

Eschatology, that branch of systematic theology which deals with the doctrines of the last things (*eschata*). The Greek title is of comparatively recent introduction, but in modern usage it has largely supplanted its Latin equivalent *De Novissimis*. As the numerous doctrinal subjects belonging to this section of theology will be treated *ex professo* under their several proper titles, it is proposed in this article merely to take such a view of the whole field as will serve to indicate the place of eschatology in the general frame-work of religion, explain its subject-matter and the outlines of its content in the various religions of man-kind, and illustrate by comparison the superiority of Christian eschatological teaching.

As a preliminary indication of the subject-matter, a distinction may be made between the eschatology of the individual and that of the race and the universe at large. The former, setting out from the doctrine of personal immortality, or at least of survival in some form after death, seeks to ascertain the fate or condition, temporary or eternal, of individual souls, and how far the issues of the future depend on the present life. The latter deals with events like the resurrection and the general judgment, in which, according to Christian Revelation, all men will participate, and with the signs and portents in the moral and physical order that are to precede and accompany those events. Both aspects—the individual and the universal—belong to the adequate concept of eschatology; but it is only in Christian teaching that both receive due and proportionate recognition. Jewish eschatology only attained its completion in the teaching of Christ and the apostles; while in ethnic religions eschatology seldom rose above the individual view, and even then was often so vague, and so little bound up with any adequate notion of Divine justice and of moral retribution, that it barely deserves to be ranked as religious teaching.

I. ETHNIC ESCHATOLOGIES.

(1) Even among the **lower - savage and barbarian - races** the universality of religious beliefs, including belief in some kind of existence after death, is very generally admitted by modern anthropologists. Some exceptions, it is true, have been claimed to exist; but on closer scrutiny the evidence for this claim has broken down in so many cases that we are justified in presuming against any exception. Among the lower races the truth and purity of eschatological beliefs vary, as a rule, with the purity of the idea of God and of the moral standards that prevail. Some savages seem to limit existence after death to the good (with extinction for the wicked), as the Nicaraguas, or to men of rank, as the Tongas; while the Greenlanders, New Guinea negroes, and others seem to hold the possibility of a second death, in the other world or on the way to it. The next world itself is variously located—on the earth, in the skies, in the sun or moon—but most commonly under the earth; while the life led there is conceived either as a dull and shadowy and more or less impotent existence, or as an active continuation in a higher or idealized form of the pursuits and pleasures of earthly life. In most savage religions there is no very high or definite doctrine of moral retribution after death; but it is only in the case of a few of the most degraded races, whose condition is admittedly the result of degeneration, that the notion of retribution is claimed to be altogether wanting. Sometimes mere physical prowess, as bravery or skill in the hunt or in war, takes the place of a strictly ethical standard; but, on the other hand, some savage religions contain unexpectedly clear and elevated ideas of many primary moral duties.

(2) Coming to the **higher or civilized races**, we shall glance briefly at the eschatology of the Babylonian and Assyrian, Egyptian, Indian, Persian, and Greek religions. Confucianism can hardly be said to have an eschatology, except the very indefinite belief involved in the worship of ancestors, whose happiness was held to depend on the conduct of their living descendants. Mohammedan eschatology contains nothing distinctive except the glorification of barbaric sensuality.

(a) **Babylonian and Assyrian.** In the ancient Babylonian religion (with which the Assyrian is substantially identical) eschatology never attained, in the historical period, any high degree of development. Retribution is confined almost, if not quite, entirely to the present life, virtue being rewarded by the Divine bestowal of strength, prosperity, long life, numerous offspring, and the like, and wickedness punished by contrary temporal calamities. Yet the existence of an hereafter is believed in. A kind of semi-material ghost, or shade, or double (*ekimmu*), survives the death of the body, and when the body is buried (or, less commonly, cremated) the ghost descends to the underworld to join the company of the departed. In the “*Lay of Ishtar*” this underworld, to which she descended

in search of her deceased lover and of the “waters of life”, is described in gloomy colors; and the same is true of the other descriptions we possess. It is the “pit”, the “land of no return”, the “house of darkness”, the “place where dust is their bread, and their food is mud”; and it is infested with demons, who, at least in Ishtar’s case, are empowered to inflict various chastisements for sins committed in the upper world.

Though Ishtar’s case is held by some to be typical in this respect, there is otherwise no clear indication of a doctrine of moral penalties for the wicked, and no promise of rewards for the good. Good and bad are involved in a common dismal fate. The location of the region of the dead is a subject of controversy among Assyriologists, while the suggestion of a brighter hope in the form of a resurrection (or rather of a return to earth) from the dead, which some would infer from the belief in the “waters of life” and from references to Marduk, or Merodach, as “one who brings the dead to life”, is an extremely doubtful conjecture. On the whole there is nothing hopeful or satisfying in the eschatology of this ancient religion.

(b) **Egyptian.** On the other hand, in the Egyptian religion, which for antiquity competes with the Babylonian, we meet with a highly developed and comparatively elevated eschatology. Leaving aside such difficult questions as the relative priority and influence of different, and even conflicting, elements in the Egyptian religion, it will suffice for the present purpose to refer to what is most prominent in Egyptian eschatology taken at its highest and best. In the first place, then, life in its fullness, unending life with Osiris, the sun-god, who journeys daily through the underworld, even identification with the god, with the right to be called by his name, is what the pious Egyptian looked forward to as the ultimate goal after death. The departed are habitually called the “living”; the coffin is the “chest of the living”, and the tomb the “lord of life”. It is not merely the disembodied spirit, the soul as we understand it, that continues to live, but the soul with certain bodily organs and functions suited to the conditions of the new life. In the elaborate anthropology which underlies Egyptian eschatology, and which we find it hard to understand, several constituents of the human person are distinguished, the most important of which is the Ka, a kind of semi-material double; and to the justified who pass the judgment after death the use of these several constituents, separated by death, is restored.

This judgment which each undergoes is described in detail in chapter cxxv of the Book of the Dead. The examination covers a great variety of personal, social, and religious duties and observances; the deceased must be able to deny his guilt in regard to forty-two great categories of sins, and his heart (the symbol of conscience and morality) must stand the test of being weighed in the balance against the image of *Maf Åt*, goddess of truth or justice. But the new life that begins after a favorable judgment is not at first any better or more spiritual than life on earth. The justified is still a wayfarer with a long and difficult journey to accomplish before he reaches bliss and security in the fertile fields of Aalu. On this journey he is exposed to a variety of disasters, for the avoidance of which he depends on the use of his revived powers and on the knowledge he has gained in life of the directions and magical charms recorded in the Book of the Dead, and also, and perhaps most of all, on the aids provided by surviving friends on earth. It is they who secure the preservation of his corpse that he may return and use it, who provide an indestructible tomb as a home or shelter for his Ka, who supply food and drink for his sustenance, offer up prayers and sacrifices for his benefit, and aid his memory by inscribing on the walls of the tomb, or writing on rolls of papyrus enclosed in the wrappings of the mummy, chapters from the Book of the Dead. It does not, indeed, appear that the dead were ever supposed to reach a state in which they were independent of these earthly aids. At any rate they were always considered free to revisit the earthly tomb, and in making the journey to and fro the blessed had the power of transforming themselves at will into various animal-shapes. It was this belief which, at the degenerate stage at which he encountered it, Herodotus mistook for the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. It should be added that the identification of the blessed with Osiris (“Osiris N. N.” is a usual form of inscription) did not, at least in the earlier and higher stage of Egyptian religion, imply pantheistic absorption in the deity or the loss of individual personality. Regarding the fate of those who fail in the judgment after death, or succumb in the second probation, Egyptian eschatology is less definite in its teaching. “Second death” and other expressions applied to them might seem to suggest annihilation; but it is sufficiently clear from the evidence as a whole that continued existence in a condition of darkness and misery was believed to be their portion. And as there were degrees in the happiness of the blessed, so also in the punishment of the lost.

(c) **Indian.** In the Vedic, the earliest historical form of the Indian religion, eschatological belief is simpler and purer than in the Brahministic and Buddhistic forms that succeeded it. Individual immortality is clearly taught. There is a kingdom of the dead under the rule of Yams, with distinct realms for the good and the wicked. The good dwell in a realm of light and share in the feasts of the gods; the wicked are banished to a place of “nethermost darkness”. Already, however, in the later Vedas, where these beliefs find developed expression, retribution begins to be ruled more by ceremonial observances than by strictly moral tests. On the other hand, there is no trace as yet of the dreary doctrine of transmigration, but critics profess to discover the germs of later pantheism.

In Brahminism retribution gains in prominence and severity, but becomes hopelessly involved in transmigration, and is made more and more dependent either on sacrificial observances or on theosophical knowledge. Though after death there are numerous heavens and hells for the reward and punishment of every degree of merit and demerit, these are not final states, but only so many preludes to further rebirths in higher or lower forms. Pantheistic absorption in Brahma, the world-soul and only reality, with the consequent extinction of individual personality—this is the only final solution of the problem of existence, the only salvation to which man may ultimately look forward. But it is a salvation which only a few may hope to reach after the present life, the few who have acquired a perfect knowledge of Brahma. The bulk of men who cannot rise to this high philosophic wisdom may succeed, by means of sacrificial observances, in gaining a temporary heaven, but they are destined to further births and deaths.

Buddhist eschatology still further develops and modifies the philosophical side of the Brahministic doctrine of salvation, and culminates in what is, strictly speaking, the negation of eschatology and of all theology—a religion without a God, and a lofty moral code without hope of reward or fear of punishment hereafter. Existence itself, or at least individual existence, is the primary evil; and the craving for existence, with the many forms of desire it begets, is the source of all the misery in which life is inextricably involved. Salvation, or the state of Nirvana, is to be attained by the utter extinction of every kind of desire; and this is possible by knowledge not the knowledge of God or the soul, as in Brahminism, but the purely philosophical knowledge of the real truth of things. For all who do not reach this state of philosophic enlightenment or who fail to live up to its requirements—that is to say for the vast bulk of mankind—there is nothing in prospect save a dreary cycle of deaths and rebirths with intercalated heavens and hells; and in Buddhism this doctrine takes on a still more dread and inexorable character than in pre-Buddhistic Brahminism.

(d) **Persian.** the ancient Persian religion (Zoroastrianism, Mazdaism, Parseeism) we meet with what is perhaps, in its better elements, the highest type of ethnic eschatology. But as we know it in the Parsee literature, it contains elements that were probably borrowed from other religions; and as some of this literature is certainly post-Christian, the possibility of Jewish and even Christian ideas having influenced the later eschatological developments is not to be lost sight of. The radical defect of the Persian religion was its dualistic conception of deity. The physical and moral world is the theatre of a perpetual conflict between Ahura Mazda (Ormuzd), the good, and Angra-Mainyu (Ahriman), the evil, principle, co-creators of the universe and of man. Yet the evil principle is not eternal ex parte post; he will finally be vanquished and exterminated. A pure monotheistic Providence promises at times to replace dualism, but never quite succeeds—the latest effort in this direction being the belief in Zvrana Akarana, or Boundless Time, as the supreme deity above both Ahriman and Ormuzd. Morality has its sanction not merely in future retribution, but in the present assurance that every good and pious deed is a victory for the cause of Ahura Mazda; but the call to the individual to be active in this cause, though vigorous and definite enough, is never quite free from ritual and ceremonial conditions, and as time goes on becomes more and more complicated by these observances, especially by the laws of purity. Certain elements are holy (fire, earth, water), certain others unholy or impure (dead bodies, the breath, and all that leaves the body, etc.); and to defile oneself or the holy elements by contact with the impure is one of the deadliest sins. Consequently corpses could not be buried or cremated, and were accordingly exposed on platforms erected for the purpose, so that birds of prey might devour them. When the soul leaves the body it has to cross the bridge of Chinvat (or Kinvad), the bridge of the Gatherer, or Accountant. For three days good and evil spirits contend for the possession of the soul, after which the reckoning is taken, and the just man is rejoiced by the apparition, in

the form of a fair maiden, of his good deeds, words, and thoughts, and passes over safely to a paradise of bliss; while the wicked man is confronted by a hideous apparition of his evil deeds, and is dragged down to hell. If the judgment is neutral the soul is reserved in an intermediate state (so at least in the Pahlavi books) till the decision at the last day. The developed conception of the last days, as it appears in the later literature, has certain remarkable affinities with Jewish Messianic and millennial expectations. A time during which Ahriman will gain the ascendancy is to be followed by two millennial periods, in each of which a great prophet will appear to herald the coming of Soshyant (or Sosioch), the Conqueror and Judge, who will raise the dead to life. The resurrection will occupy fifty-seven years and will be followed by the general judgment, the separation of the good from the wicked, and the passing of both through a purgatorial fire, gentle for the just, terrible for sinners, but leading to the restoration of all. Next will follow the final combat between the good and the evil spirits, in which the latter will perish, all except Ahriman and the serpent Azhi, whose destruction is reserved to Ahura Mazda and Scraosha, the priest-god. And last of all hell itself will be purged, and the earth renewed by purifying fire.

(e) **Greek.** *Greek* eschatology as reflected in the Homeric poems remains at a low level. It is only very vaguely retributive and is altogether cheerless in its outlook. Life on earth, for all its shortcomings, is the highest good for men, and death the worst of evils. Yet death is not extinction. The *psuche* survives—not the purely spiritual soul of later Greek and Christian thought, but an attenuated, semi-material ghost, or shade, or image, of the earthly man; and the life of this shade in the underworld is a dull, impoverished, almost functionless existence. Nor is there any distinction of fates either by way of happiness or of misery in Hades. The judicial office of Minos is illusory, and has nothing to do with earthly conduct; and there is only one allusion to the Furies suggestive of their activity among the dead (*Iliad*, XIX, 258-60). Tartarus, the lower hell, is reserved for a few special rebels against the gods, and the Elysian Fields for a few special favorites chosen by divine caprice.

In later Greek thought touching the future life there are notable advances beyond the Homeric stage, but it is doubtful whether the average popular faith ever reached a much higher level. Among early philosophers Anaxagoras contributes to the notion of a purely spiritual soul; but a more directly religious contribution is made by the Eleusinian and Orphic Mysteries, to the influence of which in brightening and moralizing the hope of a future life we have the concurrent witness of philosophers, poets, and historians. In the Eleusinian Mysteries there seems to have been no definite doctrinal teaching—merely the promise or assurance for the initiated of the fullness of life hereafter. With the Orphic, on the other hand, the divine origin and pre-existence of the soul, for which the body is but a temporary prison, and the doctrine of a retributive transmigration are more or less closely associated. It is hard to say how far the common belief of the people was influenced by these mysteries, but in poetical and philosophical literature their influence is unmistakable. This is seen especially in Pindar among the poets, and in Plato among the philosophers. Pindar has a definite promise of a future life of bliss for the good or the initiated, and not merely for a few, but for all. Even for the wicked who descend to Hades there is hope; having purged their wickedness they obtain rebirth on earth, and if, during three successive existences, they prove themselves worthy of the boon, they will finally attain to happiness in the Isles of the Blest. Though Plato's teaching is vitiated by the doctrine of pre-existence, metempsychosis, and other serious errors, it represents the highest achievement of pagan philosophic speculation on the subject of the future life. The divine dignity, spirituality, and essential immortality of the soul being established, the issues of the future for every soul are made clearly dependent on its moral conduct in the present life in the body. There is a divine judgment after death, a heaven, a hell, and an intermediate state for penance and purification; and rewards and punishments are graduated according to the merits and demerits of each. The incurably wicked are condemned to everlasting punishment in Tartarus; the less wicked or indifferent go also to Tartarus or to the Acherusian Lake, but only for a time; those eminent for goodness go to a happy home, the highest reward of all being for those who have purified themselves by philosophy.

From the foregoing sketch we are able to judge both of the merits and defects of ethnic systems of eschatology. Their merits are perhaps enhanced when they are presented, as above, in isolation from the other features of the religions to which they belonged. Yet their defects are obvious enough; and even those of them that were best and most promising turned out, historically, to be failures. The precious elements of eschatological truth contained in the Egyptian religion were associated with error and superstition, and were unable to save the religion from sinking to the state of utter degeneration in which it is found at the approach of the Christian Era.

Similarly, the still richer and more profound eschatology of the Persian religion, vitiated by dualism and other corrupting influences, failed to realize the promise it contained, and has survived only as a ruin in modern Parseeism. Plato's speculative teaching failed to influence in any notable degree the popular religion of the Graeco-Roman world; it failed to convert even the philosophical few; and in the hands of those who did profess to adopt it, Platonism, uncorrected by Christianity, ran to seed in Pantheism and other forms of error.

II. OLD-TESTAMENT ESCHATOLOGY.

Without going into details either by way of exposition or of criticism, it will be sufficient to point out how Old-Testament eschatology compares with ethnic systems, and how, notwithstanding its deficiencies in point of clearness and completeness, it was not an unworthy preparation for the fullness of Christian Revelation.

(1) Old-Testament eschatology, even in its earliest and most imperfect form, shares in the distinctive character which belongs to O.T. religion generally. In the first place, as a negative distinction, we note the entire absence of certain erroneous ideas and tendencies that have a large place in ethnic religions. There is no pantheism or dualism, no doctrine of pre-existence (Wis. 8:17-20, does not necessarily imply this doctrine, as has sometimes been contended) or of metempsychosis; nor is there any trace, as might have been expected, of Egyptian ideas or practices. In the next place, on the positive side, the O. T. stands apart from ethnic religions in its doctrine of God, and of man in relation to God. Its doctrine of God is pure and uncompromising monotheism; the universe is ruled by the wisdom, justice, and omnipotence of the one, true God. And man is created by God in His own image and likeness, and destined to relations of friendship and fellowship with Him. Here we have revealed in clear and definite terms the basal doctrines which are at the root of eschatological truth, and which, once they had taken hold of the life of a people, were bound, even without new additions to the revelation, to safe-guard the purity of an inadequate eschatology and to lead in time to richer and higher developments. Such additions and developments occur in O. T. teaching; but before noticing them it is well to call attention to the two chief defects, or limitations, which attach to the earlier eschatology and continue, by their persistence in popular belief, to hinder more or less the correct understanding and acceptance by the Jewish people as a whole of the highest eschatological utterances of their own inspired teachers.

(2) The first of these defects is the silence of the earlier and of some of the later books on the subject of moral retribution after death, or at least the extreme vagueness of such passages in these books as might be understood to refer to this subject. Death is not extinction; but Sheol, the underworld of the dead, in early Hebrew thought is not very different from the Babylonian Aralà or the Homeric Hades, except that Jahve is God even there. It is a dreary abode in which all that is prized in life, including friendly intercourse with God, comes to an end without any definite promise of renewal. Dishonor, incurred in life or in death, clings to a man in Sheol, like the honor he may have won by a virtuous life on earth; but otherwise, conditions in Sheol are not represented as retributive, except in the vaguest way. Not that a more definite retribution or the hope of renewal to a life of blessedness is formally denied and excluded; it simply fails to find utterance in earlier O. T. records. Religion is preeminently an affair of this life, and retribution works out here on earth. This idea, which to us seems so strange, must, to be fairly appreciated, be taken in conjunction with the national as opposed to the individual viewpoint [see under (3) of this section]; and allowance must also be made for its pedagogic value for a people like the early Hebrews. Christ Himself explains why Moses permitted divorce ("by reason of the hardness of your heart"—Mt. 19:8); revelation and legislation had to be tempered to the capacity of a singularly practical and unimaginative people, who were more effectively confirmed in the worship and service of God by a vivid sense of His retributive providence here on earth than they would have been by a higher and fuller doctrine of future immortality with its postponement of moral awards. Nor must we exaggerate the insufficiency of this early point of view. It gave a deep religious value and significance to every event of the present life, and raised morality above the narrow, utilitarian standpoint. Not worldly prosperity as such was the ideal of the pious Israelite, but prosperity bestowed by God as the gracious reward of fidelity in keeping His Commandments. Yet, when all has been said, the inadequacy of this belief for the satisfaction of individual aspirations must be admitted; and this inadequacy was bound to prove itself sooner or later in experience. Even the substitution of the national for the individual standpoint could not indefinitely hinder this result.

(3) The tendency to sink the individual in the nation and to treat the latter as the religious unit was one of the most marked characteristics of Hebrew faith. And this helped very much to support and prolong the other limitation just noticed, according to which retribution was looked for in this life. Deferred and disappointed personal hopes could be solaced by the thought of their present or future realization in the nation. It was only when the national calamities, culminating in the exile, had shattered for a time the people's hope of a glorious theocratic kingdom that the eschatology of the individual became prominent; and with the restoration there was a tendency to revert to the national point of view. It is true of the O. T. as a whole that the eschatology of the people overshadows that of the individual, though it is true at the same time that, in and through the former, the latter advances to a clear and definite assurance of a personal resurrection from the dead, at least for the children of Israel who are to share, if found worthy, in the glories of the Messianic Age.

It is beyond the scope of this article to attempt to trace the growth or describe the several phases of this national eschatology, which centers in the hope of the establishment of a theocratic and Messianic kingdom on earth. However spiritually this idea may be found expressed in O.T. prophecies, as we read them now in the light of their progressive fulfilment in the N.T. Dispensation, the Jewish people as a whole clung to a material and political interpretation of the kingdom, coupling their own domination as a people with the triumph of God and the worldwide establishment of His rule. There is much, indeed, to account for this in the obscurity of the prophecies themselves. The Messias as a distinct person is not always mentioned in connection with the inauguration of the kingdom, which leaves room for the expectation of a theophany of Jahve in the character of judge and ruler. But even when the person and place of the Messias are distinctly foreshadowed, the fusion together in prophecy of what we have learned to distinguish as His first and His second coming tends to give to the whole picture of the Messianic kingdom an eschatological character that belongs in reality only to its final stage. It is thus the resurrection of the dead in Is. 26:19, and Dan. 12:2, is introduced; and many of the descriptions foretelling "the day of the Lord", the judgment on Jews and Gentiles, the renovation of the earth and other phenomena that usher in that day, while applicable in a limited sense to contemporary events and to the inauguration of the Christian Era, are much more appropriately understood of the end of the world. It is not, therefore, surprising that the religious hopes of the Jewish nation should have become so predominantly eschatological, and that the popular imagination, foreshortening the perspective of Divine Revelation, should have learned to look for the establishment on earth of the glorious Kingdom of God, which Christians are assured will be realized only in heaven at the close of the present dispensation.

(4) Passing from these general observations which seem necessary for the true understanding of O.T. eschatology, a brief reference will be made to the passages which exhibit the growth of a higher and fuller doctrine of immortality. The recognition of individual as opposed to mere corporate responsibility and retribution may be reckoned, at least remotely, as a gain to eschatology, even when retribution is confined chiefly to this life; and this principle is repeatedly recognized in the earliest books. (See Gen. 18:25; Ex. 32:33; Num. 16:22; Deut. 7:10; 24:16; II K. 24:17; IV K. 14:6; Is. 3:10 sq.; 33:15ff; Jer. 12:1f; 17:5-10; 32:18f; Ez. 14:12-20; 18:4, 18ff; Prov. 2:21f; 10:2; 11:19, 31). It is recognized also in the very terms of the problem dealt with in the Book of Job.

But, coming to higher things, we find in the Psalms and in Job the clear expression of a hope or assurance for the just of a life of blessedness after death. Here is voiced, under Divine inspiration, the innate craving of the righteous soul for everlasting fellowship with God, the protest of a strong and vivid faith against the popular conception of Sheol. Omitting doubtful passages, it is enough to refer to Psalms 15, 16, 98, and 122. Of these it is not impossible to explain the first two as prayers for deliverance from some imminent danger of death, but the assurance they express is too absolute and universal to admit this interpretation as the most natural. And this assurance becomes still more definite in the other two psalms, by reason of the contrast which death is asserted to introduce between the fates of the just and the impious. The same faith emerges in the Book of Job, first as a hope somewhat questionably expressed, and then as an assured conviction. Despairing of vindication in this life and rebelling against the thought that righteousness should remain finally unrewarded, the sufferer seeks consolation in the hope of a renewal of God's friendship beyond the grave: "O that thou wouldest hide me in Sheol, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me. If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my warfare would I wait, till my release should

come” (14:13f). In 16:18-17:9, the expression of this hope is more absolute; and in 19:23-27, it takes the form of a definite certainty that he will see God, his Redeemer: “But I know that my Redeemer liveth and that he shall stand up at the last upon the earth [dust]; and after this my skin has been destroyed, yet from [al. without] my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and my eyes shall behold, and not another” (25-27). In his risen body he will see God, according to the Vulgate (LXX) reading: “and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God” (25-26).

The doctrine of the resurrection finds definite expression in the Prophets; and in Is. 26:19: “thy dead shall live, my dead bodies shall rise again. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust” etc.; and Dan. 12: 2: “and many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some unto everlasting life, and others unto everlasting shame and contempt” etc., it is clearly a personal resurrection that is taught—in Isaiah a resurrection of righteous Israelites; in Daniel, of both the righteous and the wicked. The judgment, which in Daniel is connected with the resurrection, is also personal; and the same is true of the judgment of the living (Jews and Gentiles) which in various forms the prophecies connect with the “day of the Lord”. Some of the Psalms (e.g. 48) seem to imply a judgment of individuals, good and bad, after death; and the certainty of a future judgment of “every work, whether it be good or evil”, is the final solution of the moral enigmas of earthly life offered by Ecclesiastes (12:13-14; cf. 3:17). Coming to the later (deuterocanonical) books of the O. T. we have clear evidence in II Mach. of Jewish faith not only in the resurrection of the body (7:9-14), but in the efficacy of prayers and sacrifices for the dead who have died in godliness (12:43ff). And in the second and first centuries B.C., in the Jewish apocryphal literature, new eschatological developments appear, chiefly in the direction of a more definite doctrine of retribution after death. The word Sheol is still most commonly understood of the general abode of the departed awaiting the resurrection, this abode having different divisions for the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked; in reference to the latter, Sheol is sometimes simply equivalent to hell. Gehenna is the name usually applied to the final place of punishment of the wicked after the last judgment, or even immediately after death; while paradise is often used to designate the intermediate abode of the souls of the just, and heaven their home of final blessedness. Christ’s use of these terms shows that the Jews of His day were sufficiently familiar with their N.T. meanings.

III. CATHOLIC ESCHATOLOGY.

In this article there is no critical discussion of N.T. eschatology nor any attempt to trace the historical developments of Catholic teaching from Scriptural and traditional data; only a brief conspectus is given of the developed Catholic system. For critical and historical details and for the refutation of opposing views the reader is referred to the special articles dealing with the various doctrines. The eschatological summary which speaks of the “four last things” (death, judgment, heaven, and hell) is popular rather than scientific. For systematic treatment it is best to distinguish between (A) individual and (B) universal and cosmic eschatology, including under (A): (1) death; (2) the particular judgment; (3) heaven, or eternal happiness; (4) purgatory, or the intermediate state; (5) hell, or eternal punishment; and under (B): (6) the approach of the end of the world; (7) the resurrection of the body; (8) the general judgment; and (9) the final consummation of all things. The superiority of Catholic eschatology consists in the fact that, without professing to answer every question that idle curiosity may suggest, it gives a clear, consistent, satisfying statement of all that need at present be known, or can profitably be understood, regarding the eternal issues of life and death for each of us personally, and the final consummation of the cosmos of which we are a part.

(A) Individual Eschatology.

(1) **Death**, which consists in the separation of soul and body, is presented under many aspects in Catholic teaching, but chiefly (a) as being actually and historically, in the present order of supernatural Providence, the consequence and penalty of Adam’s sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12); (b) as being the end of man’s period of probation, the event which decides his eternal destiny (2 Cor. 5:10; Jn 9:4; Lk. 12:40; 16:19ff), though it does not exclude an intermediate state of purification for the imperfect who die in God’s grace; and (c) as being

universal, though as to its absolute universality (for those living at the end of the world) there is some room for doubt because of 1 Thes. 4:14ff; 1 Cor. 15:51; 2 Tim. 4:1.

(2) That a **particular judgment** of each soul takes place at death is implied in many passages of the N. T. (Lk. 16:22ff; 23:43; Acts 1:25; etc.), and in the teaching of the Council of Florence regarding the speedy entry of each soul into heaven, purgatory, or hell.

(3) **Heaven** is the abode of the blessed, where (after the resurrection with glorified bodies) they enjoy, in the company of Christ and the angels, the immediate vision of God face to face, being supernaturally elevated by the light of glory so as to be capable of such a vision. There are infinite degrees of glory corresponding to degrees of merit, but all are unspeakably happy in the eternal possession of God. Only the perfectly pure and holy can enter heaven; but for those who have attained that state, either at death or after a course of purification in purgatory, entry into heaven is not deferred, as has sometimes been erroneously held, till after the General Judgment.

(4) **Purgatory** is the intermediate state of unknown duration in which those who die imperfect, but not in unrepented mortal sin, undergo a course of penal purification, to qualify for admission into heaven. They share in the Communion of Saints and are benefited by our prayers and good works (see Prayers for the Dead). The denial of purgatory by the Reformers introduced a dismal blank in their eschatology and, after the manner of extremes, has led to extreme reactions.

(5) **Hell**, in Catholic teaching, designates the place or state of men (and angels) who, because of sin, are excluded for ever from the Beatific Vision. In this wide sense it applies to the state of those who die with only original sin on their souls, although this is not a state of misery or of subjective punishment of any kind, but merely implies the objective privation of supernatural bliss, which is compatible with a condition of perfect natural happiness. But in the narrower sense in which the name is ordinarily used, hell is the state of those who are punished eternally for unrepented personal mortal sin. Beyond affirming the existence of such a state, with varying degrees of punishment corresponding to degrees of guilt and its eternal or unending duration, Catholic doctrine does not go. It is a terrible and mysterious truth, but it is clearly and emphatically taught by Christ and the Apostles. Rationalists may deny the eternity of hell in spite of the authority of Christ, and professing Christians, who are unwilling to admit it, may try to explain away Christ's words; but it remains as the Divinely revealed solution of the problem of moral evil. Rival solutions have been sought for in some form of the theory of restitution or, less commonly, in the theory of annihilation or conditional immortality. The restitutionist view, which in its Origenist form was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 543, and later at the Fifth General Council, is the cardinal dogma of modern Universalism, and is favored more or less by liberal Protestants and Anglicans. Based on an exaggerated optimism for which present experience offers no guarantee, this view assumes the all-conquering efficacy of the ministry of grace in a life of probation after death, and looks forward to the ultimate conversion of all sinners and the voluntary disappearance of moral evil from the universe. Annihilationists, on the other hand, failing to find either in reason or Revelation any grounds for such optimism, and considering immortality itself to be a grace and not the natural attribute of the soul, believe that the finally impenitent will be annihilated or cease to exist—that God will thus ultimately be compelled to confess the failure of His purpose and power.

(B) Universal and Cosmic Eschatology.

(6) Notwithstanding Christ's express refusal to specify the time of the end (Mk. 13:32; Acts 1:6f), it was a common belief among early Christians that the end of the world was near. This seemed to have some support in certain sayings of Christ in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, which are set down in the Gospels side by side with prophecies relating to the end (Mt. 24: Lk. 21), and in certain passages of the Apostolic writings, which might, not unnaturally, have been so understood (but see 2 Thess. 2:2ff, where St. Paul corrects this impression). On the other hand, Christ had clearly stated that the Gospel was to be preached to all nations before the end (Mt. 24:14), and St. Paul looked forward to the ultimate conversion of the Jewish people as a remote event

to be preceded by the conversion of the Gentiles (Rm. 11:25ff). Various other signs are spoken of as preceding or ushering in the end, as a great apostasy (2 Thes. 2:3ff), or falling away from faith or charity (Lk. 18:8; 17:26; Mt. 24:12), the reign of Antichrist, and great social calamities and terrifying physical convulsions. Yet the end will come unexpectedly and take the living by surprise.

(7) The visible coming (parousia) of Christ in power and glory will be the signal for the rising of the dead. It is Catholic teaching that all the dead who are to be judged will rise, the wicked as well as the just, and that they will rise with the bodies they had in this life. But nothing is defined as to what is required to constitute this identity of the risen and transformed with the present body. Though not formally defined, it is sufficiently certain that there is to be only one general resurrection, simultaneous for the good and the bad. Regarding the qualities of the risen bodies in the case of the just we have St. Paul's description in 1 Cor. 15 (cf. Mt. 13:43; Phil. 3:21) as a basis for theological speculation; but in the case of the damned we can only affirm that their bodies will be incorruptible.

(8) Regarding the general judgment there is nothing of importance to be added here to the graphic description of the event given by Christ Himself, who is to be Judge (Mt. 25).

(9) There is mention also of the physical universe sharing in the general consummation (2 Pt. 3:13; Rm. 8:19ff; Rev. 21:1ff). The present heaven and earth will be destroyed, and a new heaven and earth take their place. But what, precisely, this process will involve, or what purpose the renovated world will serve is not revealed. It may possibly be part of the glorious Kingdom of Christ of which "there shall be no end". Christ's militant reign is to cease with the accomplishment of His office as Judge (1 Cor. 5:24ff), but as King of the elect whom He has saved He will reign with them in glory for ever.

P. J. TONER

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