory idea of the matter? Some have held that heaven is located in the sun, or in some of the

planets or stars, or in the earth after it has been renovated and fitted up for the purpose. The more we question, I think, the more unsatisfied we become with such answers as we can obtain. The conception of heaven certainly includes that of the realities spoken of in the last chapter, but how much do we know as to what it includes beyond those realities?

It is clear that Jesus regards heaven as a synonym for the æonial life, and especially for that part of it which lies beyond the grave. It is clear that He teaches that its joys include the possession of the heavenly temper, and association with God Himself and with persons of kindred spirit. It is clear that He regards it as the continuing of habits and conditions formed before death, and as the successful exercise of personal activities. His language is doubtless figurative, but underneath He finds realities, which He emphasizes by variously pre-

senting them to the reason and the imagination. How far beyond this are we able to go in understanding this part of His teachings?

Angels, Good and Evil

Angels are conspicuous in the teachings of Jesus. He often speaks of them as in heaven, or as performing commissions for the Father or the Son. Any one, with a concordance, may find instances. In one place Jesus speaks of "the devil and his angels" and the æonial fire prepared for them (Matt. xxv. 41). Elsewhere in the New Testament this is amplified (Rev. xii. 7; II Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6), with the implication that there are heavenly angels who have apostatized. The angels, good and evil, are spoken of in personal terms, and in terms of space and locality. Men of the past, John Milton and a multitude of others, have worked out minute schemes of information concerning the

angelic hierarchy, their rank and order, their personal character, their occupations, their history. Our generation is not addicted to overrating the elements of reality in this information; and yet it is certain that when Jesus spoke concerning angels He regarded His words, however figurative, as standing for something that is real.

Certainly He nowhere says that human beings will be transformed in the hereafter into angels. When we sing "I want to be an angel," the figure of speech is all our own. But in many places He connects the companionship and the coöperation of the angels with the life that the redeemed lead in heaven, and He dooms the lost to the companionship of the evil angels.

The Future World of Punishment

As we have seen in Chapter IV, Jesus uses particularly severe language for indicating the future condition of those

who do not attain to æonial life. The rich man in the underworld is "in torments," "in anguish," begging that one "may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue" (Luke xvi. 23-25). Jesus speaks of "the gehenna of fire," the "æonial fire," the "unquenchable fire," the inescapable "judgment of gehenna," "the outer darkness," the "whole body cast into gehenna," the destroying "both soul and body in gehenna" (Matt. v. 22, xviii. 8, 9, xxv. 41, xxiii. 33 *et al.*; cf. Luke iii. 17). We have noted the fact that phrases of this sort are mostly, perhaps exclusively, the current phrases that were employed by the scribes, and that they are pretty generally accompanied by the definite article, indicating that Jesus uses them as quoted phrases. Apparently He regards them as figures of speech, but also regards them as standing for facts that are as real as they are dreadful. What can we ascertain concerning these dreadful realities?

We may draw certain inferences concerning them from the analogy of the realities of the æonial life, already considered in Chapter VII, and these we shall find confirmed by other utterances of Jesus.

Either the saved and the unsaved are alike in having conscious existence after death, or they are not. If they are not, the analogy between the two terminates in an utter contrast. But if both have conscious existence, then the cases of the two are in some points parallel, and at other points in contrast.

They are alike in that the future life is in relations of continuity with the present, that the deeds of the present through natural processes result in future consequences, that the remembrance of the present will persist in the future, that the character now built up will be carried over into the future. And they are in contrast if the deeds of the present, the things to be remembered, the

character, are those of the æonial life in the one case and not in the other.

Note that their being in contrast is the real fact stated in most of the severe utterances of Jesus, alike those that have been referred to and others, such as those concerning the sheep and the goats, the æonial life and the æonial punishment of the judgment day. These passages announce the contrast as a contrast. They emphasize the separation of the two classes. They set forth the success of those who enter into life as over against the failure of those who do not enter. The punishment consists in the failure, the separation, the contrast. The consciousness of failure is a part of the punishment. Take for example a representative passage in Luke (xiii. 22-30). The saved are represented as having entered in at the narrow door. They are recognized by the Master of the house. The others seek to enter, and are unable. The Master refuses to

recognize them, and orders them to depart. The climax is reached in the mention of their disappointment, their consciousness of defeat: "There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without."

We are in danger of perverting our conception of this matter by confining it to one aspect of the case. When a boy is naughty and is whipped for it, there may be no connection between the naughtiness and the whipping except through the personal judgment and will of the punisher—no particular reason, for example, why the punishment should be the whipping and not something else. This is a case of punishment pure and simple, suffering inflicted as an expression of disapproval for wrongdoing. But a wise parent will often prefer a different way of punishing—that of leaving

the child to suffer the natural consequences of his wrongdoing. In this case the punishment is punishment as really as in the other, but it is also a matter of natural sequence.

If we think of God's punishing from the point of view of a whipping arbitrarily given after the wrong was done, we are likely to misconceive the whole matter; we shall have a correcter view if we think of the wise Father as accomplishing His purpose of reward or punishment mainly through His adjusting of natural sequences to that end. This may not be a complete view of the subject, but it is the part of the field that is most open to our exploration.

For illustration, suppose the case of three parents who have passed into the future world, and who look back through memory on the way in which they dealt with their families in the present world. The first remembers his having honestly endeavored, by divine grace, to care well

for his loved ones, and to surround them with good influences. The second remembers having been negligent in these duties, with disastrous results ; but he also remembers having repented later, and of having done his best to retrieve his faults, with the aid of divine grace. The third remembers unrepentantly his failure in duty and the ruin that has resulted therefrom to his loved ones. Who does not see that for the first two there is blessedness in their remembering of the past, in their consciousness of the good they have accomplished and the character they have won, and in the approval of God and the good ? Who does not see that for the third there is torture in remembering the past and in the present consciousness of personal meanness and of deserved disapproval ? Or if he is too callous to feel the torture, that indicates a degree of personal degradation that is worse than the worst misery. In these supposed instances we take a look at certain

perfectly real materials for the construction of a heaven or a hell. The brightest imagery in the Scriptures does not exaggerate the blessedness of a heaven made up of such experiences. And the hell thus indicated is as dreadful as the words of Jesus concerning the gehenna of fire.

According to Jesus heaven is success in the highest meaning of the term, and hell is failure. It is the failure made by him who has not entered into life. It is failure in point of achievement; he has not come to the light, and so he remains in darkness. It is failure in point of character, the failure of one who, though he gains the whole world has forfeited himself. It is the failure which a man makes when he is left to himself, and to the influences of natural deterioration. To be consciously and hopelessly guilty and mean, to be covered with shame and yet remain unrepentant—that is hellfire. Remorse is torment. To be guilty and mean without shame and without re-

morse is contemptible to a degree that is worse than any torment can be. And the failure spoken of by Jesus is also failure in point of companionship. He emphasizes the idea of separation between the righteous and the wicked, each going to his own place, each seeking the society for which he is fit.

Evidently we are cognizant of certain realities which may well be those intended by Jesus in the severe language He uses. We need not affirm that items like these exhaust His meaning; but they certainly illustrate it. And we have here no punishment that consists of an arbitrary infliction of pain or harm. Stern and dreadful though the realities may be, they are of a class with which we are familiar. The results of our deeds pursue us. From the thrill or the sting of an approving or a disapproving conscience who can flee?

“As I thought of my former living,
And the judgment day to be,
Sitting alone with my conscience
Seemed judgment enough for me.”

In His utterances on the subject Jesus divides mankind into two classes and no more. There can be no doubt of the correctness of this division, but let us not misapprehend it. It does not imply that there is precisely the same reward to all who repent, and precisely the same details of failure to all others. The æonial life begins before death. The line of division is drawn already. Perhaps the future will not be so unlike the present as many imagine. There is the same room in the future as in the present for infinite variety of kind and degree on both sides of the dividing line. If one believes that the line of division is fixed at death, so that thereafter there is no crossing from one camp to the other, that does not prevent his thinking

that both here and hereafter there are some on each side who are relatively near the line, and others who are farther away. There is nowhere any injustice nor cruelty nor unkindness in any penalty inflicted by our heavenly Father.

CHAPTER IX

Eternity and Immortality

BY the phrase "eternal life" many understand a course of life unlimited in duration. To escape defining the term, we have thus far avoided the use of it, substituting for it the transferred phrase "æonial life." I hope that we have used this phrase often enough so that it has raised in our minds its own proper suggestions. It does not properly denote a course of life, but the fact of being alive, though it is true that being alive implies a life in the sense of a course of events. The

term æonial is not merely a term of duration ; it denotes the nature of the new life, the life of the kingdom, in which one may participate both before and after death. Thus far we have avoided the question whether the term also denotes or implies unlimited duration. The time has now come for considering that question. Does Jesus teach that the æonial state, whether of life or its opposite, extends on without limit of time ?

*Eternity according to the Prophets and
the Scribes*

The stem idea of the Hebrew noun *olam*, eternity, is that of hiding or being hidden. It presents eternity as duration the limits of which are hidden. It implies looking forward into the future and backward into the past, from some point of time, and seeing no limits of duration that are to be taken into the account. It is silent as to any such thing as abso-

lutely limitless duration, but from the idea of duration that is practically limitless it never varies. The psalmist says, "I have called to mind thy judgments from eternity" (cxix. 52), and thus dates them at a time so far in the past that its limits need not be considered. The servant whose ear has been bored by his master "shall serve him to eternity." That is, the duration of the service shall have practically no limit. Omitting all fine distinctions, the Old Testament word regards as eternal that which has no recognizable limit of duration.

Under the influence, perhaps, of Greek thought the scribes introduced variant uses of the word. They employ it in the plural—a usage that is rare in the Old Testament. Strictly speaking there can be but one eternity, for eternity includes all duration. From another point of view, however, there are as many eternities as there are points of time from which we can look backward

or forward. Thus conceived, eternities are distinguished not by their boundaries, for they have none, but by their centers. In Hebrew "the wilderness" is the boundless pasturage country surrounding the arable territory of Palestine, while the wilderness of Beersheba is that part of the wilderness near Beersheba, and the wilderness of Tekoa is that part near Tekoa, and "this wilderness" is the part near where the speaker happens to be. Analogously "an eternity" may be that part of unlimited time that is conceived of as adjacent to some event. In particular "this eternity" is the part of eternity which the speaker thinks of as now present, as distinguished from "the eternity to come," a significant part of eternity which is still future.

Further, events occur in time just as in space, and the word that denotes the duration may come to be used to denote also the aggregate of the events. The

scribes practised this usage. To denote the present with its course of life, its aggregate of events, they used the term "this eternity," while by the term "the eternity to come" they expressed a certain conception of the future with its aggregate of events, its course of life, especially its recompenses.

In English we have this same conception of a course of human life or an aggregate of human events occurring in time, and, unfortunately, we express it by the term "world," the term which properly denotes the aggregate of human events occurring in space. Thus we recognize a time-world as well as a space-world, and we habitually confuse the two.

"Æon" in the New Testament

In the New Testament the Greek noun *æon* and its adjectives stand for the *olam* of the Old Testament and the scribes. Like the Hebrew word, they

denote duration without limits that are to be taken into the account. They are used of the past (*e. g.* Luke i. 70; Acts iii. 21, xv. 18; John ix. 32), but much oftener of the future. They are prevailingly translated by such words as forever, eternal, everlasting. They always denote duration, but sometimes also the aggregate of facts or events conceived of as included in duration. When so used our versions translate by "world." "The care of the *æon* and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word." "The sons of this *æon* are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light" (Matt. xiii. 22; Luke xvi. 8). In particular, the present *æon* is often contrasted with the *æon* to come (Matt. xii. 32; Luke xx. 34), the New Testament here following the usage of the scribes.

In classical Greek the word "*æon*" sometimes denotes the term of a human life, with variant meanings somewhat like those of the English word "age."

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In English we use the word "age," just as we use the word "world," to denote a period of duration with the aggregate of events included in it. So we are not surprised to find the word "æon" in the New Testament sometimes translated by "age" (*e. g.* Eph. ii. 7; Col. i. 26). The revised versions substitute "age" for "world" either in text or margin.

In explaining these terms a good deal has been said as to an alleged Jewish conception of a messianic "age" with limits definitely fixed; but the proof is inadequate. The phrase which our English versions translate "the last days" nowhere has a meaning more definite than that of future time when Jehovah fulfils His promises. No "age" mentioned in the New Testament has determinable beginning or end. Even the "present æon" and the "æon to come" have no boundaries that are indicated; they are the two parts of the one inseparable

arable æon rather than two different æons. If one substitutes "age-lasting" for "everlasting" he will still have the idea of duration without cognizable limit. Whatever you make of "the end of the world," "the consummation of the age," at least Jesus does not speak of it as the end of the conscious existence of any one; He speaks of the æonial life and the æonial punishment as following, not as terminated by, the final judgment (Matt. xxv. 41, 46).

He and His early disciples make the same point in various phraseology. When Paul says that love "abideth" and "never faileth" (I. Cor. xiii. 13, 8), we have the idea of unlimited duration given in other words. According to Mark (iii. 29) Jesus says that he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit "hath never forgiveness" (hath not forgiveness unto the æon), "but is guilty of an æonial sin." In Matthew's record (xii. 32) the same utterance is: "It shall not be for-

given him neither in this æon nor in that which is to come." We must not delay to multiply instances.

Analogies to Personal Immortality

The teaching of Jesus agrees with the natural expectations that men form. The current doctrine of the perpetuity of matter and of energy is not a doctrine of immortality, but it has a bearing thereupon. Each atom of matter and each vibration of force in my body—apart from supposable creation or annihilation by Deity—will in some form endure forever. And this, however emphasized in recent thinking, is not a new discovery. Men have always had some glimmering knowledge of it. Whatever be true of the man himself, the constituent parts of him are held to be eternal. Here is at all events a certain kind of endless existence, to say nothing of the suggestion that the personality is likely to be one of the elements that persist.

Further, the idea of the immortality of a person's influence is an idea with which men have been familiar in all historic time. Some effort of mine affects another person, and through him another, and so on without end. Very ancient is the habit of illustrating this by the pebble dropped in the middle of the lake, and raising a ripple that becomes wider and wider till it passes out of sight. Endless influence is not personal immortality, but it may serve for illustrating it.

This becomes conspicuous when we think of influence that is attended by fame, by reputation. Think of such men as Homer or Isaiah or Cæsar or Nero or Judas. Each has an influence over us who are now living, the same as if he were alive among us, an influence that is an unquestioned reality. It is an influence that is perfectly individual. The men of the past are as distinct to us as are our contemporaries with whom

we talk. The influence of some of them is for good, and of others for evil; toward some we cherish feelings of approval and admiration and love, and towards others feelings of loathing and execration. If we conceive of them as conscious of the good or the evil they are now doing, or of the estimation in which they are held, that constitutes reward or punishment for them. So far as we can see, this condition of reward or punishment is eternal.

Literature recognizes no greater motif than this. We are very familiar with the honors paid to those whom the poets or the historians have made immortal. And who is there who does not sometimes feel stirred by the wish to do something by which he will be remembered after he is dead? The endlessness of combined influence and reputation presents so many points in common with personal immortality that one is sometimes taken for the other. I

think that many read George Eliot's fine poem on "The Choir Invisible"* as if it were an expression of the yearning for personal immortality. But it falls short of that, splendidly fine and worthy as it is. And it further differs from the teaching of Christ in that it is an aristocratic aspiration for something that can be attained by perhaps one in a million, and not a democratic aspiration for a blessedness open to all who love God and their fellow men.

* "O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues. So to live is heaven.
* * * * * This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,

Involved in these analogies is the idea of a future recompense that is endless. There will be good or harm without limit of time as the result of what I do. Under the natural law of continuity here is eternal reward or retribution, independent of the question whether I shall eternally have a consciousness for enjoying and enduring. We cannot think of the future except as unlimited in duration. We think of it as in continuity with the present; can the sequence be less than perpetual? And if it is attended by consciousness, if a human personality is a force persisting after death, is there any reason for expecting a cessation of that persistence? If memory plays a part in the recompenses of the future, the things remembered will of course never change; will the remembering

Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world."

ever cease? We cannot think of the distinction between right and wrong as having a time limit. In fine, these analogies indicate an eternity of ill consequences for the wrongdoer as dreadful as that indicated in the teachings of Jesus. They differ from His teachings mainly in the fact that they have no offer of salvation to make to the repentant.

Different Views of Immortality

In childhood I came into contact with a little Sunday School book which stirred me up to a good deal of thinking. It had pictures of a worm and a chrysalis and a butterfly, and by these illustrated the transformation from one form of life to another through an apparent intervening death. The drawing of such analogies is not a new thing. It was done in times long antedating Christianity. The idea has been that immortality is natural to man, that perpetuity of personal exist-

ence rests on the same basis with the perpetuity of matter or force or influence, that a human soul once in conscious existence remains so eternally.

Does this agree with the teaching of Jesus (see Chapter VI above) that the æonial life is an especial gift from God to all who repent, believe, love, obey, and to no others?*

Is not this teaching that immortality is a gift, to be had only by its being bestowed, in conflict with the view that all human persons are by nature immortal? The usual answer has been that the gift of eternal life does not consist in the perpetuating of conscious existence, but in rendering that existence a blessed one; that every human person lives after death in the sense of being conscious, but not necessarily in the sense of having a

* From this statement there should be no dissent. The received Evangelical teaching is that the blessed immortality becomes the possession of all who will take it; and Universalists do not teach that it ever becomes the possession of any who refuse to take it.

beatific life ; that human life does not become eternal life except by the receiving of God's gift, and that some remain without the gift forever ; that there is such a thing as æonial death, and that it consists in eternal conscious existence without æonial life.

Along with this question goes another, that of probation. Jesus and His disciples say that men are to be judged for the deeds done in the body, not for deeds done after death. They urge men to a present change of mind, to immediate entrance upon the æonial life, never to the posthumous performing of these duties. Those who in the judgment go to the right hand are those who in the present life minister to Christ in the person of His disciples. These teachings suggest the question of the relation of immortality to the crisis which we call death. The received doctrine has been that probation ends at death or before death ; that our opportunities and the

disposal we have made of them then become facts of the past, fixed and unchangeable; that character has then become fixed beyond recall, and that its recompenses are then irrevocably determined.

At once a great difficulty arises. If one conceives of punishment as an arbitrary infliction of suffering, then the idea of its lasting forever is horrible. In order to escape this difficulty some hold that æonial punishment is not unlimited in duration. I do not think that their solutions of the problem are successful. The difficulty must be met by reasonable definition of the nature of the recompenses of the future, and not by impossible attempts to cut short eternal sequences. Yet it seems to me that certain differences concerning this matter are less vital than they have sometimes been thought to be, that it is a matter in which men of different minds are likely to differ, and that it is here more impor-

tant to emphasize our agreements than our differences.

Jesus does not teach that there is eternal punishment for temporary sinning. What He seems to teach is that there may be endless sinning, involving endless penalty (Mark iii. 29). If one holds that God follows men in the future state of punishment with restoring influences until many or all escape into æonial life, he may hold it consistently with the principle that endless punishment is the inevitable consequence of remaining endlessly unrepentant.

Some have taught that the unrepentant are annihilated at death, or at the final ceasing of their probation, but more current now is the doctrine that there is no natural principle of permanence in personality; that the natural order for the elements that constitute a human person is that they simply disintegrate, and become stuff for new constructions; and that this is what happens except in the case

of those who receive the gift of æonial life. That is, they deny natural immortality, and affirm that the gift consists in immortality itself, and not merely in its being made blessed. Some teach that God only has immortality (I Tim. vi. 16), and that He gives immortality not to all men as created in His image, but only to those who become entitled to æonial life. Those not so entitled, they say, follow the same course with other animal and vegetable beings. Having served their purpose they decay, becoming waste materials to be reutilized by the great Constructor.

One might say that ceasing from conscious existence is itself eternal punishment, and so comes within the description given by Jesus. But what can one say concerning the expressions in which Jesus represents the unsaved as exercising consciousness in the future state? Is oriental figure of speech elastic enough so that the experiences of Dives, and the

weeping and gnashing of teeth can be reconciled with the idea of the cessation of personal experience? That a person who might have had the joyous successes of eternal life should instead go to decay is matter for painful lamentation from an onlooker, or from the person himself looking forward to his fate; has Jesus by figure of speech put this wailing into the disintegrated person's own mouth, in order to present the matter vividly?

The true solution is to be sought rather in rightly conceiving of the nature of the recompenses of the future.* It makes a difference whether one thinks of punishment as *ex post facto* torment, or takes the view of it presented in the preceding chapters.

* A distinguished evangelist is reported in the newspapers as saying: "Hell is the hospital for the incurables of the universe. Hell is the insane asylum of the universe, where men and women remember."

CHAPTER X

The Resurrection of the Body

THE Christian creeds couple the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Other Christian utterances specifically join the resurrection and the final judgment. There have been utterances of this kind that were more serious than sober. The theme has proved an attractive one to the imagination, and in treating it the ponderous structures of the western imagination have put the Orient to shame. On the foundation of the oriental pictures given us by Jesus and Paul and their associates

the church has built the *dies iræ* hymns in all their solemn variety, and in poems and sermons detail after detail has been added. A good illustration of this is the passage so often quoted from Dr. Young.

“ Now monuments prove faithful to their trust,
And render back their long committed dust ;
Now charnels rattle ; scattered limbs and all
The various bones, obsequious to the call,
Self-moved advance ; the neck perhaps to meet
The distant head, the distant head the feet.
Dreadful to view ! See, through the dusky sky
Fragments of bodies in confusion fly,
To distant regions journeying, there to claim
Deserted members and complete the frame.
The severed head and trunk shall join once more,
Though realms now rise between and oceans roar.
The trumpet sound each vagrant moat shall hear,
Or fixed in earth, or if afloat in air,
Obey the signal wafted in the wind,
And not one sleeping atom lag behind.”

In the “ *Columbian Orator*,” a book of selections from which the boys of the first half of the nineteenth century learned the pieces they declaimed at

school, these lines of Dr. Young are quoted and amplified in an "Extract from a Sermon on the Day of Judgment."

"Now the nations under ground begin to stir. There is a noise and a shaking among the dry bones. The dust is all alive, and in motion, and the globe breaks and trembles as with an earthquake, while this vast army is working its way through, and bursting into life. The ruins of human bodies are scattered far and wide, and have passed through many and surprising transformations. . . . And now, at the sound of the trumpet, they shall all be collected, wherever they were scattered; all properly sorted and united, however they were confused; atom to its fellow atom, bone to its fellow bone."

"The living shall start and be changed, and the dead rise at the sound. The dust that was once alive and formed a human body, whether it flies in the air, floats in the ocean, or vegetates on earth,

shall hear the new-creating fiat. Wherever the fragments of the human frame are scattered, this all-penetrating call shall reach and speak them into life."

I add another citation. It is from a sermon published in April, 1906.

"To believe in design without a designer . . . requires much more childish credulity than to believe that the great First Cause could resurrect the body after long centuries of decay. So the fact that the body may be mutilated, a limb buried here and an arm there and the remainder elsewhere, does not diminish the power of omnipotence. If the physical being were torn into fragments and some parts cast on the blistering sands of the sultry desert, others bound by the icy fetters of the frigid zone, and still others buried in the 'dark unfathomed caves of ocean,' while some portions may have crossed into the realms of the vegetable world and appear in the form of the nodding violet or waving grass, yet He

who occupies all space, and writes His law within the tiny walls of the smallest atom, could change these scattered particles into a glorified body in the twinkling of an eye."

Whatever we may think of this author's idea of the resurrection day, he is correct in saying that the acceptance of all these details involves less credulity than believing in design without a Designer. All these quoted statements are by persons who have thought the case through, have weighed objections, and have reached conclusions. Doubtless their conclusions are grotesque, but they deserve more respect than is due to the superficial and supercilious criticism sometimes heaped upon them. But in their exuberance of detail they are in contrast with the greatest Christian hymns, and still more with the reticence of the New Testament. And it is not correct to say without qualification that they represent the view which the church

of the past has taken of the doctrine of the resurrection. Some persons have taken this view, and some still take it, while others, from Paul till now, have taken a view very different.

The Terms that denote Resurrection

In the New Testament the terms denoting the resurrection are employed in three different ways. First, they may denote the general fact of the transforming of dead persons into living. Second, they may denote a certain great cosmical crisis, the crisis when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised. Third, they may denote the permanent condition of those who have experienced resurrection. The consideration of the second of these uses belongs to the next chapter ; that of the first and third is now before us.

The word most commonly used in the New Testament for rising from the dead is the verb *egeiro*, to awaken. The angel

awakened Peter, and the disciples awakened Jesus (Acts xii. 7; Mark iv. 38). Joseph awakened from his dream, and took Jesus to Egypt, and back to the land of Israel (Matt ii. 13, 14, 20, 21). Here and often elsewhere the English versions have the verb "arise," but the arising is only a suggested meaning. Probably the word could be uniformly translated "awaken," and in many instances with the effect of rendering the sense more vivid. Read through the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians, substituting "awaken" for "be raised." Note especially the places where it comes into antithesis with "asleep" (*e. g.* verses 18, 20). You will perhaps not wish to change the familiar old rendering, but you will find it imbued with new significance. The noun of this stem is used but once in the New Testament (Matt. xxvii. 53).

It is said that the use of *egeiro* in the sense of raising the dead is unknown in

classic Greek (Cremer, p. 306). It is a distinctly Semitic contribution. It is in keeping with the Old Testament conception of death as a person's sleeping with his ancestors. Gehazi, after laying the staff on the face of the dead boy, made his report that the child was "not awaked" (II Ki. iv. 31). Jesus expresses the same idea in a different word when He proposes to wake Lazarus from his sleep (John xi. 11).

Nearly as frequent as *egeiro*, and on the whole more conspicuous, are the verb *anistemi* and its noun *anastasis*. The noun is translated "resurrection." The verb denotes to rise up or raise one up from the supineness of death to the vigor of life. Peter turned to the body of Tabitha and said, "Rise up." She opened her eyes, saw Peter, sat up, "and he gave her his hand, and raised her up." Jesus commanded the ruler's daughter to awaken, "and straightway the damsel rose up" (Acts ix. 40, 41 ; Mark v. 41, 42).

The words of these two stems are sometimes used interchangeably, and in variant readings one is often displaced by the other. Resurrection of the dead is frequently mentioned, but resurrection from the dead still more frequently. In the first of these expressions dead persons are represented as rising to life, in the second one is represented as passing out of the class of dead persons into another class. Perhaps we have here nothing more than two differing aspects of the same fact.

The words of these stems are not used to denote a person's being raised from the grave, or from the world of the dead. Jesus says that "all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth," some "unto a resurrection of life," and some "unto a resurrection of judgment" (John v. 28, 29). Here we have not a resurrection from the tombs, but a coming forth from the tombs into a resurrection (not "the resurrection," as

in the versions). Similarly we are told that Jesus "called Lazarus out of the tomb, and awakened him from the dead" (John xii. 17). At the crucifixion "the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints that slept were awakened, and, coming forth from the tombs after the awakening," were seen by many (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53). The revised versions make "the awakening" in this case to be Christ's resurrection; however this may be, the resurrection terms here denote something different from the coming forth from the tombs. In Revelation (xx. 13) we have a representation of the sea and death and hades giving up the dead that are in them, but this is not called resurrection.

We are accustomed to sing :

"From the dark grave He rose,
The mansions of the dead";

and our hymns and other religious utterances are saturated with this conception of

the resurrection of Christ or of believers as a rising out of the grave or out of the world of the dead. This circumstance gives importance to the distinction that has just been presented. Whether the conception is correct or not, at all events it is not scriptural; and it has a tendency to distract our minds from the scriptural form of the idea of resurrection. Whatever exceptional or unusual forms of expression there may be in the recorded teachings of Jesus and His immediate followers, the ordinary presentation is not that of buried bodies rising up from their graves, or from Hades, but that of a person awakening from unconsciousness, rising up from the powerlessness of death to the activity of life.

Resurrection and the Body

In our sixth chapter we have noticed the correctness of the instinct which leads men to speak of the salvation of

“the soul.” The same instinct asserts itself when we speak of the immortality of the soul, but of the resurrection of the body. What is the human body?

Differentially, it is the complement of organs through which an individual human spirit works. Whether it is necessarily made of matter is another question. In certain conditions, we would speak of the body of a shadow or of a reflection. The Bible says little of disembodied human spirits as such. It represents the human person in the life after death as a soul, a self, a spirit with whatever organism is requisite for maintaining personal identity. It never speaks of the resurrection of “the flesh” or of the materials of which our present bodies are composed, but it emphasizes the resurrection of the body. “If the Spirit of Him that awakened Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that awakened Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal

bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11). Notice here that our resurrection bodies are to be our mortal bodies made alive. That this making alive implies transformation is much insisted upon. We wait for the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory" (Phil. iii. 21).

As we shall see in the next chapter, Jesus and the others at first taught this doctrine, to Jews, mainly in terms derived from the Old Testament and the scribes. When it came to be preached to the Greeks, with their non-Semitic habits of thought, difficulties arose. To meet these difficulties was one principal purpose of Paul's letters to the Thessalonians, perhaps the earliest of the New Testament writings. The difficulties persisted, and are more formally discussed in Paul's later writings, especially in the familiar fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians.

Nature of the Resurrection Body

First, it is identical with the mortal body of the same person, in the sense of its being body to the same spirit, and constituting with that spirit the same soul, the same self. Jesus, speaking on another subject, stated an implication which Paul recognized and expanded. When a grain of wheat dies in the earth, it has a resurrection in the "much fruit" which springs from it (John xii. 24).* Paul calls attention (I Cor. xv. 36-41) to the identity of the blade with the kernel that was sown: "to each seed a body of its own." The kernel and the blade are alike the body to the differential principle of the kernel. The product is still wheat, not something else; still that individual type of wheat, not some other.

* It is no valid objection to say that the Gospel of John was not written till after Paul's epistles, for Paul was not dependent on our written Gospels for his knowledge concerning Jesus. Doubtless he learned from Jesus how to deal with the Greek mind.

In this sense it is the same body, not a similar body but the same, no matter how different it may be in shape or color or qualities or constituent particles. And Paul intimates that it is in many aspects a different body—"not the body that shall be," "but God giveth it a body." Notice how absolutely this teaching identifies the resurrection body with our present bodies; and how utterly in contrast it is with all attempts to identify them by the materials of which they are composed.

Second, various terms are used to indicate the differences between the present body of a person and his resurrection body. One is earthy and the other heavenly, one psychical and the other spiritual, one corruptible and the other incorruptible (I Cor. xv. 42-54). Jesus had taught that in the resurrection men die no more, but are like the angels (Luke xx. 36 and parallels), and Paul expands the teaching into this doctrine

of a heavenly, spiritual, incorruptible body. This might be illustrated by all the numerous passages which speak of the changing of our mortal bodies (*e. g.* I Cor. xv. 51, 52; II Cor. v. 2, 4; Phil. iii. 21; Rom. viii. 11).

Third, emphasis is particularly placed on the idea that the resurrection body is not subject to the perpetual flux which we think of as characterizing matter. That it is incorruptible is many times reiterated. Christian teaching, except in figure of speech, does not mention the nourishing of the resurrection bodies of the redeemed by eating and drinking. Jesus expressly says that there is no marrying in the resurrection. Note the contrast with the teachings of Mohammed and others. And as if other expressions were not explicit enough, Paul expressly tells us that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. xv. 50), that is, that the resurrection body is not a body of flesh and blood.

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Does Jesus teach that the resurrection body is made up of atoms of matter? I do not know. The witnesses do not say, and I do not know what atoms of matter are. Does He teach that the resurrection body contains some of the same particles which the mortal body of the same person contained? I do not know. The witnesses do not say. What I do know is that He teaches that the two bodies are identical in point of personal individuality, and the new body is made of other stuff than disintegrating, corruptible matter. This doctrine of the resurrection of the body is positive, replete with reality, and free from the difficulties attending such presentations as are quoted in the beginning of this chapter.

The Bodies of Lazarus and of Jesus

The bodies of Lazarus and of others who were raised from the dead by miracle should not be cited in proof of the

nature of the resurrection body. Their reanimated bodies were corruptible, and in due time died again. But how was it with the body of our risen Lord during those last forty days? That body of flesh and bones, that body which ate and drank? No one should dismiss the question lightly. There is nothing on which the New Testament more insists than on the reality of the resurrection experiences of Jesus, and the indissoluble connection between His resurrection and ours. The great thing in the doctrine of the resurrection is the personal relation of Christ to it. Nevertheless a wise person will be cautious in drawing inferences as to our resurrection body from what we are told concerning the body of the risen Jesus.

“ In the Resurrection ”

In the passage between Jesus and the Sadducees the word resurrection is used by both to denote the permanent condi-

tions that follow an experience of resurrection, or that follow the general crisis known as the resurrection. "In the resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be?" "In the resurrection they neither marry nor" etc. (Matt. xxii. 28, 30 and parallels). This use is not infrequent (*e. g.* perhaps Luke xiv. 14, xx. 36; Phil. iii. 11). So far as the future is concerned, the resurrection life is the æonial life, and, like that, is the gift of God. The effecting of a resurrection is by divine prerogative. This is affirmed concerning the resurrection of Christ (*e. g.* Acts ii. 24, 32, x. 40, xiii. 34, xvii. 31), and concerning that of believers (*e. g.* I Cor. vi. 14; John v. 21). Both in the case of resurrection and of æonial life, Jesus claims to exercise the same prerogative (*e. g.* John v. 19-29, xi. 22-25), that of the giving of life.

CHAPTER XI

The Judgment Day

A VERY large part of what the New Testament writers have to say concerning the future life is devoted to the resurrection regarded as a cosmical crisis, the end of the world, the consummation of the age, the close of the dispensation, the accomplishing of all things, the case of those who endure to the end and shall be saved, the coming of the Lord to judgment (*e. g.* Matt. v. 18, x. 22, xiii. 49, xxiv. 13 and numerous other places). We shall the better understand these representations if we begin by noting that the judgment ima-

gery is mainly from the Old Testament ; that the ideas of its finality and its connection with the resurrection of the dead are largely the contribution of the scribes ; while the distinctively Christian element is the personal presence of Christ in the judgment scenes, and their being dominated by His temper and principles. Of course the earlier truths which Jesus incorporated into His teaching have His sanction equally with those which He added to the old ; but we shall understand Him better if we distinguish between the two.

The Old Testament Judgment Imagery

In an immense number of places the writers of the Old Testament speak of Jehovah as the universal king and judge of nations and of men. In not a few places we find the picture of His holding an assembly for judgment, arousing Himself for that purpose, coming to the place of judgment attended by a retinue, re-

turning on high. It is in His capacity as judge of peoples that individuals appeal to Him to redress their wrongs (*e. g.* Joel iii. 12, 16; Pss. i. 5, vii. 6-8, ix and x, especially ix. 7, 8, 15, 16, 1, especially 3, 6). The conception is not that of a universal judgment-court held once for all, but rather that of a court held for the trial of the case that arises.

In a succession of utterances of different centuries the prophets use the phrase "the day of Jehovah" to denote a judgment crisis of this sort. The book of Joel, for example, is a monograph on "The Day of Jehovah." Read it through with this in mind, and on the verses that mention the day of Jehovah read the reference passages in Obadiah, Amos, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Malachi. Each prophet speaks of the day as near at hand, impending. A prophet proclaims it as impending in his own time, and does not think of this as in conflict with its having been impend-

ing in the times of earlier prophets, in different earlier centuries. It is the one impending day of Jehovah, and yet there is something generic in its character.

In these passages concerning a judgment crisis or concerning the day of Jehovah cosmical convulsions are pictured, heaven and earth quaking, the sun and moon and stars darkening, and the like (*e. g.* Joel iii. 15, 16 and parallels). In some cases these are wholly or in part figures of speech for political struggles or revolutions.

Who does not see that this imagery is reproduced, of course with variations, in those passages of the Gospels and Epistles which speak of "the day of the Lord," "the day when the Son of man cometh"—in the pictures we have of Christ coming in the clouds of heaven, attended by angels, with power and great glory, to "render to every man according to his deeds," with signs from heaven, and earthquakes, and political convulsions,

“men fainting for fear and for expectation of the things which are coming on the inhabited earth”? (Matt. xvi. 27, xxiv, especially 6-8, 27-31; Mark viii. 38, xiii. 7, 8, 24-27; Luke ix. 26, xxi. 9-11, 25-28 and parallel places). Not the least marked feature in the reproduction is the representation that the events in question are impending over that generation, and yet also belong to an unknown future date (Matt. xvi. 28, xxiv. 36; Mark ix. 1, xiii. 32; Luke ix. 27). In view of the history of the phrases used, one should not feel too sure that Jesus and Paul were expecting something that failed to occur.

Judgment and Resurrection

If Daniel xii. 1-3 is to be counted one of the Old Testament judgment passages, then the picturing of the resurrection of the dead in connection with the judgment scene begins in the Old Testament. Apparently this was a common

practice with the scribes in the time of Jesus. When Martha said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John xi. 24), it is most natural to think that she was uttering a commonplace, believed alike by Jesus and herself and her countrymen. When Jesus says of the believer that He "will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 40, 44), He seems to be addressing Himself to preconceived opinions. Similar instances are numerous. His auditors may have had the idea of "the judgment," "the day of Jehovah," as a crisis that might be repeated whenever there was occasion for it; but they also had the idea of "the judgment," "the day of Jehovah" that was peculiarly and exclusively such, "the last day," and with this they were in the habit of coupling the thought of the resurrection.

Assuming that Jesus addressed Himself to His hearers on the basis of the mental equipment they already had, this

equipment included prominently the conception of the day of judgment that was such *par excellence*. They thought of it as the time of the announcing of reward and punishment. He was appealing to ideas which they held in common with Him when He spoke of the wheat and the tares in the harvest which is "the end of the æon," when He said that men "in the day of judgment" shall give account of every idle word, and that it would then be less tolerable for some than for Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt. xiii. 39ff., xii. 36, x. 15, xi. 22, 24). He and His first disciples were not uttering things that were entirely strange and unfamiliar when they spoke of the pageantry of the occasion, the judge coming in clouds with his retinue of angels, the sounding of the trumpet, the gathering of all the nations, the separation to life and to punishment, some sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes (Matt. xxv. 31ff., xix. 28).

Christ the Judge

When Jesus and His disciples thus took over the teachings of the Old Testament and the scribes they doubtless changed many details; but the great characteristic change which they made consisted in their proclaiming that Jesus Christ is Himself the supreme judge at the last day, and that all its proceedings are marked by the ethical qualities which characterize Him. He it is, according to the passages last quoted, who is to come in the clouds with the angels, to sit on the throne of His glory, before whom the nations are to be gathered, and who will pronounce the sentence. It is He that will reject many who say, "Lord, Lord"; He to whom the Father "hath given all judgment;" and He whose voice the dead shall hear (Matt. vii. 22; John v. 22, 25). It is He that shall descend from heaven when "the dead in Christ shall rise first," and He whom those who are caught up shall

meet in the air (I Thess iv. 16, 17). Paul "preached Jesus and the resurrection," and that God has appointed a day for judging the inhabited earth by the Man whom He raised up from the dead (Acts xvii. 18, 31).

What does this Teaching mean?

If we were at liberty to repudiate those parts of the doctrine of the judgment-resurrection which seem to have originated with the scribes, that would afford a cheap solution of certain great difficulties. The Old Testament doctrine of a recurring "day of Jehovah" is simple. From the Christian point of view no great difficulty enters through the affirming that Jesus Christ is the Lord of the judgment. But this doctrine of one particular future time for the judgment and the resurrection of the dead is a puzzling doctrine.

It comes into troublesome relations with our conceptions of space, and

our knowledge that the earth is round. The picture of the Judge coming in the clouds is facile enough as long as you confine it to a limited horizon, but how can you make it when you extend the horizon so as to include the whole earth? You cannot solve this by saying that God has infinite power. It is not a question of power; it is whether we can possibly think an unthinkable thought, and whether that which is unthinkable can be real.

A like difficulty emerges in terms of time. In the earlier chapters of this book we have seen how thoroughly the teaching of Jesus emphasizes the idea of the continuity of the present with the future. How can this be reconciled with the idea of one great judgment time for all, far in the future? Have we here a break in the continuity, a break extending over the time intervening between any person's death and the judgment day? How about these two

conceptions, one of which presents the matter in terms of natural law, while the other presents it in terms that seem to transcend and contradict natural law?

The creeds and theologies have answered this question by presenting in various items a doctrine of the intermediate state. To persons of modern habits of thought these items are likely to seem mechanical and unreal. In our generation many even of those who believe in immortality cut out all ideas of a resurrection day and a final judgment, saying that there is no other resurrection than the fact that a person continues to live after the death of the material body. Such come under the rebuke which Paul administers to certain men who "have missed the mark, saying that the resurrection is passed already" (II Tim. ii. 18). In view of the immense number of utterances in which Jesus and the earliest Christians reiterate this teaching as to the judgment-resurrection crisis,

and of the circumstantiality of those utterances, it is impossible to deal fairly with the difficulties by merely ignoring them, or by cheap explanations.

A more reasonable way is that already indicated in our eighth chapter. The statements made concerning the judgment-resurrection pageant are like other physical expressions for infinite realities. There is in them an element of figure of speech, but they stand for something that is tremendously real. The reality is there, whether we can successfully dissect it from the imagery or not.

“ Watch, therefore, for ye know not ”

The thing that Jesus makes perfectly intelligible in all this teaching concerning the judgment is the practical bearing of it. Because the day and hour are coming, and coming unexpectedly, we are never to relax our vigilance. This is repeated over and over, with endless variety of phraseology. The coming of the Son

of man will be as a thief in the night, as lightning that in an instant fills the whole sky. There will be no notification beforehand, and therefore we may never be off our guard. The supreme instant may arrive when we are working in the field, grinding at the mill, resting on the housetop, and we must therefore be always ready.

In this as in many other matters the instinctive perceptions of Christian people have been more intelligent than their formal exegesis. What is the practical effect of the belief in the judgment day, as it works itself out in the experience of a devout person? It is to bring all his conduct into relations with that final scene. One has an opportunity, and either uses or fails to use it; at that moment his relations to that opportunity are forever decided; the decision that will be announced at the judgment day has already been reached. One closes his life leaving certain duties done and

others undone; that decides the character of his lifework, and the decision is the one which will stand at the last day. What the recording angel writes concerning us is decisions, and not information only. When the books are opened the final decision will consist of the innumerable decisions that have been recorded day by day. The thought of this has wholesomely affected believers, rendering them careful of their daily acts, and this is the effect that Jesus designed it should have.

In this we have a glimpse at one aspect of a great reality. The thousands of millions of the men of the successive generations have their millions of millions of crises in life, important or relatively unimportant, and in each crisis it is God the judge who makes the decision. Suppose we combine in our thought these millions of millions of items, thinking of them as one aggregate. Shall we not have a conception of a universal judg-

ment, such that we might clothe it with the imagery used in the New Testament? And will not our conception be that of a great reality in which each one of us is concerned?

Of course this is not offered as superseding any other contents which there may be in our Saviour's teaching. Doubtless it is only one aspect of a many-sided reality. Christians have commonly regarded this teaching as including an outline of the future history of mankind and the earth. Millennial theology of every type is based upon it. There are large fields of thought here which we cannot now enter. The church is not going to drop its use of the judgment-resurrection phraseology, nor the idea that there will be outward events in realization of it. But nothing in the great crisis is more important than this, that the daily crises of our lives be adjusted to it. For many purposes our Saviour's final word is: "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

CHAPTER XII

Cross Examination

IN eleven chapters we have made a brief survey of the teaching of Jesus concerning the future life, as this is set down in the records. Two additional questions arise. First, are the records to be depended upon? Did He actually teach what they say He taught? Second, is this teaching true? These questions must here be dismissed with a few words. Perhaps only a few are needed.

Some one will doubtless say that the treatment in this book has been merely popular, and not scientific, with the sug-

gestion that a truly scientific treatment might bring to light something very different as constituting the actual teachings of Jesus on the subject in hand. Of course the treatment has not been formally scientific, but whether that affects the results reached is another question. We have come across the meadows instead of marching the long way around, but the place where we have arrived may be the same, for all that.

No one is so extreme an agnostic as to doubt that Jesus taught something exceedingly pronounced concerning a future life. So much is evident from the whole history of the church of the first centuries. If there were nothing else, the ambition of the early Christians for martyrdom indicates how prominent was the idea of the future life among the traditions which they inherited from their Founder. This and other phenomena must needs be accounted for by something in the teachings of Jesus.

In trying to account for it we might have begun by following some recent critical theory, laying aside everything except the minimum residuum of the Gospels which our theory regards as actually uttered by Jesus, and giving to this the interpretation that seemed to us the most plausible. If we had done this, and stopped with this, our alleged scientific results would have been worthless. We should still be under obligation to correct and supplement our conclusions by comparing them with the impressions which the teaching of Jesus made on His contemporaries and His immediate successors. We should have to take these group by group, and when we had been through them all, we should simply have done more thoroughly and exhaustively the work which in this volume we have actually done. Of course the author has done some travel on this longer road, though he could not ask his readers to take the toilsome tramp with

him. The longer process would simply confirm the conclusion already reached, to the effect that the narrators of the words of Jesus unite with His contemporaries and first successors in an agreeing testimony as to what He taught concerning a future life. There is nothing unbelievable in the proposition that He taught what they say He taught. If He taught just this, His teaching accounts for the part that the belief in the future life played in the experience of the martyrs and confessors and other early Christians.

In view of the stress I have laid on the spiritual factors in future reward and punishment, some one may charge me with explaining away or softening down the words of Jesus. But I have not explained away anything. I have simply called attention to certain parts of His meaning. If you think this inadequate, the terms which He used still remain for your more adequate interpretation.

And I have not softened down anything. Does it seem to you that mental anguish and regret are trifles? If you think of Nero as now conscious, how do you suppose he enjoys the thought of his life career, and the reputation he bears? Do you think that universal execration is just slightly disagreeable? How would you like to be thought of, the coming two thousand years, as we all think of Nero? A certain woman who lived several generations ago is currently cited for illustration as the mother of criminals. Figures are given as to how many murderers have descended from her, how many thieves, how many harlots, how many lunatics. If you think of her as now living, how, provided divine grace has not intervened, does she feel concerning her course on earth? How would you like to look forward to such a future reward as hers? And if you think of Nero or that woman as so hardened that they do not suffer from

regret, does that diminish your repugnance? Does it give you a desire to be like Nero, or like that woman?

Do not make the blunder of thinking that mental and moral suffering belong to our refined civilization, to the exclusion of men who lived in earlier times. In our teachings on future retribution the physical symbols still have their use. There are many who are stirred by them who would not be stirred without them. Supposedly they may have been more needed for men in earlier stages of civilization, but from the earliest recorded times men have been capable of understanding the bitterness of degradation and disgrace and poignant regret.

As with the retributions of the future, so with its rewards. If we insist upon those which are spiritual in their nature, that excludes no other rewards which one can find warrant for in the teaching of the Master. We do not know the

whole, and we need not be troubled at our deficient knowledge. If we are "children of God," and "know that if He shall be manifested we shall be like Him," we need not worry that "it is not yet made manifest what we shall be."

Can we be sure that this teaching of Jesus is the truth? The past ten years have witnessed the publishing of a multitude of books and articles on immortality, many of them by authors who do not accept the testimony of the Scriptures or of Jesus as a sufficient ground of belief. With much uniformity they reach the conclusion that the argument for immortality results in what is "at worst a drawn battle," that life beyond the grave is at least as probable as its opposite. For one who has nothing more than this the outlook is dim, though not utterly hopeless. But if one adds to this a conviction that Jesus had wonderful insight, that He had knowledge of man's destiny reaching beyond that of other men, and

that the things which He confidently taught were the things that He really knew; then one may take comfort in the fact that scientists and philosophers know of no sufficient reason for not accepting His doctrine of the future life. And there are yet higher grounds of certitude for us who receive Jesus as the supreme revelation of God to men.

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