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An Analysis of the Christian Conception of the Life Beyond the Grave

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF THE
LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Christian Doctrine
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I have chosen a vital theme of never-failing interest, at once ancient and ever modern, likely again to be in the limelight in the after-period of World War II. Here is a subject both human and catholic, above all--personal. I have, as a Christian, emphasized the contribution and solution offered by the Founder of Christianity itself. I have briefly recognized pre-Christian influences and speculations, and also traced the development in thought and interpretation by the first century church of the greatest of all events in human history, viz., the Resurrection of Christ, the pivotal fact discussed in the thesis. I have sought to be comprehensive, but not exhaustive, suggestive and positive in the application following the investigation. While the treatment is concise, I have tried to make it adequate.

In addition to the indebtedness acknowledged in the bibliography, I desire to make direct reference to the constructive criticisms, helpful suggestions, and guidance in reading afforded by Dean F. D. Kershner who kindly read the M.S. of this thesis. His encouraging oversight in the preparation of this work, in addition to his gracious leadership, has been an inspiring contribution.
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CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

The compulsion of love and the necessity of circumstances often take us to the graveside. Brought face to face with the fact of death, all thoughtful people naturally ask: Is this the end of everything? Is the grave our goal? Does the dust claim the entire and real man? Is our destiny just extinction and nothingness? Has the man we know ceased to be? Does death end all? Are we really burying him? Is he anywhere or nowhere? If he is somewhere, where is he? How does he fare?

The question of life beyond the grave is a very ancient one, asked even long before the puzzled and perplexed patriarch asked it. Death is one of the saddest facts in human life. The grief of mourners is real and spontaneous. We express our sorrow in the colors and music we choose. Our symbols are eloquent. What are the flowers but emblems of the resurrection, heralds of the bright and better land, and apostles of immortality? The sadness we feel is a tribute to the greatness of our nature. We sorrow because we love. The companionship of the departed was dear to us. Without them, life will never be quite the same again. The churchyard is the market-place where all things are rated at their true value, and those who are approaching it

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1Job 14:14.
talk of the world and its vanities with a wisdom unknown before.

Death is the final and greatest mystery. The curtain rings down for the last time on the activities of life. The busy worker has left the stage and will no more return to play his part. Never again will he go out and in among us. How we shall miss him! Death cannot be evaded. To it all must submit. It is Heaven's appointment and must be kept. "Death is a black camel, which kneels at the gates of all," says an Eastern proverb. In some instances medical skill may postpone the event, but in the end death must be obeyed. It is Nature's law. To rebel against it is of no avail. We may bow our head in submission or butt against death in anger and rebellion. The result is the same. God's decree must be heeded.

Physical science has no reply to our question. We must look elsewhere for an answer. When we deal with spirit we introduce that which science cannot number, or weigh, or analyze. We move in a realm where test tubes, microscopes, and reacting agents are of no use. But the Christian believes that there are solid arguments that can be advanced in favor of a future life. He maintains that his faith is based on reason and is not a leap in the dark.

The Importance of the Subject--

Two Observations

(1) Faith in Immortality is an almost universal belief. This question of the future life is certainly life's greatest, and one of humanity's oldest questions. Practically all nations and peoples

2Heb. 9:27.
3Gen. 3:19; Rom. 5:12.
answered it with conviction in the affirmative. Skeptics on this issue in the ancient world were almost unknown. In the main, after wrestling with the problem, people of all centuries have decided in the favor of the eternal hope. The cave dwellers of the Stone Age, uncouth and rude, provided their deceased friends with weapons and implements for use in the life to come. So, too, our Red Indians anticipated happy hunting grounds. This persistent and hoary conviction of personality's surviving death appears to be an intuition of mankind, for when primitive men reach the borders of history they possess this conviction. Evidences are found in the oldest graves in the world through anthropological research. This belief is not arrived at through instruction or investigation, but is believed intuitively. It is a native instinct of the soul. The Bible did not create it, for it was there before the Book. The Word of God simply purified, confirmed, and exalted the hope that man held. The soul's survival beyond the tomb was a vital article of faith among the later and more highly developed races, e.g., Egyptian, Persian, Assyrian, etc. Cicero's famous words are still of interest:

As it is by nature that we believe in the existence of the gods, and by reason that we apprehend their nature, so it is by the unanimous opinion of all nations that we hold the doctrine that the souls of men continue permanently to exist.

So general, constant and widespread a belief can hardly be false. The amazing thing is that, here in a world where death is universal, that there exists and always has existed, belief in a

5Frank H. Marshall, Religious Backgrounds of Early Christianity (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1931), XVIII-XX.
6Frazer, op. cit., p. 137.
7Marcus Tullius Cicero, Tusculan Disputations, i, 16, 36.
life after death. Modern nation-wide and officially imposed atheism in Russia, a case of the will to disbelieve, does not nullify the fact that practically all races, past and present, civilized and barbarian, Orient and Occident, have held to persistence and continuance of life after death in some form. Personal survival is not the Eastern interpretation, but the spirit abides eternal in some form, even though it lose its identity, and be absorbed in the unconscious and impersonal All. This may not be satisfactory to the Westerner, for to him this is not life at all, but it is at least a denial that thought and consciousness are to be identified with the soul. Doctrine equivalent to the Platonic phraseology, "every soul immortal," underlies the religion of the Hindus. The survival value to the race of faith in a life after death can scarcely be overestimated. The experience of Mary W. Shelley is a general and genuinely human one:

But were it not for the steady hope I entertain of joining him, what a mockery would be this world! Without that hope, I could not study or write; for fame and usefulness (except as far as regards my child) are nullities to me.

(2) Utilitarian Value of a Belief in an After-Life. Its importance to life's efforts and conduct is at once obvious. We dare

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8Joseph Agar Beet, The Immortality of the Soul (London: Eaton and Mains, 1901), I, 15.


not gainsay the dearest hope of the race that has upheld man in all generations, and so by our denial turn life into a zoological garden. Hedonistic motives and appeals naturally caused deterioration in Epicurus's followers. If there be no God and no other life, then men are animals to roam at will through life. Is it too strongly Lutheran to say that this encourages wrongdoing, and that such teaching speaks loudly to men, virtually saying: "Live as you like! Sin as you please! There is no hereafter! There is no judgment-seat of God! You have nothing to fear! Death will wipe us all out!" Is this far from the popular interpretation and the practical application of such a denial? What awful alternatives the two positions represent!

Rather would most agree with the hymn writer:

The throbings of immortal life
Grow stronger as the days go by.

Virtue for its own sake is lofty teaching, but human nature in general is not moved by, and practical earthly morality is not based on such idealism. Daily conduct, flesh and blood behavior is guided by more effective incentives. To assert that conscience is a sufficient administrator of punishment in this life, and exacts the last farthing of justice is to betray a deficiency in knowledge and observation of patent facts and everyday moral reality. That conscience so often fails as a punishment where most needed is an obvious fact, in spite of what we shall say later on. The conscience of the


virtuous man is the most sensitive of all consciences. Attain a high standard of goodness, and the least deviation from the path of right gives great inward self-reproach. The higher a man is in grace, the lower he will be in his own esteem. Paul solemnly averred that a conscience could become warped, blunted, defiled, seared or branded as with a red-hot iron. Conscience is not infallible, as he proved in his own case. He was sincerely wrong. It can be educated. Like a compass, it may become disordered, maladjusted, and unreliable. But conscience does bear witness to a future life as we shall show elsewhere. Vicious men feel the admonitions of their moral faculty less and less. Continual violation of conscience causes its protests to cease, becoming torpid or dead, producing a state of hardened guilt.

Is it reasonable to do one's duty always if there be no future life? Do self-interests and the interests of others coincide at all times? If one sacrifice himself to perform a social duty, wherein is there an adequate return? Can it be shown that in this life, from a merely worldly standpoint, it is wise or reasonable under any circumstances whatsoever to sacrifice the only life a man has in the interests of the public good? Remove belief in the hereafter, and the noblest of human acts lack rational justification, and are rather unmitigated folly. Prof. Henry Sidgwick concludes:

that the inseparable connection between Utilitarian duty and the greatest happiness of the individual who conforms to it, cannot be satisfactorily demonstrated. The utmost development of sympathy would not cause a perfect coincidence between Utilitarian duty and self-interest. We have, then, to regard [belief in a future life] as an hypothesis logically

13 II Thess. 2:11, 12; I Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:15.  
14 Acts 23:1; I Tim. 1:13; II Tim. 1:3.  
15 Isa. 5:20; Matt. 6:22, 23.
necessary to avoid a fundamental contradiction in one chief de
partment of our thought.16

In this connection consider Captain Oates’s self-sacrifice
and heroism.17

(3) Analogy is not conclusive, but is suggestive, and here
corroborative. The lower animals have certain instincts, and for
each of which there exists a certain correspondence. Science knows
of none to which there is not an answering satisfaction. It is dif-
ficult to imagine that man, the highest creature of all, is the only
one who has instincts to which there are no mutual adaptations. Is
man a lonely exception in the world? Is nature true to dumb things
and a cheat to man? Man feels that in his desire for immortality he
has sure proof of his capacity for it. The great Doctor of the Roman
Church wrote words of wisdom when he said:

Every creature naturally desires in accordance with its
nature. Now, desire, in creatures capable of apprehension,
follows apprehension. Sense-perception apprehends things only
under the limitations of here and now; but intellect apprehends
existence absolutely and in relation to all time. Accordingly,
every creature possessed of intelligence naturally desires to
exist for ever. Now, a desire implanted by Nature cannot be in
vain, and therefore it follows that every intellectual substance
[i.e., every reasonable soul] is incorruptible.18

16 Henry Sidgwick, The Methods of Ethics (7th ed.; London:
A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, The Idea of Immortality (Oxford:
The Clarendon Press, 1922), IX, 177.
R. Powell Mead, The Effect of the Belief in Immortality on

17 Frederick D. Kershner, Horizons of Immortality (St. Louis:
The Bethany Press, 1925), XIII, 137, 148.
E. Griffith-Jones, Faith and Immortality (London: L. Duck-
worth & Co., 1917), III, 1, pp. 135-211.

18 Thomas Aquinas, Summa, I, 75, 76.
Man is thus the one discontented creature in the universe. His desires are out of all proportion to his means of gratifying them. His soul lives amongst the ideals, immensities, eternities, and infinities of the universe. "God hath set eternity in their [men's] heart." As M. Piatt says:

Our thought is not enclosed like that of the brutes, within a limited portion of time and space; its natural reach carries it far further; in whatever way it employs its powers, in whatever direction it turns, there is always something eternal which it has in view.... When we depart from this life, the adaptation of our thought to its natural environment has not commenced; there remains a radical disproportion between our ideal and us. It is necessary, therefore, if the sense of finality is to be satisfied, that our existence be prolonged indefinitely.

Man strives for perfect happiness on this earth, but concludes that all is vanity. He seeks perfect knowledge, and yet his most advanced knowledge reminds him that this is but "a superficial film of hypotheses floating on an ocean of nescience." He aims to attain perfect holiness, but "they who fain would serve Thee best, are conscious most of wrong within." Is man to be mocked and disappointed? Or, does the Creator keep his word with man? Emerson, though admitting that "we cannot prove faith by syllogisms," asserted that a great desire implanted in the human heart is evidence that its

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19 Eccles. 3:11, margin.

20 Charles Harris, Pro Fide (London: John Murray, 1923), XV, 234.

21 Eccles. i, ii.

22 Harris, op. cit., p. 235.
realization lies within the possibilities of the one who cherishes it. Is it not reasonable to believe that God, who keeps faith with birds and fishes and all dumb creatures, immersed in matter, will also keep faith with man? There must be the future to match the intuition of the soul. Every instinct man can test is met, hence he feels justified in thinking that those he cannot test will also be satisfied. To deny this would be to contradict his own spiritual instincts.

Of our materialistic and pleasure-loving age, one may say that men in general do not live as if they looked to die, and therefore do not die as if they looked to live. But while comforts and conveniences, due to scientific invention, have made many of this generation this-worldly, the apparent apathy towards the other life is more superficial than real. The Middle Age world and its theology, centuries of war and pestilence, naturally brought an interest in other-worldliness to the fore. But quiet, sober meditation, when we are alone and at our best, sends a shudder of horror through us as we contemplate the possibility of annihilation. The father of modern Agnosticism, a cultured intellectualist, and materialistic scientist, wrote in a letter to his friend, John Morley: "Than that I know no more I would rather be in hell a great deal." John Forster wrote to Harriet Martineau: "I would rather be damned than

annihilated." 26 Wilhelm Ostwald presents no such horror. 27

I have sought in this chapter in a dual way to show the importance of the subject. Its interest coincides with the existence of mankind. Its utilitarian value as related to conduct, restraint because of anticipated retribution or justice, and the fortification of duty—all of these aspects have been elaborated. Analogy is both illuminative and confirmatory. Man's desires, capacities, and nature warrant or justify, if not necessitate, expectation of a future life.


CHAPTER II

THE OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

The Jews divided their Scriptures into three classes: the Law (Pentateuch), the Prophets—Former and Latter, and the Writings (sometimes called the Psalms, from the first and most important division).]

1. In the Law or Torah.---Our starting point is the much discussed passage relating to the divine creation of man: "And Jehovah God formed the man [of the] dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

The word "neshemah", translated "breath", is rendered as pne (from pneo) in the LXX., and this Greek equivalent is used by Paul. But the crucial word is "nephesh", translated "soul". It is translatable as "living being", "life", "self", "person", etc. Individuality was a strong Hebrew conception, and this appears to be the major idea. But the word is used at the outset in Genesis and throughout of the animals of the field as well as of man. This

1Luke 24:44.
2Gen. 2:7 (cf. 1:26, 27).
flexible use of the word forbids an exclusive and specific connotation as denoting inherent or natural personal immortality, an eternal, spiritual, and invisible substance abiding in the body. Such dualism or parallelism is Greek and not Hebrew thought. Rabbi Mattuck wrote:

Among the Jews who came into close contact with Greek thought, the conception of life after death took a somewhat different form. Immortality was ascribed to the soul, which was conceived as the non-material substance of personality. This belief implies a dualistic conception of human personality. It is not found in the Bible, which has no word for soul. Where the word occurs in our English versions, it translates, in all cases but one, the Hebrew word nephe sh, which means individual being, person, or self, sometimes referring to the inner activities of the personal life, and at other times meaning nothing more than body. The Bible has, however, the hint of another dualism—form and life; the first, human; the second, divine. It is found in an early story of creation.

He then quotes the passage under our discussion.

The Septuagint "psukhe" is far from being an equivalent in the idea of the Jewish word "nephe sh". And yet today the orthodox interpretation of the verse we are analyzing, in most Christian churches throughout the world, is that of the Platonic Jew of Alexandria, Egypt. Philo's comment is a revelation of the infection of Greek culture. He says:

One may rightly say that man is on the boundary-line of a mortal and an immortal nature, partaking so far as is needful of each; and that he has been born both mortal and immortal, mortal as to the body, but as to the mind immortal.

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But the plain truth is that the Hebrews had no word corresponding to the Greek word for soul, psukhe. That all human souls are immortal is not taught or implied in the Old Testament, and certainly the endless permanence of the soul is not taught in this passage. In this and the next chapter we have reference to "the tree of lives" (hayyim), the partaker of it living for eternity (alam), the LXX rendering this latter word as eis ton aiona (unto the age). One cannot dogmatize on this primitive symbolism, remote and ambiguous, and preserved in a relatively little known and dead Oriental language. The figure, however, is suggestive.

But God did not leave himself without witness even in the primitive patriarchal dispensation. Enoch was his representative, teaching the doctrine of a future life. His departure was typical of the ascension of Christ. Enoch's translation was "a miracle of knowledge to all generations." Later we shall refer to the honor and revelations afforded the patriarch in the Apocalypse of Enoch, written immediately prior to the Christian era.

So, too, was Jacob's vision a type and prefiguring of the union of God and man, heaven and earth, in the Incarnation. Intercourse between this world and the supernatural was possible. Philo, the pre-Christian philosopher of Alexandria, made Jacob's ladder the air, through which the soul descended to inhabit the body at birth, and ascended at death after leaving the body. Origen

10Gen. 5:21-24; Heb. 11:5.
12Gen. 28:10-22; John 1:51.
later adopted this view.\textsuperscript{13}

It, doubtless, is too much to say that man in Eden is immortal. But the gathering of the patriarchs to Sheol is distinguished from their subsequent burial, implying the separate existence of the soul.\textsuperscript{14} Great reverence was attached, as with the Egyptians, to the corpse and to the sepulchre or family burial ground.\textsuperscript{15} Burial of the dead was a sacred duty, and an act of benevolence also with the Greeks and Romans. The Jew stressed the unity of man, soul and body, and to him the future life had no meaning apart from the reunion of soul and body to live again in the completeness of man's nature. This is the opposite of Platonic dualism of soul and body; immortality resulting from the final liberation of the soul from its prison house of clay. It is easy to see how the cardinal doctrine of later Judaism arose—the resurrection of the body or the revivication of the dead.

Promises that appeared of literal fulfillment and interpretation were not so misconstrued by these children of early civilization, but giants of faith. In the midst of mortality, at the dawn of history, these pilgrims lived as heirs of immortality.\textsuperscript{16} They were conscious of an eternal background even though their immediate environment or framework was temporal.

Exodus contains a great and latent truth, quoted and enlarged upon by Jesus as meaning that "God is not the God of the dead but of the living: for all live unto him."\textsuperscript{17} The patriarchs had been dead

\textsuperscript{13}Origen, contra Celsum, vi. 21.
\textsuperscript{14}Gen. 15:15; 25:6, 9; 35:29; 49:29, 31, 33.
\textsuperscript{15}Gen. 50:25, 43; Exod. 13:19; Josh. 24:32; Judges 16:31;
II Sam. 21:12-14.
\textsuperscript{16}Gen. 17:8; Heb. 11:10, 13-19, 22; Ps. 90.
\textsuperscript{17}Ex. 3:6; Matt. 22:31, 32; Mk. 20:37, 38.
for centuries, and yet God did not say to Moses, "I was their God," but "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Note the characteristic Hebrew emphasis on the individual. But certain passages in this book (Exodus) should be linked up with, for the sake of comparison, the "I am's" of the Fourth Gospel, and especially the extraordinary utterance: "Before Abraham was born, I am." God is "the God of the spirits of all flesh." 

The practice of necromancy is a tacit belief in an after-life. This Pagan intercourse with departed spirits was sternly prohibited. Doubtless, much was fraud and pretension, but gross and popular superstitions reveal men's faith and attitudes.

The death of Moses was shrouded in mystery; nobody had seen his burial or grave. This led to later speculation and expansion. A fragment, the Assumption of Moses (c. 6 A. D. - 10 A. D.), almost deifies Moses, and apparently Jude quotes a verse from the lost part of this work, about Michael contending with the devil about the body of Moses. The existing fragment teaches eternal reward for those Jews dying for their faith. The Mystery religions taught that immortality through the vision of God was possible, and Philo, a Hellenist, a father of Gnosticism, firmly believed in the doctrine of immortality by the beatific vision being realized. Hence he maintained that Moses was gradually prepared for immortality by a transfiguration of his

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16Ex. 3:13-15; 6:2, 3; John 8:58.  
19Numb. 16:22; Heb. 12:9, 23.  
21Deut. 34:6.  
22Jude 9.  
23Assumption of Moses, 9, 10.
mortal body. Because of his immediate intercourse with God, his whole physical nature became changed into the substance of the monads, a mind substance akin to the radiance of the sun. Previously, his body had been composed of the dual nature of ordinary human bodies, partly flesh and partly spirit, thus subject to corruption. The transfiguration was effected by his privileged vision of God in preparation for immortality. 24

Interest amongst Christians would naturally be heightened by the Lawgiver's presence with Elijah (miraculously removed from the earth), and Jesus, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the trinity of dignitaries discussing Jesus' exodus. Elijah's departure was unique and miraculous. What of Moses? This incident of Moses' death and burial, veiled in obscurity, has forever been enshrined in Christian verse. 25

2. In the Prophets (Nebhiim).—(1) In the Former Prophets, to us purely historical books, occur the translation of Elijah, 26 the seance at Endor, 27 the resurrection narratives of Elijah and the son of the widow of Zarephath (Sidon) 28 and Elisha and the son of the Shunammite woman, 29 and Elisha's bones and a revived corpse. 30 In this age of the prophets, Elijah prefigures and typifies the ascension of

25 e.g., W. W. Walford, Sweet Hour of Prayer, verse 3.
26 II Kings 2:11 (Cf. Ecclus. 48:3; I Mac. 2:58).
27 I Sam. 28:3-25 (Cf. I Chron. 10:13, 14).
29 II Kings 4:36-37.
Christ, appearing on the Holy Mount with Moses and the Messiah, conversing about the exodus of the latter. Elijah and Elisha are enveloped in the miraculous, the unique Old Testament miracles of raising the dead anticipating the greatest miracle of all the centuries. Miracles were numerous at the ushering in of new epochs, e.g., by Moses, Elijah and Elisha, Christ and the Apostolic Church. Similar miracles were performed by Elisha and Christ.

Though spirit communication to the Jew was taboo, its reality and possibility were nowhere denied. If the dead live, why should it be doubted that at God's command Samuel's spirit returned?

Did David anticipate conscious reunion with his child at death? His Psalms may suggest an affirmative answer. Even these beautiful sentiments are pale, vague, and indefinite when separated from the gospel of the resurrection. Assurance of the blessed, age-lasting (aionios) life, "the life which is life indeed", was yet to be realized.

(2) In the Latter Prophets are passages which, interpreted in the Christian light, are bold and adventurous affirmations of faith. New Testament writers quote freely from the LXX., or from memory, and insert a new content into words having an entirely different setting. Lest we should read too much into these passages, we should read the godly and royal Hezekiah's classical and Homeric description of

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31 Lk. 9:28-36.
32 e.g., II Kings 4:42-44; Matt. 14:16-21.
33 Isa. 8:19, 20; Lk. 16:27-31.
34 II Sam. 12:23.
35 e.g., 21:4; 23:6; 27:4.
36 I Tim. 6:19.
37 e.g., Isa. 26:3 (adapted and quoted by Paul, I Cor. 15:54); 26:19; Ezek. 37:1-14 (a national restoration or resurrection); Hos. 6:2; 13:14 (quoted I Cor. 15:55).
Sheol. The Hebrews and Greeks present a parallel development. The chaotic and lifeless land of the shadow of death where even the light was darkness was very uninviting, hence his passionate prayer for more of this richer life on earth. To die was not gain to Hezekiah. One appreciates Paul's advanced conceptions by way of contrast with these sub-Christian and melancholy forebodings of death with its consequent gloom and loss. A richer life was not yet conceivable. The "promise of life in Christ Jesus" was yet to be fulfilled.

3. In the Writings (Kethubhim or Hagiographa).--References to the future state of the dead are most numerous in the third division of the Old Testament, the Writings or Psalms. Hezekiah's dismal, morbid picture of Sheol is confirmed in many passages. Sheol is an uninviting land of silence, forgetfulness, and thick darkness. The conditions are repulsive and depressing. "There is rest in the dust!"

A more complete denial of immortality is scarcely conceivable than is found in Ecclesiastes, but in the same book, we ascend to the realm of hope, well-nigh Christian. Is the book self-contradictory? Or, have we the reflections of different moods? It is difficult to reconcile the conflicting viewpoints. The very acme of pessimism is in this book. Here is food for the chronic cynic.

38 Isa. 33:18, 19 (Cf. Eccles. 17:27, 28; Bar. 2:17).
39 II Tim. 1:1.
40 Job 3:17-19; 10:21, 22; 17:13-16; Ps. 6:5; 88:10-12; 115:17; Eccles. 9:10.
41 Eccles. 3:16-22.
42 Eccles. 12:7.
43 Horace Mann, "Immortality", Twelve Sermons (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1861), XI.
44 Eccles. 4:1-3.
Is Job always consistent with himself? He enumerates the appearances hostile to man's living again, and questions if life can be expected after death in view of Nature's discouraging analogies, but later rises to positive affirmations of faith, this passage being universalized and immortalized by its incorporation in the world's greatest oratorio, "The Messiah" (Handel), and its use in the average funeral service.

"And I know that my goel (redeemer or vindicator) liveth, and that he shall stand up at the last upon the dust: and after they shall have destroyed my skin, this [shall be or happen], and from my flesh I shall see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not [as] a stranger."

Alternative readings should be noted, especially of verse twenty-six, e.g., Did Job anticipate seeing God in his flesh or apart from (without) his flesh? Doubtless, we are in danger of making many passages, notably this one, to mean much more than they meant to the original authors. Our present vantage point enables us to say that Job's goel or kinsman is the Messiah who did come to earth as our protector and redeemer of the righteous. He vindicates uprightness of character, and lives for ever. But did Job himself confidently and definitely contemplate a resurrection and continued personal existence as we do? To us, Jesus is our Boaz, who has the right to redeem. Doubtless, the Old Testament is not as specific as the New Testament on this point. The philosophical drama of Job is unique, and was

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45 Job 14:7-12.
46 Job 14:13-17.
probably produced by some nation contiguous to Israel. It does not allude to any event in Israel's history; some of the characters are Idumean. In interpreting the book we need to keep its peculiar nature in mind. It is almost certainly non-Jewish.

But corroborative positive texts abound in the Psalms. The first passage is cited by both Peter at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, and Paul at Pisidian Antioch, as referring to the resurrection of the Messiah. Daniel was included by the Jews with the Writings. This book prophesied the resurrection of the wicked as well as the just. That retribution beyond the grave occupies so small and indefinite a place in the Old Testament, as contrasted with Plato and Egypt, is one of the most perplexing facts in Old Testament theology.

4. Summary of Old Testament Review.—A brief survey of the Old Testament convinces one that there was a lack of assurance of a life beyond the grave in those pre-Christian times. Conflicting viewpoints should not surprise us. That there was a shadowy existence in the beyond was an ancient and widespread belief, but there was no positive knowledge of a personal immortality.

"The only immortality that the early Israelite dreamed of was the perpetuity of Israel; his highest personal aspiration for the future that his family might never die out."
After the close of the Old Testament canon a number of apocryphal and pseudepigraphic writings appeared. Amongst the more important was the Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach (c. 180 B. C.), in which the only immortality taught is that of one's descendants. There is no life after death—the father lives in the lives of his sons. In the vindication of one's fame or memory he is rewarded after death.  

What Dr. Salmond has accurately said in regard to the Apocryphal 'Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach,' applies no less truly to the canonical Jewish Scriptures: 'There is nothing in it that speaks of an objective immortality, far less of the hope of the resurrection. The immortality which it looks to is the name which the departed leave behind them, and the life which they live in their children.'  

Dr. Ballard contrasts the simple but certain, lofty yet reserved, Christian confidence in a glorious hereafter, resting upon the risen Christ, with Rabbinic fancy and Maccabean fanaticism. It is a striking fact that the Jews were later than most nations about them in conceiving of individual immortality, or at least in giving definite expression to it. The Old Testament material analyzed, and from which conclusions are drawn is relatively scanty. The evidence is thus inconclusive and indefinite. When Jesus broke the bands of death, certainty was brought into this uncertain world. It was "our Savior Jesus Christ who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption (aphtharsia) to light through the gospel."  

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56 II Tim. 1:10.
CHAPTER III

THE POSITION AT THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

1. Influence of the East.—The seventy years' Babylonian
exile introduced the Jews to new philosophies and eschatologies.
The conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great transferred Jewish al-
legiance to the Persian power (B.C. 538-332). Immortality, as a
hope and faith, was imbedded deeply in the fiber of the Persian soul.
Zoroaster was his prophet and Ahura-Mazda (the god of light) his
main deity. It was the Persian conviction that, following death,
the soul awoke on the morning of the fourth day and experienced a
spiritual resurrection. The Yadna in the Avesta reveals in elevated
thought a Paradise (a Persian word) for the righteous, and a "hell
of darkness and filth" for the wicked. Many conceptions of the Per-
sian religion were refined and spiritual, but Persian theologians
excelled in conjuring up tortures for the damned. All faced judg-
ment, and crossed a bridge, and provision was made for an inter-
mediate state. The Messianic expectation was interesting. 1 Fire
was sacred as it is to the Parsees of India today.

When Mithraism went West it popularized solar worship. It
has been said that its conception of hell (with its gradations of
punishments) gave the nearest approach of any Pagan religion to the
New Testament teaching on this subject. Astral worship was Oriental.
Pausanias said that the magi of India and the Chaldeans first knew of

1Matt. 2.
the astral immortality of the soul. Plato's knowledge of the subject he confesses came from the Pythagoreans. Anyway, the sun as a deity became the leading object for worship in the West amongst the Romans.

2. Egyptian Views and Influence.—It is inconceivable that the religious thought of the land of the Nile would have no effect on the Jewish outlook and life. From the earliest times Judaism was in direct, immediate, and constant contact with Egypt, but specifically during B.C. 323-304 (under the Ptolemies). Fifteen hundred years before Christ the Egyptian faith in and view of a future life was ancient, as proved by the "Book of the Dead." The Egyptians, more than any other people, expressed this conviction and gave attention to life after death. Their chief and favorite god, Osiris, the Savior-god, and husband of Isis, died and rose again, a myth that has been used to discredit the New Testament story of Easter. In fact, a number of religions commemorated the slaying and restoring to life of their gods, e.g., Bacchus, Osiris, Attis, and Adonis. In sacred feasts, the body of the god was symbolically eaten, and so a mystic identity established between the deity and the devotee, and the deity's immortality shared. After death, illustrious heroes were guests at the tables and banquets of the gods.

Those initiated into the sacred rites had the assurance of survival beyond the grave. Much interpretation of the land of reeds and rushes was crude and materialistic. The hope of continued individuality for the righteous was ethically based on the condition of

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observing certain prescribed religious duties. Extinction apparently awaited the wicked. Immortality and blessedness are rewards based on religion and ritual, not on the Greek philosophical foundation—the endless and essential permanence of all human souls. Egyptian teaching anticipated Christ's promise of life eternal for the righteous, and His threat of destruction (olethros, apôleia, apollumi) for the wicked. Excavations have revealed that at the death and entombment of a king, his slaves were slain and buried along with him, that they might in another life serve him, and supply his needs. It was believed that the dead lived in or near the tomb, hence it was attempted to insure the permanence of the deceased body. Material sustenance was needed for the future life. Morality in this life became a condition of future blessedness. A Great Assize and general resurrection were anticipated, and a system of rewards and punishments was developed.

The devotees of the Phrygian Mysteries in their feasts regarded intoxication as a religious rite, a foretaste of ecstatic bliss for the privileged—the initiates of Dionysus. Wine symbolized the divine waters of Lethe, erasing all earthly memories of sorrow and suffering. The worshippers of Osiris, in the desert land of scorching heat and unquenchable thirst readily and naturally adopted this custom. The sacred cup appealed to the thirsty land.

The Greek historian, Herodotus, after visiting Egypt, said that the Egyptians "were the first who taught that man's soul is immortal," but a stranger was likely to miss fine religious distinctions. Retribution awaited all men, good and bad, but immortality was conditioned, and not natural or absolute.
3. Greek Mythology and Speculation.--Homer represents very early thought. Dr. Moore speaks of the eleventh book of the Odyssey as the oldest "Descent to Hades" in European literature. Immortality was an attribute of the gods alone and those upon whom they bestowed it. The after-life is pale and feeble. King Achilles preferred the most menial earthly slavery to kingship in Hades, the abode of the dead. Retribution or rewards were not in Homer's scheme. The ancient Greeks apotheosized their heroes. To remedy Homeric deficiency, the later Greeks conceived of the Elysian Fields and the Islands of the Blessed for the good, and Tartarus for the evil. In the main, the Romans adopted Greek legend and eschatology. With the revival of the mystic religions, the birth of the Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries and the cult of Dionysus (c. 600 B.C.) a rich and definite scheme of the after life was elaborated. Immortality became democratized. The devotee became identified with the deity and so partook of the immortality of the god, through initiation into certain ceremonies, e.g., the Taurobolium (baptism of blood); the drinking of wine and its consequent intoxication anticipating ecstasy of union and fellowship with Dionysus (Bacchus); the eating of honey, a sweet foretaste of eternal bliss; the eating of sacred flesh and blood or bread, thus eating the god and appropriating his strength and immortality. Origen exploited the Orphic doctrine of the ultimate salvation of the soul after repeated cycles of birth and death. His Pagan idea was

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4Frazer, op. cit., vii. 90 sq.

5Ibid., vii. 15.
that all the wicked and the demons, including the devil himself, would repent and be saved.

Plato's arguments for the natural imperishability of the divine reason or soul were: (1) Everything in Nature has its contrary; (2) All of our present knowledge is reminiscence; (3) Compound substances alone are liable to corruption or disintegration. Death was simply "the actor changing his mask."

Transmigration, with the idea of Karma, is a primitive and animistic idea. Probably the Pythagorean Greeks derived this ancient idea from the Egyptians. It took the place of crass tortures in crude subterranean hells. Marshall discriminates between rebirth and reincarnation, and says that even plant life could be involved in the cycle. Plato believed in cycles of existence.

The Orphics appear to have introduced the Greek idea of the divinity of the soul of man. The daimon was confined and defiled in a corporeal cell to be released by death. Their contemporaries, the Pythagoreans, shared the view, and so it is uncertain who originated the ideas of the soul's divinity and deathlessness. This Orphic-Pythagorean dogma of the immortality of the soul became reasonable.

6Plato, Phaedo, 79.
Joseph Addison, Cato, A Tragedy, V. i.
William Wordsworth, Ode: Intimations of Immortality, V.

7George Foot Moore, Nectarpsychosis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914).


9Plato, Timaeus, xlii.
(and not merely emotional), and was given a philosophic basis by Plato. Ancient writers assert that Pythagoras taught the immortality of the soul. Herodotus uses the same phrase, thus the idea is not new with Plato.10 He says the Egyptians were the first to teach that man’s soul is immortal, and that some Greeks borrowed from the Egyptians the doctrine of the transmigration of souls into the bodies of various kinds of animals. The Egyptians did anticipate Plato in teaching a post-mortem retribution of all men, good and bad. But, nevertheless, the doctrine of the endless and essential permanence of all human souls is Greek and not Egyptian. Cicero says that "Pherecydes, a Syrian, first said that the souls of men are eternal," that his disciple Pythagoras held the same view, and that Plato went to Italy and there learnt the Pythagorean doctrine about the eternity of souls.11

Plato’s reasoning soul belonged to the eternal and real world of ideas and values. The supreme idea is the Good and the Beautiful, the Absolute, God. Man’s soul has existence from eternity and will exist forever; a dead soul is unthinkable. Aristotle accepted the survival of human reason with modifications, but in inaugurating a scientific age he really paved the way for certain phases of scepticism.

The intrinsic worth of man—an adequate and worthy conception of the entire psychical nature of man—has provided a philosophical basis or sanction for immortality. Thus, to Plato, God was too wise and good to allow so beautiful and precious a thing as the human soul

10Herodotus, History, ii, 123.
11Cicero, Tusculan Disputations, i, 16.
Personality is sacred, dignified, and unique—both the ancient and modern world have reflected much on this aspect of human nature. A conception of abiding values demands survival. We shall have occasion to refer to this again in connection with the teaching of Jesus, a confirmation and elaboration of an idea familiar to Greek thought. To deny that there is a fundamental meaning at the core of the universe is the most thoroughgoing atheism.

Men have the faculty they call conscience, deciding on the rightness or wrongness of their actions. Dramatists and novelists bear witness to its power. The Greek tragedians could not leave it out of their tragedies. This moral law, written on men's hearts and in their minds, a part of their moral constitution, was always recognized in the ancient world, e.g., by Sophocles, Xenophon, Socrates, Demosthenes, Plato, Euripides, Cicero, Seneca, etc. Shakespeare, in Macbeth and Hamlet, etc., shows its might. Does not the fear of the future that lurks in conscience correspond to the judgment seat of God? That dim dread cannot be explained unless there be a future life and a great assize. If there were no God and no other life there would be no reproach when men do wrong, and there would be no fear of future punishment. A Christian's conscience within him convives him of a life beyond the grave, and of the existence of a Supreme Being, to whom he must give answer. Men feel that they must not shut their eyes to great spiritual facts and ignore

12Plato, Timaeus, xli.
13Rom. 2:12-13
15Rom. 14:12; II Cor. 5:10.
the evidences of God-like qualities in man, thus making men to be simply lumps of matter. 16

The Macedonian period (B.C. 332-323), bringing the Jews under Greek domination and culture, was ushered in by the conquests of Alexander the Great.

4. Pagan Rome and the Future Life.---Israel as a nation came under Roman imperialism B.C. 63 when Pompey captured Jerusalem, and this domination continued until A.D. 70 when Titus destroyed the temple and dispersed the Jewish population. Christianity was born into the environment of Roman civilization and came into violent conflict with its secular and religious power.

Early Rome believed in the survival of the soul. Homeric shades were Manes and Lemures. The Etruscans took over the figures of Charon, Cerberus, and the Furies. Two schools later developed of almost opposite thought. Epicureanism was a thoroughgoing materialism. The soul began with conception and was absolutely dependent on the body. Lucretius was its most gifted Latin exponent. To Epicurus pleasure was the summum bonum of life. The soul was composed of atoms, and was dissolved at death. As the fragrance of a flower, so might a breath of the soul briefly endure, but eventually all was scattered by the winds as dust. Annihilation was inevitable and complete. While the name Lucretius adorned the school, it was vigorously opposed by the Oriental cults. By A.D. 350 it had lost its force. It didn’t contribute to seriousness of life; its fruits were laxity and dissipation. 17 To the popular mind, pleasure of a material and sensual

16Ps. 42:1, 2.
17I Cor. 15:32.
kind was the chief end of life. Horace dared to say he was a "hog of
Epicurus' herd." The object of life was "baths, wine, and love."

The Stoical eclectic system borrowed both from Plato and his
greatest pupil, Aristotle. Dr. Moore contends that it was a strict
materialism taken from Heraclitus. Or, was it rather a material-
istic pantheism? The active principle, intelligence, or world-reason
was the cause of all things, and permeated every part of the cosmos,
causing and directing all things. Its nature was best likened to
fire, the most powerful and active of the elements, or rather the
primordial element. The cosmos is animated by divine fire, associated
with intelligence. This immanent principle was spoken of as a person,
God, or as Epictetus put it, "The reason is a fragment of God." Man
is a microcosm, a part of the cosmos, and this world-reason expresses
itself in him. The human soul returns to its primitive element. The
Stoics held to a cyclical theory of the cosmos—this present universe
was temporal. Virtue's reward was a limited and temporary survival
after death. Stoicism was a religion for this life; resignation
was based on fatalism. In a vague and general way the Stoics accepted
the life of the soul after death, but it was unimportant. Stoicism's
cold abstractions could never grip the human heart.

Belief in immortality was revived in the first century B. C.,
in neo-Pythagoreanism. Dionysus of Thrace, Cybele (Diana) the Asiatic
great mother of the Gods and Attis (both of Phrygia), and other

    A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, op. cit., IX, 184-188.
19 Cicero, Tusculan Disputations, 1, 32.
20 Acts 17:18.
Eastern deities found their way into Roman worship. In 204 B.C. the Roman Senate invited Cybele to take up her residence in the imperial city of Rome. Mithraism, affected by Pythagorean doctrines, became important, teaching astral immortality.

Plotinus was the outstanding apostle of neo-Platonism, a theosophic philosophy, ignoring religious ceremonies and making salvation available by pure philosophy. As with the Mystery Religions, the Beatific vision was emphasized.

At the beginning of the Christian era the most popular conception of Hades was found in the Sixth Book of Virgil's Aenid, the best classical description of the Nether World, the most important religious book from the Augustan age. In preparation for his holy task, Virgil's hero, Aeneas, was mystically initiated. Virgil's age followed the sceptical age of Cicero, Pliny, Seneca, and Juvenal. The doubting Cicero was profoundly moved by the bitter experience of his life, the death of his beloved daughter, Tullia. As with the Greeks, the Romans promised unique blessings to soldiers slain in battle, e.g., Titus before Jerusalem. Apotheosis or deification of supermen, e.g., Emperors, was an easy import from the Orient.

5. Jewish Belief at the Time of Christ's Coming.—After the close of the Old Testament Canon, the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings show a developed and definite eschatology, in which everlasting punishment and rewards are clearly set forth. Retribution is definitely taught in Israel thought. Judas Maccabaeus told his

22. Judith 16:17; Wisdom 2:23; 3:1-4; Enoch 51:1; 53:2; 54:6; 58:3; etc.
soldiers of post-mortem honor awaiting martyrs and heroes of the faith, an element in all religions. Jewish views at Christ's coming are plainly seen. The Apocalypse of Enoch is the most important of these non-canonical books. A general resurrection and judgment awaits the Jews; the righteous shall inherit the earth. Enoch travels through the underworld; Tartarus and Sheol are depicted. A vision of heaven is described. There is no clear distinction between the resurrection and immortality of the spirit. Degrees of punishment are taught. The book was strangely preserved and handed down by Christians. As an entire book, it is extant only in Ethiopic.

The two main Jewish parties in Jesus' day were divided over the resurrection and had clearly defined attitudes. The Pharisees represented orthodoxy; the ruling Sadducean party were rationalists and sceptics, believing that the soul perished with the body. Platonic teaching infected Hebrew theology. Paul, it must continually be remembered, was a devout Pharisee. The Pharisees, according to Josephus, accepted the Platonic doctrine. So also the Essenes. First and Second Maccabees, second century B.C., are historical books that show the chasm between the two major parties. The former is Sadducean, and so "Heaven" is substituted for the name of God throughout the book. There are no miracles, and the deathless fame of glorified heroes is the only immortality. The latter is Pharasaic, and so God intervenes miraculously on behalf of his people. The

23 I Mac. 3:13-20.
25 Enoch xiv.
28 Josephus, Antiquities, xviii, 1; Wars, ii, 8.
resurrection doctrine is stressed. Philo, an Egyptian Jew, accepted Plato's doctrine. Both Philo and Josephus wrote in Greek, and were saturated in its philosophy.29

Persian eschatology bore striking resemblances to that of Palestine, e.g., the separation of the just and unjust at death, an intermediate state, a general resurrection, and a last judgment. But there are striking differences, and the Jews had unique features in their doctrine of the last things. Paradise or Abraham's Bosom awaited the true Israelite, and Gehenna or Tophet the wicked.30 The latter was a figurative extension of the literal Ge-Hinnom. Our Lord frequently used the term with its commonly accepted meaning. Specifically and technically it meant the place of final punishment for the wicked following the last judgment. Sufficient references have been given to prove that for three hundred years before Christ the Jews looked forward to "eternal life." And when Jesus came, claiming to be a Teacher sent from God to announce eternal life for all who put faith in him he found devout and prepared souls ready for such a message, able both to understand and appreciate it.

29 Marshall, op. cit., IX, X.
30 Isa. 66:24; Ecclus. 7:17.
CHAPTER IV

THE ATTITUDE AND DECLARATIONS OF "THE PRINCE OF LIFE"

The teaching of the Master is unhesitating and unmistakable. He was the wisest and best of teachers. He was more—He was the Son of God who had come from the Father. He spoke with authority and certainty because he knew. He assured the disciples that there was a Father's house in which were many resting or abiding places (more - a dwelling).\(^1\) At the grave of Lazarus he declared that though a man die, yet he shall live.\(^2\) He claimed to be a Teacher sent from God to announce eternal life for all who put faith in him, and his followers, as we shall see later, appealed to his resurrection in support of his claim and of his gospel of life eternal. Thus the hope of immortality rests (in the New Testament) not on the nature of the soul, but on "the promise of the life in Christ Jesus"—to use a Pauline and Christian expression, but a most non or anti-Platonic one.\(^3\) In some of his parables he lifts the curtain, and gives us a glimpse of the workings of life in the unseen. The assumption of immortality runs like a golden thread through all his teaching. Whatever else he did not teach, he certainly taught that. The

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\(^3\)II Tim. 1:1.
Christian can believe him there—he has proved his knowledge at a thousand points and has never found him mistaken. Deniers of immortality give the lie direct to Jesus, and declare his teaching to be false and misleading. Such positive and definite sentiments are entirely warranted as our subsequent analysis will show.

1. **Survival and continuity of personality are assumed.**

This taken-for-granted attitude is based on a dual conception:

(1) the Nature and Person of God;

(2) the Value of the Human Soul.

(1) **The Character of God.** The existence of God is postulated at the outset of the Bible narrative, but nowhere is it argued or proved. The life of Christ is characterized by serenity and trustfulness, based on a God-consciousness. The relationship of the Creator to his creatures is pre-eminently that of a Father to his children. Here is one of his distinctive contributions. The entire destruction of God's children at death is unthinkable in view of Christ's revelation of a Father of Love who is interested in every detail in this life of every individual. Even birds and animals are included in God's tender care—how much more are human beings! Even an Old Testament revelation of God's lovingkindness forbids extinction of individuality. God's power never produces what his goodness cannot embrace. There can be little doubt that contemplation of the mercy and gentleness of God, his goodness to his people, plus a strong individualism, moralized Sheol, and caused the development, the pronounced progress, which is seen by comparing the primitive book of

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4Matt. 6:9.
6e.g., Ps. 103.
7Ezek. xviii.
Job with Enoch (2nd century B.C.), of a scheme of rewards and punishments in the after-life. Job's faith was the product of, and based on, his conception of God's justice and righteousness. God would ultimately—the how was beyond his understanding—champion his cause. And now Jesus was enlarging upon and intensifying this forgiving and gracious side of God's nature, his concern for the one, the last, the lost, and the least. No material, earthly detail of his child was too trivial. Jesus was addressing a people with a doctrine of the resurrection, with moral and worthy views of God in general, and with an experience of his favors. True, traditionalism had obscured much, but many pious common people were alive to divine compassion, and aware of his many blessings. But the time had come for the manifestation of a richer and more concrete picture of God. The Incarnate Logos expressed, revealed, expounded, or declared (exegeomai) God. It was natural that man should no longer distinguish between Christ and God. John, in his first Epistle, calmly asserts that because the eternal God is love that in this fact and of our union with such an one we have eternal life assured. The nature of love forbids that its object of affection should be allowed to perish. But more of this later. Whittier's words are apt—

"In the maddening maze of things,
When tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed ground my spirit clings,
I know that God is good."

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9Isa. 26:19, 20; John 11:24.
10Jt. 1:46-55.
11John 1:16; 10:30; 14:9.
12I John 5:20.
Such a rich confidence in God's goodness undergirds the Christian gospel, and accounts for expressions of rapture and ecstasy as God's revelation in Christ was conceived, such joyous faith dissolving problems and difficulties, all due to "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 13

(2) The Value of Human Personality. Jesus stated the Magna Charta of modern democracy. 14 We have previously alluded to Plato's reasoning that God was too good to allow so beautiful a thing as the human soul to perish. The emphasis laid on the individual is obvious in Christ's teachings, e.g., in an immortal trifoliate of parables, 15 and in his personal evangelism. 16 In his practical, everyday ministry he spared neither time nor pains to reach the individual, the outcast, and sinner, e.g., a heathen woman, 17 a blind beggar, 18 an impure woman, 19 a despised taxgatherer, 20 an adulteress, 21 etc. Could one associate by imagination the beautiful and touching parenthetical incident of the gospels (the woman with the incurable hemorrhage) 22 with Athenian philosophers. His most profound discourses and self-revelations are so often reserved for the solitary soul, e.g., a socially ostracised and evil Samaritan woman. 23

Contrary to his age and religious contemporaries he found time to

13 II Cor. 4:6.
14 Matt. 16:20.
F. W. Boreham, A Casket of Cameos (New York: Abingdon Press, 1924) XVI.

15 Mk. 16.
16 John i, iii, iv, ix, etc.
17 Mk. 7:24-30.
18 Mk. 10:46-52.
19 Mk. 7:36-50.
20 Mk. 19:1-10.
21 John 8:1-11.
22 Mk. 5:25-34.
23 John 4.
devote to the child. 24

In the light of his actions and words, annihilation and ob-
literation of a sacred, autonomous, and unique soul becomes unthinkable. 25 Self-consciousness revolts against extinction. Man possesses a spiritual nature and appreciates beauty. No other animal can do that. He prizes spiritual qualities such as love, truth, honor, goodness, and liberty above all else in the world. In his highest moments he thinks of other ends than just the sustenance of his physical life or his material enrichment. For these spiritual values men have been willing to make, and millions today are willing to make, the sacrifice of life itself, thus suggesting that man is more than matter. A spiritual nature fits him for a spiritual world. He can hold fellowship with God now, but not in absolute freeness and fulness. Spirit is something death cannot touch—man feels that his true sphere lies on the other side of death. The Genesis Creation record reveals to him his dignity, his affinity, and kinship with God. 26 In the valiant and voluntary sacrifice of millions of de-
fenders of decency and freedom on the battlefields of Flanders, Belgium, and France materialistic philosophy finds its greatest challenge, ultimate defeat and breakdown. 27 The horse and the dog are popularly recognized as approaching nearest to human intelligence,


but at no time have any of these animals exhibited the capacity for or the desire to worship, nor shown the yearning for the life to come!

To Jesus it was superfluous to elaborate upon heaven, and so he contented himself with one brief explicit and direct utterance on the last night. However, teaching on the after-life is interwoven in the texture of his words. His many indirect references are quite satisfactory and definite. Allusions to the future life, "the life which is life indeed," are so often incidental, but are all the more emphatic and valuable because of that. Many detailed and unpleasant descriptions were given by the Master of the abode and state of the wicked. Perhaps it was impossible with our language and thought to describe a life entirely different. A dog is incapable of sharing man's philosophies, being on a lower plane of capacity. More definite conceptions however of the future world would doubtless beget more interest. The Medieval Inferno was neither vague nor hazy in men's minds. This need for definiteness must be met by hard study as specifically as possible.

2. The Moral Argument.—"And shall not God avenge his elect, which cry to him day and night, and he is longsuffering over them?"

29 I Tim. 6:19.
31 Ibid., IV, VI.
Contrary to much modern sentiment, Christianity does embrace a system of rewards and punishments.33 "Everywhere in the New Testament it is said that men will be judged according to their works, not according to their faith or profession."34 In all men there is an inherent demand for justice. Man is sure that iniquity should not be tolerated. In history he sees a law against wrongdoing at work; corrupt nations and wicked tyrants have met their doom. But that law works slowly, and is limited in its operations. Human history is full of misfortune, injustice, and uncompleted lives—no recompense was ever made to them here—they died the victims of injustice. Today we are all Habakkuk's,35 and strain our faith to sing the chapel favorite:

"This is my Father's world,
Oh! let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet."36

Why does a Hitler succeed and a France perish?37 Man's belief in a moral order compels belief in a future life. The Judge of all the earth will do right.38 On the other side of time wrongs will be righted, inequalities will be adjusted, and righteousness will triumph over evil.39 Our mind can only rest in the thought of a world in which goodness and happiness will be united. The innocent will have their reward; retribution will overtake the guilty.

Our implanted and instinctive demand for justice must be

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33 e.g., Matt. 16:27.
35 Habakkuk 1.
36 Maltbie D. Babcock, This Is My Father's World.
37 Ps. 37:35; 73.
38 Gen. 18:25.
39 Rev. 6:9-11; 20:4-6.
adequately accounted for, and in spite of all to the contrary, man believes from the evidence of his inner world that the universe is fundamentally moral and rational. 40 Browning voices humanity's attitude:

"Truly there needs another life to come!
If this be all
And another life await us not, for one
I say 'tis a poor cheat, a stupid bungle,
A wretched failure. I for one protest
Against, and I hurl it back with scorn."41

The originator and creator of our moral nature can scarcely be less rational and moral than we are, but rather infinitely more! Our heart can be trusted—it is deeper than reason. At this point, Christ met a deep and universal need, took a stand on reality, and assured us of his dual office of Savior and Judge.42 The Messiah had always been so represented.43

3. Jesus and Plato Contrasted.—We have already at length made reference to Platonic views about the soul, its kinship with the eternal world of Ideas which it apprehends, guaranteeing similar immortality.44 So, too, have we contrasted these with those of Aristotle.45 Plato taught that the soul of every man was immortal (anēlethron) and imperishable, whereas Christ asserts or implies the possibility of its destruction.46 Christ promises age-lasting

40 Ps. 97:2.
41 R. Browning, Paracelsus.
42 John 5:22.
43 Ps. 2.

44 Plato, Phaedo, 79.

45 Pringle-Pattison, op. cit., III.

(aiōnios) and blessed life to his believing followers only. Jesus recognized the infinite value of the soul, but the New Testament never asserts or implies its essential or endless permanence, that by virtue of its own nature or by the will of God every soul will think and feel for an endless succession of ages. With regard to the destruction of the wicked in the New Testament, the characteristic words, olethros, apōleia, apollumi, are together in this connection used more than thirty times, and rendered, destruction and destroy, perdition and perish, lose and lost. Ruin is the idea at the back of them all. In Luke's gospel the lost (apōlōlōs) was found, hence was not extinguished nor had perished. Plato's phraseology and thought are altogether absent from the New Testament. In fact, the word "immortality" (athanasia) is only found in reference to the resurrection body (not soul), and elsewhere as an attribute of God himself. All three references are Pauline, all the more significant in that the sect of the Pharisees were Platonic at this point. But Paul deserves separate treatment later. To support the Christian hope by an appeal to the immortality of the soul is to illuminate the light of the gospel with the dim torch of Greek philosophy. From the second century of our era until the present day our theological phraseology, hymnology, etc. is more Platonic than Christian. From what Christian Scripture did good Charles Wesley derive his phrase "a never-dying soul" in the famous verse--

47I Kor. 15:6, 9, 32.
48I Cor. 15:53, 54.
49I Tim. 6:16.
"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify;
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky."

Its source is not doubtful nor its sound unfamiliar to readers of Phaedo. It hails from Athens, not from Palestine. A recognition of this has caused modern hymnals to substitute "a precious blood-bought soul", etc., which certainly has more of a New Testament flavor.


Are the dead dead at all? The Sadducees, who denied there was any future life, one day came to Jesus asking him for proof of such a thing. He pointed them to words in their own book where it is written: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." But the patriarchs had been dead for centuries when God thus spoke to Moses at the Burning Bush. Jesus then added the comment, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Luke has a significant and suggestive addition, "for all live unto him." In other words, he is saying that, if the patriarchs had terminated their lives at death, God would not have said, "I am"--he would have said, "I was." We may thus think of our Christian dead as having travelled eastward and reaching the sunrise. They are glorified and are with Jesus; they see his face, and his name is in their foreheads. Death is only a new beginning--the liberated spirit has left the old life. It has now all the fitness and capacities it needs for the new life. It has begun the great adventure. Death is a doorway, a thoroughfare, not a dead end or

blind alley. It opens out into a larger and more glorious existence. Death is both departure and arrival. We say, "He has passed away"; Jesus says, "He has arrived." This is not rhetorical language, but plain open facts revealed on the New Testament page. The dead in Christ are happy beyond measure and are unwearily busy. All tears are wiped away and sorrow is unknown. All his servants joyously serve him. They will have spiritual bodies to suit their new existence. The body our Lord wore after his resurrection is a pattern. That body was independent of material things. It could pass through closed rooms and become invisible at will. I have earlier dealt with the Sadducean question, and am here anticipating briefly the resurrection doctrine because relevant in this connection. This fantastic resurrection enigma was based on ignorance of the Scriptures and a denial of the power of God. This dual fallacy underlies most skeptical hypotheses conceived since the days of the Sadducees. Their successors continue to err in this direction. Earthly and human relationships shall be adjusted to new conditions, and in some respects we shall be as the angels.

(b) The Rich Man and Lazarus. Though popularly assumed to be a parable, I find no reason or warrant for so regarding it. It is not introduced in the typical language of parables. May it not be literal and straightforward history? Dives (the traditional name)

51Phil. 3:21.


53Lk. 16:19-31.

54Matt. 13.
and the leprous beggar may have been well known characters to his hearers, and he simply in Jewish language continued their careers in the spiritual world beyond the veil. A sharp distinction in destiny is depicted; the future state and place are morally based and grow naturally out of earthly conduct and attitudes here; the decision or retribution is final; the Scriptures are sufficient; Lazarus' bliss is due to his pious faith, and Dives' misery is the outcome of selfishness and callous indifference to human need and suffering, not doctrinal heresy. It is thus ethical and practical. Just how far Jesus conformed to the national and popularly current thought forms of the day cannot be decided. "Abraham's bosom" was a natural and meaningful figure to the devout Jew. It was equivalent to Paradise. The phrase is not used elsewhere. One cannot dogmatize on the eschatology here. Hades is a place of torment in this incident, and Abraham's bosom is not a part of it, but entirely separate. There is memory, recognition, sympathy or concern for those yet on earth, and actual pain but which is not purgatorial—there is no promise of relief. There is no resurrection hinted at and no waiting or intermediate place, rather does the rich man immediately following the burial of his body awake in conscious agony. The earthly and after-death life are unbroken and one; recollections are carried over the grave. Personality has survived the shock of death. It is a lurid, detailed, and lengthy account. Justice is administered, and circumstances reversed. The circumstances, the audience, the immediate occasion, and the age, plus their theological background qualify

56 Matt. 8:11, 12; Lk. 16:28, 29.
one's conclusions. When every allowance is made for environment and symbolism of the age, the facts enumerated above abide. The pious believer still feels justified in anticipating the gentle angelic ministry at death, the luxury meted out to the beggar.  

God's law is: Use or Lose! And, as we shall see in the next section, the good-for-nothing servant was not cast out because he abused or misused his talent, but because he disused it. Dives presents a stern warning.

(c) Parables of the Talents and the Pounds. Here is proportionate reward for service. Ability and opportunity are scrupulously considered. Jesus introduced a new conception, stewardship, a principle or rather the Christian philosophy applied to the administration of all things which are God's: time, service, life, money, etc. Partnership, cooperation, and fellowship between man and God are its basis. Man is singularly honored with a sacred dignity and given a position of trust and responsibility. God's fellow-worker is conscious of the challenge and puts his best and all into the enterprise--initiative, thought, resourcefulness. He seeks to justify the confidence and reliance bestowed upon him, he must prove his mettle and will not fail. Diligence and faithfulness merit recognition. Trustworthiness in the small task qualifies one for appointment to a greater task of responsibility. The greatest honor one can receive for work well done is to have more and greater tasks committed to him. Efficiency in service comes through practice.

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60 I Cor. 3:9; II Cor. 6:1.
whole-hearted concentration, patience, and persistence. A day of reckoning when we shall give account of our trusteeship awaits us.

The value and greatness of human nature demands its continuance. It is too big for the present world—it can never be satisfied here. Only a small part of its possibilities are realized in time. Men die learning—there is the craving for perfecting—we are always striving, yet never attaining. All this indicates that we are built on lines which predicate that we are meant for a future life. We are fitted for a bigger world than the present. That other world lies beyond the grave. The mark of incompleteness is stamped upon our present life. As Bishop R. J. Foster put it:

I feel that I was made to complete things. To accomplish only a mass of beginnings and attempts would be to make a total failure of life. Perfection is the heritage with which my Creator has endowed me, and since this short life does not give completeness, I must have immortal life in which to find it.61

Again,

Earthly Providence is a travesty of justice on any other theory than that it is a preliminary stage, which is to be followed by rectifications. Either there must be a future, or consummate injustice sits upon the throne of the universe. This is the verdict of humanity in all the ages.62

Jesus satisfies us at this point by promise and assurance, and meets our deepest need, a fundamental and universal yearning.

(d) The Penitent Thief on the Cross.63 Enveloped in excruciating agony and overcome by physical torture, in his desperate need one of the two malefactors repentantly made a unique petition to the

61 Randolph S. Foster, Beyond the Grave (New York: Phillips and Hunt, 1873), II, 92.  
F. J. Boreham, A Handful of Stars (New York: Abingdon Press, 1922), IX.

62 Ibid., II, 93.  
central Figure of fellow-sufferers. He knew by the taunts of Jesus' tormentors that He who was the central target of their scorn must have claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God, the King of the Jews. The Master's attitude of forgiveness, restraint, patience, and dignified fortitude was strangely impressive. Imposters did not suffer in that way. His quiet endurance and kingly bearing was a strange contrast as compared with the hate and cruel malice of the religious leaders, the merciless and callous apathy of the executioners, and the scoffing and cursing of the thieves. The pitiless sport failed to obscure divine majesty.

By an act of sublime faith the repentant thief with his mis-spent life cast himself in earnest and sincere entreaty upon the mercy of the Lord. The immediate and tender response has made this a popular passage—the worst need not despair. There is hope on the death-bed at the eleventh hour. There was no time for laboring nice distinctions, teaching theology, or correcting eschatology. The comforting promise to a restored Israelite was entrance at death into blissful Paradise.\(^64\)

This incident has been perverted and misconstrued by those presuming on God's grace. But this Scripture presents problems when compared with others.\(^65\) Without delay, resurrection or judgment the thief would be with Jesus in conscious delight.\(^66\) Was it an intermediate and temporary or the final state? The text does not hint an answer. Was it that they both went to Hades, of which Paradise was a part (that for the blessed), and at the same time were in the Father's

\(^{64}\) II Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7.  
\(^{66}\) Lk. 23:46.
hand, i.e., under his care and in his love? Such would effect a reconciliation, but some maintain Paradise is heaven to the Jew and not a part of Hades. 67

(e) The Judgment of the Nations. 66 God will be debtor to no man. 69 No humanitarian deed shall pass unnoticed nor go unrewarded. 70 No literature has exceeded this dramatic scene for inspiring philanthropy and social service. The Master identifies himself with the needy. 71 This famous passage is wrongly, even though popularly, spoken of as a parable. True, a simile is used and a comparison made, 72 but the illustration doesn’t weaken the positive assertion of a general judgment. 73 The time of its setting is indefinite and flexible. If post-death (and it appears to be that) what is its relation to the resurrection? The criterion is not orthodoxy but charity or benevolence. Is this assize identifiable with that one of Paul’s? 74 There is a sharp separation and final, authoritative pronouncements are made. Everlasting torment theorists turn to the harsh and severe words of this passage (cf. eis tous aĩ̃mas tōn aĩ̃nōn, unto the ages of the ages) 75 for argument and ammunition. Doctrinal criteria and ecclesiastical dogmas or even morality and character are excluded in the picture, all stress being given to works and not faith or holiness. It is certainly a very Jewish

67 Cf. Eph. 3:8-10.
69 Heb. 6:10.
70 Matt. 10:42; Mk. 9:41.
71 Cf. Matt. 18:5.
73 Matt. 25:51, 32.
74 Rom. 2:1-16.
75 Rev. 14:11; 19:3; 20:10.
framework, and has much in common in its spectacular grandeur with Egyptian pictures and other faiths. But there is an eternal back-
ground postulating life forever; judgment is not arbitrary or merely legal but ethical, growing out of our earthly usefulness to fellow-
men. It is not a separation of the virtuous from the vicious, but a separation of the brotherly and helpful from the selfish, anti-
social, and indifferent individualist. Callous egotism earns for itself damnation. There are but two classes: those who did, and those who did not. Those condemned on the left are there not because of sins committed, but because of duties omitted. Not for the breach of the Decalogue, nor for adultery, murder, robbery, blas-
phemy, or debauchery was the left hand group (the priest and Levite type) condemned, but for sheer neglect. Men comfort themselves by saying, "I have done no harm", but God adopts a different view, "What good have you done?" The great English philanthropist, the Earl of Shaftesbury, made this great Scripture in Matthew his favorite pas-
sage and inspiration.

5. The Transfiguration. This is one of the most sublime events in the gospels and contains elements of mystery beyond human explanation, yet none of the Master's recorded experiences was more

76 Lk. 10:25-37.
77 F. W. Boreham, A Casket of Cameos (New York: Abingdon Press, 1924), XXI.
78 Matt. 17:1-9; Mk. 9:2-8; Lk. 9:28-36; John 1:14-18; II Pet. 1:16-18.
vital, and none more clearly revealed his glory. Its purpose was twofold: (a) It was a means of fortifying and strengthening Jesus Himself for his final journey up to Jerusalem. This was probably its chief purpose. (b) It was for the disciples a confirmation of their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and a revelation of the meaning of the title they had given him a week earlier—the Son of the living God. Jesus was six months from the end, and on the holy mount (Mt. Hermon), in miniature and promise, the apostles—the ambassadors of the new age—saw the kingdom of God come with power—power to glorify Christ, power to raise the dead, power to change the living. It was a vivid foreshadowing of the kingdom inaugurated at Pentecost and of the kingdom in its final manifestation of glory. The veil of his flesh became transparent, and deity eclipsed humanity or rather swallowed it up. The earthly was lost in the radiance of the heavenly. Doubtless it prefigured what actually did take place in his resurrection, and such an idea would suggest to Paul a similar change for Christians at the Parousia, both for the living and for the dead, when this mortal puts on immortality. Moses had had a lesser experience, but his own was a reflected, derived or borrowed glory whereas Christ's was spontaneous, original, inherent and natural. This contrast was paralleled by a comparison of the two covenants, the one fleeting and the other abiding. So, too, our moral transformation of character referred to in a delightful verse finds its best commentary and

79 Matt. 16:18.
80 Eph. 1:19-23.
81 1 Cor. 15:50-53; I Thess. 4:13-18.
82 II Cor. 3.
83 II Cor. 3:18.
illustration in this unique and sacred gospel incident.

Here was a revelation of the Lord of glory as he really was, the "mask" or disguise (real humanity) being laid aside. His comeliness was of the Spirit, and made no appeal to the carnal eye.

"The Savior comes; no outward pomp
Bespokes His presence nigh;
No earthly beauty shines in Him
To draw the carnal eye."

It, too, was a foregleam of his glory when he would return.

The three discuss Christ's supreme work, his exodus (Gk., exodos) at Jerusalem. We catch a glimpse of the costliness of redemption. Death also for the Christian is but an incident in an eternal pilgrimage. "Exodus" is a suggestive word. It reminded Israel of her birth and beginning as a nation. The exodus from Egypt to Canaan was the greatest of Old Testament events. Every annual Passover reminded of deliverance from bitter oppression and bondage. A horde of slaves became organized free citizens. The incident was a communication of strength and assurance to Jesus himself (cf. the Gethsemane strengthening angel). It was fitting at this crisis that heaven's cheer should be given as he moved forward amid a world's disdain to the shameful cross. Thus amongst the vision's values we see the glory of his perfect manhood, the glory of his divine nature, the glory of his redemptive cross, and the glory of his coming kingdom in the great consummation.

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84 I Cor. 2:8; Phil. 2:5-8.
85 II Pet. 1:16.
87 Heb. 12:1, 2.
88 Rev. 11:15.
Here, also, was a revelation of the Old Testament relation to Christ. The law and the prophets were subordinate to Christ, and about to pass. In fulfilling them he superseded them. Five words prove this point,—"Jesus only"; "Hear ye him." Eye and ear were appealed to. Christ is God's last voice to man. In the Transfiguration the veil between the two worlds is very thin, and this life merges into the next. The lives of both celestial visitants had ended in mystery. No mortal hand buried Moses; no human mourners assembled around that lonely grave in Moab. Elijah's rapture was like Enoch's translation in that he did not see death—these two exceptions did not pass through the portals of death as all flesh must. But where was Elijah taken in view of Jesus' words? What was the condition of these two men during the intervening centuries? What kind of bodies did they have on the mount? Had they been in a conscious state? How did the apostles recognize men who had lived long in the past? How did the two from the other-world know about earthly coming events, e.g., the decease of Jesus at Jerusalem? Do our dead today take a similar interest in us? We must patiently wait for the answers, "for now we see in a mirror in a riddle; but then face to face."

6. Jesus' Claims in the Fourth Gospel.—In the Synoptics, Jesus' Messiahship is carefully concealed, and after prolonged preparation and instruction is revealed to a select few with the prohibition that it is not to be publicly announced until he rises from

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89 Heb. 1:1, 2.  
90 Cf. I Thess. 4:17.  
92 1 Cor. 13:12.
the dead. In John's gospel it is declared at the outset indiscriminately and defended openly, to his early disciples and even to a Samaritan woman, etc., His Deity is likewise proclaimed and acknowledged without reserve. Plainly the Old Testament Jehovah is in some mysterious way identified with the New Testament Jesus.

The Jews charged him of claiming to be equal with God and he nowhere denies it. But it is in the unique literary phenomena, the "I am's", that we see the audacity of his claims. There can be no doubt that this language is studiously associated with the covenant God of Israel and thereby made meaningful. Particularly is this obvious in a passage in John's Gospel. Notice the grammatical anomaly—"Before Abraham was, I am." Did the Jews misunderstand him? Why did he not correct himself by an explanation? Obviously he was understood and there was no correction to offer. Was he guilty of blasphemous egotism or was he speaking the sober truth of God? He claimed to be the Resurrection and the Life, and as such he proceeded to raise Lazarus. He further made good his claims of being Lord of life and death by raising himself. Because he claimed to be the Life, Christianity itself was spoken of as such.

20:23.
95Isa. 6:10; John 12:39-41.
96John 6:35, 48; 8:12; 10:7, 9, 11; 11:25, 26; 14:6, 9;
97Exod. 3:14; 6:2-4.
98John 8:58, 59.
100John 10:17, 18.
7. "Eternal Life" in the Fourth Gospel.--This phrase occurs some seventeen times in the Gospel of John and six times in the Johanne letters. There is much truth in Prof. Simpson's conclusion that neither the word nor even the conception of immortality is found in the first century Christian gospel. The subject is approached by Jesus from a new angle. New terminology expresses this unique approach. Jesus' originality is nowhere more apparent than here. Jesus' great emphasis is on eternal life, and this is found in him, a new quality of life beginning here and now. It is limited in possession, for only a vital, living, and personal faith assures the believer of participation in the Divine life. It is thus restricted and conditional.

It is "the gift of God." It is conditioned by simple faith, and by obedience. Ritualistic imagery is used in one passage. It is identified with a mystical and direct knowledge of the Father and of the Son, and with Christ himself. Union with him is essential to the maintenance of this life. This allegory teaches that Christ is the moral stem of humanity, and when severed from him we are nothing and can do nothing. He claims to be absolutely indispensable to the world. The sacrificial language

102 F. D. Kersher, Horizons of Immortality (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1926), X, 119.
103 John 3:15, margin; I John 5:11, 12.
106 John 3:36; 8:51.
107 John 6:40, 52.
108 John 17:3.
109 I John 5:12.
110 John 15.
111 A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, op. cit., VII, VIII.
in the Bread of Life discourse112 would be meaningful to the mystery cults but problematic to the Jew. Crude literalism is safeguarded against by a spiritual interpretation.113 Jesus had "the words of eternal life."114 Eternal life is a promise fulfilled only in Christ, and not a natural, universal gift.115 To the early Church he was "the Prince (Author) of life."116 What was the specific purpose of his coming? "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."117 The everlasting duration of the believer's life depends not on the meaning of aiónios, but on our living, inseparable union with the divine, eternal life, "Because I live, ye shall live also."118 Eternal life can be rejected,119 which shows that it is something received and not inherent. It is appropriated by faith. Seven times in his farewell discourse on the night of betrayal,120 Jesus uses the comforting and illuminative phrase, "a little while", thus robbing death of its bitterness in separation and parting.121 By divine alchemy, sorrow actually becomes joy.

3. The Figure of Sleep.122--Christ's tender and comforting message of victory over death was shown in his likening this dark experience to a natural and daily phenomenon--sleep. It is euphemistic

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112 John 6.
113 John 6:29, 35, 40, 63.
114 John 6:38.
115 Tit. 1:2; 3:7; Heb. 9:15; I John 2:25.
117 John 10:10.
118 John 14:19.
120 John 16:16-19.
121 John 16:20, 22.
122 Mark 5:39, 40; John 11:4, 11-14.
language, a soft and suggestive figure, popularized by the Christian imagination. No idea became more common in the new age vocabulary. And yet it has been distorted and misconstrued to teach the fantastic theory of soul-sleeping. In reality, it was simply an attempt to remove the dark and harsh features associated with the word "death". The body is apparently reposing in slumber, hence Christians called their burial ground a cemetery or sleeping place (Gk. koinétrion). The folly of crass literalism is seen in the second reading above. Thus, it is figuratively true to speak of the saints' bodies sleeping. Stephen, after committing his spirit into the care of Jesus in heaven, "fell asleep." It was a favorite figure with Paul. David, he said, "fell on sleep." In his great Resurrection and Second Coming passages he uses the word. But if the body is not here referred to, there was neither point nor comfort in his message to the bereaved and perplexed. Christ's resurrection was a bodily one, and he was "the firstfruits of them that are asleep" (cf. the phrase, "the firstborn from the dead"), The Christian word "sleep" is a substitute for the harsh and gloomy Pagan word "death", Hymnology has caught up the idea and the graveyard stones bear witness of its appeal. The open tomb with its joyous triumph and hope made the old word incongruous. As sleep is temporary so is our sorrow and separation. Philippians does not square with the soul sleeping theory.

123 Matt. 27:52.  
124 Acts 7:55-60.  
126 1 Cor. 15:4, 18, 20; I Thess. 4:13-15.  
127 Col. 1:16.  
128 cf. I Cor. 11:30; II Pet. 3:4.  
129 Phil. 1:21-23.
I bring this chapter to a close by quoting the last two stanzas of Sarah Doudney's hymn, "The Christian's 'Good-night!'":

"Only 'good-night', beloved--not 'farewell'!
A little while, and all His saints shall dwell
In hallowed union--indivisible--
Goodnight!

"Until we meet again before His throne,
Clothed in the spotless robe He gives His own
Until we know even as we are known--
Goodnight!"
CHAPTER V

THE CROWNING PROOF OF A FUTURE LIFE

IS THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

It is a demonstration of the fact of a life beyond the grave. His death and resurrection are as the obverse and reverse sides of a coin,² two aspects or halves of the one event. He was dead and reappeared in the power of a new and spiritual life. His rising is a sample, symbol, and guarantee of our own.² The living Jesus with the keys of the eternities swinging at his girdle is the evidence of life after death.³ When he died he simply passed into the spiritual world. His appearance on earth again just meant that he had returned from the journey he took. What we call death is never the cessation of existence—it is only a change of sphere. To the Christian there is no death. To abolish man's fear of death was one of the purposes of the Incarnation.⁴ He has extracted death's sting and mastered sin's power. Probably most Christians are not devoid of fear in the Valley, and to most death still has a sting.⁵ The fear of the grave was doubtless vanquished to Paul. "Immortality," it has been said, "is the glorious discovery of Christianity."⁶

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¹Rom. 4:25.
²1 Cor. 6:14.
³Rev. 1:17, 18.
⁴Heb. 2:14, 15.
⁶Cf. II Tim. 1:10.
Christ was spoken of by Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage as the Gibraltar of Christian evidences and the Waterloo of scepticism.

It used to be said that "neither the sun nor death can be looked at steadily." For millennia prior to the first Easter morn Death as monarch of the sepulchre had flown his black flag. But all has been changed to the Christian (or, ought to be) and the grave is full of light and hope. Death is as near to the young as to the old; here is all the difference: death stands behind the young man's back, before the old man's face. As Longfellow puts it,

"There is a Reaper whose name is Death,
And with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And all the flowers that grow between."7

The open tomb exorcises our fears. Paul based the whole Christian system on the Resurrection.8 He staked his all on that basic fact.

1. The Post-Resurrection Appearances.

(a) In Judea
   (1) To Mary Magdalene alone9
   (2) To Mary Magdalene and the other Mary10
   (3) To Cleopas and another, en route to Emmaus11
   (4) To Peter12
   (5) To the ten Apostles (Thomas absent)13
   (6) To the eleven Apostles (Thomas present)14

(b) In Galilee
   (7) To Peter, Thomas, Bartholomew (Nathanael), James, John, and two others at Lake of Galilee15
   (8) To the eleven on a mountain in Galilee16

7 Th. Longfellow, The Reaper and the Flowers.
8 1 Cor. 15.
9 Mk. 16:9; John 20:16.
10 Matt. 28:9.
11 Lk. 24:13.
12 Lk. 24:34; I Cor. 15:5.
13 John 20:19; Lk. 24:36 (I Cor. 15:5).
15 John 21.
16 Matt. 28:16.
(9) The appearance to more than five hundred at one17
(10) To James18
(c) In Judea again
(11) To the Apostles on the occasion of the Ascension19
(d) Near Damascus
(12) To Saul of Tarsus20

This is not presented as an arbitrary or final arrangement, e.g., some may identify (9) and (9), etc.

2. Its Evidences.

(1) Paul's Testimony. The Resurrection of Jesus is the corner-stone of Paul's system. It proved to Paul that this Man of royal Davidic descent was also the eternal Son of God.21 His great passage on The Resurrection22 was written only twenty five years after the Resurrection, and in this important document he enumerates six appearances. Its date of authorship would be A.D. 55, and Paul was converted soon after the Ascension, perhaps within a year of it (e.g., Harnack, A.D. 50). His summary would be based on still earlier data. Three years after his conversion he visited Jerusalem and met James and Peter.23 And now for an analysis of Paul's testimony.

(a) His Conversion. His thirty years of strenuous labors and sufferings, terminated by the sword and not by disease, prove that his bodily constitution was amazingly strong, and contradict the theories that account for his conversion naturally on the basis of a sickly body and delicate health. Only a sound physical

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17I Cor. 15:6.
18I Cor. 15:7.
19Lk. 16:19; Lk. 24:50; Acts 1:4-11; I Cor. 15:7.
21Rom. 1:4.
22I Cor. 15:3-11.
23Gal. 1:13, 19.
frame could have endured the labors and trials of the Apostle.\textsuperscript{24}
Compared with the other apostles, he could say: "I labored more
abundantly than they all,"\textsuperscript{25} and nobody attempts to prove that Peter
or John lacked robust health.

It is more plausible to suggest that his Damascus road ex-
perience was the natural climax of a long and severe inward struggle.
Ingeniously it is imagined that he resisted his conscience, that he
was mentally divided against himself, that he was spiritually per-
turbed and discontented. One verse in Acts\textsuperscript{26} is interpreted as
meaning that Paul was struggling against his better self, that he
was fighting against higher light and new truth. Paul was influenced
by remembering the spectacle of Stephen's triumphant death following
his matchless arguments. And so his conversion was the inevitable
outcome of such influences.

But such a view contradicts all the evidence we have. Paul
never hints that he was gradually converted, and to say that his con-
version was the inevitable outcome or cumulative effect of natural
forces is to oppose very directly his own statements. In strong
language\textsuperscript{27} he maintains that he was inaccessible to human influences,
and that to the end of his days his conversion surprised him. He was
conquered by main force, "being apprehended (katalambano) by Christ."\textsuperscript{28}
Absolute necessity (anagkā) is at the back of his gospel preaching.\textsuperscript{29}

\begin{enumerate}
\item[24] I Cor. 11:23-33.
\item[25] I Cor. 15:10.
\item[26] Acts 26:14.
\item[27] Gal. 1:12-17.
\item[28] Phil. 3:12.
\item[29] I Cor. 9:16.
\end{enumerate}
In one passage he uses the strong term, ekstrosa (an abortive birth) to
describe his sudden change. Nowhere does he acknowledge that he
violated his conscience even during his maddest fanaticism and most
bitter zeal against the Christians. Did he wilfully and consciously
sin against his better judgment? His own words are final. Paul's
conversion cannot be explained naturally. It was God who miraculously
revealed his Son in him. Paul's bursting through the particularistic
barriers of Judaism into the universal idea of Christianity was
nothing less than an act of the supernatural.

(b) The Other Five Appearances. Intense emotional
excitement, nervous exaltation, and intense preoccupation with an
idea could produce a visual hallucination. But were any of these
conditions present in the case of the apostles? The risen Christ
began to appear already on the third day, at a time when the apostles
were in a state of profound depression. Their hopes had received a
terrible blow, and to Jews the fatal end of Jesus could only mean
that he was a false Messiah under a curse. As the apostles had not
expected his death, they certainly did not expect his resurrection.
His predictions had made no impression on their minds because they
were filled with expectations of an entirely different kind. While
still prostrated with shame and grief, within forty-eight hours of
Jesus' death, the apostles were experiencing unexpected manifesta-
tions. The appearance to James was to an unbeliever, and over

30I Cor. 15:8.
31Acts 28:1; I Tim. 1:13; II Tim. 1:3; etc.
32Mk. 14:50.
34Mk. 9:10.
35Matt. 16:22, 23; Mk. 10:37.
36John 7:5; Mk. 3:21.
five hundred saw Jesus at one time.

"Collective hallucinations, though their existence is guaranteed by the Psychical Research Society, are of rare occurrence, and stand much in need of explanation." 37

(2) Testimony of I Peter and I John. Paul's conclusions are corroborated by Peter in his undisputed letter. 38 Peter contends that here is the firm basis of a Christian's life and hope. John is strongly confirmatory in his equally undisputed epistle. Unmistakably, even if indirectly, he refers to Jesus' post-resurrection appearances (pelephao, to handle or feel), illuminated by a comparison with gospel passages. 40 For critical reasons I shall not press the disputed Apocalypse as a witness. But it testifies explicitly and implicitly to the resurrection. 41

(3) The Gospels and Acts. We can confidently use Luke and John as witnesses of the first importance. Luke in Acts thrice records Saul's conversion. 42 He tells us that the risen Lord spoke at length to Saul, and he gives us many particulars making a natural explanation of the conversion impossible. While Paul was satisfied merely to mention the appearances of Jesus, Luke and John describe them in detail. It appears that he spoke (sometimes at length) at every manifestation. The grave was found empty on the third day, attested not only by Luke, but also by Mark (that is, by Peter), by

38 e.g. I Pet. 1:3, 4, 21; 3:21.
40 John 20:27; Lk. 24:39.
41 Rev. 1:10, 16; 2:8.
42 Acts ix, xxii, xxvi.
Matthew, by John, by the Jews. At first, the apostles entertained the idea that he was a disembodied spirit, and to dispel this he offered himself to be handled, and by showing his five wounds; also by eating with or before the apostles. He ate for the sole purpose to show that his body was real. Luke, it must be noted, was a competent and conscientious historian, while John himself actually handled the risen Lord. Jesus did not rise with a purely natural body—the Jewish expectation, but with a spiritual body, no longer subject to the limitations of ordinary matter. It suddenly appeared and suddenly vanished, manifested itself within a closed space, and ascended into heaven.

Jesus expressly says that he was glorified at his resurrection (edóthē, "was given"); he conferred the Holy Spirit on Easter evening, which was not possible before he had been glorified. But, however, the risen body was the same body which was crucified, evidenced by the empty tomb, and by the wound—prints which it exhibited. The disciples believed that at the resurrection, the body of Jesus was transformed into a spiritual body; the visible and tangible character of the post-resurrection manifestations was simply an accommodation to the needs of the disciples. Both Luke and John

44Lk. 24:37 ff.; John 20:20, 27.
45Lk. 24:42; Acts 1:4 (margin); 10:41; Lk. 16:14.
47Lk. 6:14; 12:23.
49Matt. 28:10; Lk. 24:26.
50John 20:23.
51John 7:39; Eph. 1:19, 20.
suggest that there were numerous convincing appearances unrecorded by them.\textsuperscript{52} Doubtless, Paul's five listed appearances\textsuperscript{55} are typical ones, a carefully selected (perhaps an official) but not an exhaustive list.Appearances began at Jerusalem, then in Galilee, and again at the capital. Of course, the first manifestations being as early as the third day, necessitates their location at Jerusalem. Galilee manifestations were most appropriate in that most of his followers lived there. The disciples had to begin their work at Jerusalem and hence the wisdom of the final appearances being located there.

(4) Internal Stamps of Authenticity. The evidences of trustworthiness in the records of the Resurrection are numerous. The gospel narratives would be strange fiction indeed. When the disciples first saw Jesus they were afraid and thought that he was an apparition.\textsuperscript{54} Of course, this fear was quite natural under the circumstances. The skepticism of the disciples strengthens the evidences; they were obstinate unbelievers. He was not always recognized at once.\textsuperscript{55} Mary Magdalene's experience was not the result of expectant attention. The fact that his followers failed to know him proves that they were not expecting to see Jesus. This would be a strange piece of invention. Details are so often significant because casual. The disciples were greatly depressed,\textsuperscript{56} and were induced with difficulty to believe,\textsuperscript{57} some in particular were stubborn doubters.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{52} Acts 1:3; John 20:30.
\textsuperscript{53} I Cor. 15:3 ff.
\textsuperscript{54} Mk. 24:57.
\textsuperscript{55} Mk. 24:16, 31; John 20:14-16; 21:4-7; Mk. 16:12.
\textsuperscript{56} Mk. 16:10; Lk. 24:21.
\textsuperscript{57} Mk. 24:11; Mk. 16:11, 13, 14.
\textsuperscript{58} Matt. 28:17; John 20:25, 27.
Here are very decided indications of truthfulness. How full John's gospel is of unobtrusive autoptic touches. The visit of John and Peter to the tomb is true to life.\textsuperscript{59} The younger man outstrips the older, but it is the impulsive Peter who is first to enter in. John's reflectiveness is indicated in that he is first to understand the meaning of the grave-clothes. He is intimately familiar with the state of unbelief among the apostolic band, "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead."\textsuperscript{60} This line of argument and investigation is most reassuring.

3. Its Significance.

(1) The Atonement. It is a matter of history that Jesus died on the Cross, and in doing so he wrought out redemption for us. If that atonement is only to touch our present, then it was not worth making. Men were not worth dying for who were to perish in a few years. But the Atonement is a great, a glorious, and an amazing thing—its possibilities and results must be commensurate with it. If there be no future existence, then the great act of Jesus Christ was a waste of life and love. It was not worth doing, if death ends all. But consider its vast and comprehensive sweep as expounded by Paul.\textsuperscript{61} A great proof of a future life lies in the fact of atonement when united with Easter. And twenty centuries of Christian history are the best commentary on and confirmation of Paul's famous words: "And the hostile princes and rulers he shook off from himself, and boldly displayed them as his conquests, when by the cross he

\textsuperscript{59}John 20:3-10.
\textsuperscript{60}John 20:9.
\textsuperscript{61}Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:14-22.
triumphed over them." The originality and daring of Paul startle us again and again. On this passage, Bishop Lightfoot comments: "The paradox of the crucifixion is thus placed in the strongest light --triumph in helplessness, and glory in shame. The convict's gibbet is the victor's car." How small the necessary apparatus was for the staging of God's transcendent act! Two beams, a long and a short, laid one across the other, a handful of nails, a hammer, and a naked body—that is all. There is no background, no tableau, such were not needed. And yet herein we have a stupendous triumph, the victory that rose out of defeat, the glory that burst from the darkness. It was the falling into the ground and dying of the seed which was to grow into a renewed humanity quickened together with Christ. Thus the triumph of the Cross moves its pageantry onwards into unending vistas of Christian experience. We know that the sweep of the Cross includes eternity. That death of deaths assures us of immortality. The symbol of shame could never have become a symbol of glory but for the consummation of the rising from the dead. The Cross alone told the Jewish minds that God had pronounced Jesus a false Messiah and imposter. But Paul always thinks of the death and rising as one act. Calvary's voluntary sacrifice was accepted; remission of sins became available in Christ crucified; "the word of the cross" (a significant phrase) could be preached; God had set his seal of approval on the

62 Col. 2:14, Weymouth's translation.


64 John 3:16.
self-giving of his Son—all these truths Easter confirmed. \(65\)

(2) There is a Life Beyond. If the resurrection of Jesus were "spiritual" and not bodily, if God simply sent a "telegram from heaven" to assure the disciples that all was well with Jesus, even then human immortality is a fact, and Jesus is really the Son of God. The soul of Jesus manifesting itself to the disciples after death would establish that much. Jesus' death had been spoken of as an exodus. \(66\)

Death is thus an exit and parting, is but temporary, "until the day dawn and the shadows flee away." In the presence of death the absolute becomes relative and vice versa, the unseen becomes real. Earth loses its hold on us, and the invisible becomes magnetic. Bereavement is a spiritual stock-taking opportunity, and an inventory is compiled of the things that cannot be shaken. We gain a new scale of values and a sense of proportion. \(67\)

We speak a rare wisdom undreamt of in the market-place or halls of pleasure. The real sadness of death lies in separation. There is an element of sorrow about all farewells. How sad when the parting is for all time. But it is not forever. Jesus taught that Heaven was home for us all—what a beautiful conception of the after-life. Home with all its love and joy. That will do us—we can wish nothing beyond that.

Jesus comforted his disciples by reminding them that parting was but for "a little while" (used seven times in the farewell discourses of John's gospel) and "I shall see you again, and your heart shall rejoice", "your sorrow shall be turned into joy." \(68\)

\(65\) I Cor. 1:18-22.  
\(67\) Rom. 8:16; II Cor. 4:17.  
\(68\) John 16:20, 22.
divine alchemy! Sorrow was but a prelude to abiding and undiluted joy; parting was the harbinger or reminder of reunion, even as Winter is the forerunner of Spring. Those, whose bodies are reverently laid in God's acre, have arrived before us. We are still on the road. The journey to us is not yet over. As we draw near the Eternal Home they will give us welcome. We shall meet in the Great House never again to part.

"Death doth hide, but not divide!
Thou art but on Christ's other side;
Thou art with Christ, and Christ with me,
In Christ united still are we."

These are the practical implications and justified reflections of one who can say, "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep." Brief sorrow gives way to abiding joy.

(3) His Deity Established--His Claims Vindicated. 69 I have already dealt with his claims of divinity, and referred to one of the "divine grammatical anomalies" in Scripture. 70 "I was" in this connection would have expressed simple priority, but in the phrase used a contrast was intentionally drawn between the created and the uncreated, the temporal and the eternal. A timeless existence is claimed in the contrast between gennethai and eimi. He was put to death for claiming to be divine. 71 In one majestic exhibition or dramatic demonstration of divine power he was proved to be what he claimed. 72 Henceforth Paul calls him by divine titles and names. 73

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69 Rom. 1:4.
70 John 6:58.
73 Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:6; Titus 2:13.
The essence of Christianity consists of a unique and unlimited devotion, absolute self-surrender to and worship of a divine personal Redeemer.

(4) An Incentive to Holy Living, Zealous Service, and Courageous Witnessing. Christ has been experienced as a Living Presence and as a Divine Companion--this is the testimony of countless saints through the centuries. There is the deduction from life. Why should the apostles suffer and die if the resurrection were false? Paul's sacrifice and his torturous hardships were only endurable or intelligible on the basis of sincerity and conviction. The subsequent martyrdom of the apostles and other eye witnesses is only rational when we accept their testimony that they actually saw Jesus risen. They stood on the unshakable rock of fact. As religion rises in excellence the hope of immortality grows clearer, and increases in assurance. The best and noblest of mankind have lived in the hope of another life. Missionaries, reformers, prophets and martyrs have firmly held this hope. Their faith was so sure that life itself became a secondary thing. The aspirations of the noblest are intimations of immortality. Their faith cannot well be a lie. To what noble and heroic heights some souls will rise! A craven and contemptible coward like Mussolini presents a humiliating opposite extreme. To deny immortality is to cut the nerve of the most inspiring motive in the minds of men. Noble souls suffer patiently; men live righteously; martyrs die; because they live in the hope of another life. If immortality is a delusion, then these heroes of faith are pathetically

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74 Phil. 3:7-11.
75 I Cor. 4:9-12; II Cor. 4:8-12; 6:4-10.
deceived. How differently Archbishop Cranmer would have died if he
had believed this life was all! Verily, a living coward would then
have been preferred to a dead hero!76

76 F. W. Boreham, Rubble and Roseleaves (New York: Abingdon
Press, 1923), V, pp. 57-63.
CHAPTER VI

THE BELIEF OF THE EARLY CHURCH

ACCORDING TO ACTS OF APOSTLES

1. Emphasis on the Resurrection.—The first preaching of the gospel at Pentecost in its fulness contains as its climax the proclamation that Jesus the crucified was risen, ascended, and enthroned. Peter reasons by quoting two Messianic Psalms. The former is boldly applied to Christ and fulfilled in his rising from the dead. In this, Paul concurs as he argues from the Scriptures at Pisidian Antioch. Both take pains to affirm that David, whose body saw corruption, and whose tomb was still in their midst, could not possibly be referring to himself. Rabbi Israel Mattuck, of the London (England) Liberal Jewish Synagogue, says:

"The beginning of the hope for immortality in Judaism may be traced back to the Psalms. Some of the Psalms have been so interpreted as to make them express a belief in immortality; but these interpretations are very doubtful. There is in them no certain expression of the belief in immortality; but they often describe the spiritual experience upon which the hope rests—the experience of God and the desire for complete union with him."

But Christian preachers, like Peter and Paul, did not hesitate to give a rich and specific content to this former Psalm.

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1 Acts 2:22-36.
2 Psalms 16 and 110.
Historically, that word, "Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption," found its fulfillment only in the case of Jesus, for he alone of all sons of men was holy, harmless, undefiled. But if only man had remained holy, he too would never have seen corruption. Without terrifying accompaniments of pain, weakness, death, and the grave, he would have passed into the larger and ampler life of saints in glory. Peter's assertion that David's spirit had not ascended into heaven agrees with a statement of our Lord's. But what of Elijah? And what of Ecclesiastes? It raises questions about Old Testament eschatology—just where were the righteous souls before Christ's ascension? To Paul, the rising of Jesus from among the dead ones constituted the fulfillment of "the holy and sure blessings of David."

Consistently, the early church appealed to the open tomb as the guarantee of life eternal. Peter heralded it to Jew and Gentile, and Paul announced it in the ancient seat of culture and philosophy (Athens) as the evidence or seal of God's appointment or approval of this Man's universal Judgeship. Judgment was thereby assured. There is no appeal to the natural immortality of the soul. All the weight is put on an historical fact.

2. Resurrections in the Name of Jesus.—During his earthly ministry, Jesus had raised the dead, e.g., Jairus's daughter, the only son of a widow of Nain, and Lazarus of Bethany. It was a

7 Eccles. 12:7.
8 Isa. 55:3.
10 Mt. 5:21-43; etc.
11 Lk. 7:11-17.
12 John 11.
credential of the Messiah, and such miraculous power was appealed to as of evidential value when the doubting Baptist made his inquiry. To raise the dead was a charge to the twelve, and power must have been delegated to them accordingly. Following his own death and resurrection, physical resurrections at Jerusalem occurred. Earlier, I referred to Pagan conceptions of resurrection in abundance, e.g., the myths of Demeter and Persephone, the Phoenix, etc.

As regards the Jewish conception:

Judaism has brought with it from the past, two forms of the belief in life after death, the belief in resurrection and the belief in the immortality of the soul. The former was originally the belief in the revival of physical existence on earth. The other is the belief in the continuance of a disembodied existence elsewhere after death. It may be said that the resurrection belongs to the circle of apocalyptic ideas which concern themselves with the ultimate destiny of the universe, including human life on earth, while the belief in immortality belongs in its origin to philosophic ideas, more or less simple, about the constitution of individual human life.

Only two instances of raising the dead occur in Acts: Dorcas by Peter, and Eutychus by Paul, two representative apostles. Another case may be so regarded.

3. The Death of Stephen—Nowhere as regards the dark experience of death is the difference that Christ made more patent than

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13Matt. 11:2-6.
14Matt. 10:34.
15Matt. 27:52, 53.
16Israel Mattuck, op. cit., p. 5.
17Acts 9:36-43.
18Acts 20:9, 10.
19Acts 14:19, 20 (2Cor. 12:1-10).
20Acts 7:55-60.
here. The first Christian martyr, with transformed face, serenely trustful, and in the spirit of forgiveness, meets a cruel and unjust fate. There is a remarkable resemblance and dissimilarity between his death and that of his Master. Excepting a verse in John, Stephen alone uses the Master’s self-chosen title "Son of man" (familiar in Daniel), all the more significant here in that Stephen applies it to the enthroned Lord in heaven. Elsewhere in the New Testament, he is depicted always as seated on the right hand of God, but here out of respect and tender sympathy for his suffering servant he stands. Stephen is granted the privilege of gazing into an open heaven and beholding a face to face vision of his Savior in glory. The Savior’s committal of trust addressed to the Father (a Psalm quotation) is virtually repeated by Stephen but addressed thus, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" The prayer of forgiveness on the Cross was spoken to the Father; here to the Savior direct (a plain implication of his deity), "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Rapture and ecstasy pervade the whole--there is no bitter cry and interruption of fellowship corresponding to that of Jesus. Was this departure unique, or is it repeated or even normal in Christians passing to a higher life? Tenderly and reverently, Luke says, "he fell asleep."

4. The Two Ordinances.--(a) Baptism was appointed by the Master Himself. It was practised by the apostolic church. It is

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21 Acts 6:15.
22 Lk. 23:34, 46; Ps. 31:5.
23 John 12:34.
24 Matt. 27:46.
26 Acts 2:38, 41.
not an arbitrary institution but rich in symbolism and charged with ethical content.  

As an eloquent witness, it has for twenty centuries testified concerning the three basic and fundamental gospel facts. Deny these and the origin of the institution is a mystery, and its message or import evaporates. Every baptism, i.e., every penitent believer's burial or immersion in water (a watery grave) in the name of Christ pictorially and dramatically sets forth the redemptive acts on which our hope of forgiveness and life everlasting rests.

(b) The Lord's Supper or Table was likewise decreed or ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ on the last night, and practised by the first century church. It is inexplicable in source and purpose unless the Church and its gospel are based on fact. Throughout the whole world, wherever Christianity is known, this rite is observed. Wherever it has prevailed, living sacrifices for sin have ceased, and at the same time the sense of sin has been greatly intensified. For nineteen centuries, without a break, the Eucharist has been observed by almost all Christians in every part of the world. What is an adequate cause for this unique institution? It could not have come from Judaism, for it entirely ignores the heart of the analogous Jewish rite, a living animal victim for sacrifice. A

27 Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 2:12, 13.
28 I Cor. 15:1-4.


30 I Cor. 11:23-34.
31 Acts 2:42; 20:7.
32 Ex. 12.
pious Jew could only be horrified and shocked at the suggestion of the Messiah making himself a sacrifice. Roman and Greek mythology do not help us in our quest for a source. It was a puzzle alike to Roman and Jewish persecutors. The New Testament account of its origin, intention, and promulgation is at once simple, reasonable, and alone sufficient. The observance of this memorial—a unique service—has always been part of the Christian religion. 33

5. The Lord's Day. 34—implicitly the author of the Apocalypse refers to the resurrection, 35 (kuriakos, Lordian, used also by Paul). 36 These two new institutions required a new word directly applied to Christ. The weekly celebration of the breaking of the bread (loaf) on the resurrection day led to the name dies panis (day of bread) being applied to the first day of the week in Chrysostom's time (d. 407). But why the change of day from the Old Testament Jewish Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, to the Christian Lord's Day, the first day of the week? The former was hallowed from time immemorial, sanctioned by God's own example, according to the creation record, 37 and later connected as a memorial with the exodus, 38 (note "therefore"). It was first humanly observed, as far as the record shows, 39 and incorporated as a rigid law in the Decalogue. 40 It was peculiarly national or Jewish. 41 In the New Testament, the observance

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34 E. Griffith Jones, op. cit., II, iii, 33.
36 Rev. 1:10.
37 1 Cor. 11:20.
38 Gen. 2:1-3.
39 Deut. 5:12-15.
40 Exod. 16:33-28.
41 Neh. 9:13, 14; Ezek. 20:12, 13.
of the Sabbath was made a test question by the Jews. Jesus met violent opposition and criticism on this issue. His attitude to the Law was judged by his liberal interpretation of the fourth commandment. The word used in the New Testament for the weekly holy day promulgated at Sinai in sabbaton (Genit. plur.) and occurs sixty times, including the revolutionary text. It is a matter of history that, as Paul says, the Sabbath was abolished or cancelled, and a new sacred memorial day was substituted, the first or eighth day. Why?

"This is the day, when from the dead
Our mighty Saviour rose,
And crushed beneath His conquering tread,
The last of all our foes."

42 Col. 2:16, 17; cf. Rom. 14:5, 6; Gal. 4:10, 11.
CHAPTER VII

PAUL'S TEACHING IN HIS EPISTLES

1. Emphasis on the Resurrection.--The Pentecost note--the stress on the risen Christ--is continued by Paul in his many letters. It is his cardinal doctrine, proclaimed in baptism, an essential element of faith believed in the heart, and made the fundamental basis for the Christian resurrection. It is most elaborately expounded in his first letter to Corinth.

Because Paul speaks of appearances (ἀπαραστάσις, Aor. pass. of ἀπαραστάσις) only, and says nothing of the empty tomb, of the handling of the risen body, or of words spoken by the risen Lord, it has been concluded that the manifestations of the risen Christ were spiritual. It is true that Paul says Jesus rose on the third day, not expressly that he was seen. But why was it believed that he had risen? Was it not because he was seen? It is natural to conclude from the above verse where the burial and resurrection are mentioned in close connection that Paul attests that the grave was found empty on the third day. As already argued, Paul's conversion was not psychologically prepared for by scruples of conscience. His change can only be explained as a direct interposition of God in Paul's spiritual life. A bigoted Pharisee, in a moment, became the most liberal of Christians.

1Rom. 4:24; 6:4; 8:11; 10:9; I Cor. 6:14; 15:15; II Cor. 4:14; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:20; 2:5; Col. 2:12; I Thess. 1:10.
2I Cor. 15.
3I Cor. 15:4.

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Why? Because he had been commissioned to preach to the Gentiles.
The gospel of the open tomb is vital and indispensable. Note his conclusions and deductions—inexorable and dark—if Christ is not risen. The master-logician sees Christianity built on sand, toppling into ruin as a pack of cards, if this basic truth be not established.

2. The Doctrine of the Christian Resurrection.—To Paul alone we look for an exposition of our assured resurrection. As a Jew, with the background of a material resurrection, he (in the main) carried over a modified interpretation of the Jewish bodily rising. It was refined, spiritualized, glorified, and illuminated or defined in the light of Christ's literal rising from the dead. His body was the same—satisfying the Jewish apostles' expectations and views of a real resurrection—and yet his post-resurrection body was different. A new factor was introduced, thus surprising the apostles. Unless he had accommodated himself to material and Jewish tests, how could he have proved his identity with the pre-resurrection personality? He submitted to national and fleshly limitations of understanding, but led them on to a new truth—that his body had been subjected to a transformation. He was no longer subject to the laws of matter and space. For their sakes, he manifested a visible, tangible, and palpable body of flesh and bones, but he was independent of it. Matter and spirit were revealed as plastic and interchangeable—an open door existed between the two worlds. Was Christ's resurrection and body unique, or was his experience a type of ours? Paul could scarcely have thought in other terms nor have been satisfied with less than a similar or

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5 I Cor. 15:15-19.
parallel resurrection and body.

He is sure that flesh and blood in their present and un-
glorified state must remain with this carnal world. But he is equally
sure that we shall and must have (like the Master) a substantial
body. In this passage there is a strong dualism, and a marked dis-
similarity between the two bodies, even no continuity. But his il-
lustration or analogy of the seed, previously used by Christ, neces-
sitates a physical bridge or connection, the invisible vital principle
or germ draws its nourishment from the material storage. But perhaps
we cannot press it too literally and detailed. Paul takes his cue or
example from Christ's rising. He admits there are many kinds of
bodies—we shall not be disembodied. A catastrophic second coming
of Jesus in apocalyptic fashion, a resurrection of the saints, and
the catching up of the living transformed believers go together in
Paul's mind. In the first passage (his earliest letter) we discover
a dualism, spirits return to earth with him to reunite with glorified
bodies. Not death but the rapture of the saints at his Parousia
(presence) was anticipated by the first generation of Christians.
His delay and the death of believers produced the problem dealt with
in his first letter to Thessalonica. This temporal or first-century
setting must be kept in mind to understand Paul. Nor am I able to
see any vast change in this department of his thought. A change in
the mortal body, as with Jesus, was expected for the living and dead

6 II Cor. 5:1-10.
7 John 12:24.
8 I Cor. 15:44; Rom. 8:11.
9 I Thess. 4:15; I Cor. 15.
Costerley, op. cit., VIII, vi, 119, 120.
10 Phil. 3:20, 21; 4:3; Titus 2:13 (cf. Acts 1:11).
Christian. God "alone hath immortality" (athanasia), and this same deathlessness would clothe or envelop the redeemed mortal body. There is no Platonic doctrine of the soul's immortality here, but something more Jewish. "This mortal must put on immortality"—here is a Christian addition. We shall not be etherealized or airy spirits (a Greek conception) nor deathless material heroes on this earth (a Jewish apocalyptic idea) but glorified personalities with a body suited for our new sphere of life.

Two texts clearly point to Paul's belief that in some way "the body of our humiliation" is embraced within the effects and blessings of a transforming gospel. In his greatest passage, he contrasts the natural or soulish (psukhikos) man and the spiritual (pneumatikos) man. His use of the figure of a seed indicates his spiritual type of resurrection—continuity of personality but stripped of crude literalism and corruptible earthly flesh. And yet, as already pointed out, he shudders at the thought of bodily dissolution without an eternal body taking its place. A disembodied existence was theoretically conceivable.

What a piece of work is a man. What an amalgam of contradictions,

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11Rom. 3:11; Phil. 3:21.
12I Cor. 15:53, 54; I Tim. 6:16.
13B. H. Streeter and others, op. cit., III.
14Rom. 3:11; Phil. 3:20, 21.
15Rom. 8:22.
16I Cor. 15.
17II Cor. 5:1-10 (Cf. II Pet. 1:13, 14).
18II Cor. 4:1-10.
what a medley of opposites—the paragon of animals, the quintessence of dust! Our purest affections are rooted in physical instincts. This strange dependence of spirit upon matter for its basis and its vehicle has been described as the deep, sacramental secret of our being. To many Christian minds there appears something humbling about the very conditions of their lot on earth, as though the soul had not kept its first estate in God's bosom, but was made subject unto vanity by its birth into this material world. The doctrine of the resurrection, impossible though it be to express it in categories of time and sense, corresponds with the mysterious duality of human nature. We can conceive of nothing entered upon in separation from the body that is worthy to be called life. All our purified powers and faculties will harmonize with their transfigured expression. By the influx of Christ's endless life the soul shall be endued with a symbol and instrument conformed to the glory of its Redeemer.

Paul was mystically minded enough to see a practical significance in the Resurrection when applied to everyday conduct. The same power that burst the bars of death was available for victorious moral living. We were dead in trespasses and sins and experienced a spiritual resurrection, being quickened together with Christ. Being identified with him we are enthroned with him, and in union with the risen Son of God, the success of our new life is assured.

3. Eternal Life is the Gift of God.—— "The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Paul's position harmonizes

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20 Eph. 2:5, 6.
21 Rom. 6:23.
perfectly with that of the Master in the Fourth Gospel. Paul speaks about "the hope of eternal life."\(^{22}\)

Notice the dual correspondence with Johannine teaching:\(^{23}\) (1) Life eternal is a free gift; (2) This is found in Christ,\(^{24}\) thus strictly limited and conditional. This is as non-Platonic as one could make it. Immortality is something to be "put on"—it is not common and inherent to all men. The first death is not annihilation to the righteous or to the wicked.\(^{25}\) If it be said that this is a solitary verse of its kind, I would ask, How often must God say a thing before we believe him? Is not once sufficient? Does repetition make it more emphatic or obligatory? Verses (like votes) ought to be weighed rather than counted. Circumstances must be considered. Solitary verses are all sufficient and final in other connections in Disciples' practice.\(^{26}\) Rewards and punishments subsequent to the grave are meted out, and the wicked being found out of Christ, the wrath of God having abode on them in this life\(^{27}\) face "the second death." Only three interpretations of this seem possible: (a) everlasting punishment based on Platonic, absolute and inherent deathlessness in every soul; (b) restoration, restitution, universalism, based on a second chance, purgatorial and proportionate punishment, which succeeds where the Cross and gospel fail; the mercy of God and an optimistic view of the worst of men are stressed; (but read another class of verses);\(^{28}\) (c) annihilation following punishment, automatic

\(^{22}\)Tit. 1:2; 3:7.
\(^{23}\)I John 5:11, 12.
\(^{24}\)II Tim. 1:11.
\(^{26}\)e.g., Acts 2:38; 20:7.
\(^{27}\)John 3:33.
\(^{28}\)Matt. 23:24; Phil. 3:18, 19.
and self-chosen extinction, conditional immortality in Christ having been missed. Only the righteous survive the two death; all survive the first. 29

4. "To Die is Gain!" 30 Here is a passage worthy of the great apostle on his spiritual Pisgah, an embarrassing text to soul-sleeping theorists. Centuries or millenniums of unconscious sleep in preference to the humblest earthly service is neither appealing nor a gain but spiritual suicide. Homer and Paul are at opposite poles. As with the figure of the dissolution of a house or building, 31 so here also, death ushers us immediately and consciously into the Divine Presence. 32 Life beyond is richer, fuller, "the life which is life indeed." 33 Our interpretation of Paul here must be reconciled with the later passage on the perousia, resurrection, and rapture, in the same letter. 34 Christ was Paul's all-sufficient motive. It was Christ here and more of Christ there. Immortality is never an argument. There is no logic that can prove to us that we are immortal. It is not a dogma or a doctrine to be believed, but a quality of life that we have. Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," not, "I teach them." Gain of Christ was inevitable to the apostle, hence his exhortation: "Lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called." 35

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29 Griffith-Jones, op. cit., III, ii, 3 (A), 4 (B).
30 Phil. 1:21-24.
31 II Cor. 5:1-10.
32 Streeter, op. cit., p. 119.
33 Alexander Pope, The Dying Christian to His Soul.
34 F. J. Boreham, A Casket of Cameos (New York: Abingdon Press, 1924), VIII.
35 I Tim. 6:19.
5. Death a Departure.\textsuperscript{36} A nautical term (analusis) is used here in his farewell message. His life was "already being poured out as a drink-offering," and his release or death was as the loosing of a boat for sea. Paul's figures are always worth studying. Far from reaching a harbor, death is progress, expansion, expression, and adventure. Here is the idea of lifting anchor, spreading sail, and going out of the land-locked harbor into the open sea. There is no sense of loss or contraction here. Our hymns emphasise arrival, sailing into harbor, and casting anchor, but to a Christian death is sailing out of harbor into the ocean of larger sphere and greater opportunities. There is nothing in the ancient world to approach such an outlook of thrilling expectancy and such an attitude of fearlessness.\textsuperscript{37}

As with the Old Testament psalmists and prophets, and the apostle John, as we shall see later, Paul's confidence in death is begotten of an appreciation of the nature, the unfailing presence, and the dependable love of God. In a profound passage,\textsuperscript{38} he claims to have reached the limits of finality, and hurls defiance at all the forces of futurity. He dares the universe and infinity. All the powers that be are summoned in pairs: Life and Death, the Powers of this world and of Every Other, the Things of the Historic Present

\textsuperscript{36}II Tim. 4:6-8.

\textsuperscript{37}Cf. II Tim. 1:12.
F. W. Boreham, \textit{A Handful of Stars} (New York: Abingdon Press, 1922), XVI.

\textsuperscript{38}Rom. 8:31-39.
Boreham, \textit{op. cit.}, XIX.
and the Developments of the Boundless Future, the Things in the Heights and the Things in the Depths, this Creation and the Possibility of Others. With triumph he glories in their impotence to dissolve the sacred tie uniting him to his Lord.
CHAPTER VIII

OTHER NEW TESTAMENT MATERIAL

Hebrews

Quite a distinctive type of evidence relevant to our study is forthcoming from this letter, and it is all the more unusual in that Old Testament saints so lived in the light of immortality as to be illustrations for us. A different slant is given to the treatment, and our examples come from the remote past.

The Fear of Death

This is a remarkable passage. Some men fear death because of the physical pain that so often accompanies the act of dying. This is the least considerable element in our fear of death, for the fears that make death really dreadful are not physical but spiritual. Death takes men away from the world they know and love, and launches them into the unknown. "To die," says Peter Pan, "will be a dreadfully big adventure." "There is but one terror particular to death: that of the unknown into which it hurls us." We do not shrink from adventure, but it is the mystery and the bigness of the enterprise that appalls us. There is a famous passage in Carlyle's History of the French Revolution:

\[\text{Heb. 2:14, 15 (Moffatt, 182).}\]
Frightful to all men is Death; from of old named King of Terrors. Our little compact home of an Existence, where we dwell complaining, yet as in a home, is passing, in dark agonies, into an Unknown of Separation, Foreignness, unconditioned Possibility.2

The chief element in that fear of death which keeps men all their life-time in bondage is that which is due to a sense of sin and looking for of judgment.3 Paul said, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." There is a close and intimate connection between sin and death. What gives sin its power (kratos) to shake the heart is that it brings to man the sense of offended and outraged law. At death we instinctively anticipate being confronted with that law which we have broken and set at nought. "Fear is the tax that conscience pays to guilt."4 Christ has delivered us from the cause of our fear, that is from sin. He robbed the devil of his weapons and rendered him helpless. He could no longer use men's sins to torture and terrify their souls. By setting man's conscience free from guilt, he set his heart free from fear.5 He has extracted from death all its terrors. Jesus died in the deep, dreadful, and tragic sense of the word; he tasted death and got the full flavor of it. He knew the forsakenness and the woe which make up death, the consequence of sin. But because he exhausted it, we never die. Here is one purpose of the Incarnation. Believers have "tasted the powers

4Heb. 9:27.
5Rom. 8:1.
of the age to come. 6

The Translation of Enoch 7

Chapter eleven is the art-gallery of heroes of faith, the honor roll of God's workmen who became giants in achievement because they laid hold of the unseen. Abel's immortality was due to his spirit of sacrifice. But for sin our end would not have been this coarse, cruel, terrifying thing we call death. 8 Enoch never set his eyes on this ugly, grisly, brutal thing we call death. "He was translated that he should not see death," that is he was translated without pain or fear from one of God's houses to another. So, too, on the Mount of Transfiguration, what was mortal of Jesus was swallowed up of life. These two instances give us a hint as to what the last earthly stage of man's career might have been had he not fallen and sinned. The gift of God to Israel was continuance of life. 9 Not for one moment did he cease to be the God of the patriarchs, therefore, not for one moment were they dead. Enoch gained the desire of every true Israelite—an unbroken fellowship with God.

Pilgrims and Promises 10

The nomadic life of the Arabian sheik, the Oriental shepherd, the tent-dwelling patriarch is conducive to another-worldly attitude. Materialism cannot flourish where there is no abiding place. Reflection told Abraham that he was a pilgrim, a temporary sojourner,

6Heb. 6:5.
7Heb. 11:3.
8Ezek. 18:20.
9Exod. 3:6.
10Heb. 11:9, 10, 13-16.
a traveller, in more ways than one. Peter adopted the figure. But, like H. F. Lyte, in a world of change, Abraham's heart yearned for the eternal and unchangeable.

"Change and decay in all around I see; Oh, Thou who changest not, abide with me!"

Later, the annual Jewish Passover ritual conveyed the same message. With loins girt and staff in hand, they ate standing and in haste. The roots of these pilgrims' lives were in the invisible and so drawing upon divine resources. Inspiration, sacrifice, endurance had their source here. In terms of a city or a better country they conceived of their future habitation. Thus they suffered and plodded on, seeing the monotonous and transitory against an eternal background. With beautiful imagery, the Old Testament reminded men of the frailty of life, but always set over against this is God's eternity. This great chapter closes by telling us that these Old Testament saints, prophets, and heroes, friends of God, were waiting, incomplete, until something should come. The age of Christ is the final one, the consummation of a long pre-Christian growth, an essential complement. Christianity has come and fulfills the best in Judaism. We are called to be the trustees of God's final word to mankind in Jesus Christ.

11I Pet. 2:11
12Exod. 12.
13Eccles. 12:6, 7.
14Ps. 90.
15Heb. 11:10, 40.
16Matt. 11:11; Lk. 10:23, 24.
The Communion of Saints

"One family we dwell in Him,  
One church, above, beneath;  
Though now divided by the stream,  
The narrow stream of death."

--Charles Wesley

According to its usual sense or meaning, martus means "witness". But a difference of opinion occurs on the passage before us. Are these witnesses of Chapter eleven the giants of history, really conscious and interested spectators of this earth's arena and its contestants, or are they not beholders but simply those who testify to a truth or fact? The worthies enumerated have borne testimony for the faith which the writer demands of his readers. He urges truths to be believed and principles to be acted upon, and these testifiers are models for imitation. They witness to us of the faithfulness of God, and the possibilities and might of a life of faith. Whatever view be taken, the idea is inspirational. The prayers of the dead for the living theory has been deduced from this rather slender premise. In the second passage we have a sublime contrast between the two covenants. The author lists the privileges (eight) to which "ye are come." Amongst these is "to the spirits of just men made perfect." There is a splendid simplicity and catholicity in this phrase. We all owe more to those in their grave than to those alive. Memories and influences still direct us. But can we not say positively that those whom we call dead are not dead at all? Still further, Are not the living departed in fellowship with us? And more, if heaven and earth are open

17 Heb. 12:1, 23 (cf. Eph. 3:15).
18 Cf. I Cor. 4:9.
to one another, and if those who have passed into the eternal world are in communion with us, is this communion mutual? If they pray for and help us, can we reciprocate? Rome has no doubt. It is an interesting speculation.

But once, and that at the conclusion of the book, does the writer refer specifically to the Resurrection of Jesus, and that occurs in a magnificent benediction and in conjunction with his blood. It is a great text, "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with (in) the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, etc."

I and II Peter

The paucity of reference to our theme in these letters as contrasted with the extensive and profound treatment of Paul reminds us of our indebtedness to the great apostle to the Gentiles. Peter tells us nothing new. He refers to the Resurrection; to death as the dissolution of a tent or tabernacle, as Paul did earlier; to his end as an exodus, the word used by Luke in telling us of the theme on the Holy Mount; to the Transfiguration; to our Christian life as a pilgrimage, the same language as in Hebrews. As for the authenticity of II Peter, I quote Marcus Bodsw: "Although several pseudonymous writings appear in early Christian literature, there is no Christian

22 II Pet. 1:15.
24 I Pet. 2:11.
Dr. James Moffatt ingeniously attributes the preaching by Jesus to the spirits of the disobedient antediluvians (apparently in Hades) to Enoch. He accepts an emendation of Dr. Randal Harris, and says the story of this mission in Peter’s obscure passage is told in the Book of Enoch. It is an interesting suggestion.

The brief epistle of Jude has already been adequately referred to, and doesn’t warrant a separate section of treatment. The death of Moses has been immortalized in poetry, e.g., in C. F. Alexander’s words:

"By Hebo’s lonely mountain,  
On this side Jordan’s wave,  
In a vale of the land of Moab  
There lies a lonely grave.  
But no man dug that sepulchre,  
And no man saw it e’er;  
For the angels of God upturned the sod,  
And laid the dead man there.

"And had he not high honor?  
The hill-side for his pall,  
To lie in state while angels wait,  
With stars for tapers tall;  
The dark rock-pines like tossing plumes  
Over his bier to wave,  
And God’s own hand in that lonely land  
To lay him in the grave."

The Testimony of I John—the Evidence of Love

Here, of course, is the classic of mysticism. Christianity is interpreted as the union of the soul with the Divine Christ, as Paul

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says, states, that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him." Faith in God's goodness sustains the hope of many. All have loved ones that walk no more with them on this earth. We cannot forget them, but love them still, and we are certain that they love us still. There is the intense desire to find them again. It is difficult to explain that universal passion of the soul unless there be the reality to equal it. We shall meet in the Father's house—we believe the longing of love will be satisfied.

As Whittier says:

"Life is ever Lord of death! And Love can never lose its own!"

Even when men deny immortality with their lips, still do they confess it with their lives, for life has its arguments no less than intellect.

By the powerlessness of the whole world to satisfy the poorest heart, by the cargoes we all have on board of things that are not wanted for the voyage; by the passion for truth, the cravings for perfection, the glimmering of ideals we never reach, man stretches out his hands to immortality. Whoever loved without longing forever? Deep affection postulates eternity. Love does not want a year or a millennium. Love cries for immortality.

Faith in the goodness and love of God, along with the implications of his Fatherhood facilitates and even necessitates

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27Gal. 4:19.
28I John 4:16.
faith in the survival of each of his children. As John reminds us, our love for our brethren unites us in an indissoluble bond with our God, and such fellowship and life are deathless. Those who love God never meet for the last time. Faith in the survival of personality furnishes a high ethical motive and a sustaining comfort in this life.

The Apocalypse

In evaluating and understanding this book, one must remember its saturation in Old Testament thought, language, and imagery, also the apocalyptic medium of symbolism, its idealisation, and the crucible of persecution from which it originated. Mystery and mysticism, a Pagan environment, a Christian Jewish outlook, an arrogant imperialism—all are here. Nowhere does a Western literalist need to remind himself more than here that Revelation is an Oriental book, dealing with peculiar and special problems or situations of the first century, last decade. To conceal its message from the uninitiated was deliberate, necessary and easy. For a number of centuries of oppression the Jews had used the device of symbolism. Without the key it was hocus pocus. The aim of the apocalypse is to condemn compromise with Emperors' worship.

At the outset, the resurrection is explicitly and implicitly mentioned. Such a victory assured ultimate triumph over the foes of the Church—her Leader was alive and present. Endurance would be generated as death was scorned with its accompanying sufferings. It

32 Rev. 1:17, 18.
33 Rev. 1:10.
34 Rev. 11:15.
35 Rev. 12:11.
was the worst the enemies of righteousness could do. For sheer beauty and comfort, one gem is outstanding. 36 The overcomers would share his throne, eat from the tree of life in the restored Paradise, 37 etc. Passages of unmitigated severity are plentiful, easily understood and pardonable under the circumstances, but tender promises and assurances of bliss for the redeemed are scattered throughout. 38 The book is set in an atmosphere of the supernatural and the miraculous. Events are catastrophic and spectacular, related in vivid and dramatic style. The beatific vision is assured to the faithful. 39

What is Heaven Like?

A number of pictures are given of the home of the redeemed. There is splendor and majesty, reverence and worship, music and praise. Beauty and value, honor and joy are expressed by an appeal to familiar objects. In terms of the best and highest on earth, and by the aid of temple ritual and song, the impression is conveyed to us that the new life in a new sphere shall be a natural continuation of our best attainments and holiest strivings. The chaste and happy bride indicates a holy and joyous company. The city four square, full of light, its streets of gold and its gates of pearl, speaks of purity, perfection, and preciousness. Our most treasured values of this life must be conserved. Precious stones and concrete objects alone can represent or suggest what is to be revealed to us. Negatives are helpfully used to tell us that no evil, no cruel parting, no bitter pain shall mar

36 Rev. 14:15.
37 Rev. 11, 111.
38 Rev. 7:15-17; 21; 22.
40 Rev. 4:21, 22.
the harmony and delight of the saints. The figure of a garden reminds of Eden with its innocence and unclouded fellowship. A bride, a city, a garden, a throne, each sets forth some aspect of truth. To be "for ever with the Lord," to look on the Divine face, to bear his name and claim upon us, to be honored with continuous service—these represent the very essence of satisfaction. A wedding feast most fittingly describes the fellowship before us.

In our conceptions of heaven we have materialized it into a grand prize-giving occasion; a sort of super-Sunday School picnic for good boys and girls. We have conceived of heaven in three dimensions populated by emasculated citizens—called saints. We have conceived of the heavenly life in negatives—no night, no sin, no tears, no death; but we have not conceived the positive life. We should follow out our participation in the divine nature; through the divine suffering into the divine glory. Heaven is the splendor of the divine nature in its eternal progress. But we are sharers in the divine nature, so heaven must be our participation in the eternal existence of God.

There Is No Magic in Death

We carry dispositions, tastes, and habits with us. We begin there as we end here. What men sow in the fields of time they will reap in the harvest of eternity. What a height of folly for the sinner out of Christ to think that he will suddenly wake up after death, and find himself fit for God's holy presence, and for a place in his kingdom. If life has not made us by God's grace, through faith, holy—do we think that death without faith will do it? The cold waters of that

41Ps. 17:15.
42Hugh McLellan, Sermons (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1923), III, p. 45.
43Rev. 22:11.
44Gal. 6:7, 8.
narrow stream are no purifying bath in which we may wash and be clean. No! no! as we go down into them, we will come up from them. In view of the many solemn passages, the gospel of a second chance is a hazardous and fool-hardy speculation. The Scriptures, in no uncertain words, warn of an awful doom for the Christless and unbelieving. The character wherewith we sink into the grave at death is the very character wherewith we shall reappear at the resurrection. Christ came into this world to save sinners! Punishment does not infallibly produce repentance—obduracy may be chronic and permanent. Sin, as Paul knew, takes up its residence in the citadel of the will.

Recognition and Personal Immortality

In the Transfiguration vision, individual survival and recognition were facts. These two desires and essentials are assumed throughout the entire New Testament. Personal immortality alone can satisfy the craving of the human heart and vindicate the justice of God. If all men, good and bad, receive from the Infinite the same reward—absorption (which is only another name for annihilation) then Infinite Injustice is seated on the throne of the universe. The following incident sufficiently illustrates the point. Schleiermacher, an advocate of Pantheistic Absorption (virtual extinction) once tried to comfort with it a young woman who had just lost a dearly loved husband. This is her reply, "Schleier, shall I not find him again? O my God! I implore you, Schleier, by all that is dear to God and

45 Rev. 9:20, 21.

sacred, give me, if you can, the certain assurance of finding and knowing him again. Tell me your inmost faith on this, dear Schleier. Oh! if it fails, I am undone. It is for this that I live, for this that I submissively and quietly endure; this is the one only outlook that sheds a light on my dark life—to find him again, to live for him again, to bless him again. O God, it cannot be destroyed. Speak to my poor heart; tell me what you believe . . . . . Do you know when it is that I feel the grasp of the sorrow too bitterly? It is when I think, 'In that future the old things will go for nothing'; and when I think, 'His soul is resolved back—quite melted away in the great All. The old is quite gone by; it will never come to recognition again.' Oh, Schleier! this I cannot bear; oh! speak to me, dear.'

Surely we shall not be bigger fools there than we are here. We misunderstand each other and really never know ourselves because this mysterious something we call personality is what it is. Barriers of ignorance will be broken down, and all shall be flooded with knowledge. Prof. James Orr said that man's true self is his personal individuality, and "over against its I, it seeks a Thou, and will rest satisfied with nothing less." The Gospels and all of the New Testament assure us that

Pringle-Pattison, op. cit., VIII, 164, 165.

481 Cor. 13:12.

"Eternal form will still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet." 50

As Mary W. Shelley wrote: "I trust in a hereafter--I have ever
done so. I know that that shall be mine--even with thee, glorious
spirit! who surely lookest on, pitied, and loved thy Mary." 51

Conclusion

The Person of Christ Himself

Jesus rose above life. This makes it perfectly credible
that he would rise above death. Two things take us all--sin
and death. Jesus conquered the first--our own inward moral
conscience being witness. Will he conquer the second? It
would be surprising if he did not. I say it reverently: If
Jesus did not rise from the dead, he ought to have done so.
The whole thing would come out wrong if the grave had held
him captive. When the broken and dispirited disciples, now
radiant with a wild hope, whispering to each other, 'He is
risen', they were simply echoing what his whole life had
done. Throughout his life he arose. Where we seek, he
arose. The resurrection fits in with that fact. There must
be an empty tomb where there is such a fulness of life.
Jesus carries the resurrection. 52

Did a unique Person necessitate the Resurrection? Does his sinless
life make his rising from the dead natural, inevitable, and credible?
Or does the resurrection prove that he was divine, and so establish
his deity? His life and claims, his death and resurrection together
form a unit and must be considered as an indissoluble whole. He

50 Tennyson, In Memoriam, XLVII.


52 E. Stanley Jones, The Christ of the Indian Road (New York:
The Abingdon Press, 1923), 12, 171; 12, 172, 177.
James Orr, The Resurrection of Jesus (London: Hodder &
Stoughton, n.d.), X.
claimed to be Life Absolute and the Resurrection Incarnate. His character is the one flawless gem of all the world, and his faultless character the proudest possession of the races of men. This illuminates and makes intelligible the resurrection when considered as a part of the whole. Viewed as a solitary and isolated fact it lacks meaning; unite it to a life characterized by its onlyness and it is supported eternally.

The Resurrection of Christ the Ground of Confidence in Eternal Life

The singular and sinless life and the unique resurrection are complementary; each dovetails into the other. One is the root—the other the fruit. Unlike Socrates speculating about the nature and immortality of the soul, this Man of Fact raised the dead. Unlike the philosopher he didn’t teach that Life is lord of death but he demonstrated it by rising from the dead. And Paul staked all upon this unshakeable truth. If he did not rise from the dead, then we are all in our sins, our beloved righteous dead are perished, our faith is vain, and the apostolic claimants to be eye witnesses are branded as liars of the deepest dye, our preaching is vain, and of all deceived, hopeless men we are most miserable and to be pitied.

The Church’s Survival and History

Founded upon a Rock, the Church, in mystic and vital union with her Divine Lord, was assured that death would never depopulate or annihilate her. His victory over sin and the grave, his

53 John 11:25, 26; 14:6.
54 Matt. 11:5.
intercession in the presence of the Father, his presence, and his Eternal Spirit are promises to his "little flock." He is our High Priest after the likeness of Melchizedek "after the power of an endless (indissoluble) life." We share his sovereignty and resurrection triumph, and participate in life divine and eternal. His strength and Easter conquest are made available to us in practical, daily living. Moral empowerment has been appropriated by multitudes of saints. The Church’s immortal life and vigor are guaranteed by her risen Lord. This alone accounts for her survival in a hostile world.

The Salvation and Moral Regeneration of Men

Twenty centuries of the transforming gospel’s application, the Gesta Christi, "the greater works," the miracles of changed lives and redeemed characters—these are all inexplicable except on the basis of a risen and living Christ. Here is the fifth gospel. Mystically-minded Christians have experienced inward renewal and the all-sufficiency of Divine grace. Security is a reality because he lives forevermore. His followers have always been confident of his real presence. The eternal realities and life everlasting are thus experimentally and spiritually perceived here and now. To a great cloud of witnesses this is the final and sufficient proof of immortality.

56Lk. 12:32; Eph. 5:29-32.  
57Heb. 7:15.  
58Eph. 2:5, 6.  
59John 14:12.  
60Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:13.  
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