

THE PURPOSE AND FORMS OF NEW TESTAMENT
ESCHATOLOGY.

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Eschatology is a term which covers all teaching as to the future. It may be the immediate or distant future. But that very statement involves an assumption which only the future itself can verify. Are we entitled to use the words "immediate" and "distant" in this connection? Are terms of time strictly applicable when we leave the record of the past and the conditions of the present? Is not the future with its conditions a continual discovery, and must not positive statement always be used with an element of reserve?

Leaving the determination of that to men of philosophic subtlety, there can be no question that turn where we will there is a very constant interest in, and concern about, the future. What it shall be plays a large part in the imagination of men. The outlook may extend no farther than the earthly life. And now from a base conception of life, now from one that is lofty, men discount the probabilities and regulate their conduct accordingly. The man whose decision is "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die", propounds a theory of cause of life determined by his eschatology quite as truly as the man who responds to the appeal, "work while it is called to-day; the night cometh when no man can work." Both are as much under the spell of the future as the man whose outlook is into an eternity of bliss in the presence of God. Each of these is a recognition of the influence the future exerts on our lives. And the whole history of horoscopes, and fortune telling, or oracle and prophecy is a testimony to the anxiety on the part of men to get at certainty as to the future, so as to arrive at the proper course of conduct for them to pursue in view of it. The whole mental apparatus of hope and fear is a testimony from within man's nature itself that it is open to the play of the future upon it and to the influence which the future exerts as surely as the past in determining

the present. May it not be said, indeed, that the future is the element in our environment that safeguards our liberty? It is the constant door of escape from the pursuing and entangling past. And if we meet it, bearing with us burdens of accumulated responsibility, we still may do so with the surviving expectation that somewhere, somehow, we yet may reach a point where for us, as for Christian when he came to the Cross, the burden will slip from the back and we shall recover our freedom.

From what has been said it is at once evident that this whole matter of the future may be utilized to serve the very highest moral ends. If we can reach a conception of the future sufficiently impressive and reasonable, so consonant to the noblest that is in us that it reaches the depths of our being, it will inevitably have that effect. But to have full effect it must correspond with the fullest conception of life—human life. I cannot better express what I mean than by quoting at length a passage from Professor William James in "The Will to Believe" (p. 212). "In a merely human world without a God, the appeal to our moral energy falls short of its maximal stimulating power. Life, to be sure, is even in such a world a genuinely ethical symphony; but it is played in the compass of a couple of poor octaves, and the infinite scale of values fails to open up. Many of us, indeed—like Sir James Stephen in those eloquent 'Essays by a Barrister'—would openly laugh at the very idea of the strenuous mood being awakened in us by those claims of remote posterity which constitute the last appeal of the religion of humanity. We do not love these men of the future keenly enough; and we love them perhaps the less the more we hear of their evolutionized perfection, their high average longevity and education, their freedom from war and crime, their relative immunity from pain and zymotic disease, and all their other negative superiorities. This is all too finite, we say; we see too well the vacuum beyond. It lacks the note of infinitude and mystery, and may all be dealt with in the 'don't care' mood. No need of agonizing ourselves or making others agonize for these good creatures just at present.

"When, however, we believe that a God is there, and that he

is one of the claimants, the infinite perspective opens out. The scale of the symphony is incalculably prolonged. The more imperative ideals now begin to speak with an altogether new objectivity and significance, and to utter the penetrating, shattering, tragically challenging note of appeal. They ring out like the call of Victor Hugo's alpine eagle, '*qui parle au precipice et que le gouffre entend,*' and the strenuous mood awakens at the sound. It saith among the trumpets, ha, ha! it smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting. Its blood is up; and cruelty to the lesser claims, so far from being a deterrent element, does but add to the stern joy with which it leaps to answer to the greater. All through history, in the periodical conflicts of puritanism with the don't care temper, we see the antagonism of the strenuous and genial moods and the contrast between the ethics of infinite and mysterious obligation from on high, and those of prudence and the satisfaction of merely finite need." It is obvious how corporate to this whole line of thought so graphically presented is the idea of the future. It is easy and natural to connect with it infinitude and mystery. It opens such vistas, but around them hang clouds now luminous with sunlight, now dark and thundry, now lurid with lightning flash. And when Christianity forces on men the fact that they must proceed along the path of these vistas, and out into the beyond, when it inscribes over all, "surely God is in this place", the future becomes fraught with a seriousness, a solemnity, and yet a subtle attractiveness that make our prospects within it a potent stimulus to ethical ends.

Now, as a matter of fact, in the New Testament all the use that is made of men's views as to the future, anything new that is added to earlier knowledge, any revelation that Christ and the Apostles make as to its nature is given to serve ethical ends. So much is this the case that whenever interest in the future or inquiry with regard to it is dictated by mere curiosity, it is studiously ignored or frankly challenged. Not once but repeatedly in Christ's experience you have scenes like this: The disciples start a question, say, as to the probable number of the saved—"Lord, are there few that be saved?" What is

the line of reply? "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." Our welfare, that is to say in the future, is not to become with us a matter of calculation of chances, but is to be diligently striven for along the ways of believing service. Or, in the Fourth Gospel, take the pointed inquiry of Peter as to John's future, "And, what shall this man do?" Mere curiosity, and nothing in the reply to satisfy it. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." But isn't it a striking commentary on the pernicious habit of reading between the lines that those apostolic Higher Critics discovered in this a covert indication of John's future? "Then went this saying abroad among the disciples that that disciple should not die." But a life far beyond the ordinary span did not mislead either John himself or those with whom he spent his later years, for here is the remark on that tale, "Yet said not Jesus unto him that he should not die, but 'if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?'" Or take the first chapter of the Acts, and its account of the intercourse between the risen Lord and His disciples: "Wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom of Israel?" Curiosity again, and the dregs of national vainglory, but only to be sternly repressed and their attention directed to a higher flight, with a weighty obligation to bestir themselves for the spread of the gospel. The risen Christ is marvelously like the Christ before His cross. Just as little as ever will he be a soothsayer. No more than Lazarus does He reveal secrets discovered in the beyond to gratify curiosity. That He declines to do.

On the contrary, all that is said is uttered in order to enforce high-toned living. Take the vivid descriptions of judgment in Matthew, take the parables in Matthew or Luke, take the promises in John. Not one of them is a mere flight of imagination, a mere rhapsody on the glory of heaven. They are all deliberately given to enforce conduct, to make men strenuous to do or patient to endure. And when we pass from Christ to His followers the same spirit prevails. Paul's treatment of the subject in the case of the Thessalonians is very instructive. It shows at once the abuse and the use of teaching

as to the future. But it shows above all, both in the abuse and and in the use for which it was intended, that this at least was obvious in what He taught about it: it was great information which was to be turned to practical account. In the Corinthian Epistles the same is true, and in the magnificent study of the spiritual life which occupies Romans 1-8 the climax which He reaches of a redeemed creation towards which things steadily tend is not simply intended to fire the imagination but to stir the moral energies. True, He harks back for a moment to study the perplexing position of Israel and to adjust it to his scheme. But that accomplished, all concentrates on the practical outcome in holy living and righteous doing. And the same is true in the more elaborate and visionary books of II Peter, Jude, and Revelation. Suppose they are the conglomerates—at any rate two of them—as some hold them to be. The intention of the conglomerators becomes all the more obvious. They find a miscellany of apocalyptic sketches by Jews, Jewish Christians, etc., which have gained currency with many; but to what purpose? Nothing practical, nothing vital. So they associate them directly with the moral issues involved, turn the current conceptions to practical account.

The reason why I have been at pains to emphasize this practical aspect of New Testament teaching as to the future is that it seems to cast a great deal of light on the whole subject of New Testament Eschatology, and helps to a general point of view from which to observe the varying forms in which the future comes before us in the New Testament. It is brought before us in prophecy and apocalypse under imagery which is built up on the physical and material, but also in forms which are purely spiritual in their terms. The same is found in the teaching of Christ himself. There are explicit prophecies of His own return. There are apocalyptic sketches such as in the thirteenth chapter of Mark, or its parallel in Matthew 24 and 25. There is the figurative language of many of the parables. There are anticipations of a simple fellowship with God which death itself cannot interrupt. This is what is reproduced among the other New Testament teachers.

Of course the objection may be raised that this assumes what

ought to be proved: namely, that Christ did use apocalyptic. But letting that rest for the moment, it is important to notice where these varying forms come from. They come almost entirely from the Old Testament. There are types of them all there. The prophets, the Book of Daniel, the Psalms provide samples of all of them. That is to say, so far as the form is concerned, the New Testament forms are simply those in current use among the people of that day. But subsequent to the Old Testament writings there had grown up in later Judaism a vast accumulation of apocalyptic writing. So far as our knowledge goes, wisdom literature and apocalyptic writings formed the chief literary productions of the later age. And hence it is not surprising that apocalyptic should hold a conspicuous place in, and indeed dominate a whole book of, New Testament teaching on Eschatology.

But there is a present day prejudice against apocalyptic. And I do not wonder. Much of it is couched in terms alien to modern modes of thought, and is expressed in figures that strike us as grotesque and incongruous and beneath the dignity of the subject, and we turn away from it with a feeling of satiety after a small dose. We are conscious of the great gulf, of a difference not of quality simply, but of kind, between prophecy and apocalyptic. Apocalyptic seems a sort of resuscitation of prophecy by a mechanical process, producing an impression of a galvanized imitation of life, that trusts to spectacular effects to make up for the loss of the demonstration of the Spirit, very much as the modern actor depends on stage scenery and sumptuous dresses to cover the poverty of real dramatic ability. But there is a danger in such generalizations. We may lose the grain with the chaff. I am far from belittling the value of all the research and discovery of our own day, which has recovered for us so many specimens of apocalyptic with which to compare those which survive in the Canon of Scripture. It has greatly helped us to understand the state of mind and mode of view to which these correspond. Yet I do not know that the ages which were in blissful ignorance of them missed much. I doubt whether after all the dust bins in which they have been found were not perhaps the proper

place for them. In the Canon we have preserved for us all or nearly all that was worth keeping. We can now compare, indeed; but to compare is to feel the contrast. It is to feel that there is a legitimate place for apocalyptic, that is not necessarily incapable of serving spiritual purposes. But its capacity was relatively small, and practically it was exhausted in what survives in the Canon. Thereafter both in the synagogue and in the Christian church it ran out into extravagance. And there is just the same kind of difference between the extra canonical Apocalypse and the Canonical as exists between the Gospels of the Infancy, the fantastic stories of the Golden Legend, and the reserve and inspiration of the opening chapters of Matthew and of Luke.

Apocalyptic, then, was a well understood if not very lofty method of presenting truth as to the future. Is it scientific to start with a presumption that this is a form of teaching which our Savior could not adopt? I submit that it is not. But nobody says that it is, you rejoin. Perhaps not explicitly, but there is undoubtedly a dead set against the genuineness of everything in what purports to be Christ's teaching that is of an apocalyptic character. Look at the treatment of what is called the Small Apocalypse of Mark XIII, or its equivalent Matt. XXIV and XXV. Charles' work on Eschatology so far as it bears on this subject will serve my purpose as an example as well as any other. He, first of all, with many others, proceeds to divide up the passage into two series of sayings which he regards as independent of each other. He then raises the question as to whether they both proceed from Christ. The one set of utterances deal with spiritual aspects of the case. The other set deal with temporal aspects of it. The latter is set down as a tissue of apocalyptic invention without moral significance, and, on the basis of a most flimsy induction, declared to be out of line with Christ's other teaching. But here is a point which he has never reckoned with. According to the text, Christ had made a definite statement as to the fate of Jerusalem, which stirred the interest and curiosity of his disciples, and they put a fair question to him on the subject. And if what is repudiated as non-moral and apocalyptic is excluded

in Christ's professed answer, there is no answer at all to the question He himself had evoked. Yes, you say, but that is in line with the very point which was insisted upon at the outset of this paper, namely, that Christ never would satisfy mere curiosity. And I admit it so far. But, on the other hand, when He had himself raised the point, and that in a way almost to provoke inquiry, surely it is to fail to distinguish things that differ not to see that a more or less direct answer is required in this case. That he should couch the answer in such terms as to bring the moral issues involved into special prominence is what we should expect and is what we have in the reply as it stands in the Canonical Gospel; but that He should entirely ignore it, the result that comes of the critical dissection, is, I venture to say, remarkably unlike Christ.

But as regards this very passage, it is a mistake to look at it simply as it stands in Mark's Gospel. We get a far better conception of Christ's whole method of eschatological teaching if it is taken in the connection in which it stands in Matthew, a connection of which we only know a part from Mark to Luke. I should like to repeat here what I have said elsewhere.* "This chapter is only part of the great group of teaching on the last day of Christ's public ministry. It is all instinct with the impending catastrophe. From ch. xxi., v. 18 onwards He is speaking in view of the end. And the full import of the chapter is only felt when read in close touch with what precedes and in view of the tragic events which began with His own seizure on the very next day. Recall that day's teaching. In the morning there was the miracle of the barren figtree, a most arresting symbol. As soon as He entered the temple He had to meet the challenge of His authority by the priests, and when He had exposed their disingenuousness in the successive parables of the Two Sons and the Wicked Husbandmen, with its terribly pointed application, He gave a forecast under a parabolic form of the fate of one section of the Jewish people. Then in the parable of the Marriage of the King's Son and the fate both of the disdainful decliners and of the presumptuous

* NOTE—In the relevant part of my Joan Kerr lectures on "The Relation of the Apostolic Teaching and the Teaching of Christ," T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.

guest He gave a parabolic sketch of judgment and the lines on which it should go. Over the question of the Sadducees He dealt with the question of the resurrection, while the whole twenty-third chapter is that torrent of invective against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees which painted in lurid colors the fate that must inevitably befall such moral lepers, and which reached its climax in the wail over infatuated Jerusalem. With this He went out of the temple, and with singular want of sympathy with their Master's spirits the disciples begin to dilate on its imposing proportions. He is in no mood for such talk. Jerusalem's fate weighs on His mind, and when His disciples, first silenced and then lured on by His tragic prediction, "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto thee, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down," ask Him when and with what signs. Was He not in the very state of mind when with a seer's eye all that lay ahead would take shape before His eye and His answer would naturally come in the apocalyptic form in which we have it, a sort of dramatic vision in which He foresaw the fate worked out. But Jesus was no pessimist. The fate of Jerusalem would simply clear the ground for the glorious advance of the building of the city of God, and with a passing reference to its final consummation, the day and hour of which was a secret known to God in heaven alone, He turns back to press the moral significance of all this on his disciples, and by precept and by parable to enforce the significance of the constant imminence of His coming. Then in the parable of the talents he lays down the principle of final judgment and award and closes the day's discourse with that solemn prophecy of judgment when all nations should be gathered before Him, as judge, and receive on the ground of their conduct towards even the most abject, as indicative of their real attitude toward Him, their final irrevocable verdict of everlasting punishment or eternal life. There is an extraordinary cohesiveness about the whole day's teaching. It was more than simply Matthew's skill as a literary artist which threw scattered sayings, uttered at various times in Christ's ministry, into its last day, and preserved the air of naturalness by inserting such side issues as the inquiry about

the tribute money, or that about the son of David. The *tout ensemble* speaks for its unity and authenticity as it stands. And we see that the apocalyptic could be used with perfect skill at the proper moment by Jesus to set forth the lessons of His kingdom.

Having seen that apocalyptic can be legitimately used for the teaching of the New Testament eschatology, and was so used by Christ himself, we are not surprised to find that it has also a place in the teaching of His followers. Not only is there John's Apocalypse, but Jude and II Peter are largely Apocalyptic, and II Thess. 2, 1-12, is an outcrop of it in Paul's writings. But what is worth noticing is that wherever it occurs it takes for granted a certain previous acquaintance with the general situation to which it alludes in cryptic terms. Take, for instance, the interjectional remark in Mark 13:14, "let him that readeth understand." It is too much to assume from that as Charles does that the passage in Mark originally took shape in writing. It is quite enough to recognize a reminder here from Mark, made when he reduced the words of Christ to writing. And that view of it is in harmony with Paul's way of introducing the passage in II Thessalonians, and the other passages to which I have referred. Not once, but repeatedly, you have hints of this sort running through the Book of Revelation. If we readers take note of these things, as we are bidden to do, we shall see that we ought not to proceed to the interpretation of eschatology from apocalyptic, but we should read apocalyptic from the point of view of other eschatological teaching. We are not to treat its statements as dry literal fact, but as flights of imagination, supplying sketches of the future in vivid, dramatic, living-word pictures, intended to suggest ideas, not to serve as history written beforehand, not puzzles to stimulate and to test the ingenuity of the curious. It is not in apocalyptic, therefore, that we have the proper starting ground from which to discover New Testament teaching as to the future, but on the firm ground of simpler, more prosaic statement.

Christ's eschatology might be summarized in three sayings of His own, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise",

"The Son of Man cometh", "Of that day or that hour knoweth no man." Each of them implies so much. The first exhausts the case for the individual. The second takes count of the whole course of history. The third rings out the note which gives its full impressiveness to the subject, and makes the religious interest paramount in life, for it should keep us ever on the alert, with the dread significance of the one certainty in the unknown future, always impending, always imminent. It is this note of imminence that is the most striking feature of New Testament eschatology. To a very large extent New Testament eschatology has taken over the sifted convictions of the older Jewish faith. In course of ages that had undergone a very perceptible course of evolution, until when Christ came it presented a fairly definite set of ideas grouped round two foci. The one was the individual, the other the Jewish nation. In Christianity the former of these received its full recognition, and the doctrine of the future, so far as regards the individual, was modified chiefly by being brought completely into harmony with that fuller conception of life which it was the part of Jesus to reveal and to bestow. On the other hand, the set of ideas that clustered round the nation was left to wither as the destiny of Israel sank to the same level of importance as Christ accords to that of other nations; that is to say was merged and lost in the grander conception of the kingdom of God. It was the destiny of this great spiritual empire that was now brought into the foreground, and Israel discovered that its own significance was measured by the fact that it had been for a time the cradle of the kingdom of God. Its exceptional position for a time was lost when this grander kingdom came in view. And so in Christian teaching the individual and the kingdom of God take the place of the individual and the nation of Israel.

The chief problem in trying to construct a scheme of the future is to adjust the relation of those two sides of the question. But in part this is caused by the attempt to fit the teaching as to the individual, which takes account of the facts of life and death in a single life, into stages in the apocalyptic sketches which deal with the progress of the kingdom partly on earth

and partly after this earth is done. It may be very attractive to try to discover from the sketches of the drama of the world's history some situation to which to relegate the souls of the departed, and thus to construct a definite doctrine as to the period between death and the final judgment. But that is really not where to look. The purpose of the two lines of teaching is fairly well marked in each case, and anything that detracts from the note of urgency and impendingness and the need for constant watchfulness and definite decision that will affect all the future here is false to the whole line of teaching with regard to each. After all, Christ never spent much time on developing a scheme of the future. He took the ideas which men held. He challenged them to lead lives that would harmonize with their professed convictions. They had certain views about Gehenna and what the fate of the wicked there meant. And when need was to alarm men out of their selfishness and self-satisfaction, he would show them that evils as dread as those which they associated with Gehenna were awaiting them if they persisted in certain lines of conduct. They had views about resurrection. In times of sorrow he bade them take account of these views and put their faith into practice. And for practical purposes, which were the great purposes which Christ always had in view, the most impressive form which eschatological teaching took in His hands was neither more nor less than His own resurrection. The objective fact of it was the undoubted conviction of all his followers. But what was Christ's resurrection? It was not simply a return to this earth. Christ's bodily appearance in this world after His quitting the tomb were the "many infallible proofs", as Luke calls them, that He was risen. The resurrection is the triumph of life over death, the self-assertion of the eternal life over the frailties of our mortal bodies, the full significance of which is to be found unfolded in the writings of Paul. I am not much impressed with the attempts to prove a development in Paul's views as they are supposed to appear successively in Thessalonians, Corinthians, Romans, Collossians. The forms are different, but that is due to other conditions than those of development. It is due to adaptation of the argument to suit differ-

ent phases of inquiry and perplexity in the readers. The time between the composition of Thessalonians and of Romans is too brief for any complete or far-reaching difference, propounded without a hint of change of view in the later book. In Thessalonians you have Paul's doctrine as to the individual introduced to banish fears for deceased friends, lest they should miss their share in the glory of Christ's return. His reply in brief is that they that fall asleep in Jesus, God will bring with Him, and risen from the grave they shall unite with earth's survivors in enjoyment of heavenly glory. The very terms used, and the abuse by some of what was said, making of it an excuse for laziness, shows that the expectation was that Christ's return would be not long delayed. But long or short does not affect this conception, nor the conviction on which it rests, namely, that once united with Christ, life with Him must persist. The abuse of this truth led to what is called the short Apocalypse of II Thess. 2:1-12. But that is simply a corrective in cryptic terms which it was very natural to employ in a communication to a predominantly Jewish community, setting forth the larger issues which were inevitable and which must determine the length of time that must elapse ere Christ come. It is not a discussion of the particular case of any single group of individuals. Coming to I Corinthians, written not very long after, Paul simply discusses at greater length the certainty of the resurrection for those united with Christ, following very much the same lines as he had indicated in I. Thessalonians, and on this basing a call to immovable stability in a holy life. In II Corinthians he develops in a very original manner what he had hinted at in I Corinthians, namely, the nature of the resurrection body. There he had given his judgment that the spirit always requires a body suited to the conditions in which for the time it exists—amid natural things a natural body, amid spiritual things a corresponding spiritual body. In II Cor. iv. and v. he seems to teach that from the day a man becomes united with Christ a process begins by which the body that had been the instrument of a purely earthly life and personality gradually undergoes change and becomes transformed into something suited for the complete domination and use of

the Spirit. It reaches what Ruskin calls a "period of the soul culture when it begins to interfere with some of the characters of typical beauty belonging to the bodily frame, the stirring of the intellect wearing down the flesh, and the moral enthusiasm burning its way out to heaven, through the emaciation of the earthen vessel; and there is, in this, indication of subduing the mortal by the immortal part." And in Romans viii he seems to have the same conception in view when he puts the crowning touch to his picture of a spirit-controlled life, and says, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness (i. e., though the body is still subject to mortality because of sin, the spirit is life, and that because of righteousness); but if the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you." Having reached this, he does not, as in I Corinthians, proceed to develop the consummation simply of the Christian community, but also the share in it of the whole creation, just as he does again in the beginning of the Epistle to the Colossians. And with all that, his attitude in Philippians and in II Timothy, in parts which are admittedly Pauline, and which refer to his personal expectations, entirely agree. Thus Paul's fundamental conceptions are practically identical with those of Christ. To depart is to be with Christ; the Lord cometh; but beside the great certainty stood out the grand uncertainty of the day and hour when the trumpet should sound and all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

The verifying of the Resurrection and the insistence on judgment to be carried out by himself on the whole human race are the most distinctive features of Christ's eschatology. The vital connection between these and the life eternal which he bestowed is unmistakable. And it is one of the convincing proofs of the genuineness of the discourse of Jesus in the sixth chapter of John that the phrase "and I will raise him up at the last day" keeps recurring by an association of ideas which is not logical, but which is involved in the inevitableness of vital relations between Christ and the man united to Him by faith.

It is a painfully mechanical criticism that rejects this recurring dominant. It simply spoils the chord.

It is true there was great uncertainty in the minds of the first disciples as to the time of Christ's return. Their anxiety for the consummation, the intensity of their expectancy, led them to miss the foreshortening in Christ's pictures, just as the fore-Raphaelites of criticism miss it still, and attribute to Christ the first mistakes of His followers. But they rapidly outgrew their mistake. The gap between the foreseen reign of Jerusalem and the distant Himalayas of the Ages was speedily realized. They discovered that the world was a bigger thing than they had supposed, human perversity a more impregnable barrier, and they saw that urgent as the case continued to be, constantly watchful though they must remain, the end would not come as soon as they had imagined. And as the Advent receded, the fact of the Resurrection grew in importance and in value, not simply as an argument for the validity of Christ's claims, but as a comfort and stimulus to those who had to fight to the death the good fight of faith.

The question is raised as to whether in the New Testament resurrection is ever spoken of in the case of the wicked. A negative answer is only secured by a quite arbitrary exclusion of passages such as John 5:28, 29, of which, for instance, Charles says: "Here the resurrection is adjourned to the last day: both righteous and unrighteous are described as coming forth from the tombs, and the scene is depicted in the most materialistic form—in fact, it would be hard to find a more unspiritual description of the resurrection in the whole literature of the first century A. D." What are we to make of criticism like that? It simply betrays a case of a malady recurrent among scholars, a sudden fit of literalism, in which everything is paralyzed, including common sense. A moment's thought of the context would have prevented this aberration. But the truth is that resurrection properly so called, meaning that triumph over death which is the property of the eternal life bestowed by Christ, is only possible in the case of men united with Christ. On the other hand, it is quite proper that in free, untechnical speech resurrection should be occasionally used of

both the good and the evil, where all it means so far as the evil are concerned is persistence of existence beyond physical death. And there is a touch of irony in its use in such a case as this, a perfect oxymoron, of words, which only crass literalism can treat as a contradiction in terms, a resurrection of damnation.

This brings me to the last point on which to touch, and that is the bearing of New Testament eschatology on the final fate of the wicked. It is proverbial that this subject is very meagerly touched on in the New Testament. What is said is terribly severe, and the sternest, most fixed things are said by our Lord himself, the Judge. But it is true that in the main it is the fate of the believer, not of the unbeliever, to which prominence is given. How are we to account for this disproportion, or what does it mean? It is in large measure due to the relation of Christianity to current beliefs. There were current very strong and definite convictions as to the fate of the wicked. Life after death, with an exhaustive doctrine more or less homogeneous, was commonly believed in throughout both the Jewish and the Graeco-Roman world. And in this picture the dark side far predominated over the bright. There was no doubt of immortality shared in by all humanity. There was no doubt that for the wicked the future meant endless woe. But even for the righteous the future meant, even at the best, in the great majority of cases, something very like purgatory, even if anything better was ultimately to succeed. Now the New Testament teaching does not contradict that view of the future of the wicked. Without indorsing its varying details, as these were variously portrayed by vivid imaginations, without even stopping to declare which was the more accurate anticipation, it utilizes this dread of the sinful heart as no needless terror, but a dread reality which those who choose the ways that lead thither must face. It gives no hint of a possibility of change for them. And if I am asked how I can assent to such a hopeless view of the fate of the wicked, I can only reply that I do not see what strictly moral influence can operate to produce a change for the better in men who have rejected the strongest it is possible to conceive, namely, the love

of God revealed in Jesus Christ. To tell me that the pains of hell may effect what the grace of God cannot achieve is to ask me to believe that after all something akin to measures of constraint and cruelty, are more potent than the free play of love—the very antithesis of the teaching of Christ. On the other hand, the purpose of what the New Testament has to say, where it is not directly ethical, is to relieve the anxiety of those who trust in Christ as to the fate of their fellow-believers, to let them see the inevitable issues for the believer of his union with Christ, and in the light of this to make their hopes a new incentive to the practice of the character which will find free play in the life to come. Thus by devious ways we return to the point of departure, namely, that the purpose of eschatological teaching in the New Testament, whether it be as to the nature of the life after death, the course of the world's history till the Son of Man come, the imminence of the advent, the judgment, or the life everlasting, is to impel to faith and constrain to righteousness.