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Some Eschatological Views of the Fate of the Wicked in Human History

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SOME ESCHATOLOGICAL VIEWS OF THE FATE OF THE
WICKED IN HUMAN HISTORY

by

ORMONDE STANLEY BROWN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts

College of Religion

Division of graduate instruction
Butler University
Indianapolis
1941
PREFACE

The writer expresses the hope that this treatment of an important subject may be found interesting— he knows that it can scarcely be found pleasant reading. It is our purpose to treat of the "eschatological views of the fate of the wicked"—Hell ideas entertained—"in human history". These are many. While most of them agree at some points, the range of ideas is broad, and "human history" is broad. We wish to emphasize our disinterest, for the purpose of this thesis, in eschatological views of the reward of the "good," save to say that, generally, this is but 'the other side of the shield,' having a definite correspondence to its opposite. We make no claim to give either an exhaustive or erudite treatment of our subject, but attempt rather to outline the major views in the field, relating them to, and in some instances tracing their influence upon, human history.

Our special interest lies in the idea of Hell in the New Testament Scriptures and in the Church in its development; also, in the questions: How did the Hell ideas enter the New Testament Scriptures? Whence came they? What is their true significance? To what extent are current ideas those of Pagans, of early theologians, of Poets, or of Reformers?

It is not our intention to attempt in any, to "explode" the idea of a Hell. But we do not feel at all well-disposed towards
"eternal punishment" as such. This must of necessity give place to some reasonable theory. It is but the mental playground of the abnormal minds of sadists and masochists.

The views that we shall consider pre-suppose a hereafter; whether bodily, or the "immortality of the soul," or "continued consciousness," is immaterial. No set group of persons may be considered the "wicked." At one time these may be the immoral; at another, the non-conformists. The term is relative. But in each instance the "fate" of those considered wicked is fixed; and it is in these views that our interest lies.

The writer expresses his appreciation of the valuable help and direction given him by Dean Frederick D. Kershner, both privately and in class discussion. Considerable help was also received from Professors W.J. Moore, A. Holmes, and von Gerdtell of the Butler College of Religion Faculty. To these gentlemen the writer gladly expresses his appreciation.
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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

Standard References

E.B. - Encyclopaedia Britannica. 14th ed.


Books of the Bible and Apocryphal Writings

A.V. - Authorized Version of the Bible (i.e. King James Version)

Gen. - Genesis.

Sam. - Samuel.

Chron. - Chronicles.

Psm. - Psalm.

Macc. - Maccabees.

Jer. - Jeremiah.

Matt. - Matthew.

Mr. - Mark.


Jn. - John.

Rom. - Romans.

Cor. - Corinthians.

Col. - Colossians.

Thes. - Thessalonians.

Pet. - Peter.

Rev. - Revelation of John.
INTRODUCTION

Hell yawns before an entire humanity. Many and diverse are its forms conceived in human history. In tribal myths the idea has been largely based on superstition, the creation of the distorted imaginations of men in the grip of the tyrant Fear. Ignorance breeds fear and wonder. Savage peoples were mental slaves dominated by divergent fears. They were as children groping in the dark, and their systems were but the attempts of limited minds to express something that was essentially 'felt' rather than reasoned. Their world was large, unknown, mysterious. The elements played strange pranks. Customs crystalized to become the "status quo" of tribal life, and gradually 'hedged in' the community; "right" consisting in conformity to them, "wrong" in the opposite. Beyond death's barriers nothing was known. But, as far as we know, some belief in a hereafter of one kind or another was an almost universal phenomenon.

Perhaps it was in this struggle in the dark, in this quest for knowledge of his universe, that primitive man first conceived of gods and ethical notions. He adored objects which made his subsistence possible. Soon symbols became substitutes for actual things. Totems, multitudinous forms in stone, wood and metal, and anthropomorphisms, were attributed powers magical and mysterious. This was largely cult worship. To please the Deity meant prosperity here and hereafter; to displease meant his disfavor here and his vengeance in the beyond. As ethical
concepts grew, ideas of future punishment became more clearly defined.

Thus, fearful and ignorant, primitive man asked his questions and supplied his own answers. Traditions grew to become myths, which preserved, for him, Truth. His religion was unquestionably a deterrent against what the group considered as evil. Taboos and mores were many and rigid; the pattern was set, and none dare break it. The penalty meted out for wickedness, in the later hell ideas, curbed the "wrong". These served thus a practical utilitarian purpose and were not without their pragmatic merits.

The spiritual content of primitive Hells seldom rose above the "ghost" or "dis-embodied spirit" level. Future life and future punishments were largely "of the flesh"; the hells the projections of that which was known in experience, bolstered by the imagination and thrust forward into a hazy beyond. There was, of course, no "scientific approach". Mystical, subjective "feelings" in the collective experience of child-minded men, formulated strange ideas of the future state.

"Hangovers" of ideas entertained by primitive tribes persist in human history. There were then no "demands of reason", no "ontological arguments". Mankind is notoriously conservative—especially so in matters of religion. Humanity's time-honored customs and traditions, fixed in its experience, are not easily eradicated, even when the mind labels them false. Credulity is tenacious—appallingly so.
The tediously slow emergence of the human race from the forests is by no means complete as yet. The exodus is underway, but it may require centuries for us to pack our baggage. Many, indeed, prefer the "wrath to come"; consequently they will not flee it! Hideous hot hells and flaming torments have seared their way deep into the mind of Mankind. Every device of the unquestioned ingenuity of man's imagination seemingly has been bent upon the framing of a hell par excellence, more hideous than his neighbors. This development has, to some extent, related itself to Man's ethical growth. It has been said: "There is not a man alive who is not damned by at least six religions."¹ Each vies with the other, and: "Earth gaps, hell burns, fiends roar,..."²; every evil, filthy, base, sordid creation becomes projected into a state or place as the reward of "wicked", who is not infrequently identified with the non-conformist! It would be difficult indeed to ascertain the extent to which these monstrosities of creative imagination have endured as the fruits of bigotry and religious bias, or in what measure their purpose has been the regimentation of thought. But, manifestly, these factors have not been entirely absent in human history; and certain it is that many have enjoyed their happiest moments in the contemplation of their fellows writhing in the unspeakable tortures of the Hells cherished in their little minds.

¹Attributed to J. Brierley.

²Shakespeare, Richard III, iv 4,75.
As we shall see, the Greeks and early Romans had little to do with extreme notions of Hell. Homer and Virgil present comparatively mild views on the subject. Even the Tartarus of Greek mythology is a calm abode compared to the numerous and horrid hot and cold Hells of Buddhism. And to be an evil spirit devoured by a crocodile or she-hippopotamus according to the Egyptian mythology was perhaps a far more pleasant thought than the dread uncertainty of the untold ugly possibilities of Hindu metempsychosis.

Jewish eschatology was always vague, both in the Old Testament canonized scriptures and in the apocalyptic writings. Their post-exilic development in this regard is in all probability traceable to their contact with the Persian faith and culture. And the New Testament scriptures were written almost entirely by Jews who shared, perhaps unconsciously, this background.

The Latin theologians, products of the Latin Church, have undoubtedly produced views among the worst of all. Augustine, in particular, created the vogue of thought, and the re-echo of his morbid ideas of eternal flames was not only a great misfortune; it became, with slight variations, the corner-stone in the profession of many clerics of the middle ages and reformation. The Reformers, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, were thorough-going revivalists of Augustinian eschatology. More recently, the names of poets--John Milton, Pollok and JosephTrapp--of the preachers, Jeremy Taylor, Jonathan Edwards and Spurgeon, and a score of others have contributed to the popularizing of hideous
Hells. And Bunyan too was graphic enough, to say nothing of famous artists of the calibre of Michael Angelo.\(^1\)

The choice is broad. Retribution, annihilation, eternal torment; Sheol, Hades, Gehena, Tartarus or Hell; "everlasting contempt", "conscience is Hell"—or a score of divergent views—which?

This, at least, is certain: The fate of the wicked must be just; it must be reasonable and possible; it must be purposeful. It cannot be eternal, therefore, in the true sense of the word; and if a limited sense is intended another word should be chosen. A personal survival of some kind with a consciousness of the "after" state and the memory of the former state is a minimum requirement.

An endeavor has been made in this thesis to give a concise and definite statement of the major beliefs held in human history with the view to show their interest, both for their own sake and for their influence upon human thought and action. The subject has been approached with the personal conviction that mankind is "growing to manhood in Christ". The Christian scriptures are uncommonly sane and restrained in their picture of Hell; the subject has little mention at best, and is singularly free from the excesses characteristic of other systems.

\(^1\)His famous painting: "The Last Judgment".
CHAPTER I

PAGAN VIEWS

a) Primitive and Savage.

Primitive man and Nature were constant companions. Animism is as old as the human race, and as wide-spread. Our early ancestors conceived of everything as having its spirit--a tree, an animal, a man. Perhaps it is true to say that there is no tribe which did not entertain some view, however vague, of a future state. Few, if any, savage peoples believe in utter and complete extinction. The claim that this view was found among some North American Indians, some natives of New Guinea, and the Fuegians, is not established conclusively.¹ The conception of these peoples is more probably vague than one of unconcern; yet, if the claim be true, it is rare indeed. While many tribes have but vague notions in the realm of eschatology, others have views simple but graphic. The dead are, with nearly all of them, objects of dread.

No subject connected with his psychic life has so engrossed the mind of man as that of his condition after death. Savages in all regions of the world have generally very clear and vivid conceptions of the spirit-world--its life, its characteristics, its landscapes--and this suggests an intense preoccupation with the subject. The wide-spread fear of the dead points to a

¹See J. A. McCulloch, art. on "Primitive and Savage" views, under Extinction, H.B.R.E. v.XI, p.818.
very primitive idea that their state was not one in which life had ended....

The dead were sometimes considered living in the grave in bodily form. The grave was the house of the dead; hence the placing in the tomb of useful items, of weapons and implements of the craft of the deceased, toys for children, toilet articles and jewels for women. Also:

Such practices as binding the dead with cords, laying heavy stones or a mound of earth on the grave (doubtless to prevent their egress), or feeding the dead at the grave, or, again, the idea that the dead could come forth from the grave, not merely as spirits, but in the body—the root of the vampire superstition—all points in this direction....

There is ample evidence, also, of the idea of subterranean world of the dead. Here, many graves seem to make a wide region into which the individual grave is but a portal for entrance to or egress from it. Thus, ghosts or spirits may wander about, inhabit various bodies, animate or inanimate, drink and eat, or disturb the living. Sometimes they inhabit forests, or live in houses, rivers, mountains or lakes, as with the Papuans of Wakatimi. It remains to mention the next step—transmigration of souls—and this is not uncommon. Some of the Australian Blacks are said to believe in this; while among the American Indians it is well known that the belief of departed spirits entering to dwell within a wolf, or other animal, was

1Ibid., p.817.
2Ibid., pp.817, 818.
3Ibid., p.818.
long held in some tribes. These dead return in their assumed form to play pranks. Among the Pigmies of Africa the spirits of the dead live on in snakes and bush-pigs—another evidence of the fear of the dead. J. G. Frazer\(^1\) supports this suggestion. He says:

... the fear of the human dead,... on the whole, I believe to have been probably the most powerful force in the making of primitive religion.

Daily the sun died in the west. Man, whose own life was bound up intimately with the life of Nature as he saw it, soon conceived of himself as going to a western region of the dead where there was an island Spirit-world. Or, sometimes, this was thought of as being out on the wide expanse of the plains, and again, in the valleys. The fate of the wicked is by no means clear in each instance among primitive man. It was considered as essentially like this life and, in some measure, depending upon it. Retribution was in store for the unworthy dead. Dreams, trances and swoons, rather than ethical considerations, frequently consigned men to this unwelcomed state.\(^2\)

Among the Todas the place of the dead is to the west and is called Amnodr. The fate of the wicked is interesting:

... a ravine is crossed by a thread; the bad fall from it into a river and are bitten by leeches; they are then helped out by the people on the banks, and remain with them for a time proportionate to their badness... \(^3\)

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\(^3\)Ibid., p.318.
Among the things considered bad here are selfishness, jealousy, and a grudging spirit.

Some tribes have various categories and different places for those who fall into each. The "fiery Hells" found among some tribes may possibly be of Christian origin and added to some simple doctrine of belief in another region beyond this life.¹ This is probably true among the Payaguas, and the Parossi.

The Payaguas think that evil souls go to a place full of cauldrons of fire .... The Parossi believe that a fire which flickers up on the way to the other world destroys the wicked, but, should they survive, a horrible monster tears out their eyes and kills them .... the evil go to a spring where a continual fire burns them.

With the Tube-tube (Slade Island) of S.E. New Guinea,

"The spirits, however, act as judges, and those who do not attain the right standard are kept in an outer circle whence Elysium is seen by them. The very wicked must wander up and down the earth forever in great pain."³

The few peoples that we have considered by no means exhaust primitive and savage tribes. But they will serve to indicate what is generally true of them all. We shall find these major views of savage peoples reflected, in modified or expanded form, in other developed religious views.

¹Ibid., p.825
²Ibid., 826
³Ibid., p.826
1. Greek.

Our study of this people embraces its history from the acceptance of the Minoan civilization, about 1600 B.C., down to the Hellenistic period. Before 1600 B.C., we know little of the inhabitants of the mainland of Greece. Excavations thus far have brought little to our attention relating to our interest here. But the work of Sir Arthur Evans and others in Crete has furnished much detail of the Minoan civilization. A sound claim is made for the identity of the Minoan and Mycenaean religions. Assuming this to be true, the Mycenaean period, down to about 1200 B.C., may be viewed as a whole. This pre-historic period terminates with the Homeric poems, prior to which we have the Doric invasions from the north. The years 900 - 500 B.C. witnessed great colonial expansion. Then came the classical period, followed by the Graeco-Roman, or "Hellenistic" period, with which our study closes.

As Rohde points out:

Greek religion was a natural growth, not a special foundation, and the ideas and feelings which gave it its inward tone and outward shape never received abstract formulation.

Long before Homer enshrined Greek ideas in his works, this people, in myth and cult, had sought to express the beyond. It was con-

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2Psyche. (Preface to first edition, p.vi.)
ceived as a shadowy realm, a place unknown fully but dark and uninviting. To this abode all souls went. Burial practices and the existence of an early soul worship supports this view. Generally death was viewed pessimistically. It was thought of as evil, man's worst enemy. Achille's soul in Hades prefers a menial position on earth to being a king in the realm below.

At a very early time, the souls of the dead were considered "shades". These might be likened to the "alter ego", the "other self" or "second self", reflecting the other part but independent of it. These conceptions are not always consistent, however, and one is obliged to generalize. Sometimes the departed are pictured on the tomb-stones as like their living selves; at other times as they died. 1 The souls went to Hades.

The essential idea in the term "Hades" is two-fold:

(1) It is beneath the earth. Generally, the body of the dead was buried beneath the earth; thus, the abode of the souls was thought of as in the "place of the underworld".

(2) A departure of the life from the body is understood. The soul is set free to go "beyond the day and the sunset, far, far to the west". 2 Hades was a person. The dead went to his house. The name Hades (Hades) means "invisible". It was the general abode of the departed. They who entered Hades came not out, for

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2Ibid., p.229.
Cerebus, a fierce, three-headed dog, guarded the entrance. Wherever limestone soil allowed the rivers to disappear, or where the caves led to the underworld and mists rose from the cracks in the earth—there, it was thought, men had access to the nether regions. The Styx (Hatred), the Acheron (Mourning), and the Cocytus (Lamentation), are examples of imaginary rivers of the Greek thought. Charon ferried the dead; Lethe was the "Spring of forgetfulness". The geography of the realm is complex.

Nor was the idea of "burning flames" absent from the Greek conceptions. Another river, the Pyrphlegethon ("Flaming with fire") flowed into the Acheron. Over these rivers which separated the dead from the living, the soul of the deceased must pass. There was no escape.\(^1\) All must go to "Mighty Hades and dread persephone"; to gloom and darkness. The "Region of woe" is but dimly pictured. To it only a few abnormal sinners are consigned.

Among the religions of the world none is more a part of the life of the people than is the Greek. Their gods were but super-men in human mould, subject to the limitations of time and space; although, perhaps, not as much so as were ordinary men. For our knowledge of Greek religions, customs, and beliefs, we are indebted to the poets and philosophers. It seems to be agreed that those ideas presented by Homer are not mere construc-

\(^1\)Ibid., p.231.
tions of his imagination; they are rather the historic beliefs generally held among the entire people from early times, portrayed and preserved in the immortal epics.

While there is nothing particularly attractive about the Greek ideas of Hell, it may be said that, apart from the cases of a few special "sinners", these are of a much higher order than those of primitive man in general. There is a conspicuous absence of the crude and irrational elements that mark primitive systems. There is no "punishment for punishment's sake"; always there is a reason for the act. Both Greek tragedy and theology reflect this fact. Before the Homeric epics, Greek eschatological ideas were vague. Furthermore, in the entire field, there can be no claim made to any unanimity of opinion or interpretation among authorities.

As we have seen, primitive peoples are accustomed to attribute unlimited powers to the disembodied soul-powers, all the more formidable because they are not seen. They anxiously seek the good-will of these essentially active spirits. Although the pre-Homeric view among the Greeks was not dissimilar from this, it differed at some points. Something of the shadowy and even material notion of the spirit of the dead predominated. But these spirits were essentially impotent. While, to human eyes, these were dreamlike, materialism of some kind seems implied. Homer pictures them as requiring blood, the "life-principle"—for any degree of strength. This vitality was, at best, temporary, making consciousness and conversation possible. The eleventh book of the Odyssey makes two fairly definite statements
about the state of the dead. In the first place it is clear that death was the end of life as it was known here. The moral value of "filth and darkness", however, involves some consciousness of it; and to what extent those who shared this experience were appreciably conscious is by no means clear. Both thought and consciousness seem to come with the drinking of blood, so the spirits seek it. Tiresias says:

"Whosoever of the dead that be departed thou shalt suffer to draw nigh to the blood, he shall tell thee sooth; but if thou shalt grudge any, that one shall go back to his own place again."

This supplies the key to the second statement, namely, that there seems to be a complete lack, in this insubstantial state, of the joy known in real life.

The Orphics considered that for a soul to inhabit a body in the first instance was a punishment of limitation. The soul was divine and therefore immortal. The body was a tomb. At death, the soul survived or became extinct according to its inherent worth or the absence of it. The spirit lived in the tomb, in the old home of its former dwelling, or in a "Far land". Rebirth in another body is found as far back as Pindar, where three successive experiences cleansed the soul. Unworthy souls eventually lost their entity altogether. Some were rewarded, others punished. But, generally, punishment meted out for heinous crimes, as murder, or for infidelity towards the

1 Odyssey XI. 147.
gods, was relatively rare. What instances are known to us breathe a certain reasonableness. Where possible, reformation seems to have been the goal: punishment was remedial. Some souls, however, were too wicked ever to return to earth, and these remained forever in Tartarus.

The Greek was unlike the primitive man in this further consideration: Although his spirit world, superficially viewed, seems skin, the element of extreme fear is absent in normal life. Even if we grant that in early thought the element of fear was undeniably present, it must also be granted that this factor ameliorated in the advanced polytheism of Homer. Farnell says of this period:

"We see then that the current conceptions about the Gods had ceased to be inspired merely by fear. A milder sentiment had come to tinge religious thought; the deity was regarded not only as a righteous God of Vengeance, but as loving mercy and compassion and as a defender of the weak and destitute. . . . and the sanctity of the oath taken in the name of the deities of the upper and lower world was the basis of much private and communal morality."

Furthermore, in pre-Homeric times it is entirely possible that spirits were conceived of as returning to the living for weal or woe. And there were "furies"—personified curses; spirits of the lower world—to administer punishment for the crimes of violence. For the wicked, terrors were many. He might well fear these "winged beings, surrounded by serpents and armed with goads or lashes."


2Fairbanks, op. cit. p.239.
...Homer indeed himself was cognizant of such forms of terror as a black 'Ker'—Penelope likens Antinous to one; the ancient folklore of Argolis was aware of a bad spirit that once ravaged its homes. The early popular imagination was sure to have inherited or to have evolved such creations of fear; and a black Earth-Goddess with a horse's head and snake locks, who lived in a dark cave at Phigaleia, almost certainly in the Pre-Homeric period, was a sufficiently terrifying personality. ¹

Yet: We ought to recognize that at no period of his history was the ordinary Hellenic ghost-ridden, worried and dismayed by demoniac terrors, or by morbid anxiety about the other world, or his destiny after death; at least, he will not appear so when we compare his religion and theological records with those of Babylon, Egypt or Christendom. ²

Finally, the Greek Myths furnish us with two examples of futility as a form of punishment. In each instance there is a clear reason for the penalty. The first story is that of Sisyphus, who was a crafty and avaricious king of Corinth. After death, in the lower world, he was condemned to roll to the top of a hill a huge stone, which constantly rolled back again. His task was incessant. The second example is one interesting both in itself and in the fact that our English word 'tantalize' finds its essential meaning in the experience. Tantalus was the son of Zeus and the nymph Pluto, and father of Pelops and Niobe. As punishment for revealing the secrets of Zeus, he was plunged up to the chin in water, with the finest luscious fruits hanging over his head. Ever he grasped at the fruit, but they receded, as did the water when he stooped to

²Ibid., p.37.
drink. He was thus teased and tormented in repeated disappointments. The thing so desirable was unattainable, always withheld from his possession. Doubtless, this was Hell indeed!

Manifestly, the Greek mind entertained definite notions of severe punishment, but this was always considered the "wages of sin".

The soul's sojourn in Hades therefore was for a time of punishment and purification, even as life itself was a penance for sin. According to a common belief, at least in Plato's day, after a thousand years the soul entered a new incarnation, and so on through ten rounds of earth and Hades, until at last, freed from sin and earthly cross by faithful observance of a holy life on earth and by the purification which it underwent below, it returned to its divine abode; but those who persisted in sin were condemned to all the punishments which man's imagination could devise; the wicked were doomed to lie in mud and filth, while evil demons rent their vitals. Indeed the horrors which the medieval Christian loved to depict in order to terrify the wicked...were first devised by the Orphics and their heirs, for exactly the same purpose. 1

2. Roman.

Early Roman views of the fate of the human Soul, are not unrelated to those of the Greeks. With the passing years Rome borrowed, increasingly, the Greek ideas and culture, among which were eschatological terms and ideas. Superficially, the two peoples seem to have points of agreement in this field; yet, in Italy, the conceptions of the Soul's life were always more practical, less imaginative and picturesque, and, generally, harsher notions were entertained. The Larcs were spirits of the dead; Nanes the good spirits. The home of these was beneath the

earth, and they were worshipped at a place, "Mundus", a pit hollowed out of the earth. At the founding of a city this consecrated hollow was covered with a great stone "lapis manalis". By the removal of this, access to or egress from the lower region could be had.¹ The Larvae and Lemures were the souls given to mischief and harmful deeds. Care had to be taken that men were laid to rest properly. Later, bad souls were relegated to "Tartarus".²

The Romans regarded the spirits of the dead as, in some sense, divine. The tomb was always regarded as an altar. The living could, by offerings, influence, and in turn be influenced by, the dead. Various ceremonies expressed reverence for the dead. Very early, there is evidence that the dead were possibly buried within the family dwellings. Cemeteries have been found just outside cities. In early Rome the dead were buried in tombs shaped like huts similar to those used by the living. The deceased were considered as needing, in that state, all that was needed here; hence, a multiplicity of items were buried with him for comfort or use. These were considered as having ghostly survival.³ Periodic offerings of food and drink evidently possessed the same significance.

³Ibid., p.340.
There is greater fear of the dead in the Roman view than is found among the Greeks. The fact that the good spirits are called "manes", "the good people", is probably euphemistic. Fear of the dead is seen in appeasement of them; and various rites were used to expel undesirable spirits from the abode of the living.

G. F. Moore says: The spirit of the ancestors, the De Parentum, were believed to watch over the house and to avenge infractions of the ordinances of the family. The Romans had no vivid imagination of the state after death, and no notion of a retribution beyond; but they had their share of the world-wide belief in ghosts, spectres, and bogeys, and tried to dissuade their visitations, partly by offerings, partly by aversive rites, as when in the Lemuria the householder threw out nine black beans at midnight.1

In the VI th. book of the Aeneid, Virgil imitates the story of Odysseus's visit to the entrance to Hades to consult the soul of Tiresias. From this necromancy, or consultation of the dead, we gain a picture of its state. Virgil combines previous stories of visits in describing that of Aeneas to the lower world. Two doves sent by Venus conduct him to the tree with the golden bough. The Sibyl, taking this twig, leads him through the deadly vapors of Lake Avernus, into a cave, through a dark wood where dwell Harpies, Gorgons, and other monsters. They reach Acheron, where Charon ferries them through the fields of Sadness. At the parting of the ways, the abode of the lost souls is seen surrounded by the burning

river Phlegethon. Aeneas is not allowed to look, for:

The feet of innocence may never pass into this
house of Sin.

Their unspeakable woes are described, in part, by the Sibyl.
The majority of souls must be punished by successive re-in-
carnations. This fearful picture is heightened by the view
of its opposite, Elysium—the abode of the blest. Then, they
return. These scenes, it is said, are graphically depicted
in Etruscan tombs.¹

The Greek idea of a relentless and inexorable door-
keeper guarding the exit from Hades is reflected in the Roman
idea of a "Janitor". In Italy there were many spots on the
earth's surface at which the great underworld made its presence
known. Among the earliest Roman cults was that connected with
volcanoes; indeed, the original inhabitants of the city, the
Albans, were in all probability driven forth from their homes
by volcanic activity.

The old Roman religion was organized and regulated at
a very early time. As an established and fundamental insti-
tution of the state, "it was perpetuated with no essential
change through the whole age of the republic".²

We may say in truth that the Roman ideas were somewhat
gross and material; and the moral idea is less developed here
than in the Greek views. In this respect these ideas are not

¹Fairbanks, Mythology of Greece and Rome. p.238, footnote.
²Moore G. Foot, op. cit. p.551.
unworthy predecessors of later Latin theologians whose views we shall consider.

c) Egyptian.

Egypt was a civilization old, vast, and complex. Long before the Sphinx looked in immutable and open-eyed wonder across the desert; before the pyramids had begun to weather the slow grinding of Time, Kings ruled and died and religion flourished. From time immemorial, the narrow valley of the Lower Nile was inhabited by a people who subsisted by pastoral and agricultural pursuits. Like a long silver snake in a meadow of green, the Nile made her way to the sea beneath a flaming sun, and held the destiny of millions safe in the dependability of her fertility. Little wonder that Old Sol and the River became deified. The sun was Re; Osiris represented the Nile and its fertility. These two were surely Egypt's parents; and the child was cultured and religious.

The dead were greatly feared. Egyptian beliefs about the abodes and destinies of souls were confused:

...Nowhere is the jumble of inconsistencies, which seemingly never worried the Egyptian mind, more hopeless than here. [i.e. concerning the state of the dead] 1

Furthermore, each new period in Egypt's long history left its religious impress in some slight change or addition. Erman makes this point clear:

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...the confusion of ideas, national and local, old
and new, increased with every successive period, and
added to the mass of religious details that rejoiced
the Egyptian theologians, but which we regard with
horror. [1]

The Egyptians believed in an underworld region. Sokar
was one of the Gods of the Dead whose shrine, Ro-Setau, "the
gates of the ways", led straight to the underworld. [2] Kings and
men were always considered in different categories both in life
and death.

From the earliest times Egypt's religion was character-
ized by intimate relation between the gods, and animals, accord-
ing to the particular locality in which each was found. As we
have seen, primitive tribes have similar worship in this connect-
ion; but Egypt is peculiar in the "perpetuation of this worship
as a common pattern for religion to the latest times." [3] Thus,
in spite of slight variations, we may treat of our interest in
connection with this people as having a continuous history
through the Old and Middle kingdoms, and the Empire.

Early Egyptian religion was not divorced from myth and
magic; these being inextricably mixed with its "fetishism", or,
"totemism", as some prefer to label it. [4] Recent discoveries
have shown that Egyptian culture reached great heights under

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Archibald Constable and Co. Ltd. 1907. p.3.
the Fourth Dynasty; a standard not even surpassed in the Twelfth Dynasty. Here too, religion "appears in forms which were perpetuated without essential change to the end".1

Egyptian graves and burial customs bear ample evidence of their sharing the universal belief that the dead survive in a mode different from this life, but with the same needs. Frequently images in the form of portraits or metal masks accompanied the dead. It was believed that the image of the man was another body in which his "Ka", or "protecting genius"2 might have an imperishable habitation. Some early kings had with them in burial, in small side-chambers, their wives, guards and dogs. And much more might be said of buried treasures, embalming, and regular cults for the offerings of food, drink, and clothing. But the foregoing will suffice; the case for a life-like immortality is clear.

The dead inhabited the tombs. Their spirits were not always confined there, but might wander about at leisure, inhabit animals, or assume their form. The state of the dead generally follows the pattern of this life. About 2000 B.C. there was also a belief in "the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns"3 and in the "hidden places". Other primitive ideas are also reflected in Egyptian ideas. The

1Tbid., p.149.


dead were the "People of the West"1---"an oasis in the western desert". Osiris is the king of the dead.

The passage of the soul is pictured in the Book of Portals.2 Through these portals of the soul passes, but each gate in the series is formidable, being guarded by a great serpent, and is opened only by the pronouncement of the magical word by the god.

Not unlike the Mosaic decalogue, the "sins" to be considered at the judgment are, among others, murder, theft, oppression, adultery, lying, fraud, slander. These may be against man or god. The Pyramid text and the Book of the Dead furnish our information, in the main, concerning the future of the wicked. These texts combine references found in coffin texts and inscriptions found in the pyramids. The Pyramid text is much the older and more important.3 In considering the following, the moral note is seen to be very prominent, as is the fear element.

The deceased is led by Anubis into the great hall of Truth, the roof of which is crowned with flames. The 125th book of the Book of the Dead depicts the judgment. Osiris presides—he is the "perfect Judge". The candidate for trial is

2Ibid., p.194.
led before a court of forty-two justices. These represented
the original territorial divisions in Egypt. Their names are
interesting—Bone-Breaker, Fiery-Eyes, White-Teeth, Devourer
of Bowels, Blood Eater, and the like! Before these god—"gentle-
men of the jury", the scared sinner appears and pleads his case—
mainly by stating the negatives of his conduct. He is weighed
in the balance. In the event of an unfavorable decision—which
is an entirely possible decision of this august jury—a monster
called "Devourress", described as having "the body of a hippopo-
tamus and the head and jaws of a crocodile, squats beside the
scales with open mouth"¹ ready to devour him.

d) Hindu.

Aryan immigrants moved down from the central plateau of Asia, it is supposed, and settled in India, giving birth to the Sanskrit language and to the religion known successively as Vedism, Brahmanism, and Hinduism. This religion expressed itself in many shades of belief, but was characterized especially by idolatry and transmigration of souls. There are many sects, with divergent views, within this system; yet, all alike are orthodox Hindus. And there are many scriptures, some professing to be the revelation of the Supreme Being, while others do not. The Vedic literature includes what are commonly known as the four Vedas, the subsequent ritual writings called the Brahmanas, and the Upanishads which are philosophic additions. The Rig-Vedas consist of 1028 hymns, and are the oldest literature, belonging, probably, to between the 15th and 10th centuries B.C.¹

While considerable change took place in the course of centuries, this did not affect our particular interest appreciably. From the beginning gods and spirits abound—not without confusion—in this great religion of India. For centuries the dead were burned, excepting children and great saints, the bodies being taken to the banks of a holy river before death if possible. All kinds of precautions were taken to keep the spirits of Hell away, as surrounding the bed with a ring of

cow dung or by putting a sacred plant or stone by its side. Or a cow might be brought and the dead man would be transported across the waters of death by seizing her tail. Upon death, the body would be burned on an open pyre. When partly consumed, the skull was cracked by a blow with a club to allow the exit of the soul, and this was followed by food offerings for the benefit of the dead.

The wicked went to Hell, consisting of some twenty-one or twenty-eight divisions—there is no agreement at this point. Yama, once the ruler of the blessed dead, is now the infernal judge and executioner. But this point is disputed by A.B. Keith. Moore says:

...his two messengers bind the soul of the dead man and hurry it before Yama's judgment seat; there he is confronted by the recorder with his book, in which all the man's deeds, good and bad, are set down...

"On the thirteenth day, the soul having in the meantime grown a kind of intermediate body, the minions of Yama conduct it either to heaven or hell. The road to the latter is eighty-six thousand leagues long, and the hardships the hopeless sinner encounters upon it are a foretaste of the torments to which he is being hurried. Plunged at last into the particular hell to which he has been adjudged, he may find himself in a Bolgia full of heated caldrons, or of red-hot irons, or in a lake of blood or stinking mire, or be driven through a jungle where the leaves of the plants are sharp knives, or a plain paved with iron spikes; there is a hell of pincers with which the flesh is torn from the bones, and many more. These hells are not places of eternal punishment; the doctrine of rebirth, the transmigration of souls, maintains its place, and serves its old use in explaining the inequalities of earthly fortune;..."
Rebirths are clearly retributive. The soul may rise by good efforts or fall by bad ones in the next incarnation. And although punishment is not considered eternal, it is commensurate with the crimes of the individual and he must work out the consequences of his deeds through an innumerable succession of bodies.

There is another suggestion:

The fate of those who failed to achieve such a boon [heaven] may then have been... mere annihilation, with which would accord the stress laid by Rigveda on the length of life as the great aim of man. But we also hear of a deep abyss made for those who are false,...

Of other fates of the dead there is no direct proof in the Rig-Vedas. The Hindu views, as reflected in these statements, are extremely horrid and very vivid. Yet, though all this be true, there remain some admirable points of interest. There is a judgment of a personal nature, where merits and demerits are considered. There is retribution and degrees of punishment, but these are neither meaningless nor eternal torment. And, despite the hideous possibilities involved in transmigration of souls, there is in this grantedly unattractive doctrine the possibility, however remote, of the bad becoming better. The clearly moral nature of this picture is evident when it is contrasted with the viciously unjust creations of the Latin theologians of our Christian era.

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Buddhism is related to Brahmanism, which was the forerunner of Hinduism, and is thus a branch of the religion of India. Gautama, its founder, lived and died a Hindu and had no intention of giving rise to a new faith. Later Buddhism has, beyond a doubt, the most thoroughgoing eschatological systems of all religions, in the view of the writer. But originally this was not true; it was a development. Indeed, Buddhism began as a system of Humitarianism. Having "...no future life and no God higher than the perfect man—it has become a vast jungle of contradictory principles and of popular idolatry,...". It passed through many phases; it embraced idolatry, demonology, necromancy and fetishism. And, as there are no reliable scriptures before the Christian era, it is difficult to ascertain what is Buddhistic in an original sense and what is pure accretion.

One of the events that made the sixth century B.C. of great importance in the history of the world was the birth of Gautama. Born with great social advantages—a good home, wealth, and the power it gave—this great man was possessed of a "divine unrest", and tore himself away from these things and his wife and child in "the Great Renunciation". To attain

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1 Grant, G.M. op. cit. p.108.
2 Ibid., 109.
3 Ibid., pp110, 123 ff., note.
to Buddhahood was to become enlightened, to know. This, he devoutly wished, nor was his wish unrewarded. And he is known to history as one of its sweetest, purest characters. His emphasis was simple:

To cease from sin,
To get virtue,
To cleanse one's own heart—
This is the religion of the Buddhas. ¹

There are two important terms in Buddhism which we must briefly consider. These are "Nirvana" and "Karma". Nirvana means "extinct". To Gautama it meant the end of restlessness of heart and mind. Appetite and desire led inevitably to misery. To be rid of these, to attain to the extinction of desires was to attain to Nirvana, to cease to be. Karma meant that a man's experience in this life was conditioned by his acts in the previous state. It might be interpreted as being a substitute for Transmigration. Moore states it thus:

... The Indian religion was born of pessimism: to exist was to suffer, and the sufferings of the present life were multiplied by infinity in lives past and lives future with heavens and hells between—the eternal series of rebirth—in the inexorable causal nexus of the deed and its consequence (Karma). The cause of this misery lay in desire—ultimately, in the will to be; the only salvation, in the extinction of desire... The goal was the endless peace of Nirvana, freed from the illusions of self and soul, from desire and dislike, from the consequences of deeds done, from the wheel of rebirth—a state of which the master declared it profitless to ask whether it was existence or non-existence. ²

¹Ibid., p.114.
²Moore, G. F. op. cit. pp.80-81.
L. de la Vallee Poussin seems to consider Karma as impersonal. That is, "what transmigrates is not a person but his Karma".\(^1\)

At any rate, rebirth is conditioned by the individual's Karma, and acts have their retribution. "...Denying the continuance of the soul, Buddhism affirmed a continuity of moral consequences (Karma)".\(^2\)

The Hells of later Buddhism fall into two divisions: Hot and Cold, arranged in corresponding stages in each instance.

(a) Hot Hells.

Twenty thousand leagues under Jambudvipa (the southern part, ... ) is the Avichi hell ("no release")\(^3\) forming a cube of 20,000 leagues. Above it are seven other hot hells called ...(1) Sanjiva, 'reviving', because winds re-animate the dying damned; (2) Kalasutra, 'black string', which cuts the damned into pieces ...;

(3) Sanghata, 'dashing together', between mountains, etc.; (4) Raurava, 'weeping'; (5) Maharaurava, 'great weeping'; (6) Tapana, 'heating'; and (7) Pratapana, 'greatly heating'...\(^3\)

The general implication of these terms is clear enough, and none too pleasant. But there is much more detail. There are, on each of the four sides of Hell, excrescences, "hell jars", cells in which the wicked are tortured. These torture chambers are called 'fiery pit', 'chaff-fire', 'corpse quagmire', 'razor road', 'cruel bird forest', etc. There are sixteen such "Hell-jars", each having eight sub-divisions, giving a total of one hundred and thirty-six hot hells.


(b) Cold Hells.

These, too, are eight in number, and correspond in size and divisions to the hot Hells. These are placed in the 'intra-mundane darkness', where there are ghosts of fearful appearance. One of these Hells is called 'Atata', named from teeth knocking, or chattering against each other with the cold.

The duration of Hell is staggering.

If [from] a load of sesamum seed containing sixty bushels, ... a man ... every 100 years, were to take ... one sesamum seed, that load would sooner dwindle away than one Abbuda hell; and even as are twenty Abbuda hells, so is one Nirabbuda hell. 1

The time is interminable. The Sanjiva Hell is of five-hundred years, with one day and one night equal in length to fifty human years. Similar absurd descriptions abound. Those who take life will be short lived; the wanton injurer of living things will be diseased; the greedy and avaricious will be weak; and the non-student of good, stupid. Add to all this a Preta-realm, where ghosts linger about windows, fences and cross-roads--miserable creatures, long, lanky, with dishevelled hair and beard; mountain-bellied and needle-eyed, who ate filth--add this, and every foul, ugly, fearful creation of the mind, or that from which any one of the senses will recoil as being repugnant in the extreme; project all this into the various hells the Buddhists conceived, and some idea of their views of the fate of the wicked will be had. They are, in detail, too hideous for mention, and very graphically portrayed.

1Ibid., p.134.
f) Shinto.

Shinto, "The way of the gods", is the indigenous religion of Japan. The Orient, as a whole, has but little contribution to make to our discussion in this treatment. China, as viewed through the religion of Confucius, has never developed a thorough-going eschatological system of its own. Buddhism left its indelible impress on this land, as it did, by reason of its remarkable adaptability, upon Japan. The common man of Japan could be a Shintoist and a Buddhist at one time, and even reflect in his religion a good deal of Confucian influence, and not be in the least conscious of the origin of that which he embraced and cherished.

The historical period of Japan begins about the 7th century B.C. Before this time, it seems, mythology reigned supreme. Shintoism is a simple religion. Shinto gods are chiefly nature gods related to fertility cults--gods who were once men.¹ The religion of the "land of the sun" expressed reverence to its imperial ancestors and historical personages. It is suggested that it, like many another religion, passed through the phases of Totemism and the worship of the dead who lived on in the grave. There grew up also a connection between the gods as "preventative deities" and the ills considered caused by demons--"hostile and savage beings of the root country" and "hags of Hades".

¹Moore, G.F. op. cit. p.95.
The story of Izanagi's descent to Hades shows that by the side of this primitive belief in the continued existence in the tomb was the notion of an abode of the dead in the depths of the earth or beneath the sea, a place of darkness and loathsome corruption, imagined like the interior of some great tomb filled with decaying bodies. There are the "ugly hags of Hades", perhaps a kind of ghoul. To this "root country, the bottom country", as the remotest end of the world whence there is no return, the sins and uncleanness of the people are sent off in the great ritual of purification. 1

Most of the Hell ideas found in this religion are largely the product of the deeply interwoven later Buddhism. From this influence, Shinto reformers tried to break and to restore the pure Shinto religion, but these efforts were futile. Moore says further:

...One great field, however, Buddhism had to itself, namely, death and the future life, for here Shinto had nothing to say: heavens and hells, with all the fears and hopes that they excite, were beyond its primitive horizon. 2

In the Japanese religion the moral note is weak. It is almost non-moral. There is no retribution in the ordinary sense of the term. The future life was not a major concern. We may conclude:

The ancient Japanese religion had no very definite ideas of the future state of the dead. A land of Yomi, or darkness is frequently mentioned in ancient myths. Several gods are said to have gone there. It is probably a metaphor for the grave. 3

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1 Moore, G.F. Ibid., p.107.
2 Ibid., p.120.
g) Norse and Teutonic.

The Scandanavian and Teutonic peoples of north Europe, and those of Iceland, reflect, in their myths and ghost-literature, some interesting ideas of the fate of the wicked. But, as Craigie warns,

It is doubtful how much of this is genuine and how much is due to ordinary medieaval conceptions of heaven and hell... 1

Norse mythology continued until the eleventh century in the worship of Odin. Within this religion there are many divinities, good and evil. Two noteworthy evil deities are Utgard-Loke, a completely hideous being, and Asa-Loke, the "evil principle". The latter is extremely subtle in his workings for evil—he is even disguised in the beautiful. He is a seductive force, to lead astray, to allure, to ensnare; the sin or passion in the human race; the volcanic flame of the earth; the fierce serpent of the sea; and "pale death" in the underworld. 1 Thus, like Odin, he pervades everything. He is behind all terrible phenomena within the universe and in human nature. We might interpret him as the personification of the "problem of evil", a veritable Satan.

Much of our knowledge of this religion is inferential, as we have no extant sources. But we know of the long-practiced custom of placing articles with the dead. Here, as witnessed elsewhere, this seems to indicate a belief in immortality.


According to Icelandic literature, mounds were placed over the graves, suggesting that the grave is the home of the dead. The wicked go to a place of punishment.

The reward of the dead is believed to be according to his deserts. There are various abodes of the dead, many of them unpleasant. Murderers and perjurers are tormented in a great hall on "Corpse strand".

The walls of this hall are wattled with snakes, whose heads are turned inwards; these spout out venom which flows through the halls in streams, and in these streams the wicked are doomed to wade.

The wicked dead go to Hel. She is the unlovely goddess, or giantess, of the region to which the unworthy are relegated.

She rules over nine worlds in Niflheim. Her Home is called Helheim. The way thither, Hel-way, is long. Its course is always downward and northward. Her dwelling is surrounded by a fence or enclosure with one or more large gates. Gloomy rivers flow through her world. One of these streams is called Slid, which rises in the east and flows westward through the valleys of venom, and is full of mud and swords. A dog stands outside of a cave (Gnipahellir). With blood-stained breast and loud howling this dog came from Hel to meet Odin, when the latter rode down to enquire about the fate of Balder. Horrible is the coming of Hel, for she binds the dying man with strong chains that cannot be broken.

In this region of fog and mists, the northern limit of cold and darkness, the wicked dead, unworthy of Valhalla, is visited by Hel's maids. He can hear the gate of Hel harshly grate as it opens to receive him into her vast realm. It has nine divisions, each worse than the other. The last is the infernal

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2 Ibid., p.853, puot. from Snorris Edda.
pit. Here,

...The palace is named Anguish; the table, Famine; the waiters, Slowness and Delay; the threshold, Precipice; and the bed, Care. ¹

This after-world of spirits is manifestly closely related to the life-situation and sense-experience of this life.

h) Persian.

The ancestors of the Iranians, like those of the Aryans of India, migrated from the high plateau of central Asia. One movement of this people had been south-eastwards to overrun India; while another came south-westward into Persia, gave birth to the Zend language, produced the Zendavesta and, finally, established the Persian Empire. This happened some four or five thousand years ago, it is thought, but it is not certainly known. The direct Zoroastrian sources are the Gathas, the Later Avesta, the Pahlavi literature and the Parsi-Persian writings.² There is something attractively straightforward and consistent about the Persian religion. Its influence has been great, and we find its tenets reflected in Judaism, Christianity and Mahommedanism. It was Dante's inspiration, in part at least; and his "Divine Comedy" portrays the Persian love of symmetry.

Excepting for the Gathas, the picture of the fate of the wicked is fairly clear in the Zoroastrian scriptures.

¹Ibid., p.388.
The Later Avesta contains several passages explicitly describing how the soul of the wicked is believed to hover near its earthly tenement, in fear, for three days and three nights before it passes to the individual judgment. The Pahlavi and the Parsi-Persian texts not only paraphrase the Avestan material with elaboration of detail but also contribute some new ideas concerning the state of the soul during this period of suspense.

In this period the experience of the soul of the wicked is in every way opposite to that of the righteous. It is described thus:

"Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda: 'O Ahura Mazda, most holy Spirit, Creator of the material world, Thou Holy One! When a wicked one dies, where does his soul abide that night?' Ahura Mazda answered: 'There, indeed, in the vicinity of the dead, O Holy Zarathushtra, it runs about chanting the words of the Kima Gatha. Unto what land, Ahura Mazda, shall I go to flee, whither to flee? On that night his soul experiences as much unhappiness as all that which (he experienced as) a living being.'"

This continues three nights. The Pahlavi literature supports this passage. In the Artak Viraz Namak is related Saint Viraz's vision of the state of the wicked. They undergo terrible tortures. The "Ordinances of the Spirit of Wisdom" further says of this period:

"On the first night the soul becomes restless on account of its own evil thoughts, on the second night on account of its own evil words, and on the third night on account of its own evil deeds;...".

The soul-in-waiting has a great desire to re-enter the body that it might make amends for its sins, but this is denied it.

1 Ibid., p.9.
2 Ibid., pp.21,22.
3 Ibid., p.24.
The later Farsi-Persian literature describes the soul's weeping and anguish upon the realization of its wretched lot.¹

What we call the conscience is known to this religion as the Daena. Man is endowed with free will and is entirely responsible for choices.² He is a moral agent. The judgment is an individual one; the merits and demerits of the dead will be weighed. It is this element, and the entire picture of the tremendous struggle of right against wrong, of light against darkness, with the final victory of the right, that makes Zarathushtra's message so virile. There is punishment for the unrighteous, but this religion is by no means one of gloomy despair and pessimism.

The soul of the dead must pass over the Chinvat Bridge.

...when it takes a step over the Chinvat Bridge, there blows to him an exceedingly foul wind from Hell, so foul as is unheard of among all the stench of the world. There is no stench fouler than that; and that stench is the worst of all the punishments that are visited upon it.³

It is then met by an ugly old hag—the personification of its own sins.

When it reaches the middle of the Chinvat Bridge, it sees an apparition (surat) of such extreme ugliness and frightfulness that it hath never seen one uglier and more unseemly than her. And it is as much terrified on account of her as a sheep is of a wolf, and

¹Ibid., pp.26,27.
³Pavry, op. cit. p.45.
wants to flee away from her...

She speaks (thus): 'I am thy own bad actions (kardar i bad). I myself was ugly, and thou madest me worse day after day, and now thou hast thrown me and thine own self into misery and damnation, and we shall suffer punishment till the day of the Resurrection.'

And she embraces it, and both fall headlong from the middle of the Chinvat Bridge and descend to Hell.¹

There are stationed at the Chinvat Bridge a triad of judges, Mithra, Sraosha and Rashnu.² The bridge widens for the passage of the just, but at the approach of the wicked becomes as the edge of a razor.³ This picture is essentially the same in all sources.⁴

...We can say without hesitation that the doctrine of the Individual Judgment is one of the cardinal teachings of Zarathushtra concerning the life hereafter,... ⁵

The judgment is altogether impartial. The wicked man's choice has led him to hell. Hell is "not conceived of primarily as a sphere of retribution." ⁶ It is described as a place of "infinite darkness". Wicked dead surround the evil one upon arrival, demons mock him, and Angra Mainu, the evil partner in the Zoroastrian "dualism", and king of the lower world, sends him loathsome and poisonous food.⁷ This, and "much misery and

¹Ibid., p.45.
²Ibid., p.67.
³Moore, G.F. op. cit. p.399.
⁴Parvy, op. cit. p.105.
⁵Ibid., p.59.
⁶Moore, G.F. p.398. op. cit.
⁷Ibid., p.400.
torments of many kinds", must be suffered until the resurrection and the last judgment. Some torments are retaliatory.\(^1\)

After the final judgment,

\[
\ldots \text{the fire will melt the metal in the mountains till it flows like a river, and in its streams all are made pure.} \quad \text{\cite{mazdeism}}
\]

Further, hell, the Inferno, is called Drujodemana-- 'house of the druj (or of the lie)'\(^3\)

Mazdeism has a famous prose legend. Like Dante's of Christianity, there is in the Book of Arta-i Viraf, the favorite legend of the Parsis, a description of hell. St. Viraf describes the awakening conscience of guilt, the keen sense of the wrong done in life, the great weeping of those who seek repentance with tears. He says of the descent to hell:

\[
\ldots \text{I beheld cold and heat, drought and stench, to such a degree as I never saw or heard of in the world. And when I went further I beheld the greedy jaws of Hell, like the most frightful pit, descending into a very narrow and fearful place; \ldots} \quad \text{\cite{moulton}}
\]

Moultoun sums up the picture thus:

Hell is full of darkness, sad voices, stench, foul food, and cold. It would seem that the conception of it sprang from the privations of winter on the steppes during the migration southward, when the preciousness of the house-fire made Atar the very symbol of all that was best for man. For the Iranian, hell and the demons were always in the north. The idea of darkness is the distinguishing feature of the House of the Lie. It worked out in the

\(\text{\cite{1}}\)

\(\text{\cite{2}}\)

\(\text{\cite{3}}\)

\(\text{\cite{4}}\)
later fancy which conceives the damned so close together that they seemed an indistinguishable mass; yet in the darkness each ever wails, "I am alone!"

The symbolism of fire was kept out of this eschatology for obvious reasons. It was left to the imagination of Milton to combine the symbols:

A dungeon horrible on all sides round
As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible.\(^1\)

This great religion of Persia strikes a grand note when compared with all that we have considered before it. There is a prevailing optimism that, even though evil in its various forms may seem to be the victor in the struggle, finally the works of the devil in their every form shall be annihilated. Right is might. God shall triumph! Ultimately,

...The works of the devil shall be destroyed, and he himself shall be for ever banished from the universe; the earth will be renewed, and hell itself purged by fire; men...after...the just retribution, will be purified and restored to the eternal life of holiness, and all evil will be forever done away.\(^2\)

1) Jewish.

Early Judaism was little concerned with eschatology. Prior to the rise of the Prophets there was practically no reference to the individual as such in this regard. God was working out His purposes in the group; Israel's collective end was always the important consideration. Yahweh was a God of justice and right, but this was true, primarily, with national reference. The monotheistic emphasis arose within Israel—-and with it the clearly individual note—in the eighth— and

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\(^2\) Moore, G.F. op. cit. p.404.
seventh-century prophethood. Before this time primitive eschatological ideas were derived from Semitic heathenism. Ancestor worship and sacrifices to the dead were practiced; the dead were greatly revered. As in ancient Greece, the family grave was originally in the house of the living, and all the graves were thought of as being united in one underground realm called Sheol, and translated "Hell". "Hell" is used to render the Hebrew Sheol (שֵׁלֹם, or שְׁלֹם), or "a hollow", and therefore means the vast subterranean resting-place which is the common receptacle of the dead. It is now generally agreed that the word Hell comes from the root צלז, "to make hollow" (comp. Germ. Hölle, "hell", with Höhle, "a hollow", and therefore means the vast subterranean resting-place which is the common receptacle of the dead.

In Old Testament times, "Sheol" was the grave; it was in the lowest parts of the earth; "the land of darkness". At death the soul went to Sheol; human relations ceased; but a vague sort of self-consciousness continued. But there was no clear knowledge, no wisdom, no life there. Yet, in the earlier ideas, there seems to be some movement:

2 Ibid., p.19.
3 Ibid., p.20,23.
4 Ibid., p.33.
6 Ibid., p.39.
Although there is no agreement on the point,\(^1\) it seems to the writer that the weight of evidence favors the view that there is very little retribution in the Hebrew picture of the fate of the wicked. This idea, where present, is a late development.\(^2\) It is suggested in such passages as Psm. 49:14:

> Like sheep they [the fools and brutish men] are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them....

There was the conception of the "Day of Yahweh". God, in His terrible majesty, will destroy Israel's enemies. Joel\(^3\) pictures the judgment of the heathen in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Also, there is a certain fearful prospect in passages\(^4\) as:

**Isa. 66:24.** And they shall go fourth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched: and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh.

**and Dan. 12:2.** And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

A world judgment and destruction is implied. God will destroy the enemies of Israel, and her spiritual foes. The worst that can be said about the Jewish ideas, then, is that they are relatively mild. Few and vague are the hell ideas in the


\(^3\) Joel 3:2 f.

\(^4\) King Jame's Version. See also Isa. 4:4.
canonical scriptures of this great religion. The "torment" idea is absent.

However, in the post-exilic apocryphal writings there are many apocalyptic passages which indicate a decided development. Also, there is literature is known as the "Pseudepigrapha". These were the books that appeared under assumed names, chiefly in the two centuries preceding the Christian era. They led to a new view in eschatology, and at the same time bridged the gap between the Testaments.

Reinterpreting and thus reechoing the old prophecies, the apocalyptic writers and speakers claimed to be possessed of the Divine Spirit, like the prophets of yore, ... ¹

And, "However much these Apocalyptists were indebted for such radical world concepts to Parseeism, they gave their message [a] specific Jewish character... ²

Apocalyptic literature grows out of a period of gloom, bitter trial, political strife and crises, or national commotions. Thus, it is to be expected that it will greatly stress a message of hope, "judgment for the wicked and salvation for the good". This it did. Under this stimulus, no greater advance was made in this period than in the determination and development of those eschatological ideas which bear upon the reward and punishment of the good and wicked respectively.

Inequalities would be adjusted; wrongs redressed. Whereas the Old Testament had little to say about individual immortality, this belief now became more assured, more clearly defined.

²Ibid., p.60.
This also characterizes the Talmudic writers. The dim, shadowy state in Sheol did not satisfy the demands of a more mature and sadly experienced people. The sixth century had witnessed the Babylonian Captivity, and with it the contact of the more hopeful Persian outlook. The Maccabean wars strengthened the growing feelings for personal immortality, resurrection of the body\(^1\) and a just distribution of rewards and punishments. Regarding punishment, the vindictive note is sometimes apparent. And the Messianic hope received new impetus.

The book of Wisdom says "...the ungodly shall be punished according to their own imaginations".\(^2\) The same hints of future retribution are scattered throughout the books of the Maccabees. In the rabbinical traditions the sinners not beyond hope went to Gehenna where remedial punishment was meted out according to their deserts, and they then passed to Paradise—Abraham's Bosom. The incurably wicked, it seems, were annihilated. There is no trace in the Talmud of rabbinical writings of eternal punishment; it is temporary.\(^3\)

"Gehenna" (Ge=valley; Hinnom=a family name) means "the valley of Hinnom".—a valley on the west side of Jerusalem where

\(^{1}\)II Mac. c.7.

\(^{2}\)3:1,5,10.

refuse was burned. It is translated "hell".

There is a great impropriety in translating two words, so different in their derivation and meaning, by one and the same word in our language. Gehenna occurs neither in the Septuagint Greek of the Old Testament, nor in any classic author extant in the world. Both Tophet and Gehenna, amongst the Jews, came gradually to express a state of torment, and at the time of the Messiah, were frequently used to denote a future state of punishment. It is suitably enough translated hell in our language, because the ideas attached to the English word hell very much correspond to the word gehenna about the Christian era. 

In addition it might be said that Gehenna is known by the names "Abbadon", "Mire of clay", "Pit of corruption", "Horrible pit", "Shadow of death" and "nether parts of the Earth"; also, it is sometimes confused with the term "sheol". It never implied "torment" in its original usage. It was a rift in the earth used for destruction.

Some of the unlovely expressions that characterized later Buddhism have their equivalent in the rabbinical traditions, where the thieves are to fill an unfillable tank; the impure sink into a quagmire; those that sinned by the tongue are suspended thereby; others by the hair, feet, and eyelids. Some eat hot coals and sand, are devoured by worms, or placed alternately in snow or fire. The Book of Elijah says:

"The day of gloom will then come and last forty days; then the dead will be awakened and brought to judgment.

3Ascribed chiefly to R. ben Levi.
The wicked will be delivered over to the torments of hell....

The Book of Enoch best represents the apocalyptical literature of this period. Of it Buttenweiser says:

In chapters xli--xlvii Enoch (Metatron) reveals to Ishmael the mysteries of creation and shows him... the spirits of those angels who were punished because they did not give praise to God at the right time, and whose bodies were turned to great fiery mountains...; the places of punishment and tortures of the wicked in hell....

How much was the later Jewish eschatology influenced by the Persian religion? This is a moot question. Were these two great religions parallel in development, or did cultural borrowing take place? It is significant that the developments within the Jewish ideas took place, in the main, following the exile. There was ample contact between the peoples both by caravan routes and in the exilic experience over a considerable period. That borrowing did take place is an attractive and entirely possible theory; yet, of course, the mere fact that the two religions have much in common by no means proves this point.

Clearly, the Jewish experience in the Captivity and in the subsequent events was one of great sorrow. The Temple had been destroyed; disintegration marked the next four hundred years. In such a national experience of decline, it would be likely indeed that the optimism of the Persian faith would

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2Ibid., p.678.
reawaken and revive the Messianic hope in the nation, and the hope of immortality and reward in the individual. These hopes were embraced; what is more likely than that the message of Zoroaster was their inspiration?

Most authorities support the above contention. Mills at length compiles the many points of agreement between the two religions. He says that nearly all the factors of our religion are found in this one.

Such then are the historical literary facts, uncontested for the most part, the great mass of them, and also incontestable; and this, whatsoever may be their possible or impossible, exterior historical connection with Hebrew theology, or with our own. The points deduced from them clearly show that they contain the very most essential elements of 'our own religion' in its advanced, if still formative, condition, from the date of the Captivity, or before the time of Christ, and after the Restoration from the Exile.2

To say that these two parallel religions had not any communication between them, he says, is a "marvellous phenomenon" indeed. Israel lacked many factors before the exile, then had them:—a "definite judgment", resurrection, clear heaven, millennium, hell, etc. Whence came these doctrines? Mills "...affirms the reciprocal influence of the two systems, the one upon the other",3 but suggests the preponderant influence of successful Persia upon this handful of mourning captives. This influence, in turn, deeply dyed the New Testament writers, we think. We study the genealogy of the body of Christ Jesus;

1Our Own Religion in Ancient Persia. op. cit.
3Ibid., p.47.
why not, asks Mills, study the more important genealogy, namely, of His thoughts, His mind? As we shall see, the Pharisees of the New Testament era believed in the resurrection of the body and in future rewards and punishments. They took over some of these late apocalyptic views and, without a doubt, embraced among other things, much of the Persian eschatology. Thus it was that Christianity found a favorable environment for its teachings among the Jews. Nor can we doubt that the Greek influence upon the Jews was strong after the Alexandrine era. As we have seen, the Rabbinical literature had a vindictive tinge. The Greek "Tartarus", which implied torment, seems to have influenced the later Pharisees.

j) Mohammedanism.

Mohammedanism is the latest of all the great extant religions of the world. Mohammed, its founder, was born in the sixth century of our era. This religion revolves around his person; he is the sole author of its Bible, the Koran. It is considered that Mohammedanism reflects much of Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. The Koran abounds in pictures of the after-life, related with monotonous repetition. Its eschatology is a splendid example of gross materialism, eternal torment, and the moulding of thought and action by the fear of hell. Martyrs for the cause live in the presence of Allah. The "wicked" in this instance are chiefly the non-conformists and infidels. Yet, in fairness, we must recognize that here, as elsewhere, a development of ideas took place.
in the history of the religion. What characterized later Mahommedanism was not necessarily conceived in the mind of its founder. Throughout the unlovely descriptions of the fate of the wicked there is extreme sensuousness and vividly grotesque physical torture.

There is to be a judgment. While awaiting it,

"...the wicked are tormented... in a foul dungeon."¹

At the judgment,

...God will judge from great books as long as one can see. But a bit of paper with the Muslim confession on it will outweigh all the evil deeds of a man's life.²

The damned are "the companions of the fire", and hell is the image of actions performed on earth. Infidels are beaten before and behind by two examining angels,

"...then crushed down into the earth and left to be bitten by great serpents. Their cries of pain may be heard by all,..."³

The infidels' actions come before him "as a devil with a hideous face" to taunt them. Then:

"The recording angels who follow men all through life witness against them... All must now cross the bridge as-Sirat, which passes over hell to Paradise, and is finer than a hair and sharper than the edge of a sword,... the wicked fall or are thrown from it to hell."⁴

Among other fearful things, the element of fire is present and

³ Ibid., p.849.
stressed in the portrayal of hell. It is ever-lasting, the Koran says.

They will live 'in hot blasts and boiling water and a shade of pitchy smoke'. They 'shall broil upon a burning fire, shall be given to drink from a boiling spring, no food shall they have save from the foul thorn, which shall not fatten nor avail against hunger'. They shall abide therein for ages. No cool thing shall they taste or drink...They will broil in the fire, and, 'whenever their skins are well done' then other skins will be given them, 'that they may taste the torment'. Here in the hell of fire they will dwell for ever and ever. 1

One of the arguments sometimes presented against the doctrine of eternal torment in the flames of hell is that it would require a miracle. Nothing that is known to man will burn eternally; any substance will burn out in time. Mahomedanism makes no attempt to cover up the fact that this is exactly what does happen. God is all-powerful. He will recreate men over and over that they may be burned again and again! Furthermore:

The fire of hell shall be seventy times as hot as the fire of the world. God will make the bodies of the infidels large, so that they may suffer more. They will be given food infinitely loathsome, of which they will eat and still be hungry. They will be bitten by serpents as large as two hundred camels, and by scorpions as large as mules, and the bites shall give pain for forty years.'2

Little wonder that Mahomedanism has been notoriously militant, offering "the triple option--Islam, the sword, or tribute".3 There was Purgatory for all, save those dying in

2Ibid., p.850.
3Grant, G. M. op. cit. p.25.
battle! These went to God. This was no small incentive for conquest.

Different words used for hell seem to signify seven different divisions or realms of hell:

Jahannam (Gehenna) the purgatorial fire, is for Muslims; Lazai, the flaming fire, for Christians; al-Hatamah, the raging fire, for Jews; Sa'ir, the blazing fire, for Sabaeans; Saqar, the scorching fire, for the Magi; Al-Jahim, the fierce fire, for idolaters; Hamirjeh, the abyss, for hypocrites.¹

Clearly, the ethical consideration doesn’t enter into Moham medan eschatology. Despite this fact, Islam’s tenets have been a mighty dynamic in her history.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

"Eschatology", the "doctrine of the last things", is expressed in such New Testament passages as John 6:39 (ἐν τῷ ἔος ἐξῆλθεν σοι ἡμέρα), "the last day"; 1 Peter 1:20 (ἐν ἐξηλθεν τῶν μυστηριῶν), "the last times"; and Matt. 12:45 (τα ἔξω τῆς τάρας) "the last state".1

The words "Hades"--the equivalent of the Old Testament "Sheol"--, "Gehenna", and "Tartarus", are all indiscriminately translated "Hell" in the Authorized Version, as follows:-


TARTARUS: 11 Pet. 2:4. (only mention)

Other similar passages, considered along with these direct references to "Hell", 1 enable us to gather some idea of the fate of the wicked as entertained in the minds of the New Testament writers. In expressions like "eternal damnation" (Mk. 3:29), and "eternal judgment" (Heb. 6:2), we are by no means justified in assuming that the scriptures necessarily mean "eternal" with the connotation we usually give the word. It is

1 A. V.
evident from other passages\(^1\) that the meaning may be "for a long time" or "of long duration". The word is obviously used in this figurative sense.

**Gehenna.** In our investigation of the thoughts of the New Testament writers, in regard to our interest in the fate of the wicked, we must keep in mind that all the "Gehenna" references cited above, excepting the one in James3:6, are recorded as the words of Jesus, not as those of the writers themselves. He seems to describe this place as one where "their worm never dies" and where the fire is never to be quenched. This valley of Hinnom was, in ancient times, associated with human sacrifice.\(^2\) Bodies of dead animals and criminals were burned there, along with refuse. Eschatologically, it is a place of future punishment, but not necessarily of endless torment, although this may be the meaning of the term as employed.\(^3\) Originally this was not so.

**Hades** is the general abode of the dead, the New Testament equivalent of "Sheol" in the Old Testament, and is used with essentially the same connotation as the latter, namely, a pit under the earth. It is characterized by darkness and probable inactivity, the degree of consciousness not being clear. The passages cited, with one exception,\(^4\) do not imply punishment. It is the place of waiting, the "unseen world".

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\(^1\)Gen.17:8;13:15;49:26. 11Sam.7:16; 1Chron.17:14.

\(^2\)11Chron.33:6; Jer.7:31.


\(^4\)Lk.16:19f.
Tartarus is used but once. In the Greek idea, as we have seen, the wicked are tortured here, sometimes never to come out again, at other times finally to become extinct. At best, the suggestion in the use of the word is sinister indeed.

We deem it best to consider the teaching of the New Testament from the following view-points: Synoptic gospels, Johannine, Pauline, Petrine. Alger makes the interesting observation that the popular view of the day was not entirely free from the idea of transmigration of souls.¹ But this did not emanate from the New Testament.

a) Synoptic Gospels.

The Messiah had come. In his spiritual Kingdom is incorporated all that was best in the past. Believers are related to him personally. He is the Head. Eschatologically, our realm of discourse embraces and enlarges upon Jewish terms and ideas. The end of the collective people of God is not neglected; yet, the fate of the individual is more particularly stressed. The moral and ethical note is at its height. Christ gives the world a synthesis of the collective and the individual ends;² this with reference both to the righteous and the wicked. But there are some passages relative to the punishment of the wicked that are not without their difficulties from an ethical view-point.

¹Alger, W.R. op. cit. p.218f.
²Charles, R.H. op. cit. p.363f.,370.
At the last day there will be a judgment:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment:...  

We do not consider a discussion of the Parousia passages relevant to our treatment of the fate of the wicked. That there is taught a final judgment is agreed. We shall not concern ourselves with the detail of it, but rather with the picture presented in the Synoptic gospels of the actual state of those, who, finally, are not "saved" unto "eternal life", i.e., the "wicked". In "that day", Christ will be the sole judge. He shall render unto every man "according to his deeds". The wicked seem to be denied the resurrection in the first two gospels, but Luke indicates a general resurrection. But, we suppose, the general resurrection is not essential to the final judgment.

As we have pointed out, there are six references to Hades in the Synoptics. Whether found here or elsewhere, we may dismiss nine of the ten usages in the New Testament, with a single statement: There is no punishment necessarily implied either in the text or the context where the word Hades is used. The translation "hell" is both unfortunate and inaccurate; eisegesis rather

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2 Passages relating to the Second Coming of the Lord.
3 Matt. 7:22
4 Matt. 16:27
6 Lk. 16:19f. is the exception.
In the instance of Dives in Hades (Lk.16:19f.), the word here presents a unique usage. While the primary purpose of the passage is not the portrayal of the state of Hades, this description is unusually clear. Here Dives is in torments. He says "...I am tormented in this flame". Furthermore, he is fully conscious and can exercise his faculty of memory. This passage, whether intended to be an accurate statement of the fate of the wicked even in Hades, or whether it was mere "accomodation", indicates that either Jesus or popular belief, or both, accepted this viewpoint. Only to this extent are we interested in it.

All but one of the usages of Gehenna are in the Synoptics. The wicked are cast down to this place after the final judgment. It is like the "lake of fire" in the Apocalypse. Hell, in these Gehenna passages, has the idea of destruction by fire. Charles says of this:

...The fire spoken of in this connection (Matt.v:22) is not to be conceived sensuously, but as a symbol of the divine wrath, which vividly represents the terrors of this judgment. This place or state of punishment is likewise described as "the outer darkness" (Matt.vii:12), the place of those who are excluded from the light of the kingdom. The torment appears to be a torment of the soul or disembodied spirit....

b) Johannine.

That the New Testament Apocalypse, the letters of John, and the fourth gospel are the work of a common author, John by

1Rev.19:20; 20:10,14,15.

name and probably the apostle John, is the opinion of the writer. Therefore we shall consider these writings as a unit. Neither the gospel nor the letters mention the words Hades or Gehenna. The latter is not mentioned in the Apocalypse, although its equivalent seems suggested in the "lake of fire" passages already cited, and Hades is here used four times.

The Apocalypse and the Zoroastrian system have similar ideas. We cannot say to what extent these were taken over from the Persian faith, but that John was at least influenced is highly probable. The unfaltering certainty that God's own cause is at issue here and now, and that it will ultimately prevail; the sweeping presentation of the mighty struggle between the forces of good and evil, right and wrong, light and darkness; the overwhelming worth of things spiritual as set over against those material;—these are among the common elements of the two presentations.

The judgment at "the great day of God" is represented by the figure of slaughter, and birds of prey are summoned to eat the bodies and blood of men.¹ At Armageddon (Megiddo), Anti-Christ and his cohorts are annihilated, the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire, and their followers are slain by the sword.² A temporary Messianic kingdom seems to intervene, at the end of which Satan will be loosed from his prison in the abyss. Finally, God Himself sends fire from heaven and the devil is cast

¹Rev. 19:17, 18, 21.
²Rev. 16:16; 19:20, 21.
into the lake of fire with his allies. Then follows the general resurrection, when all are judged according to their works as recorded in the heavenly books. The wicked, with death and hades, are thrown into the lake of fire. The second death follows. It is, seemingly, the death of the soul, as the first death is the death of the body. Whether this is annihilation or eternal punishment, or punishment and then annihilation, is not clear. But there is no suggestion of its being a remedial punishment.

The fourth gospel presents nothing new regarding Hades and Hell. In the famous verse, John 3:16, the author presents the idea that God gave His Son that (to the end that) "whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life". These two ideas seem to be set over against each other. Does he mean by "perish" annihilation? The same word is translated "marred" and "lost" elsewhere, and evidently refers to their failure to be worthy of heaven. There is a general resurrection in which

...all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth;...and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment."

There is no specific eschatological teaching relative to the fate of the wicked in the three short Johannine letters.

1 Rev. 20:12.
2 Rev. 20:14, 21:8.
3 Mk. 2:22.
4 Matt. 10:6; Lk. 15:4.
5 Jn. 5:23, 29.
c) Pauline.

Paul's eschatological ideas show, not unexpectedly, that he inherited them largely from Judaism. His "graduate" instruction was at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem. In his writings "we find no single eschatological system. His ideas in this respect were in a state of development." As is readily seen in the Thessalonian letters, Paul is greatly interested in eschatology; he has little to say, however, about the actual state of those whom he describes as "perishing". Nowhere does he use the words Hades or Gehenna. There will be a great apostasy with the consumation of the now-present activity of the Anti-Christ; the coming of the Lord will be cataclysmic; and it will usher in the final judgment. Anti-Christ will then be annihilated "with flaming fire"; vengeance will be taken on the godless among the Gentiles and Jews, and on the careless, indifferent, and hostile. The doom of the wicked is "eternal destruction".

There is an essential agreement in the Corinthian letters with the foregoing statement. Christ will be the final Judge in

1 Acts 22:3.
2 Charles, op.cit. p.437f.
3 II Thes.2:3,9,10.
4 II Thes.2:8.
5 I Thes.4:6; II Thes.1:8.
6 I Thes.5:3; II Thes.1:6.
7 II Thes. 1:9.
"the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Cor.5:10). A strong retributive tinge runs through Paul's writings; "he that hath done wrong shall receive again the wrong that he hath done".1

Paul's picture of the fate of the wicked is conjured up in the mind in the word-pictures he uses rather than in an actual description of the state of the dead. One would never gather from a reading of his epistles that the end of the ungodly was something greatly to be desired. It seems to the writer to be severe indeed; and, although he refrains from the use of Gehenna and Tartarus in his narrative, the essential significance of these expressions is nevertheless employed. The punishment is "subjective and self-executed",2 we think. Of course, as we have shown earlier, it would be unfair to assume that Paul's use of "damnation" and "eternal", whether employed together or independently, means of endless duration. But we are of the opinion that he means either that or final annihilation of the wicked. The cause of Christ is his "magnificent obsession" and he has little patience with the hardened rejectors of the gospel who "will not" accept the Christ. The reason for this is that--"...we shall be saved from wrath through him."3--and we think we do Paul no injustice if we append: "only through him". The writings of Paul greatly influenced Latin and reformation theologians.

1Col.3:25; also II Cor.11:15 and Eph.6:8.
2Charles, R.H., op.cit. p.463.
3Rom.5:9.
d) **Petrine**

Our sources for Petrine eschatology are not confined to his epistles; the book of Acts records the earliest form of it. He, too, is influenced by his Jewish background. This is seen, for instance, in his citing the sixteenth psalm: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades"\(^1\) as a prophecy concerning the resurrection of Christ. This is clearly in the Jewish "Sheol" idea.

Peter believed that Jesus, having died, went to be with the departed souls of all generations. He argued that the soul of Jesus would not be left there, implying that it had been there for a time. He says of David that "he is not yet ascended into the heavens". Christ, according to this writer, went to preach to the "spirits in prison", meaning the "underworld". The Apostle seems to picture all the souls waiting in this shadowy realm until "the day of the Lord". Then those who rejected Christ will be punished, but Peter makes no definite statements about the form of this punishment will take, after Christ judges both the "quick and the dead". The one reference to Hell (Tartarus) is in II Peter 2:4. It relates to the punishment of angels, not to that of men; yet there lingers a suspicion that a similar fate awaits the wicked of the context. That was his point in making the reference. He adds to this:

> The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly... and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Acts 2:27,31.

\(^2\)II Pet. 2:9
And he is even stronger in another statement, but not less vague:

But the heavens and the earth...are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. ¹

The remainder of the New Testament has but a few scattered references to the fate of the wicked, but their implications are not different from the ideas already expressed. Jude refers to the "woes" of the wicked, to whom is reserved the "blackness of darkness for ever". The cities of Sodom and Gomorrha are cited by him as examples of those "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire". The Christians are to save some "pulling them out of the fire".

It cannot be stated for certain that the writers of the New Testament believed in the eternal torment of the wicked, with the connotation "endless". There are, of course, certain good reasons why this theory, even if it were taught in the scriptures, could not be accepted. We shall cite these later. There is no proof that Jesus either believed or taught this doctrine. The Apostle Paul was undoubtedly the inspiration for Augustine. ² His morbidity was nearly as bad as was that of the latter, as was also his super-sensitiveness to sin.

¹II Pet. 3:7.
CHAPTER III

EARLY THEOLOGIANS

The Middle Ages have been called "the ages of faith"—not of a very robust faith, however, but rather of credulity and mental slavery among the masses. Thousands had been won to Christianity by the power of speech; other thousands by dictatorial measures and political manoeuvres. The Church dominated the State and all who would secure salvation must do so through her machinations. This politico-religious scheme worked well. It was not a very difficult matter to obtain uniformity of belief and conduct when the fear of hell and the devil were constantly before the trembling, grovelling 'common herd'.

This eclipsed even the fear of God, to say nothing of the love of Him. While it may, to some extent at least, be true to say that many of a mystical turn of mind found sweet repose in the contemplation of the mercy of God, we think it also true to say that the masses were held in ignorance and superstition, motivated by a slave-attitude of fear, and dominated by an unhealthy other-worldliness. Whence came this pessimism, this sin-crushed morbidity and self-pity? Why are men by the million cowered beneath the contemplated flames and terror and darkness of the Judgment Day? We believe that these questions find their answers in the contributions of the early theologians which we shall now consider.
Representative of this period, we shall consider six theologians: Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen of Alexandria; Tertullian of Carthage, Cyprian of Carthage, and Augustine. The eschatological views of the early church fathers and those which represent their subsequent development fall into three categories. There is the Greek position with a Heaven and a Hell plus a purgatory. The Latins entertained but two divisions, bliss or torment. There was no middle ground; everyone was either good or bad. The Roman Catholic position was a three-fold division, blending the Latin and Greek ideas to give bliss and torment, with purgatory between the two. The Greek theologians found their inspiration in the Johannine writings, especially in the logos doctrine; Paul becomes the pattern for the Latins. Generally speaking, the Greek theologians were fairly sane, restrained and optimistic; the Latins pessimistic and sadistic, having little regard for the worth of man. Gregory the Great was the first great organizer of the Roman church, and it was he who combined the three divisions mentioned above. Dante accepted this triple division, as we shall later see, but the protestants, Luther, Calvin, and Zwilingi, go back to Augustine and the Latins for their eschatological views—views which became "orthodox" protestant eschatology for many centuries. Of the early theologians, there were some who accepted annihilation as the end, chief of whom are Anobius and Lactantius. Anobius, in particular, was outspoken in his denunciation of eternal torment; this despite
his being a Latin. The views held in each case represent the degree of ethical maturity attained.1

a) Justin Martyr.

Justin Martyr was the first important theologian, and dates from early in the second century. We have access to much material from his pen, but because he represents something of a "free-lance" position theologically, he is difficult to classify as either "Greek" or "Latin". He has some traits of both positions; yet, he is not a thorough-going adherent of any one system. As far as his eschatology is concerned he is hardly of the Latin school. He accepts man's free will and thinks of him as having worth. This is essentially Greek. He seems to expect an early return of the Lord and, as the following passages show, he believed future punishment awaited the wicked.

First Apology, Chapter VIII, "Christians confess their faith in God":

This, then, we have learned from Christ and teach. And Plato...used to say that Rhadamanthus and Minos would punish the wicked who came before them; and we say the same thing will be done, but at the hand of Christ, upon the wicked in the same bodies united again to their spirits which are now to undergo everlasting punishment; and not only, as Plato said, for a period of a thousand years;...2

Chapter XII. "Christians live under God's eye."

...each man goes to everlasting punishment or salvation according to the value of his actions. For if all men knew this, no one would choose wickedness

1Kershner, F.D., Ibid., pp.100-104.

even for a little, knowing that he goes to the everlasting punishment of fire; but would by all means restrain himself, .... 1

Chapter XVIII. "Proof of Immortality and Resurrection". Justin here argues that if death meant insensibility, it would be a "god-send", and says:

... But since sensation remains to all who have ever lived, and eternal punishment is laid up (i.e. for the wicked), .... 2

Chapter XIX. "The Resurrection possible".

And hell is a place where those are to be punished who have lived wickedly, and who did not believe that those things which God has taught us by Christ will come to pass. 3

Chapter XXI. "Analogies to the History of Christ".

... and we believe that those who live wickedly and do not repent, are punished in everlasting fire .... 4

Chapter XXVII. "God's care for Men".

... that he [Satan] would be sent into the fire with his host, and the men who follow him, and would be punished for an endless duration, .... 5

Second Apology, Chapter IX., "Eternal punishment not a mere threat".

And that no one may say... that our assertions that the wicked are punished in eternal fire are big words and bug-bears, .... 6

1Ibid., p.15
2Ibid., p.22.
3Ibid., p.24.
4Ibid., p.26
5Ibid., p.31
6Ibid., p.79.
These passages will suffice to indicate the general ideas in the mind of Justin. He is stating what he considers the Christian position, specifically. He invariably uses the expression "punishment" not "torment". The latter word implies a certain ugly gloating over the agonies of those suffering. This was characteristic of the Latin theologians, especially Augustine, but this extreme notion, and the pictoral presentation of it, is not found anywhere in Justin's writings. Indeed, his works, throughout, are permeated by a pleasing reasonableness, even if his conclusions cannot always be accepted. 

b) Clement of Alexandria.

Clement is typically Greek in his viewpoint and makes refreshing reading. Throughout his works this "most learned of men" reflects the Alexandrian influence. He lived in the second half of the second century. He, too, believed in free-will, and had an unusually fine estimate of man. He could see the outworking of God's purposes in life. There was, for him, reason back of the universe; God's revelation was through reason; the Bible was to be interpreted by reason. Thus, we should expect to find a reasonable statement in his eschatological views; and we are not disappointed.

Clement is positive and optimistic. Men, he believes, will usually do what they know to be right for its own sake. The Lord may chasten, but the purpose of this is correction. There is the love of God behind it. His words scourge, but

1 Jerome.
aim at release from slavery and error. In knowledge and wisdom men pass from darkness to light, "For to be chastised of the Lord, and instructed, is deliverance from death". Rebuke brings one to his senses; as the father who loveth and correcteth his child, so the Lord corrects and reforms.

In the course of his: "The Exhortation", he rebukes a thousand sins, and warns against "destruction" because of them. Every man must face the judgment individually; it will be according to his own works. The wicked go to purgatory where they are punished in proportion to their sins. This "unsainted saint" was no ascetic. He did not accept any accumulated inherited sin of his distant predecessors. Every man's end is within his own power to determine.

c) Origen of Alexandria.

In Origen, the Greek trend reaches its height. He is noted for his fair-mindedness—witness his giving Celsus's arguments in his own "Contra Celsum". He wrote much, it seems, but most of his works are no longer extant. In many ways he is not unlike Clement whose successor he was in the Catachetical school at Alexandria. In common with others of this school he accepts man's free will, and yet he seems to lean towards "original sin", characteristic of the Latins. His eschatological position is fairly clear from his own writings directly on the subject. He says in Chapter X: "On the Resurrection, and the Judgment, the fire of Hell, and Punishments," regarding the threatenings of eternal fire:-
When a soul has gathered together a multitude of evil works, and an abundance of signs against itself, at a suitable time all that assembly of evils boils up to punishments, and is set on fire to chastisements; when the mind itself, or conscience, receiving by divine power into the memory all those things of which it had stamped on itself certain signs and forms at the moment of sinning, will be a kind of history, as it were, of all foul, and shameful, and unholy deeds which it has done, exposed before its eyes; then is the conscience itself harassed, and, pierced by its own goads, becomes an accuser and a witness against itself. And this, I think, is the opinion of the Apostle Paul himself, .... 

Those whose spirits are shown separated from the soul will be punished, yet:

"...that the punishment also, which is said to be applied by fire, is understood to be applied with the object of healing...." 

Origen is known for his allegorical interpretation of the scriptures, and this is clearly his method in the above passages. He says further:

"but the outer darkness, in my judgment, is to be understood not so much of some dark atmosphere without any light, as of those persons who, being plunged into the darkness of profound ignorance, have been placed beyond the reach of any light of understanding." 

Origen taught the theory of restitution; thus the sinner makes amends for his wrongs. From the above passages it will be seen that hell is the equivalent of purgatory. He rejects eternal torment theories.


2Ibid., p.143.

3Ibid., p.144.
d) Tertullian of Carthage.

Tertullian was a "grim old Roman orator" and an astute enough Latin theologian. His presentation of the unlovely future that awaits the sinner is surpassed only by that of his colleague Augustine. These gentlemen both had vivid imaginations which, coupled to little moral insight or ethical growth, made their picture of the future torments of the wicked horrible indeed.

According to Tertullian, all souls are to be kept in Hades until the resurrection—a material resurrection—and then all would be judged, the wicked being punished in a material hell of endless torment. He is in every way a practical Roman. Much of his writings were in Latin and his viewpoint is more Jewish than Greek. To some extent he accepted free-will; yet, he also seems to have a belief in original sin, at least in a modified form. He has, as Dr. F. D. Kershner says, an excellent "vocabulary of vituperation", but no "cheap slander". He is a rhetorician of the first order; his writings against Marcion furnish proof of this claim. His dates are from about 150 to 220. He was a born "practical man" and educated as a lawyer.

We need quote but little to indicate the ultimate misery of the wicked. His writings need no commentary to explain their gross passages, as the following:—

---

a pitiable crowd
Wailing its crimes; with parching tears it pours
All groans effusely, and attests its acts
With frequent ululations. At the sight
Of flames, their merit's due, and stagnant pools
Of fire, wrath's weapons, they 'gin to tremble all.
Then an angelic host, upsnatching them,
Forbids to pray, forbids to pour their cries
(Too late!) with clamour loud: pardon withheld,
Into the lowest bottom they are hurled!
O miserable men!

Into the deep darkness shall ye go of fire
And brimstone; doomed to suffer glowing ires
In torments just. God bids your bones descend
To penalty eternal; go beneath
The ardour of an endless raging hell;
Be urged, a seething mass, through rotant pools
Of flame; and into threatening flame He bids
The elements convert; and all heaven's fire
Descend in clouds.

Then greedy Tartarus
With rapid fire enclosed is; and flame
Is fluctuant within with tempest waves;
And the whole earth her whirling embers blends!

Fiery, and a dreadful marsh white-hot
With heats infernal, where, in furnaces
Horrific, penal deed roars loud, and seethes,
And, rushing into torments, is up-caught
By the flames vortex wide; by savage wave
And surge the turbid sand all mingled is
With miry bottom. Hither will be sent,
Groaning, the captive crowd of evil ones,
To burn! Great is the beating there of breasts,
By bellowing of grief accompanied;
Wild is the hissing of the flames, and thence
The ululation of the sufferers!

The above passage will suffice to indicate the mind
of Tertullian. He seemed to derive a good deal of unhealthy
pleasure from the torments of the wicked devised by his own
mind. It is unthinkable that one could gloat over this kind
of thing. He and Augustine are especially unforgivable when

\[1\text{Ibid., "Strain of the Judgment of the Lord", p.312ff.}
\text{Lines 342-352; 375-381; 406-418. (Authorship not absolutely}
\text{certain).}\]
we remember that they are living in the Christian era. Pagan cults may be forgiven to some extent when we realize their ignorance of God's love as revealed in the Christ, but not so the Latins mentioned. In addition Tertullian would have gotten perhaps equal pleasure out of suffering the same way himself. He was both sadist and masochist—quite abnormal.

e) Cyprian of Carthage.

Cyprian also was a Latin theologian—the third of the "great trio". Born about 210 A.D., he died a martyr in the year 258, having had but a short, though eventful, Christian experience. Like Tertullian he was trained as a lawyer, and was essentially legal in his entire outlook. His teaching asserted the authority of the collective episcopate; he taught apostolic succession; indeed, it is said that "the logic of his position led straight to the papacy".

We have noticed that the theology of the Greek school, generally, thought of God as immanent, whereas the Latins usually presented Him as essentially transcendent, distant from the world, and not greatly concerned with men. If man is worthless to begin with, as the Latins thought, born in original sin and totally depraved, any act of a transcendental God in saving him is grace indeed!

To the Latins, God is a Judge to be feared, not a father to be loved. Cyprian takes over Tertullian's theology largely. Harnack says:

The Christianity of Tertullian, blunted in many respects and morally shallow ("de opere et eleemosynis"), yet clerically worked out ("de unitate
ecclesiae"), became naturalized in the Occident through Cyprian, the great authority of Latin Christendom; 1

However, Cyprian did not look forward to the second coming of Jesus as an imminent event as did Tertullian. Generally, his eschatology agrees with that of Tertullian; it is Latin but does not stress the gross element. Our interest in Cyprian lies in his teaching: Outside the Church there is no salvation. The Bishop had all authority. He could pardon sins for he was the apostolic representative and owed his appointment to God, not to man. The implication was that all outside the Church, and un-baptised infants were doomed to Hell. From this position it was but a step to the place where it was deemed best to church all men, even if this had to be done under compulsion, torture, or even death. It was argued that it is a far, far better thing to suffer in this way here, than to be a candidate for the eternal flames of God's wrath in the hereafter. The middle ages witnessed no small amount of this sort of thing and, preposterous though it seems to us, this was thought of as being, all things considered, an act of love towards the non-conformist.

f) Augustine.

Much of the work of Augustine is extant. From it we gather some knowledge of his life. He portrays himself in his "Confessions" as rather dissolute in his youth; but in

view of his being keenly sensitive to sin and living entirely in a subjective world of his own creation, one hardly knows to what extent his claim is true. His life and work belongs to the late fourth and early fifth centuries. His "City of God" and "Confessions" best furnish his general outlook; one so pathetically morbid that his eschatology is anticipated in view of such unrivalled pessimism.

Before we seek to relate Augustine's eschatological views in greater detail, let us briefly review his theology as a whole. It is common knowledge that his view of God, in the first place, was rather austere. "Absolute Monism" is the term that best explains it; God, like the Roman Emperor, presides over the universe in a transcendental fashion. Individuals and "personality" are hardly His concern. Man is totally depraved, born in original sin, and predestined to be saved or lost anyway. The world is made out of nothing; nothing is evil and therefore the world is evil. All matter is evil. The pope was as a little God and must be obeyed; children must be baptised—this was essential. Of course, there are obvious inconsistencies all through this position, but Augustine believed himself supported by the scriptures. Undoubtedly, most of his morbid introspection—indeed, his "nature"—was inherited from his superstitious mother, Monica. All this, and more, is the outlook of the man who has the honor to be "the greatest name in theology":

1See F.D. Kershner, op. cit., Chap. on Augustine, pp. 155ff.
The "Confessions" make depressing reading. They can be understood only as the reader considers himself something of an amateur psychologist, checking a "case". They are a strange mixture of tears, fears, self-pity, self-accusation, and, generally, distraught emotionalism. That his theology was so widely received and even welcomed by no means supports it as true; this fact is rather a dire commentary upon the wide-spread nature of mental and spiritual sickness in the Middle Ages. The nature of these confessions and letters may be seen on any page, taken at random. The style is beautiful and the expression tender, but the thought morbid in the extreme. His mind is entirely unsettled; he is forever musing upon death and the fear of Hell, now as it concerned himself, later as it related to others.

The "City of God" is an excellent summary of the theology of Augustine. God wills everything that happens. He is supreme, Omnipotent; man is a grovelling slave. His eschatology portrays a hell of intense misery and of endless duration. There is no purgatory, nor will sinners be annihilated. A special miracle makes it possible for matter, which would otherwise soon burn out, to burn forever! Dean Kershner makes a list of some of the chapter headings of the seventeenth and twenty-first books. These are interesting! We shall quote a sample of this rich description:

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2Pioneers of Christian Thought, p. 179f.
Chapter 4.--"Examples from nature proving that bodies may remain unconsumed and alive in fire".

If, therefore, the salamander lives in fire,...and if certain famous mountains of Sicily have been continually on fire,...these are sufficiently convincing examples that everything which burns is not consumed. As the soul, too, is a proof that not everything which can suffer pain can also die, why then do they yet demand that we produce real examples to prove that it is not incredible that the bodies of men condemned to everlasting punishment may retain their soul in the fire, may burn without being consumed, and may suffer without perishing?¹

Enough! There are pages of similar passages in this and other books, and this is not the most horrid. We shall conclude with the words of Dr. Kershner:

When one reads the pages contained in these chapters one is struck with the obvious desire of the author to remove even the slightest possibility of hope from the damned. Some of the propositions appear humorously grotesque in the light of modern standards, but we must remember that Augustine wrote with tremendous earnestness and that there is not the slightest touch of irony in his teaching. He fully believed that all who belonged to the class of the non-elect, and non-baptized infants, all heretics of every description, in short everybody except a certain limited and exclusive group selected for no merit of their own but merely by the caprice of Omnipotence would burn forever in unending torture which, by special interposition of the Divine Power, could not be terminated by dissolution or extinction.²

CHAPTER IV

MEDIEVAL AND REFORMATION CONTRIBUTIONS

It is our purpose in this chapter to show how, through literature, theology, art, and preaching, the popular but erroneous picture of "hell" has been disseminated throughout the world. That some of the finest contributions of all times in these fields should have become vehicles for the furtherance of false or grossly overstated theories of hell fire, eternal torment and endless punishment, is deplorable indeed. There has grown up the almost "orthodox" belief in many circles, and in the mind of the common man, that this traditional view, which he invariably refers to the Christian system, is in the main true. It is not. Nor is it true that, in the field of literature at least, the authors of immortal works drew only upon the Christian and Jewish scriptures. Their inspiration was often their not inconsiderable knowledge of contemporary, or of heathen views of the hereafter in such systems as the Greek, Persian, Buddhist or Egyptian. Dante was taught by the theologian Thomas Aquinas; Milton was a first-rate theologian in his own right. The Reformation theologians were Augustinian to the core. Their eschatology came from Latin morbidity rather than from Christ and the Bible. And this immeasurably perverted conception of the fate of the "wicked"—too often the free-thinking heretics and non-conformists—predominated in
art and became the bulwark of modern preaching up to the close of the past century.

1. Literature.

In treating of the works of Milton, Dante and Bunyan, we wish to make it clear that these are but representatives of a score who might be considered worthy of the "honor" we do these three. A cursory glance down the full page of references to "Hell" in any Shakesperian concordance--most of them having an extremely formidable implication--and none would deny the eligibility of this great author for mention here. He, Spenser,\textsuperscript{1} Chaucer,\textsuperscript{2} Herrick,\textsuperscript{3} Pope,\textsuperscript{4} along with Milton, make reference to Greek and other eschatological terms in the course of their writings. But Milton, Dante, and Bunyan are read in every school. They have each had a tremendous circulation throughout the world in many languages; they have been the mind-food for the millions.

a) Dante Alighieri.

The Italian poet's "Divine Comedy" is a work blending beauty of diction and grandeur of conception. His scheme is strictly medieval. The Earth is the center; beneath it lies Hell in nine circles, and in the nethermost depths Satan, the fallen Lucifer, lies frozen to his breast. The

\textsuperscript{1}Faerie Queen 1, v. 31-34.
\textsuperscript{2}His Age, 7.
\textsuperscript{3}Knightes Tale, 1224.
\textsuperscript{4}Dunciad, 111, 19.
majesty of the picture is somewhat marred at the beginning, for here the eternity of Hell's tortures is inscribed on the portal of the "Inferno" in the third Canto:

"Eternal I endure. All hope abandon, ye who enter here". This but reflects the medieval Church doctrine based on the Latins, and Cyprian's "No salvation outside the Church". Plato, Homer and Aristotle are in Limbo, for they were not in the church! Medieval Christendom had assigned a terrible fate to the un-baptised. This was repulsive to Dante, and he voices the "sore grief which assailed his heart" on account of it. He is baffled. Why should they suffer for no sin of their own? Finally he surrenders up reason and accepts it on faith. Memorable events and personages of many lands are mirrored in what Carlyle called "the voice of ten centuries". His great work reflects throughout its pages the fact that Dante was a mystic, and influenced by the Allegorists. And he draws upon the literature of nearly all religions.

The Old Testament worthies, according to Dante, were released from Limbo only by the preaching of Jesus, and taken up with him to Paradise. Couched in the familiar setting and terms of other faiths, the description of the abode and lot of the wicked is graphically presented. There prevailed only darkness, mourning and groaning. In a river of fire in which men and women stood partly submerged, these sinners suffer for the sins committed by the various members of the body. Dante's poem is not unlike the Apocalypse of Paul. In this
work some have sinned with the lips, others with the belly; thieves used their arms; still others had an evil eye, evil imaginations, but were neither righteous nor particularly wicked. The angelic guide leads the Apostle to view another river. Upon beholding the agonies of the tortured in this terrible and unspeakably deep stream, the Apostle weeps. His guide upbraids him for this, saying: "Wherefore dost thou weep? Art thou more merciful than God?" This question touches an essential flaw of the eternal torment theory—if men hate it for its hideous injustice and unbending inclemancy, are we to believe that the loving Father whom Jesus presents, or Jesus himself, are less repelled by it than men? that they gloat over this kind of ridiculous nonsense while men find it unutterably disgusting? Surely not!

Dante's dark river is similar. He describes:

...lamentations, sighs, and wailings deep
Resounding, so the starless welkin fill
That, at the first, I could not choose but weep.
Strange languages, discoursings horrible,
Accents of anger, histories of woes,
Smiting of hands, with voices hoarse and shrill, 1

The damned writhe in agony in "eternal darkness". This theme is carried on through the entire "Inferno". There are classes of sins and a distribution of the damned according to these sins. Few escape some kind of damnation. It is a good Augustinian picture in which one may watch and enjoy the punishment of these various wicked. The whole gamut of sins is considered,

both carnal and doctrinal, so that even the best of men have something to account for.

In good Roman Catholic Medieval style, the poet goes on to describe the Purgatorio—the intermediate state. But this is not nearly so "interesting" from the viewpoint of material for our dissertation. Here there is an out-working of the wrong and a tediously slow and difficult moving toward the heights. In the final canto the poet is made pure for the ascent to the stars.

Our interest in eschatological views of the fate of the wicked concerns itself primarily with the popularizing of the hell idea. That this is true of the "inferno" none will question. The poet uses his masterly style and unsurpassed powers for vivid portrayal in presenting throughout the entire length of poem, through ring after ring, and pouch after pouch, the anguish of banishment and eternal torment.

b) Milton.

John Milton was an illustrious poet. Yet, he read his eyes out not reading poetry but in reading theology. That all of his works should have a definitely religious tenor is not surprising. "Paradise Lost" is one of the loftiest works of all time; this is generally agreed. A grand tone pervades its entire length; its sonorous notes are like the swell of a mighty organ. Where, in the English language, is there a greater passage than this?—it is surely incomparably grand.

1Statement by Dean F.D. Kershner.
Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the omnipotent to arms. 1

The argument of the epic is well known. The author methodically outlines his purpose at the beginning of each book of the twelve. Book 1. is our chief interest, but we are not so much interested in the geography and location of hell. Our concern is with the Hell-ideas expressed in the description of this nether region; to these we shall now turn.

Hell is the great Deep. It is a vast expanse in which Satan

"...with his horrid crew,
Lay vanquished, rowling in the fiery gulf,"2

Satan views

The dismal situation waste and wild.
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
No light; but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all, but torture without end

1Book 1, 44f.
2Book 1, 5ff.
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter darkness,

Other passages might be cited, but the above lines will serve to indicate the general picture—one which is too often the "popular" idea of Hell in the mind of "the man on the street".

c) Bunyan.

No gaol, not even that at Bedford, would make a particularly happy background and environment for the writing of a book. In the course of some twelve years one could accumulate no small deposit of gloom in one's mind. Bunyan's life and outlook resembled Augustine's in some ways. He, too, had his "conflict", was introspective and super-sensitive to sin, and rather morbid. His "Grace Abounding" has been called "the autobiography of his soul". The pangs of hell were his constant companions, and one wonders whether he didn't derive a good deal of masochistic pleasure from being in gaol anyway. He was of the stuff martyrs are made of; his "Paradise Lost" has a Puritanic thread running through it; its beginning is not unlike Dante's. Bunyan was not learned. He was but a poor devout tinker-preacher of the seventeenth century.

The austere and abnormal author of "Pilgrim's Progress" seems to find the dynamic for his work in fleeing the flames

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1Ibid., Lines 60-72.

of Hell. He says:

... moreover, I am for certain informed that this our city will be burned with fire from heaven, in which fearful overthrow both myself, with thee, my wife, and you my sweet babes shall miserably come to ruin, except.

There are tears and tremblings; hobgoblins, satyrs and dragons of the pit. Some sit in irons amid chaos and confusion. The narrative reads:

... I perceived the mouth of hell. And ever and anon the flame and smoke would come out in such abundance, with sparks and hideous noises. Also he [Christian] heard doleful voices, and rushings to and fro, so that sometimes he thought that he should be torn to pieces, or trodden down like mire in the streets.

Thus John Bunyan, in a rather emotional setting, makes his contribution to the hideous nature of hell for all but Christian. His attitude is accurately stated in the following:

... soon the darkness grew thicker. Hideous forms floated before him and sounds of cursing and wailing were in his ears. His way ran through stench and fire, close to the mouth of the bottomless pit. He began to be haunted by a strange curiosity about the unpardonable sin, and by a morbid longing to commit it.

2. Early theologians.

a) Thomas Aquinas.

Thomas Aquinas lived in the thirteenth century, and was the pioneer of Dante. Born of a noble family, he has carved his name deep in the history of theology and has become the

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1 Ibid., p.3.
2 Ibid., pp.72,75
3 Ibid., p.73. See also pp.75,76.
master spirit of orthodox Roman Catholicism. In this great
Dominican scholasticism reaches its heights; "he is the
central figure in medieval theology". His eschatology is
that which we have called Roman Catholic,—he held to a three-
fold division: Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven.\(^1\)

Thomas's works, "Summa contra gentiles" and "Summa
theologiae", are not greatly different in their general outline.
The latter is our best source for a statement of his theology,
for it covers the whole range of Christian truth—rather volum-
incously. It was meant for beginners. "The work is divided into
three parts, the first treating of God, the second of the ra-
tional creature's approach to God, and the third of Christ, the
way to God. Each part is divided into a large number of 'ques-
tions' and each question into several articles."\(^2\) Aquinas is
usually considered an Aristotelian. In the course of the "Summa"
he treats of Purgatory and eternal hell.

Man seeks to climb ever higher and nearer to God. There
are some things accepted by reason; others by revelation, the
higher realm. The Church is authoritative; theology is the
Queen of all studies and sciences. In true Medieval mould, the
Pope is head, and everything is subject to him. Salvation is in
the church; baptism is essential.\(^3\) As we have intimated, Dante

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\(^1\)Kershner, Pioneers of Christian Thought. See pp. 221ff.

\(^2\)McGiffert, A.C. A History of Christian Thought. New York:
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933. II, 275.

\(^3\)See Kershner, Pioneers of Christian Thought, Chap.X.,
"Aquinas".
was greatly influenced by Thomas's theology. The former was "Filling in the theological skeleton of Saint Thomas with the dramatic horrors of every day".¹ Thus, what we witnessed as the picture given by Dante could be said to be that of the teaching of Aquinas. In the "Inferno" there are the various realms for each according to his works.

... Dante constructs his scheme of punishments [on] ... the Levitical maxim of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". The gluttons grovel in the mire, the hypocrites are loaded with heavy cloaks of gilded lead and burned alive...²

This is essentially the Thomian picture. He represents, of course, the orthodox catholic position, but stresses purgatory in particular.

b) Luther.

Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin make the important contributions in the field of eschatology in the Reformation. At a great many points they had their differences, but each, in a general way, was Latin in his outlook; and definitely so in his eschatology. Luther was hardly a thoroughgoing protestant in the sense of making a clean break with Catholicism. He would undoubtedly have been content to lop off the abuses within the Church, to reform her from within. He soon came to see the "lay of the land"--the break had to come. The two positions were seen to be irreconcilable; the protestants went back beyond the Catholics to the theology of the Latins. In their eschatology, the

¹Ibid., p.230.
²Ibid., p.231.
the kind of view seen in the writings of Augustine once more became the vogue. But here it became more intense, more vituperative.

Martin Luther was hardly a Saint—there never was any very close relationship between Augustinianism and Sainthood. Like the other reformers, he had his faults. All three of them were possessed of a rather bitter spirit which, in the circumstances, is understandable enough. Luther was adamant. All sinners were black or white; all men saved or lost. There was heaven or hell, one or the other, with no "degrees" of reward or punishment. Purgatory is repudiated by all three gentlemen; an extreme form of predestination is held by each; Augustine is their common background. Men are saved by the grace of God, and are made aware of it; the non-elect are lost, and nothing can be done about it.

The life of Luther makes interesting reading. It is a strange mixture of superstition and the dread of fear. His mind was hardly normal. Wace says: "Nothing was more certain to him than that the Divine justice is inexorable;..." To Luther God was great, mighty, Sovereign, and:

Man himself was only a hopeless and helpless sinner, capable of receiving the divine blessing but absolutely unable to do anything for himself. Luther's theology here was simply the morbid fanaticism of Augustine revamped but scarcely revised.

1Ibid., pp.265,267ff.,274.
2Wace, Henry. "First Principles". The Reformation or Dr. Martin Luther. (Philadelphia: Luthern Publishing Society, 1885) p.xiii.
3Pioneers of Christian Thought, p.277.
c) Calvin.

The writer has before him two rather large volumes—the "Institutes" of John Calvin. 1 There can be few works written with a more unlovely spirit; and this seems to permeate their entire length. It is more than a polemic attitude; there is something gross, severe, ungracious about it. This work best states his theology. As we have already stated, Calvin, along with Luther, was a Latin in his theology. He is Augustinian throughout. 2 Total depravity and election are written in bold letters across every page of the "Institutes." We shall cite a few passages:

Those, therefore, whom he hath created to a life of shame and a death of destruction, that they might be instruments of his wrath, and examples of his severity, he causes to reach their appointed end... 3

Now, as no description can equal the severity of Divine vengeance on the reprobate, their anguish and torments are figuratively represented. . . . for in the first place his indignation is like a most violent flame which devours and consumes all it touches. . . . How great and severe then is the punishment to endure the never-ceasing effects of his wrath! 4

d) Zwingli.

Original sin, predestination, grace, and election are ideas of frequent occurrence in the theology of Zwingli. He stresses the last two in particular. As we have already observed, his eschatology is extremely Latin throughout. He was

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3 Institutes, op. cit: iii, XXIV.
4 Ibid., iii, XXV.
Luther's contemporary, and not unlike him in his views of the fate of the wicked. The fact that he was considered a humanist did not seem to make the lot of the non-elect any more desirable. We think it is true to say that he is not less emotional and gloomy than either of the other two reformers in question. All three have left their indelible impress upon the minds of men up to the present time.

In our consideration of the work of the Theologians we should be sorry indeed to be thought to disparage their contribution. They were, to some extent, the product of their day as well as the moulders of the future thought. It is rather that we regret the existence of this morbid outlook wherever it is found in any degree whatsoever. There can be little doubt that the Medieval and Reformation thought is still with us in a marked degree. Almost in spite of ourselves we read the text of the New Testament with Latin eyes, so strong is our prejudice in that direction. We fail to see the inconsistency in thought in entertaining a Christ of Love who says, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," and a harsh Judge who condemns souls to eternal torment at one and the same time. It is little wonder that someone has said: "Because of Christ, whose sad face on the cross sees only this after the passion of a thousand years!" His Spirit is so utterly opposed to the pessimism that has bred fear and superstition in the hearts of multitudes.
3. Art

a) Michael Angelo

Dr. Kershner calls this great artist the "Painter of the Sublime".\(^1\) We select him as representative of artists of the period because of his famous painting, the "Last Judgment". Angelo was abnormal in not a few ways, it seems, and entertained strange fears of assassination and of the Pope.\(^2\) He did not care for the ordinary luxuries of life; his work was his life!

Covering the western end of the Sistine Chapel— one of the best known and most famous in the world— in the full view of the many thousands of witnesses who have admired it, the "Last Judgment" is said to be the largest fresco in the world. Dean Kershner describes it thus:

...The first impression of this fresco, when seen from the east end or center of the room, is that of a confused mass of figures, which gradually assume definite form and place, and out of the chaos one tremendous form seems to rise in the center, which, with outstretched arms and threatening gesture, hurls vengeance upon the unhappy wretches sinking down to Tartarus. Terrible looking creatures, one pierced with arrows, one flayed alive, another with a wheel of torture and others with harrows, racks, and other hellish devices, flourish these various symbols of torment, all seeming to implore the Judge to avenge them upon their enemies. There is not a note of consolation or joy in the real sense anywhere, not even in the comparatively small part of the picture devoted to the blest. The Judge does not seem at all like the Christ of Leonardo. Vengeance, not mercy, is Angelo's conception of the Judgment— the kind in which every orthodox Christian of those times believed.\(^3\)

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 61, 62.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 78.
The work is, of course, great art. But we are concerned with the affect of its realism upon its witnesses. Doubtless it has made its contribution, along with graphic portrayals in prose and verse, in presenting to the minds of men, visually, a distorted idea of hell.


a) Jonathan Edwards

The New England spirit of the eighteenth century is admirably expressed in the life-work of its great preacher, Jonathan Edwards. Calvinistic in the extreme, the typically Latin hell preached by Edwards finds an appropriate background in the "otherworldliness" and zealous Puritanism of the day. The setting is one of swoonings, shriekings, screamings, and convulsions. Emotionalism is at its height. One wonders whether a consideration of the success of such an abnormal individual in the pulpit is not just another instance of a maniac, by reason of his insanity, being considered divine. This was not unknown in the ancient world.

When we say that this man's outlook was Calvinistic, we might also say that it was more so than Calvin. And this is hardly to praise the "great" preacher; we do not intend it as a compliment. We must try to understand the man in viewing him as the product of the period in which he lived, but we wish to indicate that his entire outlook is of the Augustine-Calvin coloration which we have described earlier. We select two
sermons from which an idea of Edward's preaching, as related to the fate of the wicked, might be had, namely, "Future Punishment of the Wicked", and "Sinners in the Hands of an angry God". The titles are interesting in themselves.

The first of these tirades against the unfortunate wicked begins with a stern avowal that sinners will not be able to deliver themselves from the punishment, shun it, or find any relief from it. The text is Ezek.XXXII;14. Here is a spicy sample!—an illustration:

... imagine yourself cast into a fiery oven, all of a glowing heat, or in the midst of a glowing brick-kiln, or of a great furnace, where your pain would be as much greater than that occasioned by accidental touching of a coal of fire, as the heat is greater. Imagine also that your body were to lie there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire, as full within and without as a bright coal of fire, all the while full of quick sense; what horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace? And how long would that quarter of an hour seem to you? If it were to be measured by a glass, how long would the glass seem to be running? And after you had endured it for one minute, how overbearing would it be to you to think that you had to endure it the other fourteen! But what would be the effect on your soul, if you knew you must lie there enduring that torment to the full for twenty-four hours! ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

But your torment in hell will be immensely greater than this illustration represents....

Truly enough, as we know from our own experience, illustrations fall short of the mark—the best of them are inadequate to the task and never seem to do justice to what we wish to say. But in the above instance we get the general drift of the argument alright, we think. "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

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2Ibid., p.146-147.
is Jonathan's masterpiece. The text is Deut. XXXII:35.--

"Their foot shall slide in due time". We quote from the

"Application":

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much
as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over
the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his
wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you
as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the
fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in
his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable
in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is
in ours.¹

Well, that is Edward's view, in part, of the fate of the
wicked. One could find not a little humor in the course of
such passages were it not for the incredible fact that the man
actually thought he was preaching God's word. We can admire
his intense earnestness; but greatly deplore the content of
his message.

b) Spurgeon.

In saying that Spurgeon was as great a preacher and
as powerful in presenting the accepted idea of hell in his day
as was Edwards in his, we do not wish in any way to minimise
the sinister influence of the latter. In his graphic and fear-
ful sermon on the "Resurrection of the Dead", Mr. Spurgeon uses
the following language:--

When thou diest, thy soul will be tormented alone;
that will be a hell for it; but at the day of judgment
thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have
twin-hells, thy soul sweating drops of blood suffused
with agony. In fire exactly like that which we have on
earth thy body will lie, asbestos-like, forever uncon-
sumed, all thy veins roads for the feet of pain to

¹Ibid., p.164.
travel on, every nerve a string on which the devil shall forever play his diabolical tune of Hell's Unutterable Lament.\footnote{Alger, op. cit. p.518. quote.}

In "The Warning Neglected" he says:-

There is no human mind, however capacious, that can even guess the thought of a soul eternally cast away from God. The wrath to come is as inexpressible as the glory that shall be revealed hereafter. Our Saviour labored for words in which to express the horrors of a future state of the ungodly...\footnote{Spurgeon, Sermons. New York: Funk & Wagnallis Company (n.d.) IV,252.}

Clearly, this is the Latin eschatology. It is based on the Sovereignty of God and the worthlessness of man. Men are as worms. As one reads these passages he would never imagine that the Anglo-Saxon word "Hell" once meant "a hole in the ground".

Of course, the pictorial representation of hell in the above fashion was not confined to Johathan Edwards and C. H. Spurgeon. We could quote similar words from John Henry Newman and a dozen others. The tragedy of these contributions lies in the fact that the whole of the Western world, following the Reformation, has been nurtured on this kind of teaching for so long that it is difficult indeed to eradicate it. It is as a cancerous growth in the advanced stage.
CONCLUSION

In the course of this thesis we have briefly considered the major views of the fate of the wicked in human history. As we stated earlier, we have made no attempt to treat our subject exhaustively; rather, we hope to have treated it adequately. In reviewing the field, it is clear that many religions and tribes have shared common views at many points. We have not always attempted to trace this connection, but have been content to find interest in the fact itself. Our primary interest has been in what men have believed rather than in why they believed these things. Where, possibly, borrowing has taken place, the likelihood of this sometimes has been indicated. In some instances we should have liked to prove our point, but proof has not been attempted, often because it is lacking.

Throughout all the views we find a certain expected common ground. Wherever a hell idea is present we may say that, in some small degree at least, a moral idea is usually present. The particular hell idea entertained is in direct proportion to the ethical maturity of the people or individual concerned. All who hold to an idea of future punishment express this fact that they conceive of "some Power or Powers as having ultimate control over their destinies;" and there is some common expectation of a survival of some kind, not
infrequently of a personal nature, in the beyond. Some, as we have noticed, have been of the persuasion that this life ends all; that annihilation is the end. This view has never been general. Future punishment commensurate with the crime or wrong done within the standards entertained has been none too common. Retribution and eternal torment have, we think, had undue prominence.

Among Savage peoples there has been this retributive idea; and the "fire" punishment is very widespread in history. As one would expect, the particular hell entertained almost invariably has some local reference, and sometimes an outside influence blends with this to give a later development, as with northern Buddhism. Or, ideas latent in a system may find expression after the passage of many years. Primitive man could think of the future being dependent on funeral offerings or right burial, or upon a person being tattooed or being provided with a certain amulet; tribal custom was often the determining factor. The future was essentially life-like and vivid; or it was vague, dark, undefined. Here, the moral idea is weak.

With the Greeks the moral note was strong, coupled with a fine sense of justice and purpose. Early poets like Homer and Hesiod have little to say on the subject. Later ideas included extinction for the hopelessly wicked; futility; and torment in Tartarus. Probably the Pharisees took over this idea, passed it on through Gamaliel to Paul, and Paul

\[1\text{See Kershner, Horizons of Immortality. St. Louis, Mo. The Bethany Press. 1926. pp. 38ff.}\]
in turn to the Latins. The Romans had nothing original; theirs were rude adaptations of Greek ideas. With the Egyptians, the system was built around the resurrection in the flesh; the wicked were devoured by a crocodile or hippopotamus. The Hindu ideas were for fire for a time, and transmigration of the soul ad infinitum. Buddhist hells were gross in their later development and embraced everything foul; but the "poles" of the original system were Karma and Nirvana. Shinto eschatology is shadowy; hell is here and now. The Norse picture is rather sensuous and decidedly ghostly, cold rather than heat being the formidable element. Based on fear of Hel, it was non-moral.

The Persian, Jewish, and Mohammedan faiths have common elements. Zoroaster must surely have experienced the chill blasts from the north, and the warm, balmy breeze from the south, as alternately they swept with inclemency and warmed with kindness the slopes of Iran. He must have had the soul of a poet and philosopher, for he saw in this the eternal struggle between opposites; between light and darkness, good and bad, Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu. We cannot prove, I suppose, that the writer of the Revelation got his suggestion of the same theme or the "lake of fire" picture here, but he could well have done so. Early Judaism is vague in its eschatology. In its pseudopigraphal and rabbinical development it seems to

be indebted to the Persians, but to what extent we cannot say. Between the Testaments there is, naturally, a vindictive development. Mohammedanism is late and based on Jewish and Parsi ideas. Like the Chinvat bridge of the latter, Islam has its as-Sirat bridge. The Christian Scriptures are probably influenced by the heathen background of their writers; yet, they mention the fate of the wicked relatively little, and are far more ethical than most commentaries would allow or many translations suggest. They are mostly concerned, eschatologically, with the reward of the faithful, and their message is primarily and emphatically positive. Jesus teaches no "eternal torment". The worst passages are in the Revelation of John, and, in view of their setting they can be understood even if they cannot be satisfactorily explained. The Greek theologians were seen to be relatively mild and sane, while the Latins have amongst the worst and most cruel views expressed in history; they were the inspiration, especially in Augustine, for Reformation Protestantism. The Middle Ages blended, in the Roman system, the Latin Hell and Heaven division with the Greek purgatory. This inspired Dante who, taught by Aquinas, also drew on other backgrounds than the immediate one, as did Milton; and so a false idea of hell, commonly accepted as scriptural and Christian by many even yet, has become popularized in the

the world of men.

Eternal torment was Augustine's brain-child. Born a puny little imp, its heredity was bad; yet, to make amends for its inherent weaknesses it cried loud and long, and not a few pampered it. It should have been roundly threshed in infancy, for its ugly traits would have been more easily prevented then than cured now. Uncorrected, it grew up to be tyrannical, to hold men everywhere slaves in the grip of its sinister mastery.

There can be no doubt that Augustine's eschatology has been more wide-spread and more indelibly impressed upon human hearts and minds than that of any other man. Many others but reflect his views. The great movements of the reformation have engulfed millions in the Western world in the same unethical slavery through the neo-Augustinian views of Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli. Modern literary and textual criticism has done much to rid the minds of men of this sadistic teaching, but thousands remain deep-dyed in it, thinking piously that it is the revealed Truth of God in Christ Jesus! The implications in the expression "endless torment" are clearly as far from His mind, and that of the Father He reveals, as anything could be; its applications in history have been extremely repugnant to anyone who even begins to understand the mind of the Christ. And that such unpardonable rubbish should have been presented in His Name is both difficult to understand and an insult to the memory of One whose every expression was Magnanimity itself.
In recent years all literature, including the Bible, has been approached critically. Time-honored shib boleths and traditions have not escaped. The "eternal torment" theory has been attacked and denied: it is not like Jesus or God; it is unreasonable; it does not represent God's revealed Truth. Furthermore, it has no place for the remedy of the wrong in men; it portrays a God who derives pleasure from the torments of His own creation. This is unthinkable! The last fifty years have witnessed many works repudiating this heinous doctrine in its every form. Augustine, instead of being any longer called a Saint has been rightly labelled a Sadist,—an abnormal mental case. Slowly but irrevocably his views are on the way out. Reason hath her victories, but they are slowly, patiently won. The great throbbing heart of Humanity has imbibed more of the spirit of "that tremendous Lover"—a spirit quite unknown to Augustine. Mankind has gradually come to see that:

Por:  The quality of mercy is not strain'd
       It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven,
       Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;
       It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:
       'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
       The throned monarch better than his crown:
       His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
       Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of Kings;
       But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
       It is enthroned in the hearts of King,
       It is an attribute to God himself;
       And earthly power doth then show likest God's
       When mercy seasons justice.¹

¹Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice, IV. 1. 185.
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