be brought into this clause the argument is substantially identical with that which follows.

In conclusion we do not find any of the interpretations offered for the solution of this passage entirely convincing or satisfactory. There are none which do not more or less convey the impression of "explaining away." And on the other hand the existence of a practice to which the most literal and obvious interpretation points is neither so improbable or so indefensible as most commentators have supposed. At any rate the words stand written without any question of authenticity, demanding a solution: *si quid novisti rectius | istis candidus imperti, si non, his utere mecum.*

ARTHUR CARR.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

V.

IMMORTALITY IN MODERN THEOLOGY (*continued*).

IN my last paper I quoted and discussed writers who either maintained with more or less confidence, or did not explicitly and conspicuously protest against, the traditional doctrine of the endless permanence of all human souls. I shall now refer to two other recent writers who, while differing greatly from those quoted above, yet maintain the same traditional doctrine; and shall then quote some other writers who protest strongly against it.

Dr. Welldon, bishop of Calcutta, in his interesting volume on *The Hope of Immortality*, endeavours to say something for the immortality of the soul without appealing to the Bible. But he is not very sure of his ground. For, on p. 3, he writes: "I do not aspire to prove Immortality but to make it probable." His doubt is far-reaching. For, on p. 5, he says: "No historical fact is certain."

And he fears (see p. 10) that his book may leave his readers "in some uncertainty"; a probable consequence which, strange to say, he does not regret.

Dr. Welldon defines clearly, on p. 57, the opinion he endeavours to make probable. "The soul is immortal, i.e. everlasting. It does not merely survive death; it survives everlastingly. It survives in virtue of the character which distinguishes it from all that is dissoluble and destructible." Again, on p. 63 he writes: "The soul which lives after death is not only spiritual but emotional and rational. It is the whole immaterial part of man. It survives and survives eternally in the fulness of its intellectual, moral, and spiritual powers."

The third chapter on "The Value of the Belief," is an able and beautiful statement of the moral worth of a belief that beyond the grave endless reward awaits the righteous. In chaps. iv. and v. the writer adduces the evidences, external and internal, for immortality. Unfortunately, in so doing, he omits, as outside the scope of his work, the one ground on which the Christian hope rests securely, viz. the promise of life in Christ Jesus with its historical and experimental credentials. This omission is most serious. For Dr. Welldon's book leaves the impression that this hope rests only on what he admits to be the uncertain grounds here adduced. Whenever these outlying proofs are brought forward, they ought to be supplemented by the more solid proof given to us in Christ. The evidence adduced is halting and uncertain. So far as it goes it affords a probability that man will survive death. And this survival the writer accepts as proof or presumption of the truth of his main thesis, viz. that all human souls will, in virtue of their nature, survive for ever; thus confounding survival with endless survival.

The last chapter discusses "The Christian Amplification of the Belief in Immortality." Like some other writers,

Dr. Welldon says: "Christianity does not prove immortality. It assumes immortality; or to speak exactly, it breathes a spiritual atmosphere in which the assumption of immortality is felt to be natural or even necessary." This is a terrible understatement. For Christ and His Apostles asserted again and again in plainest language that eternal life awaits all who put faith in Him: and in proof of this assertion God raised Him from the dead. Consequently the Christian hope of immortality rests, not on the uncertain grounds adduced in this book, but on the sure word of our risen Lord.

On p. 342 we read: "Of Hell, as it is called, and of the disciplinary process to which unhallowed souls are subjected when this life is ended, it is impossible to form a conception save through the contrast in which it stands to the beatific state; for it has not been the will of God to reveal more than its mere shadowy outline." Dr. Welldon suggests the hope that "when the soul stands at the judgment-bar, the misery of sin, the pain of loss, the burning sense of all that might have been and yet is not and may never be, above all the ever present consciousness of alienation from Him to whom man's spiritual being tends unceasingly, will be an agony so sharp and subtle as to extort an exceeding bitter cry for the pardon and peace of Heaven."

Although Dr. Weldon asserts, e.g. on p. 349, that "immortality is the inalienable prerogative of man," his essay affords fair presumptive proof that this is not taught in the Bible; which is my contention in these papers. What degree of probability he has claimed for his assertion, his readers will judge.

The last book to which I shall refer, as defending the immortality of the soul, is a most attractive and in many respects excellent volume on *Christian Theology* recently published by an American theologian, Dr. W. N. Clarke.

He asserts, on p. 192, that "MAN IS IMMORTAL, that is to say, the human personality is undying. The spirit is the person, and what is here affirmed is that the human spirit, with its essential powers in which it resembles God, is destined to live on endlessly. A human being will never cease to be a human being." But, for this statement, he does not quote Holy Scripture. On p. 198 he writes: "The influence of Jesus certainly has supported in Christians the conviction that all men live for ever; for among Christians this belief has been held, with only occasional variations, not merely as a natural conviction but as a Christian certainty. Christ does not affirm in so many words that all men live for ever, but He powerfully teaches it by His attitude and mode of appeal to men."

On pp. 450–453 Dr. Clarke refers to the doctrine of conditional immortality; but without approval. He denies a bodily return of Christ and a judgment at the end of the world. So p. 458: "If the coming of Christ is conceived as spiritual, not visible, and as a process, not an event, a change in one's idea of the resurrection will necessarily follow. If no visible descent of Christ is looked for, no simultaneous resurrection of humanity on the earth will be expected. If we accept the view of Christ's coming that has been expressed on previous pages, we shall naturally think that each human being's resurrection takes place at his death, and consists in the rising of the man from death to life in another realm of life. . . . According to this view resurrection is not simultaneous for all, but continuous, or successive; and for no human being is there any intervening period of disembodiment." How far removed this teaching is from that of the New Testament, I have in my volume on *The Last Things* endeavoured to show.

In his discussion of final destinies, on pp. 474–480, Dr. Clarke expresses a hope that for most or for all men there

may be probation and salvation beyond the grave. On p. 477 he reminds us that "there are passages in the New Testament in which there seems to be hope that God will yet gain the love and devotion of all souls. There arises also the question whether God would not be just so far defeated if an endless dualism were established in His universe by the endless sway of sin over a part of His intelligent creatures. From such considerations comes the hope of many that God will finally bring all souls from sin to holiness." So on p. 478: "It is hard to believe that God indefinitely perpetuates suffering that is not useful."

These two volumes, by Bishop Welldon and Dr. Clarke, reveal the natural tendency of the doctrine of the immortality of all human souls. They who believe that to every man God has given an intelligence which, whatever he may do, will for an endless succession of ages know and feel, may well be pardoned if they cherish a hope that this perishable gift will be to him, not an endless curse, but ultimately an endless blessing. Thus, as with Origen in the third century, so with many now, Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul has been the parent of a doctrine of universal salvation. They also illustrate the danger involved in adding to the theology of the Church, even in the supposed interests of the Christian life, doctrines not taught in the Bible. We have no right to go beyond the plain and abundant teaching of the Sacred Book. And, to do so, is perilous in the extreme.

To sum up. Of six modern works quoted in my last paper and in this, not one attempts to prove from the Bible, although some of them endeavour to prove in other ways, or assume without proof, the endless permanence of all human souls. This affords a presumption hardly distinguishable from certainty that this doctrine is not directly or indirectly taught in the Holy Scriptures. And in a matter pertaining altogether to the unseen world, other

proof is worthless. It may therefore be dismissed as no part of the gospel of Christ.

The most conspicuous protest in our time against the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, in the sense of the endless survival of all human souls, is that made by the Rev. Edward White in his *Life in Christ*, published in 1875, a third edition revised and enlarged in 1877. This bold protest rendered great service by claiming a reconsideration of the whole subject. It was, however, in my view, weakened by the writer's endeavour to prove that the Bible teaches the ultimate extinction of the lost, thus himself going, as I think, beyond the teaching of Holy Scripture in another direction. Mr. White's book also lies open to objection on sundry matters of detail. But, in spite of all this, it remains a most honourable protest against prevalent and popular error.

The teaching of Mr. White is ably supported by Dr. E. Petavel, of Lausanne, in a very useful volume entitled *The Problem of Immortality*.

A very remarkable and valuable protest against the same doctrine is found in Gladstone's *Studies subservient to the works of Bishop Butler*. On p. 142 the writer calls attention to the two meanings frequently confused or identified (e.g. by Bishop Welldon quoted above) of the phrase *immortality of the soul*, viz. its survival of death or its endless survival. He points out that Butler's argument in chap. i. of his *Analogy* "is a plea not for immortality, properly so called, but for persistence of life as against the special occasion of death. . . . There are those who say these two things, survival and immortality, are but one; and who seem to suppose that the case of surmounting death is like that of obtaining a passport which will carry us over the frontier of some foreign country; where, this once done, we have no other impediment to apprehend. But, on such an

assumption of the identity of survival with immortality, it is to be observed that it is a pure assumption, and nothing more. We have no title to postulate *in limine* that powers, which may be so adjusted or equipped as to face the contingency of death, must therefore be in all respects such as to be certain of facing with a like impunity every other contingency which, for aught we know, the dimness of the future may enfold in its ample bosom. Such questions may remain open, and without prejudice for independent discussion."

Mr. Gladstone denies strongly, and again and again, that the Bible ever teaches, in the proper sense of the phrase, the immortality of the soul. So, on p. 198: "Another consideration of the highest importance is that the natural immortality of the soul is a doctrine wholly unknown to the Holy Scriptures, and standing on no higher plane than that of an ingeniously sustained, but gravely and formidably contested, philosophical opinion. And surely there is nothing, as to which we ought to be more on our guard, than the entrance into the precinct of Christian doctrine, either without authority or by an abuse of authority, of philosophical speculations disguised as truths of Divine Revelation. They bring with them a grave restraint on mental liberty; but what is worse is, that their basis is a pretension essentially false, and productive by rational retribution of other falsehoods. Under these two heads, we may perhaps find that we have ample warrant for declining to accept the tenet of natural immortality as a truth of Divine Revelation."

Contrast this plain statement, which, if untrue, may be disproved by one quotation from the Bible, with the equivocal language quoted in these papers of mine from writers who assert, or assume, or do not deny, the doctrine in question.

The venerable statesman denies that this doctrine was

taught in the earliest age of the Church. So on p. 184: "The secret of this mental freedom, the condition which made it possible, was the absence from the scene of any doctrine of a natural immortality inherent to the soul. Absent it may be termed, for all practical purposes, until the third century; for though it was taught by Tertullian in connexion with the Platonic ideas, it was not given forth as belonging to the doctrine of Christ or His Apostles. . . . It seems to me as if it were from the time of Origen that we are to regard the idea of natural, as opposed to that of Christian, immortality as beginning to gain a firm foothold in the Christian Church." This is an important confirmation of my third paper.

On p. 189 we read: "It seems indisputable that the materials for the opinion that the soul is by nature immortal, whether we call it dogma or hypothesis, were for a long period in course of steady accumulation; though this was not so from the first. After some generations, however, the mental temper and disposition of Christians inclined more and more to its reception. Without these assumptions it would be impossible to account for the wholesale change which has taken place in the mind of Christendom with regard to the subject of natural immortality. It would be difficult, I think, to name any other subject connected with religious belief (though not properly belonging to it) on which we can point to so sweeping and absolute a revolution of opinion, from the period before Origen, when the idea of an immortality properly natural was unknown or nearly hidden, to the centuries of the later Middle Ages and of modern time, when, at least in the West, it had become practically undisputed and universal.

In further agreement with my third paper, Mr. Gladstone says on p. 192: "It seems, however, to be generally felt that the determining epoch in the history of seminal

Christian thought upon this subject was the life of St. Augustine, together with that period following closely upon it, when the Western Church became rapidly imbued with his theology in almost its entire compass."

Canon Gore, in vol. ii. pp. 210–214 of his recent work on *The Epistle to the Romans*, accepts without modification the teaching in Gladstone's *Studies* and in my own volume on *The Last Things* in reference both to the future punishment of sin and the immortality of the soul. On p. 212 he writes: "Careful attention to the origin of the doctrine of the necessary immortality or indestructibility of each human soul, as stated for instance by Augustine or Aquinas, will probably convince us that it was no part of the original Christian message, or of really catholic doctrine. It was rather a speculation of Platonism taking possession of the Church. And this consideration leaves open possibilities of the ultimate extinction of personal consciousness in the lost, which Augustinianism somewhat rudely closed."

The writer protests, as I do, against the assertion "that the souls of the lost will be at the last extinguished. These positive positions are no more justified than those of our forefathers which we have deprecated. We must recognize the limits of positive knowledge."

This confirmation, by a theologian so eminent as Canon Gore, of the protest now restated and amplified in these papers is of utmost value. And against it I know nothing. So far as I have read, no modern writer has done anything whatever to prove, from the Bible or in any other way, the endless permanence of the human soul. This is strong presumptive evidence that no valid proof of this doctrine can be brought; and thus confirms the contention of my second paper that it was not taught by Christ.

In another paper I shall discuss the positive teaching of the Bible about the human soul; and the bearing of this teaching, and of my protest against the popular doctrine of

the immortality of the soul, upon the ultimate destiny of those who persistently reject the salvation offered by Christ.

JOSEPH AGAR BEET.

HAD OUR LORD READ THE "TABLET" OF KEBES?

ONE of the little company of disciples who attended Socrates during his last hours in the prison-house of Athens was a young Theban named Kebes. He figures as one of the principal interlocutors in that immortal dialogue where the dying Master, *placidus ore, intrepidus verbis, intempestivas suorum lacrimas coercens*, discourses of the Immortality of the Soul. He is, moreover, the reputed author of a quaint little book, once better known than now. It is called the *Tablet*, and is a sort of allegory in the style of a Platonic dialogue. It purports to be a description of a tablet which hung in the Temple of Kronos and emblematically depicted the course of human life. From neither a literary nor a philosophical point of view is it a work of much importance, but it is invested with fascinating interest when it is found to contain two passages which are strikingly analogous to sayings of Jesus.

Here is the first (chap. xv.)—

"'What is the way that leads to the true Instruction?' said I.

"'You see above,' said he, 'yonder place where no one dwells, but it seems to be desert?'

"'I do.'

"'And a little door, and a way before the door, which is not much thronged; but very few go there, so impassable does the place seem, so rough and rocky?'

"'Yes, indeed,' said I.