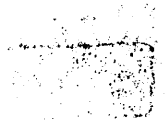
Is there still anybody there?

A comparison of attitudes to Death in the 19th and 20th centuries.

A Thesis for the degree of
Master of Theology
Submitted by John Young.

The object of the thesis is to determine whether or not 20th century attitudes to death are different from those commonly held in the 19th century.

The 19th century position is described with particular reference to those social conditions which moulded that century's attitude to death. Some 19th century authors are cited. The transition to the 20th century, particularly with regard to medical and social factors, is described. A number of 20th century authors are quoted. The scriptural attitudes to life and death are exegeted and an informal survey of the attitudes to life and death held by the members of three congregations of different denominations is attached as an appendix.



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CHAPTER 1

In this first chapter one will try to see whether or not there has been, in the 20th century, a flight from death. It certainly forms a smaller part of fiction than it did in the 19th century. There have been medical advances which free people from pain. It is also true that more people die in hospital than at home. There have been theological changes, shifts in emphasis from the God who punishes to the God who welcomes. There has also been a significant decline in support for institutional religion. All of these or any of them in combination with any of the others will remove death from people's thinking or, at least, move it to the periphery of their thought. So has there been a flight from death? Or is it just that people don't feel the need to think about it as once they did? Or is it that people never had much fear of death, only of dying, and that modern pharmacology, with its analgesic benisons, has removed that fear?

We will contrast and compare attitudes to death in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The 19th century writers wrote often and freely about death. Death-bed scenes were common and frequent. Indeed, Dombey and Son begins with a child's vision of Heaven, from which place he is snatched back as his fever recedes! The religious writing about death and related matter is, to the 20th century eye, stylistically unacceptable. It is pompous, it is authoritarian and prescriptive. It is also, as we might expect, coloured by the dominant ideas of the society from within which it is produced. So the poor and the suffering are

promised future rewards and the rich are gently chided. The unregenerate are firmly condemned to eternal torment but their children guaranteed eternal bliss. When we come to examine the content of 19th century preaching it will become clear that death as a release from this world to Paradise was a much repeated idea.

Looking for a starting point for this section of the paper, I made a random search of the sections of the Divinity Library in Glasgow University dealing with Death & Burial. There I discovered God's Acre, historical notes relating to Churchyards by Mrs. Stone. While she offers her readers what amounts to a survey of burial customs through the ages she also says in her introduction, "The subject may not seem at first sight a very attractive one. But if it be a little startling to find so many pages devoted to "graves and worms and epitaphs" it may reassure us to call to mind that EPITAPHS point to a future hope; that WORMS loosen and so thereby tend to irrigate the soil for the bursting forth of flowers and that GRAVES are the "footprints of angels"."

The first thing that is clearly said is that admission to Paradise is not universal. It is only for the faithful Christian folk. It also seems that it will be more readily be achieved by the poor than by the rich. The rich are not excluded. It is just that their possessions make it necessary for them to struggle harder to win their reward. She tells us that death is the "equaliser"[1] in that all must pass through it. Quoting Jesus when he says that it is "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Mt 19:24) she claims that death is a harder experience for the rich than for the poor because they tend to put

trust in their possessions and, by implication, because they have a lot more to leave behind.

The foregoing notwithstanding she quotes, with approbation, the 7th Duchess of Somerset; "after a ball or masquerade, have we not come home very well contented to pull off our ornaments and fine clothes, in order to go to rest? Such methinks is the reception we naturally give to our bodily decays; they seem to undress us by degrees to prepare us for a rest that will refresh us far more powerfully than any night's sleep could do".[2] "Refreshment" contains implications of reward. Yet even with deferential nods, such as this one, in the direction of the rich, which reflect the times in which she lived, Mrs. Stone is firm in her belief that it is only the faithful rich and poor who enter Paradise.

She asserts that the "much-suffering" look on death as "the guide who will lead them home"[3] - especially if they are poor as well as suffering. She relates an anecdote concerning a poor, dying woman, seeking charity from her, the supplicant talking of "going home soon". The implication in the anecdote is that the woman will, in Paradise, gain rewards in the form of relief from physical and social misery.

From even such a popular book as this, there are several inferences which may be drawn. Death is taken to be the means whereby people are released from misery and temptation to Paradise, where they will know peace, rest and reward. If to go there is to go "home" then it is our proper abode and our dwelling here is temporary and, by definition, unhappy. This world is a vale of tears indeed and we

are better off out of it. There is no sense at all of the Kingdom being within us, of the joys of Paradise being glimpsed, far less experienced, on this side of the grave. Nor is there a great deal of pity for those who, by their belief or behaviour, are wrathfully excluded from Paradise by God.

There we have, then, in a book designed for popular consumption and meant to be taken as offering a scholarly, or at least detached, treatment of the disposal of the dead through the ages, a subject which was of great importance to the 19th century mind, the effusion of current Christian thinking about death and the life everlasting which was, as we shall see, a Victorian preoccupation.

The Rev. Dr. William Anderson was a well-known preacher, minister of St. John's U.P. Church, Glasgow, who died in 1880. Several collections of his sermons and discourses were published. One of them, Re-union in the Heavenly Kingdom and other discourses appeared in 1887. The references which follow are taken from the sermon which gave the book its title. As we shall see, the same implications, and more, as we may draw from Mrs. Stone's book, may be drawn from his writings. Certainly powerful concepts such as family and judgement, as well as an emotional attitude to small children, colour and shape his thinking.

He writes of re-union after death. This will take place after the graves have given up their dead at the great Resurrection. He admits that this creates a problem i.e. that of knowing where the spirits of the faithful departed go and are kept until that day.

Having acknowledged the mystery he simply dismisses it with the observation that "they are happy".[4] We may be sure of this because they are in the hands of God who will reward his faithful people. He further compounds the difficulties of his position by conceiving of at least two grades of glory ".... to conceive of them as being already as glorious as they shall ever be is an unscriptural imagination". His basis for this thinking is Hebrews 11:39.40 where we read "and all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised since God has foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect".[5] Superficially he appears to have scriptural support for his view but neither Robinson (Moffatt N.T. Commentary 1933), Moffatt (I.C.C. 1924) nor Bruce (New London Commentary 1963) support Anderson's view. All of them are clear that these verses refer not to re-union after death but to the completeness of the revelation of God in Jesus. Moffatt, perhaps, expresses this common view most clearly when he observes that Jesus is the teleoisis, the means by which is consummated the faith of the Jews, God's final act of revelation. Later commentators confirm this view. James Swetnam in his study of The Epistle to the Hebrews, published an Analectica Biblica in 1981 says "teleoisis .... implies definitive access to God through the sacrificial death and exaltation resurrection of Jesus".[6] Similarly in Hebrews and Perfection, David Petersen observes that "Old Testament Saints were denied the historical experiencing of the messianic teleoisis as a totality. Since Christ has accomplished his work, they too will share in its benefit".[7]

Like Mrs. Stone (see p.3), Anderson denies any universal salvation: "It is not said that the wicked rest in their graves";[8] "be assured, brethren, you cannot entertain joyful prospects for the righteous, without being affected with gloomy forebodings for the destiny of the wicked".[9] Theologically he would say that while we cannot limit the mercy of God, God himself has limited it as, for instance in Isaiah 48:22 "There is no peace saith the Lord, unto the wicked". From there he argues that we may not, without being blasphemous, entertain hopes for the eternal survival in Paradise of the unregenerate.

The one exception to this is the dead infant. He does not define 'infant' but includes within the definition a child of his who died at the age of 5½. For these young dead there is universal entry to Paradise though not all gain the same reward. Children of believing parents are assured of Paradise. This he seeks to prove typologically, using the Abrahamic covenant "I will be a God to thee and thy seed" (Gen 17:7). Children of unbelieving parents shall be saved "though not with a salvation so glorious as that of the offspring of the saints";[10] "..... the divine government regards with special favour the offspring of its loyal subjects".[11] So the children of the faithful are advanced to a "higher station of honour".[12] Yet children of evil-doers will be so grateful to have been admitted to Paradise at all that they will not grudge "The preference to the higher honours which is made to his loyally-descended fellow citizen".[13]

Anderson also regards this world as completely fallen and evil. Rewards are all in the future. Indeed, at one point he advises grieving parents to "weep for the living and not for the dead ..... the dead are safely kept for you".[14]

Anderson has something to tell us about the kind of life the faithful will enjoy in Paradise. The re-union there will have a social character. He infers this from the fact that people are social creatures and derive many of their great joys firstly from family sources and then from the generality of people with whom they come into contact. He argues the point from 1 Thess 4:13 "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope". He takes this to mean that the saints are not lost forever to those left behind. This would only be true if the saints on earth "shall be unable to distinguish one another in the host of the redeemed."[15] He firmly concludes this argument with the sentence "I therefore dismiss the subject as one which will not admit of a doubt."[16]

He says categorically that the "fellowship in immortality will be of a family nature."[17] He goes on to paint pictures of re-unions with dead children and relatives, all of whom will have been renewed physically. This, clearly, he would draw from the wasting diseases from which children died in those days. Re-unions with adults will be characterised not only by physical restoration but by regeneration of their impure thoughts and attitudes.

In Paradise there will also be the opportunity to associate with the great men of the Bible, to "throng around Abraham"[18] as well as the saints of all the ages.

This introduction to the first part of the thesis has already thrown up a pot pourri of ideas about the attitudes to death. It is the

natural end to life and spoken of with the naturalness which the mortality rates of the day make understandable. For the faithful, it is the entrance to Paradise where there will be rewards, re-unions, restorations. Paradise will be a busy place, the Victorians seem to tell us. Those who gain admittance, the faithful and children, will spend eternity rejoicing. Curiously there is no suggestion of an eternity of Hallelujahs. Rather there is to be the joy of receiving merited reward, of re-union with those who have gone before and the sublime experience of meeting Jesus himself.

Their rejoicing is rooted in deliverance from this world - from its snares and delusions, from its wasting illnesses, from its injustices and hindrances to perfection. Life on earth is a struggle against not only natural calamity - like illness and natural temptations. It is also the place where God tests his faithful people to make certain that they are worthy of the rewards He has in store for them. For the faithful, death is to be welcomed because it releases them from this dreadful, sinful world to our rewards; for the unfaithful it is to be feared as it will release them only to the punishments with which the just God limits his mercy.

The 19th century theologians were pre-occupied with death because it marked not only an end but a beginning - i.e. the beginning of eternity. Whether eternity was spent in Heaven or Hell was determined by what had been done and believed in this life. Here is Principal Cairns, for instance, in an article contributed to a volume entitled Future Probation - a Symposium. The Symposium is exploring the question of the possibility of salvation after death and Cairns comes

down firmly on the side which says that it is not. He tells us clearly that there is a limit set beyond which even God's grace will not operate. He also tells us that "men are in God's world manifestly in sin and ruin".[19] In the same volume we find Stopford Augustus Brooke saying "No one, nowadays, who believes in God as the Father of men, denies that in this world we are the subjects of the testing of God, subjects, if the testing ends in the salvation of those who are tested, of His education."[20]

Here, then, we clearly see such ideas as the total depravity of mankind not only advanced but urged as arguments in favour of acceptance of the Gospel. The notion that it is legitimate to terrify people into the Kingdom proclaimed by the Prince of Peace was commonly held. The manner of its presentation confirms the prescriptive and authoritarian tones already noted. The idea that God will educate people by testing them also emerges clearly.

To some degree this latter point is also made by Alexander Whyte in a sermon on the Four Winds (from the book of sermons entitled With Mercy and Judgement) in which he says "There are those who warn us not to build our nest in any forest on the earth. There are those whose blessed ministry all the saints celebrate with that psalmist who said that it had been very good for him to be afflicted."[21] The virtues of suffering are clearly approved of. There is also the idea that this world is an alien place where we have no proper home. Indeed he goes on to say "It (the day of death) is the day of their final deliverance; it is the day of their full coronation."[22] Not only is the world an alien place for the believer. Life itself has little

meaning other than the patient endurance of life's inequities, which patience will gain its reward - but not until this life is ended. The reward will be, however, far beyond the power of mortal telling for ".... Heaven is the true wonderland. Everything that surpasses .... everything that transcends, it is all collected in Heaven."[23] It has already been observed (see page 8) that for the Victorians it seems that Paradise would be a busy place, having a social character to it. Whyte says in the same sermon "All the affections of your heart will find their full outlet, their full delight and their full fruition there. All your talents will be multiplied and perfected and occupied there."[24] We may be certain that what Whyte preached on these matters was no mere oratory for Barbour in his Life of Whyte quotes a letter which Whyte wrote to his sister on the death of their father; "Christ has given us father, I believe, and we will see him where there are no separations."[25]

If further authority for the extent to which these views of death and the life to come were widely held, we need look no further than Thomas Chalmers. In Hanna's Life of Chalmers, Vol 3 we find the following: "This is a sad and suffering world but we are invited to look forward to a better ..... which we most assuredly shall inherit if we lay hold on Him whom God has sent forth as a propitiation for the sins of the world";[26] "..... the Friend of sinners, our High Priest with God, who sitteth at His right hand and pleads the cause of every sinner who applies to Him for help";[27] "what a transition and what a triumph when, escaped from the sufferings of a poor and perishable body, you are admitted to join in the song of the redeemed".[28] These quotations are taken from letters written by Chalmers to his

sister, a chronic invalid who died at an early age. What we have here is not so much his preaching as his pastoral counsel. This is his considered thought on these matters and offered here, like those of Alexander Whyte, from a source which is free from rhetoric. It is clear that Chalmers entertained notions of physical renewal, seen in his reference to "transition" and "escape from the sufferings of a poor and perishable body." This is perhaps his exegesis of Cor 15:40. It is also, I suggest, an illustration of the way in which social factors can influence belief. I doubt not that Anderson's ideas about the salvation of infants (see page 6) were influenced by the fact that he had a son who died aged 5½.

Chalmers also believed in suffering being a means whereby God sanctifies people (cf Whyte's 'education'). Again in a letter to his sister he writes "He often makes our sufferings the instruments of perfecting our sanctification ..... It is not for God's pleasure but for your own profit, that you are so exercised."[29] We have here the view that God permits His people to suffer to their spiritual improvement. Chalmers is not here saying that God inflicts suffering on people but rather that as it is endured it can have a refining effect on the human spirit. If we take "makes" in the quotation to mean "uses" then we begin to get the tendency of the argument.

We may now see that all the ideas found in the popular writers with whom we began - total depravity of man, God educating people by testing them through their misfortunes, the seeming religious masochism required to accept affliction as from God's hand and for His obscure purposes, that life is given its meaning and fulfilment by death, that life

in Heaven will be like life here only more so, the rejection of this world in longings for the next one, the social character of Heaven and the pre-occupation with the life to come - are to be found also in the thinking of the leaders of the Church of the day.

What we have here is Chalmers and his generation making a virtue of necessity. Suffering was then so widespread that it had to have been sent by God for a purpose. They have a great logical difficulty. It seems that they say that God loves people so much that he arranges an appropriate propitiation so that he might admit people to eternal joy, a joy for which he prepares them by sending illness, pain, misery and deformity. The social setting in which they exercised their ministries might give a clue to their theology. It is to that context now that we turn.

The special context in which the 19th century preacher worked is a determining factor in his theology. The conditions under which the large bulk of the population lived and the social factors which bore on their lives were so dreadful that it is easy to understand how the twin ideas of ease in Paradise and reward in the life hereafter came to pervade the theological emphases of the preachers of the day. "Let any such person devote an hour to visiting some very poor neighbourhood in the metropolis, or in almost any of our larger towns. Let him breathe its air, taste its water, eat its bread. Let him think of human life struggling there for years. Let him fancy what it would be to himself to live there, in that beastly degradation of stink, fed with such bread, drinking such water. Let him enter some house there at hazard, and - heeding where he treads - follow

the guidance of his outraged nose to the yard (if there be one) or the cellar. Let him talk to the inmates; let him hear what is thought of the bone-boiler next door or the slaughter house behind; what of the sewer grating before the door; what of the Irish basket-makers upstairs - twelve in a room, who came in after the hopping, and got fever; what of the artisan's dead body, stretched on his widow's one bed, beside her living children."[30] Royston Pike observes that "What is disclosed here about the metropolis is all too surely typical of the nation-wide state of affairs that Chadwick and Simon and the rest had to encounter and overcome."[31] Chadwick was Chief Executive of the Poor Law Commissioners and then the General Board of Health. He strove manfully to interest the nation in Public Health. Dr. - later Sir - John Simon was appointed Officer of Health to the city of London in 1848. In 1858 he was appointed Medical Officer to the Privy Council and in 1871 Chief Medical Officer to the new Local Government Board from which the Ministry of Health - which he had advocated - eventually emerged. His reports during his professional career not only described the insanitary and degrading conditions in which the mass of people then lived but protested at them. He was at once the opponent of all that militated against Public Health and, like Chadwick, a spokesman for the poor, who endured the conditions he described and had few to plead their cause. What had to be 'encountered and overcome' was the indifference of the authorities to what today we call public health. Most local authorities had a civic water supply, though it did not run into all the houses in a city; streams and rivers and their tributaries were open sewers in which ships sailed and children played. Those who could escaped to the suburbs but the mass of the people lived in close, crowded

tenements, over-populated, poorly lit and ill ventilated.

In 1841 the population of Glasgow was 255,650. It had an appalling mortality rate (28.74 per 1,000 in the early 1850's when records first began to be kept). The key to this dismal statistic lies in the housing endured by the bulk of the City's population. Building land was at a premium and the only way to house the huge influx in people to the City was to sub-divide existing properties. "One stair in a tenement block in McLaren's land off the High Street in 1846 led to more than 41 two roomed dwellings, housing 360 persons. The tenements were built round a central courtyard and an added health hazard was the practice of retaining all the refuse and manure from stables, piggeries and domestic housing alike in huge dungsteads occupying the centre of each courtyard, emptied at intervals of 6 months or more with great difficulty as the only means of removing manure was by handcart through the narrow closes leading from the wynds to the tenements. The only water supply to the more densely populated parts of the town was by public well, unless some enlightened landlord paid for the installation of a standpipe. Thousands of immigrants sought accommodation in the innumerable lodging houses of the Saltmarket and the Gorbals where conditions were so bad that they attracted statutory controls as early as 1841."[32]

Thus Glasgow was not different from London in matters of sanitation, housing and overcrowding.

There were serious medical problems which resulted from these social conditions. With such overcrowding, primitive sanitation and inadequate

water supply, recurrent epidemics of infectious disease were inevitable. This shows in the statistics for Glasgow in the epidemic years. In 1848 - a cholera year - the death rate went up to 35.08 per 1,000; in 1847, the great typhus epidemic year, it went to 52.63 per 1,000. The physical conditions in which people lived produced tuberculosis and bronchitis. The way in which infections were transmitted by germs was only beginning to be considered in the 1850's. Pike tells us that even such a far seeing public health enthusiast as Dr. Simon did not accept the germ theory of disease until 1890.[33]

A high rate of infection coupled with a high rate of injury from notoriously ill-guarded machinery meant that amputation was a common surgical procedure. Lister's own statistics of amputation between 1864 and 1866 show that 45% of patients died.[34] It was not until 1847 that Simpson began to use chloroform to assist women who were having difficulties in labour and so pioneered safe anaesthesia. It was not until Lister's work in the field of antisepsis began to spread in the mid - late 19th century that surgery became other than wound surgery. It was not usual to open the cavities of the body because of the dangers of infection which, as we have seen, resulted in a death rate of nearly 50%. Apart from the inability of medicine to do much to make people better, there was little medical provision for the bulk of the population.

In Glasgow, Parochial Boards employed a district surgeon and parochial doctors. Each parish was divided into districts of roughly equal populations. These doctors were obliged to attend pauper patients (those who were not receiving poor relief had to pay for treatment)

in their districts. They also had to keep a surgery where they might be consulted and from which they dispensed medicines. The doctors also had to attend pauper patients in their homes when summoned. They were also obliged to include maternity cases among their responsibilities.

This outdoor system, as it was called, was welcomed by the poor as it presented less of a threat to their dignity. The alternative was indoor treatment either at a poor hospital or in the sick wards of the poorhouse. Women were also reluctant to leave their homes and families to become in-patients. All of this threw great strains on the system. As a measure of these strains we take the case of Govan Parochial Board which, in 1885 employed one surgeon to every 30,000 of the population. In that year the average number of paupers throughout the City was 35.5 per 1,000. It was known for a surgeon to have 3,000 home visits and surgery consultations in a year and yet no surgeon was employed full time. By the end of the century parishes paid charitable nursing organisations to provide home nursing to seriously ill pauper patients and relieve the over-worked doctors.[35]

In addition to poor social conditions and their medical complications, which latter were further complicated by the state of medical knowledge, poverty was a significant contributor to the environment of the 19th century preacher. Those who were employed earned little for the long hours they worked. As an index we may cite the fact that the "fair average wage" for a Paisley weaver fell from £1.10.0d in the early century to £0.7.0d in the late 1830's.[36] We are further informed, in the same paragraph, that this resulted in "a falling standard of living,

represented by worse food and ragged clothes, of a deteriorating physical and moral environment and of a doubt about the future."[37] The distribution of relief to the poor was at the discretion of Kirk Sessions, who raised monies for the purpose through collections at the Church door and through a rates levy on property owners in the parish. The clothing that they issued to paupers became, in each parish, a uniform. As recently as 1940, children in school wore herring bone tweed trousers of a distinctive pattern and these were widely known as part of the Parish suit. In the same period shoes and boots with G.P.B. branded into the instep for Gorbals Parochial Board were worn. The effect of such charity on the morale of the recipients is incalculable. In the 19th century there was the further complication that the able bodied who were out of work came to be regarded as undeserving of poor relief - an attitude which lingers on into the present day. As an example of what might happen in the 19th century consider what was attempted in Paisley in the period 1841 - 83. The weavers were in great distress because of a slump in demand for their Paisley shawls. Edward Twistleton was sent by Peel, the Prime Minister, to organise relief. Under his leadership a committee was set up which raised money throughout Britain for the relief of the weavers. Twistleton sought to apply a labour test which would have recompensed the unemployed for supervised labour - 10 hours a day was the suggested duration - with relief in kind. This was intended to meet the case of the able bodied unemployed by providing a means for them to support themselves and their families by working. This was a sound principle to which the men would have responded favourably; they refused it, however, when they discovered that they would be paid in kind at stores run by the Relief Committee and that

they could obtain there for their vouchers only bread, potatoes and meal. The Provost of the Town, Henderson, said, "If weavers must earn a subsistence by breaking stones at the labourers rate I conceive their case hard enough indeed, though they should be paid in cash and left to select their own food." [38] We note en passant that Twistleton's concern was that vouchers might be pawned for money which might then be spent on drink rather than on the sustenance of a man's family.

All of this is humiliating enough but worse was to come. Henderson asked if a quarter of the relief could be paid in cash and was told that it could not. The store and voucher system raised such an outrage amongst the weavers that the local Relief Committee eventually agreed to pay one fifth of the allowance in cash. In 1842 Twistleton returned to London. By the New Year of 1843 the allowance for a man, his wife and three children had been reduced to less than 3/-d a week - a sum which the previous Spring had been judged enough for a single person. Outraged, Provost Henderson resigned from the Committee on the grounds that its duty was to relieve, not to starve the people. He further offered to open the prisons to the unemployed because "they would receive better relief as felons inside than as citizens out."[39]

It is clear then that to be poor, whether employed or not, was a degrading and humiliating situation. Attitudes towards them were at best paternalistic and patronising. In the case of the able bodied unemployed it could be downright hostile. In the face of all this, one wonders what the generality of the population made of Thomas Chalmers' well-known position about the Poor Laws; i.e. that

they should not be introduced at all. Then a self-regulating system would operate whereby the industrious would be rewarded while the profligate, the speculator and the idle would be punished. He believed that the absence of Poor Laws would impose on the rich a burden of charity. A grateful poor would benefit from a system based on kindness. One can only observe that whatever the theoretical merits of such a scheme might be, it could only perpetuate paternalism and deference and thus work against human dignity.

It begins to be clear why the 19th century preacher had such a pre-occupation with life after death. For the large majority of his people life was squalid and devoid of dignity. There was a great deal of pain, a high mortality rate and a series of attitudes which perpetuated a rigid class system. Wasting diseases like tuberculosis were common in the tenements. There was so much darkness in people's lives - in the factories and the tenements, as well as the darkness of despair born of the prospect of life lived in such conditions, that it is little wonder that the theology of the 19th century had the pre-occupation with Paradise that we have already observed. There was little in this life that was comfortable. No wonder Paradise was offered as a reward, as the sublime contrast to the miseries of this world. No wonder, too, that this world was presented as a place from which we should be glad to escape. Nor is it any surprise that the presentation of the future life should be so hyperbolic. There was so much suffering, in the sense of <u>pathemata</u> (cf Romans 8:18) "I consider that the sufferings of this world are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." This word translated 'sufferings' is derived in turn from the verb <u>pascho</u> which has the

meaning "to suffer" but also "to be acted upon".[40] Sufferings, in that Pauline sense may thus be understood in terms of helplessness in the face of adverse circumstances or events which are outwith the control of the sufferer. It could be applied to an environment which, through no choosing of the individual, was hostile to him and from which he could not remove himself. That would certainly apply to the place in which the bulk of the 19th century population found itself.

Given that the physical environment of his housing and place of work was as degrading and enervating as it appears to have been, it is not to be wondered at that what Smout (see page 16) describes as a "deteriorating physical and moral environment and fears about the future"[41] was the natural standard of living for so many of the preacher's congregation. It is not surprising that so much of his preaching had to do with how much better things would be in the next world.

Physical suffering, in terms of disease and deformity, was also commonplace. So too was death, particularly of children. The grim reaper was no stranger to the 19th century man. As a measure of how commonplace it was, records of a Paisley kirkyard show that between the years of 1781 and 1888 there were 24,930 burials. That gives an average of almost 233 per annum or an average of almost 4.5 interments per week in one kirkyard; and that in a place which avoided the worst horrors of overcrowding, as there were significantly fewer tenements built in Paisley.

All classes suffered from the lack of medical knowledge as they did from the prevailing diseases. Thus pain and disease, with their resulting despair, were more commonplace than today. We are not to be surprised at the hopes of physical renewal which we find the preachers of the day offering. When death separates people at the end of an illness, those left to mourn feel a sense of injustice, that they have been robbed by death. Since this must have been a commonplace experience, what more natural that hopes of re-union were kindled from the pulpit.

When one considers, as well as these social factors, the prevailing literalistic approach to scripture and the consequent theology which that scriptural approach produced, it is not to be wondered at that preachers adopted the attitudes to suffering and death that they did. If God made the world, as Genesis undoubtedly said He did, if He is omnipotent and beyond the questioning of man, then His purposes are being worked out in the world. The idea of suffering as a testing and as a purifying agency is not alien to the New Testament. Small wonder that such ideas found expression from pulpits set in the midst of epidemic and built over cesspools.

CHAPTER 1

1. Stone p.33
2. Ibid p.42
3. Ibid p.31
4. Anderson p.483
5. Ibid p.484
6. Swetnam p.167
7. Petersen p.158
8. Anderson ibid p.456
9. Ibid p.487
10. Ibid p.491
11. Ibid p.493
12. Ibid p.493
13. Ibid p.494
14. Ibid p.489
15. Ibid p.499
16. Ibid p.499
17. Ibid p.502
18. Ibid p.505
19. Future Probation - a Symposium p.142
20. Ibid p.255
21. Whyte p.178
22. Ibid p.190
23. Ibid p.81
24. Ibid p.89 - my underlining

25. Barbour p.144

26. Hanna Vol. 3 p.141

27. Ibid p.138

28. Ibid p.141

29. Ibid p.143

30. Pike pp.273-4

31. Ibid p.273

32. Smout p.218

33. Pike ibid p.303

34. Haggard p.171

35. Smout ibid passum

36. Smout ibid p.221

37. Smout ibid pp.221

38. Smout ibid p.234

39. Smout ibid p.239

40. Abbot-Smith p.348

41. Smout ibid passim

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CHAPTER 2

While it is tempting to see the ethos of the 19th century as a determining factor in that century's theology one must not press the point too hard. That there is a formative connection is undeniable; that there is another important factor which must not be overlooked is equally undeniable. The attitude of the 19th century churchman to his Bible is crucial to an understanding of the kind of teachings we have been considering. One has to note in passing the influence that the preacher had in those days. When there was little formal education, when so much of living was taken up just with survival, the preacher was the educated man. He thus had a most powerful influence over his people. He flourished in an atmosphere of academic ignorance. His ideas grew in acceptable soil. It is not difficult to understand how it happened that even the more bizarre exegetical pronouncements found ready acceptance.

Bizarre exegesis is not peculiar to the 19th century, of course. Our concern, however, is with the 19th century preacher and we will, for the moment, confine ourselves to him. In the Victorian period most people came unquestioningly to their Bibles. The Bible was a history of the revelation of God's dealings with His creature, man, and His intentions for him. Every word was inspired and the whole work was self-authenticating. There could be no departure from this. If any part of the Scriptures was questioned then the whole was called in question, which was unthinkable. The Bible was regarded as an unshakeable foundation on which the whole soteriological edifice of the 19th century preacher was built.

Small wonder, then, that the work of the Higher Critics in Germany received little attention in Britain. Their work was known to academics but exercised little influence because it was ignored, for the most part. Principal Rainy observed that "critical conclusions such as I have described may have good right first, certainly, to be heard, and, second, possibly to be accepted".[1] In the same volume, the author writes "To a Romanist the Bible is a repository of dogmas ..... but to the evangelical Protestant the Bible is a great means of intercourse with the living Spirit of God. And what had characterised the attitude of Protestant piety towards this "means of grace" - and nowhere more deeply than in Scotland - was a profound and familiar confidence. Here was a known and assured and undisturbed home of faith and devotion".[2] It appears that the view of the Scottish academic world was that the work of the German scholars, commonly called Higher Criticism, was to be noted but not promulgated. As P. Carnegie Simpson says of Principal Rainy "Here was a man who on the one hand resolutely supported the scholar's liberty to criticise with the frankest freedom the structure of the sacred narrative but who on the other hand, really saw and shared the pain that criticism caused in the mind of some simple and perhaps ignorant pious woman who, like Cowper's lace worker 'Just knows and knows no more her Bible true'".[3] Thus one could say that the view existed that Higher Criticism should only be available to those who have the appropriate intellectual background not to be corrupted by it. It is not suitable for the ordinary person who would be confused and distressed by it.

The existence of Higher Criticism could not long be denied and, as

it began to find its apologists, inevitably battle lines were drawn. Many stood by John Knox's dictum that "Faith hath both her beginning and her continuance by the word of God".[4] Allied to that we have also to remember that the Westminster Confession, in its opening chapter, takes the view that the Bible is the divinely inspired record of God's revelation of Himself and His purposes. Taking both factions into account Cheyne, in his The Transforming of the Kirk, goes on to observe that "as far as we can tell the Divines and most Scottish believers between 1650 and 1800 were little inclined to question the infallibility of Scripture's pronouncements".[5] A more embattled age was on its way.

The controversy began early. In 1828 Marcus Dods (whose son was later to attain professorial rank in Edinburgh University) wrote to confute contemporary writers who were even then attacking the idea of the infallibility of Scripture because of its divine inspiration. "(They write) to show us that inspiration is not so very sacred a thing as we have been accustomed to think, and the effect of which is just to reduce Holy Scriptures to the level of other pious writings".[6] This pamphlet was to be republished 50 years later which gives some indication of the degree of entrenchment of the view which it represents.

The question of the inspiration of Scripture was at the heart of the dispute. The protagonists took diametrically opposing views. On the one hand was the position which held that the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures made them unamenable to interpretation by the Higher Critical method; on the other hand there was the view that pursuance of Higher Criticism was not incompatible with loyalty to the Bible

as the inspired word of God.

The two men who forced the orthodox of their day to take seriously the application of literary and historical criticism to exegesis were A.B. Davidson, Professor of Old Testament at Aberdeen University and his pupil William Robertson Smith. Davidson escaped the indignity that Robertson Smith had to endure. We shall better understand the 19th century attitudes as we look at what became known as the Robertson Smith case, for while it comes late in the 19th century, it arises out of a division of opinion which had gone on since the earliest days of the century. The lines between the various parties emerge quite clearly. Robertson Smith, an academic, believed that the application of the methods of Higher Criticism neither destroyed nor attacked those doctrines which form the substance of the faith. Dr. James Begg, a Calvinist, in one of the many debates over some of Robertson Smith's published works, claimed that "the hearts of the best people in Scotland were trembling for the Ark of God".[7] Principal Rainy, a leading protagonist in the case, shared Robertson Smith's critical position[8] yet was party to his removal from his chair of Hebrew at Aberdeen on the grounds that while it was important to guard the due liberty of professors and to encourage learned and candid research "it was no longer safe or advantageous for the Church that Professor Smith should continue to teach in one of her colleges".[9]

Drummond and Bulloch suggest that in the mid-19th century Scotland was too preoccupied with the Disruption to pay much heed to the work of such continental scholars as D.F. Strauss and F.C. Baur.[10] Such

early response as there was, was hostile.* A.B. Davidson, author of the well known Hebrew grammar, is credited with the introduction of Biblical criticism through grammatical and literary analysis to Scotland. In his commentary on Job, published 1862 he acknowledged his debt to the German scholars but "carefully safeguarded his words by judicious qualifications so as to justify his view that the later chapters of Job were interpolations. Yet he did not pursue the argument to its completion by finishing the book".[11] Thus was the stage set for the appearance of Robertson Smith. The new criticism was cautiously being sent forth in an atmosphere of hostility and ridicule.

Before embarking on a review of the Robertson Smith case it is necessary to explain its importance. It may well be asked why anything which offered new insights into the Scriptures was so firmly rejected. The 19th century Scottish divines had a simple but substantial theological edifice and the Higher Criticism would have caused cracks in it. The life view which they taught and advanced was based on a system of rewards after death. Such a view depended on a literalistic view of the Bible as divinely inspired and unalterable from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21. Thus, as we shall see, the Robertson Smith case was brought not simply because of what he said but because of the threat he presented to the then orthodoxy.

*Strauss' exposition of the Synoptic problem was roughly treated by Clerk Maxwell. In a parody he subjected the Declaration of American Independence to the same kind of analysis as had Strauss the Gospels. Maxwell explained away the Declaration and in so doing exposed to ridicule Strauss' method.[12]

Robertson Smith was a son of the manse and of quite exceptional intellect. A glittering academic career, starred with prizes and gold medals, was crowned with his appointment as Professor of Hebrew in the Free Church College at Aberdeen when he was only 24 years of age. Despite the fact that he was a son of the manse his background was academic rather than ecclesiastical. His father had augmented his stipend by tutoring pupils who boarded in the manse and his son was educated with them rather than at school. A well meaning father did the boy no service by making him better acquainted with books than with human nature and its reactions.[13]

The consequence of this was that Robertson Smith had no understanding of how people might respond to scholarship. He accepted the academic disciplines and could not see that other people might do otherwise. He was invited to submit a series of articles for the 9th edition of the Encyclopaedia Brittanica and did so. It was the one entitled "Bible" which sparked off a controversy which was to last for years. It was more than a sectarian dispute; it was, as Bulloch and Drummond observe "a turning point for the mind of Victorian Scotland".[14]

The matter first appeared before the General Assembly of 1879. Great debate ensued resulting in a Committee being set up to amend the libel. In its amended form it was sent to the Presbytery of Aberdeen, which was instructed to try Robertson Smith in its terms. These may be summarised as follows:-

... the publishing and promulgation of writings concerning the books of Scripture which by their ill considered and unguarded setting forth

of speculations of a critical kind, tend to awaken doubt, especially in the case of students, of the divine truth, inspiration and authority of any of the books of Scripture, and on the doctrines of angels, and prophecy as the said truth, inspiration and authority, and doctrines of angels and prophecy, are set forth in the Scriptures themselves and in the Confession of Faith; as also the publishing and promulgation of writings concerning the books of Holy Scripture which writings, by their neutrality of attitude in relation to the said doctrines and by the rashness of statement in regard to the critical construction of the Scriptures, tend to disparage the divine authority and inspired character of these books...[15]

There followed eight specific charges. The Presbytery found him not guilty on all charges and there the matter might have rested. His enemies, however, appealed on all counts to the General Assembly of 1880. There he won his case and was found not guilty of heresy. The final act of the drama, however, had yet to unfold.

The previous November, Smith had submitted the manuscript of another article to the Encyclopaedia Brittanica, this time on the subject of Hebrew Language. The outcome of this was a re-opening of the whole heresy matter culminating in Principal Rainy moving in the General Assembly of 1881 a motion which included in its last paragraph the words "..... feel themselves constrained to declare that they no longer consider it safe or advantageous for the Church that Professor Smith should continue to teach in one of her colleges".[16] It is astonishing that within a twelve month period the General Assembly should reverse its decision, for the points at issue were substantially the same in both cases. There can be no doubt that Smith was denied common

justice at the bar of Assembly, but that fact forms no part of this work. The fact is that Principal Rainy, who shared Smith's critical views (see page 25) came to the view that he had to oppose Smith because he was afraid that Smith's views would unsettle the Church. In the Assembly of 1881 Rainy said "that both the tone of the article itself and the fact that the article was prepared and published in the circumstances .... evince on the part of Professor Smith a singular insensibility to his responsibility as a theological professor and a singular and culpable lack of sympathy with the reasonable anxieties of the Church as to the bearing of critical speculations on the integrity and authority of Scripture".[17] His concern for the peace of the Church led Rainy to declare that the Church had a reserve of power to deal with the case. Remember that Smith had been exonerated only twelve months previously. The article complained of had been completed prior to his first trial and its publication was purely adventitious. Even had it been written by a man freed from the taint of heresy, that would have represented no more than an employment of the freedom which his exoneration gave him. What this second case turned on was the fact that while Smith was free to hold these views as a scholar there was a large body of opinion which held that he had no right to teach them with approbation. How was the Assembly to deal with such a paradoxical problem? The law of the Church had been applied and Smith exonerated. Rainy supplied the answer. "I hold it is of importance to remember that there is a reserve of power in the Assembly to care for the interests of the flock when ordinary means and arrangements cannot meet the case".[18] Rainy's motion was carried by a majority of 178.

Thus the forces of conservatism triumphed. The curious point is that the desire to resist Higher Criticism led men to use a dubious device to secure their end. The concept of the reserve of power will not stand much scrutiny. When it is employed in the courts it is intended to be used to clarify the law when it is obscure, not to provide a means to secure a conviction where no legislation exists. Yet it was to such a misuse of principle that men of high principle were reduced; that must be the measure of their concern to maintain their conservative position.

Such action to maintain the Scriptures in their privileged and uncriticised position argues for powerful motivations. There seems to have been a deep fear that if the Scriptures were questioned they would be bereft of their power to convey the will of God. There seems also to have been the fear that, if the Scriptures were admitted to be reasonable subjects for critical examination, then such doubts would arise as would lead to doubts about not simply the will of God but of His existence. On the whole the popular reaction seems to hinge on the word "unthinkable". It was not to be considered that ordinary categories of thought and procedure were to be applied to holy writ and its purposes. The desire for a proper reverence in handling the material of Christianity and the mysteries of God's transactions with his people, led the orthodox and conservative to reject what they considered as crude and presumptuous attitudes to God. This inability to break the mould of their preconceptions explains, at least as much as does the social settings in which they preached, the line and style of 19th century preaching.

CHAPTER 2

1. Simpson p.342 Vol. I
2. Ibid p.312 Vol. I
3. Simpson p.118 Vol. II
4. Cheyne The Transforming of the Kirk p.4
5. Op cit p.5
6. Cheyne Remarks on the Bible op cit p.6
7. Simpson ibid p.337
8. Drummond and Bulloch p.77
9. Simpson ibid p.388
10. Drummond and Bulloch ibid p.40
11. Ibid p.44
12. Ibid p.40
13. Ibid p.45
14. Ibid p.52
15. Black and Chrystal p.600
16. Ibid p.426
17. Simpson ibid p.388
18. Ibid p.390

Lest it be thought that some of these references are secondary sources, it should be noted that the quotations from, say, P. Carnegie Simpson, are direct quotations from Principal Rainy himself, which P.C. Simpson records as verbatim. This fact should counter the view, held I believe in some places, that P.C. Simpson is a less than objective biographer of Principal Rainy.

Chapter 2

Simpson	A Life of Principal Rainy	
	Hodder & Stoughton	London 1909
Cheyne	The Transforming of the Kirk	
	St. Andrew's Press	Edinburgh 1983
Drummond & Bulloch	The Church in Late Victorian Scotland	
	St. Andrew's Press	Edinburgh 1978
Black & Chrystal	A Life of William Robertson Smith	
	A. & C. Black	London 1912

CHAPTER 3

In this chapter 19th and 20th century novelists' writing will be contrasted to see what attitudes they reflect, on the assumption that novelists reflect the society and period in which they worked. The 19th century will be represented by Tolstoy and Dickens and a biography of Rev. Dr. John Kirk, the distinguished Congregationalist. Material from The Old Century and Seven More Years, Siegfried Sassoon's description of his childhood and adolescence will be referred to, as will The Healers, David Hamilton's history of medicine in Scotland. 20th century writers are represented by Camus, Steinbeck, Faulkner, Elizabeth Taylor, John D. MacDonald, Gwyn Griffin, William Golding, Iris Murdoch and Iain Crichton Smith. The last three, being popular writers are included to give a broad coverage of 20th century writing.

We begin with Tolstoy and in particular the death of Prince Andrey in War and Peace.

When wounded there is this reaction described: "Can this be death? Prince Andrey wondered with a new, wistful feeling".[1]

When he is taken to the aid station he muses: "What will be there and what has been here? Isn't it all the same now? Why was I so sorry to part with life? There was something in this life that I didn't understand and don't understand".[2]

And later, in the same place he says "The love that God preached upon earth, that Marie sought to teach me and I did not understand. That is why I am sorry to part with life, that is what was left me if I had lived. But now it is too late, I know that".[3]

Later, when he is on his death bed, Tolstoy describes him as follows:- "It was evidently with difficulty that he understood anything living; but yet it seemed that he did not understand what was living, not because he had lost the power of understanding but because he understood something else that the living did not and could not understand, and that entirely absorbed him".[4]

"He tried to come back to life and put himself at their point of view. "Yes, it must seem sad to them" he thought "But how simple it is! Yes, that was death. I died and waked up." "Death is an awakening" flashed with sudden light into his soul and the veil that had until then hidden the unknown was lifted from his spiritual vision. He felt, as it were, set free from some force that held him in bondage and was aware of that strange lightness of being that had not left him since. That was the change that had come over him two days before Princess Marya's arrival."[5]

"Natasha and Princess Marya wept too now. But they did not weep for their personal sorrow, they wept from the emotion and awe that filled their souls before the simple and solemn mystery of death that had been accomplished before their eyes".[6]

What we first note here is the onlookers' reaction. Death and its surrounding mysteries move them. The event itself, apart from its power to deprive them of Andrey's society and the effect that that event will have on their lives, has an affect on them. Intrinsically it has power to stir in them reactions of awe and wonder. These are the primary reactions, those felt first before the subjective reactions

set in. There is, as we will see, little parallel to such reaction in the modern literature.

If we consider Andrey's attitude to his death, the following would seem to be the main observations:-

He contemplates death wistfully. That, by definition, means thoughtfully and earnestly. So there is an anticipatory element in his contemplation. Something is going to happen which concerns him and in which he should be interested. And of all the attitudes which might colour this process, fear is absent.

The anticipatory element is more clearly seen in his question to himself, "Why was I so sorry to part with life?".[7] This makes a value judgement on corporeal life and suggests that there might be life of a higher value to be known when this life is ended. Here Tolstoy introduces the idea of a continuum involving this life and the next.

His increasing absorption with the life to come gives him a new understanding of life as a whole. This life and the life to come are both suffused and sustained by the love of God. His one regret at dying is that he is, by death, denied the opportunity to live here on earth in that knowledge. Yet, in something of a paradox, Tolstoy has us understand that his departure from this life is made easier by the discovery that in the next life he will know the same love of God which would have enriched his life on earth had he survived his wound.

There is also the fascinating idea that the knowledge of his death

and his reaction to it make him a different and altogether new man. What is described is something like a conversion experience as, for instance in the words "he understood something else that the living did not and could not understand, and that entirely absorbed him". There is someone who had died and risen again to a new life. As we shall see, there is little parallel for any of this in the modern literature.

Tolstoy was a tormented man. His early years were full of self doubt. In 1847, when he was 19, his daughter Tatyana records that he was a man who was "constantly wrestling with his passions, constantly analyzing himself, judging himself with an implacable severity, insisting on the highest standards both in himself and others".[8] On March 24th of that year he wrote in his diary "I have changed a great deal, but still not attained that degree of perfection I would have liked".[9]

In 1887 he underwent a lengthy process of self examination which led to a conversion experience. In the course of his journey to religious certainty he wrote two books "A Confession" and "A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology" in the course of which he taught himself Hebrew and Greek. Tatyana quotes him as saying "I was dazzled by the revelation of the truth and obtained complete answers to the questions; What is the meaning of my life? And the meaning of other people's life?".[13] The family moved to Moscow and took up a life of some style which Tolstoy denied himself, spending his time among the poor and deprived of the city. As his new-found religion gripped him and began to affect his living of his life, he became emotionally and intellectually

estranged from his wife who, latterly, would not even copy out for him the religious tracts which he increasingly wrote. This was because she became incensed at his attacks on the Church and orthodoxy and, as she says in her diary in 1880, she became incensed at his "remarks implying criticism of our way of life, blame directed at everything I did, everything my friends and relations did".[14] The next 30 years saw the relationship between the two become increasingly complex, Tolstoy increasingly seeking to follow the demands of Christianity as he understood it and his wife feeling increasingly estranged from him, where once they had been inseparable. It is clear that during this entire period Tolstoy's repeated search is for peace. It is ironic, then, that such a driven and tormented man as Tolstoy should create a fictitious character of such serenity as Count Andrey in War and Peace. Although War and Peace was first published in 1869 and the views expressed through Prince Andrey pre-date Tolstoy's agony it is surely no speculation to say that the serenity must have existed intellectually for Tolstoy and sustained him through fifty anguished years. It is also certain that the view of death which is put into the mind and words of the Count would enable Tolstoy to endure his trials of the spirit, given the centrality of the view that death is the consummation of life and release into peaceful Paradise.

When we turn to Dickens it is difficult to avoid what is probably his best known death scene - that of Sydney Carton in A Tale of Two Cities. We may begin with his conversation with the seamstress who holds his hand as they wait to be executed.

"Do you think", the uncomplaining eyes in which there is so much endurance fill with tears, and the lips part a little more and tremble;

"that it will seem long to me, while I wait for her (her sister) in the better land where, I trust, you and I will be mercifully sheltered?" "It cannot be, my child; there is no time there and no trouble there". "You comfort me so much".[15] Carton's words, it will be represented, illustrate a number of points which illustrate the Victorian attitude to death. It will be remembered that they represent his thoughts as he waits his turn to go to the scaffold.

"I see the lives for which I lay down my life peaceful, useful, happy, prosperous in that England which I shall see no more".
"I see her, with a child upon her bosom, who bears my name".
"I see that I hold a sanctuary in their hearts and in the hearts of their descendants generations hence".
"I see her, an old woman, weeping for me on the anniversary of this day".
"I see that child who lay upon her bosom and who bore my name a man winning his way up that path of life which once was mine ..... I see him winning it so well that my name is made illustrious there by the light of his".
"I see him bringing a boy of my name ..... with golden hair and I hear him tell the child my story with a tender and a faltering voice".
"It is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done, it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known".[16]

The sentimentality of the writing cannot be escaped but Dickens wrote for a sentimental public. What is also of note is that, like Tolstoy, he writes of death naturally. Within the framework of the story, the idea of death is treated as naturally and in as straightforward

a fashion as would be the case if Carton had substituted himself for Evremonde to serve a prison sentence. There is no increase in the intensity of the writing because Carton takes Evremond's place knowing that he will die, in consequence.

We can see something of the continuum that Tolstoy proposed in the way in which Carton solaces himself with what he will see in the future. That must imply not only a life after death but one in which those who enjoy it can at least be aware of what is happening in the lives of those they have left behind. We notice, too, a recurrence of the idea noted earlier, i.e. that of death as release from a burdensome life on earch, when Carton talks of the "far, far better rest" to which he goes. The interesting idea here is that there is a belief in salvation by works in Dickens' thought. The underlying assumption is that Carton gains Paradise not through faith but through the nobility of his substitutionary act. While literature generally is not short of novels who have Christ types as their central characters (Neville Shute's The Man in the Tool Room and Melville's Billy Budd for instance) it seems more likely to me that what we have in A Tale of Two Cities is that kind of sentimentally presented universalism which assures Carton of Paradise because he lays down his life for a friend.

There might be seen, too, the idea of continuum in the fact that Carton's death does not erase his name from history, i.e. "I see that child ..... who bore my name". As we shall see, there is an echo of that to be found in at least one modern writer, John Steinbeck, though he does not press it as far as does Dickens.

The Victorian veneration of the dead is clearly seen in the words "I see her, an old woman weeping for me on the anniversary of this day". So large did death feature as a fact of Victorian life that the place of interment of the body was in a "city of the dead", i.e. a necropolis. It is only recently that the custom of families tending the graves of their dead has become less common. Within the lifetime of the present writer, it was a Sunday afternoon outing to lay flowers on the grave of an uncle who had been particularly dear to my father. Nor were we solitary figures in the cemetery. Nor was it simply a case of making memorial. The grass round the grave was cut, its border weeded and the area round it tidied as well as the placing of flowers. As Carton projects into the future he anticipates what was the normal behaviour for bereaved people in his day.

We turn to a consideration of the death of Rev. Dr. John Kirk. He was a distinguished minister of the Evangelical Union and Professor of Practical Theology at its theological college. We read as follows in a chapter entitled "His last illness".

"I know that everything possible has been done but you see it has failed to remove the trouble". When Mrs. Kirk asked calmly what more he thought could be done he said with increasing solemnity "What more can be done but just let God take me when the time has come". He slept that night, quietly. In the morning he said to Mrs. Kirk "I feel all wrong somehow, I think I am dying. What do you think? .... I am going to leave you". (After taking leave of his son John) .... he said "everything is just as I could wish". When the doctor called he said to him "I have given up the battle". Dr. Bowie said very soothingly "Have you really?". Dr. Kirk replied "Yet and it is all for the best".[17]

Incredible as it seems to our modern minds, a deputation from his friends arrived to make a presentation to him. The gift of money was handed over with the words "You are going to the blessed rest of heaven, where we shall all soon meet" ..... He shook hands with each of his friends as they retired saying "Goodbye and God bless you".[18]

One day he asked his son John how long he thought this lingering would last. When his son replied that "he did not think his father would see another Sabbath" the news was joyful, Dr. Kirk exclaiming with great delight "That will be grand".[19]

His death is described as follows:-
"He was looking steadfastly upwards and the whole expression was one of eager expectation. Mrs. Kirk saw that he was entering the glory".[20]

Consideration of these events must make due allowance for the zeal of the evangelical writers who would, quite naturally, write of Dr. Kirk's death in such a way as to show him in the best possible light but also for the edification of the faithful who would read what they had written and also as an exhortation to the readers to embrace the faith that they too might die with such calm and with such assurance. Even when such allowances are made, some points clearly emerge.

We notice firstly the natural way in which death is treated, not only by Dr. Kirk but by his family. They show the natural sorrows but are far from destroyed by death in their midst. Even if they are not recorded verbatim, there can be little doubt that discussions

about his impending death took place. Then, too, we remember that when told he would not see another Sabbath, Dr. Kirk welcomed the news. We see again that anticipation of a higher and better life to come which we have noted repeatedly in this thesis.

We notice also the absence of fear in either Dr. Kirk or his family. This may be attributable to the strong faith which they all shared. In part, however, it must be attributable to the general familiarity with death which characterised their times and also the thoughts of future reward which were not only part of their faith but of their culture. So they are able calmly to face death.

We may summarise the view of death gleaned from these Victorian sources the following points and ideas.

We note that while they tended to sentimentalise death, they also were able to speak about it naturally. Furthermore, they were familiar with death as a phenomenon. We may not press too far Tolstoy's point with regard to the feelings it stirs in those who observed it. It remains true, however, that our 19th century forebears were better able than are their 20th century counterparts to deal with the problems surrounding death. This is true for two reasons. For them death occurred more often at home and, as death rates show, it occurred more often in their experience. They were thus more familiar with it.

Andrey contemplates a life beyond this one wistfully. There is again no doubt that for social as well as theological reasons what came after this life was a matter of greater priority to the

Victorians than to the citizens of the 20th century. A look at a Victorian hymnary confirms this view. They came to an understanding of life as a whole when they became convinced that their deaths were imminent. It is not clear that this was a general tendency in Victorian times i.e. that the greater awareness of the certainty of death affected the understanding of everyday life but the likelihood must be admitted. Certainly the continuum involving this world and the next would be more readily admitted by the Victorians than people today.

Dickens seems, so far as Sidney Carton is concerned, to introduce a new theological principle to support universalism. Carton, because of the nobility of his action is quite certain that he will go to Paradise. This is counter to the trend we have discovered thus far (see pp 2-3) but one which no doubt gave comfort to many of Dickens' readers. (It is also interesting to speculate that Dickens was perhaps influenced by the Higher Criticism which was beginning to be known in England at around the time of the publication of A Tale of Two Cities.) The veneration of the dead and their resting places is clearly seen. While it would not be reasonable to assume that discussions about impending death took place with such frankness as they did in Dr. Kirk's household, it seems probable that death was much less feared in those days and to that degree was more calmly approached by people at large. That is not to say that people did not grieve and mourn, of course.

When we come to the 20th century writers there is one difficulty - not so much is written about death. It is certainly not accorded the space and wordage by the modern writer that it was given by his

Victorian predecessor. That in itself is interesting if we accept the premise with which we began this section i.e. that writers reflect the society in which they write. One would have to except such obvious works as Evelyn Waugh's The Loved One and Jessica Mitford's The American Way of Death. Both of these are written to expose the way in which death is commercialised in America. They also write to expose the spurious needs which are created so that they might be commercially met. They also show clearly how this process is achieved largely by manipulating and exploiting quite natural reactions to death. Thus we see in both these books the insistence upon embalming, the emergence of deep-freezing techniques and the setting up of elaborate and expensive rituals and trimmings as part of the funerary procedures. Most important, in their work, is the way in which they show up American undertakers as almost doing away with the idea of death itself. Corpses are clad in their favourite clothes, made up and given fresh hairstyles for their last appearance at the funeral. Embalming and deep freezing "preserve" the dead in hermetically sealed containers for ever. Words like "death" and "body" are never used by what Jessica Mitford calls the "grief therapists", as some undertakers style themselves. The removal of much of the burial arrangements from the bereaved, on the grounds that it is hurtful and distasteful and difficult and the provision of these services by the undertaker is, in fact, the insertion of a specialist between the bereaved and the realities that the death of a near one thrusts into their lives. A whole mystique is thrown up and gives the bereaved to understand that these events are beyond their managing. We shall return to this point later.

Let us consider for a moment Siegfried Sassoon's account of his childhood The Old Century and Seven More Years. Although describing the period of his life from 1886-1907 it was not published until 1938. Its reception at that time in this nation's history, as the shadows of war lengthened around it, is interesting. Michael Thorpe, the Editor, suggests that the book met a psychological need in a nation on the edge of war in the sense that it provided a dreamlike sense of the past. He quotes Sassoon, in the introduction, as saying of the book "I wrote deliberately to afford people nostalgic escape in those years of imminent catastrophe".[21] The pre-war generation, as it faced the growing certainty of another world war welcomed the book and welcomed this passage:

"..... Batty was telling me how Gordon had been heroically killed by the dervishes at Khartoum. . Being a hero nearly always meant being killed, it seemed, but I supposed that the glory made it worthwhile. And God was waiting with His blessing on the other side of the grave".[22] It is doubtful if the post-war generation would accept that as an expression of firm, undebatable reality.

It would be difficult to discuss the factors affecting twentieth century attitudes to death without any mention of Albert Camus. His philosophy is one of estrangement from other people. It is in the nature of life that there is no communication between people - communication in the sense of shared experience that is. Consider this. Mersault, the hero of the novel, The Outsider, has an aged mother who dies in an Old People's Home. Summoned to the Home he watches through the night over the body with some people from the establishment and then observes, as those who have shared the death watch with him, leave

the room; "To my great surprise, they all shook hands with me as though a night spent in silence together had put us on intimate terms".[23] He had not felt supported by the presence of these friends of his mother because he could not see why they should think that he needed support. It was, after all, his mother who had died and not he. That was an event in her life, not his. Nothing had happened to him that affected him or his life or his living. As a proposition this might be difficult to understand until, later on in the book we find him saying "I realised that I'd managed to get through another day, that mother was buried, that I was going back to work and that, after all, nothing had changed".[24] Nothing had changed, that affected his life and living, that is. There can be little clearer indication of the strength of Camus' philosophy of estrangement than this. It begins to be comprehensible when we find him saying "Raymond said that he had heard of my mother's death but that it was something that was bound to happen sooner or later. That was what I thought too".[25] Death is a biological event and the death of a person has no more significance than the death of a plant. We could go so far as to say that for Camus, death, being a biological inevitability, <u>can</u> have no significance in terms of shared experience. The death of someone, even of someone for whom there has been held a genuine affection, makes no mark or impression and that because we are all of us so separate in our existence that what touches one cannot touch another.

We can begin to see how it comes about that, for Camus, life is an absurdity. It begins and it ends but has no significance. Certainly nothing in it matters. There is no point in trying to see events

as important - even death. It is even more pointless to imagine that an event in another person's life can touch ours.

Mersault has a neighbour, Salamano, who loses his dog. Mersault reflects "from the peculiar little noise coming through the partition wall I realised that he was crying. For some reason I thought of my mother. But I had to get up early in the morning. I wasn't hungry and I went to bed without any dinner".[26] Note that he does not understand why his mother came into his mind when he heard weeping. It might be that, logically, here is the flaw in Camus' argument. Events from the life of another person can touch us and affect our living. What matters, though, is that Camus rejects this notion. Tomorrow, and his living of it, beckon and that is all the reality that there is or can be.

Later, Mersault reflects on how people expect him to behave because his mother is dead. "He seemed to assume that I'd been very unhappy since mother had died and I didn't say anything. But everybody knows that life isn't worth living ..... Given that you've got to die it doesn't matter how or when".[27] Thus we see with Camus that the only attitude we can have to death is one of simple acceptance. It has no significance other than as a biological fact. Indeed, he goes so far as to say that death is oblivion not only in the sense that it removes us physically from the world but also in the sense that we might reasonably expect it to remove us from the minds and memories of other people. "I could well understand that people would forget about me once I was dead.. They had nothing more to do with me. I

couldn't even say this was hard to accept".[28] That position stems from a basic position about death with emerges in a conversation Mersault has with the prison Chaplain. The Chaplain asks him "Have you really no hope and do you live in the belief that you are to die outright?" "Yes" I said.[29] So death becomes not only oblivion but obliteration and, granted that, it is easy to accept the idea that after our death we will be forgotten by those around us.

In the end, nothing matters. We live our lives, which are important only to ourselves and when death occurs it matters nothing because "I looked up at the mass of signs and stars in the night sky and laid myself open for the first time to the benign indifference of the world".[30]

A view of death which will be seen to be commonly held by mid-twentieth century writers is not only endorsed but given an intellectual cachet by Camus. We see in his writing the absence of mystery and reverence; the absence of dignity and the denial of afterlife. Death is only the final absurdity which justifies his view that life itself is an absurdity. "I'd lived in a certain way and I could just as well have lived in a different way. I'd done this and I hadn't done that. I hadn't done one thing whereas I had done another. So what? It was as if I had been waiting all along for this very moment and for the early dawn when I'd be justified".[31] The justification he refers to is the justification of absurdity. It would not be stretching the point to say that, for Camus, at least in part, it is death that makes life absurd since it extinguishes us. What point in anything

therefore except the preservation of our integrity in this life. Death is not to be prepared for or waited for. It is simply there, the natural terminus which is the end of all our journeys, a biological fact rather than a spiritual mystery - and of no particular moment.

Consider, for instance, this passage from Faulkner's Intruder in the Dust. A corpse is being disinterred and one of the party at the disinterrment is described as "listening in both directions along the road, not for the dignity of death because death has no dignity but at least for the decorum of it: Some little at least of that decorum which should be every man's helpless right until the carrion he leaves can be hidden from the ridicule and the shame ...".[32] There is no great, awesome, mysterious event to be wondered at. There is only an event which reduces human kind to carrion, the which should be decorously at least removed from the sight of those human beings which are not yet carrion. There is nothing here to be reverently remembered with headstone and flowers; simply carrion.

Here is John Steinbeck.

A man's wife has just died, accidentally killed in a fall. Her husband considers the phenomenon of her death.

"Joseph pondered slowly over it - Life cannot be cut off quickly. One cannot be dead until the things he changed are dead. His effect is the only evidence of his life. While there remains even a plaintive memory a person cannot be cut off, dead ..... A man's life dies

as a commotion in a still pool dies, in little moves, spreading and growing back towards stillness".[33]

"Everything seems to work with a returning rhythm except life. There is only one birth and only one death. Nothing else is like that".[34] Here there is some consideration of death and a certain awe perhaps. There is also a clear hopelessness in the fact of death and a clear conveying of the idea that death is extinction. His only continued existence is in the memories of people and in his achievements. Once he is forgotten and his name no longer attached to his achievements he ceases to exist and it is as though he had never been. In the second quotation there is a superficial link with Ecclesiastes chapter three where it is written that "to everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven; a time to be born and a time to die". Steinbeck, however, stops well short of Ecclesiastes, for there is no sense in his writing, as there is in Ecclesiastes chapter three that the "times and seasons" are set in the context of God's larger time. For him there is no context for our lives beyond this world.

Elizabeth Taylor's novel, Blaming came to my attention when it was reviewed in the Sunday Observer. A middle aged couple are on holiday and the husband dies while abroad. The book describes the reactions of the widow and her family. Here is their daughter-in-law breaking the news to the grandchildren.

Maggie said "I'm afraid dear Grandpa has died". "And gone to heaven," Isobel said, as if her mother had left something out. Maggie slightly

inclined her head, not to be caught telling a lie by the God she didn't believe in" ..... "Well, I'm afraid you won't see Grandpa again," Maggie said, thinking that her message was being lost in vague conjecture. "But you will remember him in your minds, and we shall talk about him often, but perhaps not to Grandma for a while. We shall let her decide when she wants to" ..... Downstairs she said to James, "I even wondered if they have realised. I found that I could not quite say, "dead is dead". [35]

Here is the modern, civilised reaction to death. Don't upset the children and don't talk to Grandma about it. There are echoes of Steinbeck in the idea of remembering "in your minds and talk about him often". What is missing is the clear belief shared both by Steinbeck and Faulkner that the end of this life is annihilation pure and simple. For when Maggie says that she could not quite say "dead is dead" she at once confesses dis-satisfaction with her own atheism and shows a trace of the awe and wonder of her Tolstoyian ancestors Natasha and Princess Marya. Her difficulty lies in the fact that death is a stranger to her. In this she is a product of her society, a point to which we shall return later.

John D. MacDonald is a prolific American writer. His general thesis is that the world is the arena of evil. Most people are uncaring, a few exploit the masses for their profit and his heroes are the occasional Quixotes who try to keep the evil at bay. He writes: "The wide beach is there, unchanging. A storm nibbles some of it away. Another storm replaces it. And the wild things are there,

watchful, hungry - generation after generation, yet always the same. Man is but a guest on the beach. He changes nothing and is soon gone".[36]

The title of the novel, Slam the Big Door, is a euphemism for death. It is an emotive term, but not at all sentimental. It describes the fact of death and its effect. It stands in contrast to the traditional sentimental idea of death as being an awakening, a step through a door into a brightly lit garden. For MacDonald it is a door which is slammed in our faces. So there is here too the hopelessness and absence of optimism which we have observed in Faulkner and Steinbeck. Man is no different from other life forms except that he is more complex but his death is a biological fact.

Gwyn Griffin is a contemporary British novelist. An Operational Necessity (Fontana 1974) concerns the trial of a U-boat Officer who was responsible for the killing of survivors of a torpedo attack. He is sentenced to death. "Four days. Four more times the late dawn would break; four more times the early dusk would fall .... He was trapped now much more surely even than he had been when U996 lay sunk in over two hundred metres of water. He had escaped miraculously then - but now it was different .... The past year had been nothing but pain and sorrow and growing fear and would culminate in a last agony in some seventy two hours .... Surely to be dead was not so dreadful .... and death before a firing squad was, physically at any rate, less terrible than the agony of many forms of disease. Man's life was short by any serious measure of time. Twenty one years or

seventy two, was there any serious difference? And YES screamed a voice within him. YES YES YES THERE IS. He was a living moving human being with the RIGHT to live as long as his heart would beat. Death - natural death - however prolonged and painful the dying was acceptable".[37]

His execution is described like this -

"A high shout. An enormous, world shattering concussion ... unbelievable, blinding searing agony - and no breath. No wish to breathe. A sick vertiginious, vanishing fall ... Emil. Odd jumbled images, meaningless and fading as the pain ended in dissolving darkness ..." [38]

So for Griffin man is trapped in life by the certainty of death at the end of it. However grand and glorious it may be, life is lived in a cul-de-sac. Emil feels trapped by the knowledge that he is to die. The end of his life will be an agony - not an agony of pain but an agony in the strict sense of involvement in a struggle which he is bound to lose. And of course these negative feelings stem logically from the denial of life after death. It is not the darkness which is dissolved but rather the darkness of death which dissolves Emil.

The 20th century attitude to death, as represented by the writers I have quoted, may be summarised as follows.

Death is neither awesome nor mysterious. It is a biological fact which produces corpses and not wonder. There is serious doubt, even

widespread certainty, about life after death. Hence death is seen simply as a biological fact, for it can have no significance if its only function is extinction. The only continuance is in the memories of friends and in the connection of individuals with their achievements. Beyond these, there is no immortality. Yet there is some doubt as in Taylor's character who could not say "dead is dead" even when she was an atheist. MacDonald seems to see death as making man, ultimately, some kind of loser. All or any optimism he might ever entertain is doomed to go unrealised because, sooner or later, the big door is going to be slammed on him. Griffin makes clearly the point that this life is the most important thing because it is all that there is. The contrast between Prince Andrey and Emil as they contemplate death could not be more marked. So it is, paradoxically, that for twentieth century man, death which he tries so hard to ignore becomes more mysterious and frightening than it was for his nineteenth century forebears.

While it seems that 20th century literature has moved away from the Victorian ideas about death, it has not moved simply to the other extreme. Indeed the shift has not been from one position to another but rather from one clearly stated position to a variety of positions. As we have seen, some of them deny any thought of existence beyond this life; others are not quite so certain.

An example of this is found in William Golding's Pincher Martin. His hero is the survivor of a war-time sinking in the Atlantic. When he is cast up on a rock in the middle of the sea he says five significant things.

"Where the Hell am I?"[39]

"I am no better off than I was."[40]

"I am intelligent"[41]

He sees himself as being "like a dead man"[42]

and he clings to his rock "like a limpet"[43]

There is a philosophy of death here. He sees it as pervading life to such a degree with its inevitability that there is nothing in life which will give it an edge or any excitement. A more detailed examination of the book will make this clear. Here is a series of quotations.

> "There was no up or down, no light, no air. He felt his mouth of itself and the shrieked word burst out "Help"."[44]

> "Could a face have been fashioned to fit the attitude of his consciousness where it lay suspended between life and death that face would have worn a snarl".[45]

> Employing the image of a little figure suspended in a jar of water which rises and falls as pressure on the covering membrane is varied, he observes "the delicate balance of the glass figure related itself to his body"[46]

> "If I'd been below I might have got to a boat. But it had to be my bloody watch. Blown off the bloody bridge".[47]

> "The slow fire of his belly, banked up to endure, was invaded. It lay defenceless in the middle of the clothing and defenceless body. "I won't die. I won't".[48]

Martin makes much of the fact that although he was Officer of the Watch, the sinking of the ship was not his fault. "Hard-a-starboard for Christ's sake." A destroying concussion that had no part in the play ..... His mouth screamed in rage at the whiteness that rose out of the funnel. "And it was the right bloody order!".[49]

The culmination of the book is a mystic internal dialogue which begins with the assertion "and last of all hallucination, vision, dream, delusion will haunt you". It goes on, making such points as:-

"What do you believe in?"

"The Thread of my life ..... I have a right to live if I can"

"Where is that written?"

"Then nothing is written."

"Consider."

"I will not consider! I have created you and I can create my own heaven."

"You have created it."

"I prefer it. You gave me the power to choose and all my life you led me to this suffering because my choice was my own .... I spit on your compassion. I shit on your heaven".[50]

"They are wicked things these lifebelts. They give a man hope when there is no longer any call for it. they are cruel things."[51]

Golding's view, then, is that death surrounds us and we are not to welcome it. We are powerless in the face of death and are, indeed, thrown into life which is surrounded by it. For all that we are powerless in the face of death it is to be resisted. We are to struggle against it because it is extinction or, perhaps, the last cruel joke of God who, if He exists, is also to be rejected for His indifference to those in fear of their death. The reference to lifebelts giving false hopes of survival would seem to indicate that Golding entertains no hope of life after death.

Yet a different view is found in The Bell by Iris Murdoch. In this novel she writes of a group of people who are linked by their connection with a lay religious community. Michael, its leader, has a homosexual affair with Nick, who commits suicide. In a telling passage towards the end of the novel we are offered a view of death. Michael grieves for Nick; "He wanted to die too. But death is not easy and life can win by simulating it".[52] The authoress is here accepting the fact of death but emphasising the power of life. In this she follows the biological rule that the tendency in all living things is to life and survival. Insofar as this is true she certainly goes against the Victorian rejection of this life. She is asserting that the positive force of life is able to overcome death by refusing to depart from us. Even if we are condemned to what might appear to be a living death, a circumstance in which people often describe themselves, even if we are, so to speak, condemned to live a life in which all we love is dead, yet still life will not let us go. When Michael seeks death in his grief what comes to him is a living in which nothing seems to matter very much; "Eventually a kind of quietness came over him,

as of a hunted animal that crouches in hiding for a long while until it is lulled into a kind of peace".[53]

At this time he reflects on his life and he comes to the view that the pattern he had thought he discerned in his life, a pattern he had believed was set by his response in faith to God, does not exist. Indeed, as he reflects on Isaiah's words "For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts." (55.9), he concludes that there is no pattern. At the end of all this he says "There is a God, but I do not believe in Him".[54]

So we may say, at this point, that Iris Murdoch is offering us the view that death exists but life is stronger. Real faith is removed from the experiences of life which, it might be argued, provide a battleground for the opposing forces of life and death on which life tends to win, albeit in a form that its possessors might wish to reject.

As Michael continues to think his way through his grief he "Looks about him with the calmness of the ruined man"[55] and discovers that the one significant thing left to him from his former life is the Mass. "It contained for him no assurance that all would be made well that was not well. It simply existed as a kind of pure reality separate from the weaving of his own thoughts".[56] In the midst of all this there comes to him these words from the Dies Irae, which is sung, of course, only in the Requiem Mass.

"Quaerens me, sedisti lassus;

Redemisti, Crucem passus;

Tantus labor non sit cassus".

In Benjamin Britten's War Requiem they are translated as

"Faint and weary thou has sought me
On the Cross of suffering bought me
Shall such grace be vainly brought me?"

The hope of redemption thrusts itself into Michael's thinking.

Drawing all this together it is clear that Iris Murdoch here offers a view of things which says that this life is all that we may know in the present; yet it is not all that there is to know. It is surrounded by many mysteries of which death is one. We may not even be certain of existence continuing beyond death but we may hope for it, on the basis that the redemption won by Christ on His Cross was won for a purpose.

Yet a third view is found in A Field Full of Folk by Iain Crichton Smith. In this novel we find a minister, the Rev. Peter Murchison wrestling with cancer and a loss of faith. The Bible no longer speaks to him and he finds the pulpit a difficult place. This is because he sees himself as a wounded healer who ought not to be speaking to his people because "he did not know what comfort to give".[57] His dark night of the soul is born of his personal loss of faith. "And now that the crab clawed at him he felt more and more soured as if someone, somewhere, had prevented him from coming to grips, as Beowulf had done, with the monster of the deeps".[58]

In a conversation with a sensitive elder he compares how once he had approached his work with the manner in which he comes to it now; "In the beginning he would set out in the morning as if he were a missionary. Now everything feels heavy and old".[59]

As the conversation goes on he abandons the discretion of the third person and says; "It's as if the repetitiveness of the world gets us down. I wonder sometimes whether too much examination of the world is good for one".[60] This leads him on to observe "I don't want it to be like that. I don't want faith to grow tired".[61]

As he pursues his path to certainty, we find him at the point where "suddenly he smiled to himself as he thought that perhaps he was being too serious. Perhaps he should look more towards a solution of comic glory, as if the whole universe were a healthy joke, the answer to whose complexities would finally emerge like the punchline in a funny story".[62]

At a village outing, the Sunday School picnic as it happens, he has a vision. "We are together on this supremely perfect and imperfect earth. We are not looking for miracles for the miracles do not happen. We are enduring but more than enduring. At moments we are touched by the crown of grace. Envious, jealous, embittered as some of us are, the message is for us. The kingdom of heaven is at hand, it is here, it is all around us".[63]

As his vision touches his understanding he looks at his wife and says "My love, my love, how much you have done for me. This love between us is part of the love that created the sun and the other stars".[64] His final observation is "We are free to live and die ..... the chain stretches to infinity".[65]

Crichton Smith's position has much in common with Iris Murdoch's.

It has the same air of life surrounded by mystery and the same sense of hope. The important difference is that the source of hope is found, not in the pronouncements of religion which we may receive but not understand but rather in the sense that we are all caught up in a process which extends this life beyond the barriers which death seems to impose. We are all linked by a chain which stretches to infinity. We may experience the infinite as in faith we contemplate the simplicity and complexity of the world.

While there is evidence that there has been a shift of thinking about death in the 20th century and that that shift in thought is to be seen in the literature of the period, one cannot say that the shift has been to any one position. There is a substantial shift to the view that death is simply extinction. There is also a range of views as we have seen. Golding says that even if death is the last joke of a cruel God it is nevertheless to be resisted and not passively accepted; Murdoch offers a more numinous view in which death is part of the mystery that surrounds life. It may not be extinction, given that the evidence of our living is that life is stronger than death. This offers hope, as does the observation that the redemptive work of Christ must have a purpose. Crichton Smith has the idea, found also as we shall see in the New Testament, that we are caught up in a process which transcends time, linking us together in a chain which stretches to infinity.

What conclusion may we draw from all of this? In the 19th century there was a more general acceptance of what death was and what it led to. In the 20th century we find a more fragmented view taken.

There is, generally, a greater uncertainty abroad about religion and its claims and this uncertainty is reflected in the fragmented view of death represented by 20th century authors. There is no shift to a new, agnostic position. Indeed, one wonders whether or not those authors who deny life after death are not denying an afterlife in much the same way as the terminally ill deny death itself. However tempting a hare that may be to start, it will suffice to conclude this chapter with the observation that there has been a shift in thinking about death in the 20th century but to no one position.

We now return to the point we indicated that we would take up when we considered Taylor's character Maggie and her reaction to death. We observed two things: Death is a stranger to her and, in her reactions to it, she is a product of her time.

What has happened in society to produce in people this distancing from death and the consequences of that distancing?

There is abundant data which explains why death is a stranger to those of us who are alive now. The awful conditions which led to the high death rates of the nineteenth century have been relieved. Shorter working hours, better housing and sanitation and above all the advances in medicine which have taken place have all reduced death rates dramatically. We can get a general picture of these medical advances from David Hamilton's book The Healers.

Here, for instance is an extract from a scale of fees charges in Inverness in 1818.[66]

	Higher Class	Fourth Class
Single visits during the day	£ 0:10:6d	£ 0: 2:6d
Visits during ordinary hours of rest	£ 1: 1:0d	£ 0:10:6d
Surgical operations:		
Major, i.e. Amputation, lithotomy	£21: 1:0d	£ 2: 2:0d
Minor, i.e. Mastectomy and Reduction of fractures	£ 4: 4:0d	£ 0:10:6d
Delivery of a child	£10:10:0d	£ 1: 1:0d

Thus, for a large sector of the population medical treatment, such as it was, was beyond them. Death from illness would be no stranger.

In 1846 Edinburgh Royal Infirmary reported a 60% death rate in amputation cases.[67]

The death rate from all causes was 10-15% in most hospitals in the early nineteenth century. There appears to be some evidence that the figures were manipulated by (a) not including in the statistics those who died within 24 hours of admission and (b) discharging those who were dying.[68]

Here is a table showing operations and mortality therefrom at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary.[69]

Years	Operations	Mortality
1851/60	2,014	10.8%
1861/70	3,403	12.4%
1871/80	5,257	8.6%
1881/90	9,741	6.4%
1891/1900	16,749	7.2%
1901/10	36,729	5.1%

"While in the early 19th century society was fairly clearly divided into those who could afford the fees of physicians and surgeons and those who could not, by the late 19th century the industrial revolution had produced a new class of skilled working man who acknowledged the new medical skills and who could afford the fees of the doctor if a system of insurance was available. By 1892 there were 1,320 societies in Scotland with 280,000 members and £1.25 million in funds".[70]

For the working class not covered by friendly societies' insurance there was an increasing number of possible sources of medical help in the late 19th century. For hospital treatment there were the voluntary hospitals and a sub class of 'sixpenny' doctors who saw large numbers of patients and did obstetrics at cut price rates, often consulting patients in batches of three and offering only an unchanging bottle of medicine as treatment. Lastly, particularly in the Highlands, there were local clubs where for an annual fee the services of the doctor were available.

There are two points from all this that show the start of trends which we will develop later. At the beginning of the century there are horrifically high death rates. Remember that the figures quoted on page 62 refer to hospitals and there were not only few hospitals but strict regulations over who might be admitted to them. The figures and percentages quoted there do not give any indication of how high were the total death rates. This means that not only are people by and large going to have considerable first hand experience of death but that experience is going to have been gained as their relatives died in their own homes. The second point is that as the century

went on not only did the number of hospitals increase but the rules governing admission to them were relaxed. Here is Hamilton again: "As the amount of destitution fell steadily in the later part of the century and as wages rose and social benefits increased, people were sent less frequently to the poorhouses; but as the numbers of paupers in the poorhouses fell the proportion of sick rose and the poorhouses slowly turned into hospitals and the stigma of Poor Law relief was removed from those in need of medical treatment. Thus in 1862 15% of Barnhill (a poorhouse in Glasgow) occupants were sick but by 1924 the proportion had risen to 37%. Soon thereafter the poorhouses were taken over as local authority hospitals".[71] This means that despite falling death rates the number of people dying in hospitals increased because of increased usage of the hospital services. This whole process was accelerated by the inception of the National Health Service.

Thus death, as an event, was gradually removed from the lives of people. Home gradually became an inappropriate place to die. That place is yielded to the hospital until a generation grows up which, as was observed to me recently by an old friend, "would not know how to straighten the limbs and close the eyes". It is also a generation which is unprepared for death because it has never known it at first hand. Even patients are left to wonder whether or not they will die from their illness. If they are not told so the probability is that they will, for even they become the victims of the system which has grown up and tend not to be told that they have a life-threatening illness.

Mention was made earlier (see page 43) of specialists. It has been

observed to me by a clinician that as soon as relatives are told that a patient has a terminal illness then, no matter what is the prognosis in terms of time, they tend to feel that his care is beyond them and as the illness develops they look increasingly to psychologists, social workers, hospitals and clinics to do their caring for them; not because they don't want to care but because they don't know how to. This is because their experience of death is so inadequate and because concealment of impending death from the patient is still, as a generality, regarded as necessary not just by the medical profession but by society at large.

How has this come about? A straw poll at a fraternal at which eight ministers representing five denominations were present, revealed that none of them could remember when last they preached about death and the Christian view of it. Ronald Falconer has said that in all his years at the B.B.C. he could remember no occasion when death featured in a broadcast service. Certainly modern theology tends to be "this worldly" so to speak. It may be that the modern preacher, because of his theological education, is unwilling to speak about death, even to his congregation about whom he ought to be able to make basic assumptions in matters of belief, because with his heart and spirit he rejects the carrot and donkey theology of an earlier day but yet feels unable or unwilling to commit God to a course of action in the matter. Or perhaps the Church itself is touched by the rejection of death which seems to be part of the society in which it is set. Certainly it seems to connive at the situation in which death is an unmentionable subject.

It is clear that there is substantial difference of opinion between 19th and 20th century writers and that in this they reflect the society to which they addressed themselves. What seems to emerge clearly is that people in the 20th century do not deny death but rather that death has been removed from them. Medical, social and commercial forces have reduced the death rate, improved longevity and gradually taken over roles that our grandparents filled naturally, however sadly. There appears to be the beginning of a small revolt amongst medical people. This is seen on the following quotations from the medical and nursing press. "Our study points to the lack of consideration or respect of patients' wishes or rights to know of their impending death".[72] "If he has been told anything other than the truth in answer to his question "Am I going to die?" he has no one in whom to trust or confide and must face the reality and fear of death in total isolation".[73] As the "to tell or not to tell" question is faced and answered differently by medical people the whole subject will open up again for people generally. It will probably be found that both patients and family would cope better than might be expected and be the better for having to.

We began this section of the thesis by posing the question "Has there been a flight from death in the 20th century?" It would seem that there has not. There have certainly been changes in attitude towards it but it seems to me that these have been forced upon people by huge changes which have taken place in society. My conclusion is that people have not so much taken flight from death but have had death removed from them. In consequence of this there has grown up an ignorance and from that have grown attitudes in which people at large support one another. People in the 20th century shy away from death

because they don't know what else to do when faced with it.

Here, by way of footnote, is a poem published in The Observer newspaper on January 4th, 1984.

In the old days when people died
The whole family gathered round the bed
Standing or kneeling (patriarchal or matriarchal)
And the last frail blessings and goodbyes were said ..
And people also said things like "His race is nearly run"
And "Fear no more the heat o' the sun!"

And the old cock has fallen into disuetude
And the womb no longer wept its blood
Yet the children stood there (filial and familial)
By the upright grandfather clock's sad ticking thud,
And everybody's tears made it an occasion not to be missed
As the last dutiful kisses were kissed ....

But now they are spirited away, behind curtains,
Hidden in hospitals, wrapped warm in drugs,
They don't see the kids from whom (paternal or maternal)
They had the love; and solitary slower than slugs,
The unconscious hours move past them. Nobody wants to know
Or cares exactly when they go ....

Gavin Ewart.

CHAPTER 3

1. Tolstoy, L.N. p.877
2. Ibid p.879
3. Ibid p.881
4. Ibid p.1055
5. Ibid p.1061/2
6. Ibid p.1062
7. Ibid p.879
8. Tolstoy, Tatyana p.188
9. Ibid p.188
10. Ibid p.197
11. Ibid p.191
12. Ibid p.190
13. Ibid p.201
14. Ibid p.207
15. Dickens p.334
16. Ibid p.334/5
17. Kirk p.512/3
18. Ibid p.515
19. Ibid p.519
20. Ibid p.520
21. Sassoon p.16
22. Ibid p.63
23. Camus p.13
24. Ibid p.24
25. Ibid p.30

26. Ibid p.35

27. Ibid p.89

28. Ibid p.91

29. Ibid p.92

30. Ibid p.30

31 Ibid p.94

32. Faulkner p.171

33. Steinbeck p.171

34. Ibid p.166

35. Taylor p.46/7

36. MacDonald p.106

37. Griffin p.393

38. Ibid p.439

39. Golding p.30

40. Ibid p.31

41. Ibid p.32

42. Ibid p.34

43. Ibid p.36

44. ibid p.7

45. Ibid p.8

46. Ibid p.8/9

47. Ibid p.14

48. Ibid p.17

49. Ibid p. 186

50 Ibid p.194/201

51. Ibid p.207

52. Murdoch p.308

53. Ibid p.308

54. Ibid p.308

55. Ibid p.309

56. Ibid p.309

57. Crichton-Smith p.2

58. Ibid p.2

59. Ibid p.90

60. Ibid p.90

61. Ibid p.92

62. Ibid p.133

63. Ibid p.141

64. Ibid p.142

65. Ibid p.143

66. Hamilton p.173

67. Ibid p.222

68. Ibid p.222

69. Ibid p.224

70. Ibid p.225

71. Ibid p.232

72. Knight and Field p.222/9 Vol. 6

73. Morris 24.1.81

Chapter 3

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CHAPTER 4

Having considered literary, medical and theological factors, it is appropriate to consider the Biblical teachings about life and death.

There are important links between the Old Testament and the New Testament views of death. In the Old Testament there are two words, hayyim and nepesh, translated "life". These broadly correspond to the New Testament words zöe and psyche.

Hayyim indicates the quality of being alive, as does zöe, and, like zöe, has death as its opposite. Perhaps "being alive" is scarcely adequate to define the concept. It denotes the distinctive principle of life, and contains the idea of animation. Nepesh is traditionally translated "soul" and may, like psyche, be defined as life in its directive or formative sense, activating the flesh. Nepesh is "the centre of life in the living being".[1] Psyche, also translated "soul" in the New Testament will bear the same understanding as this understanding of nepesh. So there is that much in common between the Old and New Testaments in their understanding of life.

In the Old Testament death is lacking in any positive content. Its Kingdom is vague and purposeless. Those who are dead are forgotten. As Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible observes "There is no death-romanticism in the Old Testament".[2] Man is known to be mortal and the longing for immortality is unknown. A man wishes for a long life and blessing in it, but he shows no wish to live for ever. The pious Israelite will be one who "desires life, and covets many days, that he may enjoy good". (Ps 34:12). Life is positively valued

in the Old Testament because of the understanding of the nature of death.

The whole cycle of life and death begins with the living God. Yahweh, unlike pagan deities, does not go through the cycle for He is the source of life. Ps 104:29 says "when thou takest away their breath they die and return to their dust". (R.S.V.).
In other words the breath on which man depends for life is breathed into him by God. Thus man depends on God absolutely for life.

Life may be threatened or weakened - prayers for healing form an important part of the Psalter, e.g. Ps 6:2, 30:2, 41:4, 107:20. Thus in the Old Testament, as in the New, "life" and "death" are not statements of physical fact alone. Life is a power which may be diminished or augmented and these, in the Old Testament, are affected by the choices which men make since in the covenant rituals God asks Israel to choose death or life; blessing or curse; good or evil. The classic formulation is to be found in Deuteronomy 30:15 - 20. There is also laid down here another distinctive Old Testament idea. In v.16 we have "if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God ..... you shall live". The quality of life in its ordinary sense of being alive and in its sense of the determinative centre of life or both are thus qualified by the degree to which man is obedient to His creator.

"The life after death is not a normal part of the classical (OT) understanding of man".[3] Yet it is in some form. Death is not extinction nor does it set a limit on Yahweh's interest in life, e.g. the translation of Enoch to Yahweh's presence (Genesis 5:24) and the similar ascent of Elijah (2 Kings 2:11). The fact that these two legendary characters did not die demonstrates the power of God over death. It is also an indication that He alone has this power.

We may draw to a close this brief survey of Old Testament attitudes to life and death by observing that in the Old Testament life is used to translate two words hayyim which means "living" and nepesh which denotes that part of man which determines what sort of life he lives, commonly translated "soul"; that life is pursued positively because it is here that all that may be known is known; that life is God's gift, making man completely dependent upon Him; that there is little interest in a life beyond this one and that obedience is the way to full living in this world.

In the Apocryphal literature, however, there is a bridge built between these ideas and New Testament thinking. In the Book of Wisdom the idea of immortality for the righteous is clearly laid down. "The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die and their departure is taken for misery; and their going from us to be utter destruction: But they are in peace ..... yet is their hope full of immortality ..... such as be faithful in love shall abide with him".[4] This development

of inter-testamental thought sets the rising of Christ in a context which makes it more susceptible to being believed. What is overcome is the canonical Old Testament thought that death is separation from God. Here is the new idea that those who retain faith and love Him in their lives shall spend eternity with Him.

In the New Testament there are, as we have seen, three words which are translated "life", i.e. zöe, psyche and bios. We have also seen that zöe approximates to hayyim and psyche to nepesh. While Hastings observes that "zöe is by far the most important",[5] we cannot examine life in the New Testament understanding without some reference to psyche, translated "soul" but having that relationship to life which changes the fact of being alive into the act of living in a particular way.

A great deal of New Testament thinking about death is shared with the Old Testament. Life is positively valued (Mark 3:4) and death is its enemy (John 8:51); the only security of life is in God (Acts 17:25); it is vain to seek safeguards in the accumulation of property or by worrying about needs (James 4:13 and 14; Luke 12:13 - 30). To hedge one's life, in this case psyche, with security, is to lose it, while to lose it for Christ's sake is to gain it (Mark 8:34 - 38).

The most important influence on New Testament thinking about death is the Resurrection. If the giving up of life (psyche) for the sake of Jesus was not to become a life-denying form of thought a new principle was needed and provided by the Resurrection.

The life of Christ issued in a struggle with death in which He was victorious. With the defeat of death the barriers between man and God are destroyed and the way to life opened. Immortality is seen, in the Resurrection, to be a real life and not shadowy or vague, unlike the Old Testament conception.

This has a double time connection for Christians. Because they will share the Resurrection they may know more than an expectation of the future life. They may have it now. As John says "we have passed from death into life" (1 John 3:14). This transition takes place in this world and as man lives in that knowledge his psyche is transformed by his faith in the life that awaits him.

The transformation fulfils Christ's vision of His people being the salt which savours the world and the leaven which raises it. For the transformed ones will, in this world, become a redeeming community, permeating society with the fullness of life which they have appropriated into their own lives and so sharing the blessings of God with those around them.

This last is important since it marks the distinct separation of New Testament thought from that of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament death is an end, almost certainly, although as we have seen there is some thought that God's interest in man is not bounded by death. The way to life is obedience to the law, as we have also seen. In the New Testament things are quite different. Death becomes more of a mid-point than a terminus.

It represents a transition from life on earth to life eternal. The future life is spoken of not only in the future tense but in the present. Above all life is gained not by obedience but by faith. The whole basis of the relationship between man and God is altered as the Law is fulfilled (Matt 5:17), having served its purpose and been replaced by faith (Matt 21:22).

These few paragraphs will serve as an introduction to an examination of the New Testament treatment of life and death. It is worth remarking at the outset that in writing about life we write about death also! All that we say about life qualifies and shapes what we believe about death. Before going on to examine zöe and thanatos we will look briefly at psyche and how it is used in the New Testament. "It has the higher powers which pertain to the intellectual, moral and religious life".[6] Thus we may define psyche and in the definition understand why it is translated "life" in the New Testament. For we are talking here not simply about the fact of being alive but about that part of us which determines what will be our life. In Mark 8:36 we have this; "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" where life = psyche. In Matthew 6:25 we have "life is more than food and the body more than clothing" and here again life = psyche. When the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, it is his psyche he lays down (John 10:11). In 1 John 3:16 we are told that as Jesus laid down his life for us, so ought we to lay down our lives for the brethren. Again psyche = life. Clearly this is a concept of great importance in the New Testament of life as a whole. It is a reference to

what we are and to what makes us what we are. It is that part of us which, by faith, will begin to show the characteristics of the redeemed person, those characteristics which will, presumably, be the commonplace of life in Paradise.

Now we pass on to the consideration of zöe.

In the New Testament zöe is first used of the natural life of man. Its opposite and end are to be found in natural death cf Philippians 1:20 where the hope is expressed that Christ may be honoured "whether by life or death". This natural life is corruptible (John 4:14 where Jesus speaks of it in terms of recurring thirst). It also has a limited extension in time cf Luke 1:75 where Zechariah's song of thanksgiving reminds us that we all, as descendants of Abraham, who at least is our spiritual ancestor, are set free by God from our enemies that we might "serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life". This is clearly a description of some of the attitudes which should characterise the activities of the defined span of our natural life. Luke in his gospel at 12:12 ff makes it clear that life is sustained by nourishment - but only sustained. It is not assured by nourishment since, as we have seen from our reference to Genesis, life is the gift of God. In 2 Cor 1:9 we have Paul writing about God "who raises the dead". Thus, God is Lord both of Life and Death. Man is dependent on Him not just for natural life but for true life since we have Jesus saying in John 12:50 "His commandment is for eternal life".

The dependence springs from God as the author of both natural and true life. Thus life is never regarded as an observable phenomenon and investigated or speculated about. "It is perceived, as among the Greeks that human life is fulfilled in the manner of leading it".[7] The New Testament view is that man, and specifically the believer, is not to live his life for himself but for God (cf 2 Cor 5:15 where the whole purpose of the death and resurrection of Jesus is said to have been so that "those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised"). The finding of a proper object or end for his living will release man from all that would hold him back from finding and living out his true life. It is worth observing that this release into the living of true life is offered for man's own sake. It is a clear demonstration of the grace of God since there is not, so to speak, any profit for Him in the activity. There is an offer which man may accept or reject as he chooses. God makes no conditions.

Indestructability is part of the concept of life in the New Testament. As we have seen, zöe is attributed to God and this is true zöe. Thus the zöe subject to death is not true life but distinguished from it as provisional. (cf 1 Tim 4:8 where we read of "bodily training" being of some value; whereas "godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come"). We should be aware that when we talk of true life we are not talking of simple mortality, which mankind shares with all organic life generally. We are talking of total death, so to speak; of

death as an absolute power which stalks its prey and consumes for ever. This death is the opposite of true life and it is this death which God overcame by raising Christ from the tomb. This concept assists us to understand the indestructability of true life. Having said that organic life has a provisional quality to it, we can understand easily the New Testament concept of being dead while alive (cf Matt 8:22 where Jesus speaks of leaving the dead to bury their dead. The crucial point is that the young man remains among the dead until he follows Jesus. The delay, for whatever reason, even if only to observe ritual mourning, numbers him among the living dead for as long as the delay lasts. He therefore is offered life but by his procrastination places himself amongst the dead). The true life, certainly available through acceptance of the Gospel, will be inherited, as we read in Mark 10:17; it will be received, as we read in Luke 19:30 and it will be entered into as we see in Matthew 18:8. All of these, as their various settings make plain, have references both to this life and the next. As we shall shortly see, the true life is available to man prior to his death. For the moment, however, we note that man may be worthy of zōe by his conduct, cf Matthew 25:46 where Jesus ends his eschatalogical story of the sheep and the goats by consigning the righteous to eternal life. Thus the New Testament can speak of a way of life (cf Matthew 7:13 ff, especially v.14 "the way which leads to life"). For all that, man has no control over zōe. "As his natural life is given him at his birth by God, so the future life is given him at his resurrection".[8] Resurrection here refers not to life after death but to the conversion experience in this life.

"All of this may be found in Jewish teaching, both in matter and expression".[9] The resurrection of Jesus is a significant departure point from Old Testament teaching about life. We may call it a significant departure point because it shifts the ground of hope away from the idea of God to a significant act which occurred in the history of this world. Until the Resurrection occurred, the hope of future life rested on the concept of God and the expectations which the concept raised. The Resurrection is God's act of salvation, free, unexpected and gracious. On this basis God exercises His initiative, through the exercise of which man is given new life, without which he would be lost. Thus hope rests on faith in this saving act.

Let us return to the point regarding the presence of the true life in this life. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is the decisive soteriological event which establishes the fact of the future zöe and offers it to all. But the decisive event has already taken place and so created the conditions within which the true life is accessible to mankind. The new age has begun. An individual's resurrection may then be understood as a consummation, achieved after death, of this certain hope. But consummation has within it the idea of completion and

fulfilment of something already begun. Thus zöe is at once something for which we hope and is, to some degree, a present possession. The present is sustained by the certainty of the future. (cf Acts 11:18 which makes it clear that through repentance the way is opened now to life . This is clear from the context. Peter has been rebuked for associating with the uncircumcised. He defends himself successfully and his accusers conclude that "to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life". From the use of "also" we must conclude that they were aware of being in a state in which their hope of future life was believed with such certainty that it permeated their present life. It is to this state that God, by His grace, admits all men).

In 2 Cor 5:1 - 15 we find the Pauline position clearly stated. In v.1 there is the assurance that if "the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God ..... eternal in the heavens". There is the future hope. But in v.4 we "sigh with anxiety" while still in this tent. Our anxiety is not that we fear death - "be unclothed" - but that we might be "further clothed; that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life". We are not to understand this as a longing for death and so fulfilment. Rather we are to see it as an expression of the tension between the two kinds of life and the awareness we have that the greater, from time to time, touches the lesser, giving rise to a longing for its stay to be longer. Abbot-Smith in his Lexicon of the New Testament gives "subject to death" as an acceptable translation of thnekos, translated "mortal" in the Revised Standard

Version. What Paul is saying here is that we not only have, as present possessions, the two "lives" but also have an awareness of them both. Thus zöe is not only future but also a present possession.

How is this life offered to man? For Paul it is offered through the preaching of the word. Zöe is present and can be seen in the preached word as a historical happening. In 2 Cor 2:16 it is quite clear that the preached word dispenses "to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life". We may extend this idea of presence to one of activity when we consider that in Romans 1:16 the preached gospel is described as "the power of God for salvation". There is no suggestion that the power is latent and every reason, in the context, to say that it is active. In Philippians 2:16 he exhorts hisreaders to "hold fast the word of life". In this context it is clear that the logos zöes is active, for Paul encourages them to hold fast to it so that "in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labour in vain". He clearly expects their grasp of the word of life to alter their style of life. In 2 Tim 1:10 he declares that the gospel, of which he is appointed a preacher, "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light".

Paul would say that not only the alternatives but the act of their discovery is due to the penetration of life by true life. "The pneumatic zöe of Paul is true zöe in the very fact that it is active every moment in the concrete possibilities of life".[10]

In 1 Cor 7:29 - 31 we find Paul introducing what Kittel calls the "reservation of ōs mē".[11] This translates, "as though" and in the passage we see what Kittel means. Those who mourn are to live as though they were not mourning; those who deal with the world are to live as though they had no such dealings. Such living is impossible without not simply faith but an energy source to maintain the effort and transform the intention to the act. That source is true life, permeating and changing this life.

Acting on these perceptions is the choice of life rather than death. The believer is set free from death as he makes his own the death which Jesus has already died.

The activity of zöe in the concrete possibilities of life is also seen in the way in which it propagates itself. Paul sees preaching as the main way in which the propagation takes place. All through his written work there are references to preaching and to himself as a preacher. The point of preaching as an activity is that the believer does not have zöe for himself alone in the inwardness of his spiritual life. He stands in a tradition begun with the Resurrection. The soteriological event is directed away from Jesus and out into the world. Similarly the believer first incorporates into his own life the event but as the effects of that incorporation show in a changed lifestyle so the zöe is, as it were, passed on and spread.

We conclude this examination of the Pauline view of zöe as present by observing that for him zöe is not limited in time. The fruit

of zöe is yet more zöe as we read in Romans 6:22 "but now that you have been set free from sin" - and there is the present zöe - "..... the return you get is sanctification and its end eternal life" - and there is the eternal dimension of zöe. To be set free from sin implies a change in lifestyle and this change can only be brought about by zöe already given. This twofold concept of zöe means that sometimes Paul writes of it as future blessing, as in Romans 1:17 for instance where he quotes Habakkuk 2:4 "they that are righteous shall live". Sometimes also he writes of it as being known in the present, as in Romans 6:4 where we read that from the moment of our baptism "we are raised from the dead by the glory of God, (that) we too might walk in newness of life". Sometimes he writes of it as both present and future in an inseparable relationship as most splendidly expressed in 2 Cor. 4:7 - 16 where the believer is "afflicted in every way but not crushed, persecuted but not forsaken and always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh".

Thus for Paul zöe is at once future promise and present possession, the present being occasionally lit up, as it were, by flashes of it as the believer steadfastly persevered in the faithful life despite all difficulties.

The Johannine view of zöe as present is even more radical. Like Paul, he roots the idea of zöe in the present in the Resurrection. It is the means by which the promise in John 14:23 is fulfilled. There we read that "If a man loves me ..... we will come to him and make our home with him".

For John, then, it is by faithful living that zöe is incorporated into the present life. For this verse is no more than a confirmation of 14:19 where Jesus says "because I live you will live also".

The Resurrection is more than an event to be proclaimed in confirm-:ation of the presence and availability of zöe. We have seen that this is the case for Paul, given his emphasis on preaching Christ crucified and risen. It is perhaps not quite the case that John roots his teaching about zöe in the present. There is a sense in which the Resurrection, for him, was inevitable from the beginning because of his understanding of the nature of Christ. In John 1:4 Jesus is described in the phrase "in Him was life". Thus from the beginning Christ possessed zöe as well as organic life. Indeed John would have Jesus as the agent of Creation and thus He is life. This means that He has life in Himself, not merely as the power of His life as a living creature but as the creative power of God present in the world in a unique way. He is, for John, the revealer of zöe.

Two verses in particular of John chapter 6 show Christ as the Revealer. In v.63 he says bluntly "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life". Thus, for John, Christ is not just the messenger and teacher, as he is for Paul, he is zöe in this world. To believe in Him (see 6:29. This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent) is to believe in zöe and to receive it. It is impossible to engage in the work of belief without receiving the gift of true life. The involvement with the risen Christ which this work demands depends upon the believer being

inspired to a new way of working out his life. This working out, in turn, is only possible if his existence is permeated by true life.

Belief in Jesus then, as the unique messenger of God, confers zöe in the present. In 11:25 we have Jesus saying "I am the resurrection and the life". That could be taken as a reference to His own life's ending. When He goes on to say that "he that believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live", we could understand that also as a reference to an event in the future, something which will occur at the death of the believer. When, however, he goes on to say "and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" we see clearly that John has Him proclaiming zöe as a permanent possession of the believer, a possession which he gains as soon as he believes. The promises in the future tense do not refer to a later eschatological event but to the moment of decision when confronted by the Word which reveals zöe to him as an option. In chapter 4, during the encounter with the woman at the well, Jesus says, in verse 14 ..... "The water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life". In effect He says that who will believe will live.

The coming of Jesus as revealer is the decisive eschatological event, the "krisis" (3:19). Life is attained not in relation to an idea or to a supra-historical metaphysical being but in believing commit-:ment to a historical person. This is quite clear from 3:21 where we have "he who does what is true comes to the light". The purpose of this coming to the light is that "it might be clearly seen that

his deeds have been wrought in God" (3:21b). The "doing what is true" (3:21a R.S.V.) indicate the working out of a commitment in a life-style. It might be said that in the Johannine Christology, zöe is both goal and way, and both at the same time. The qualification is that the way does not qualify the traveller for the goal. This is because zöe is a present possession, acquired by belief in what Jesus reveals and incorporated into the believer's life and living as he lives in Jesus. The exposition of this is found in 15:1 - 17. In v.3 we have the disciples "made clean" ("katharos" which has the sense of a vine made clean, i.e. diseased branches removed, by pruning). This cleansing by removing what is tainted is achieved by the "logos" which here would seem to have the sense of the promise or command of a teacher.[12] We may not, however, assume that this cleansing is a mechanical operation. For having said what he has to say about it in v.3, in v.4 we have "abide in me". The verb is in the imperative mood and the aorist sense of a "once only" activity is offset by the sense of the verb meno - to stay, abide or remain; this activity must be continuous. When Jesus goes on to use the analogy of a branch coming off a main stem to illustrate what He means by "living" in Him, it becomes clear that He is bidding His disciples into a style of life which is to be based on their absorbing the zöe He was into their own lives. This absorption will issue either in "much fruit" (15:5) or "exeranthe" (passive for or "zeraino" to dry up, parch or wither).[13]

It is quite clear then, that both Paul and John, in their different ways, are clear that life is enhanced by the Gospel. We turn to an examination of the New Testament teaching about death.

Death is not regarded as a natural process, any more than the Resurrection is regarded as such. Sometimes the New Testament speaks figuratively about death, i.e. 1 Cor 15:26 where it is "the last enemy"; Rev. 6:8 where it rides through the world on a pale horse with "power over a fourth of the earth to kill with a sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth"; Rev. 20:13 ff where "death and Hades give up the dead in them and all were judged by what they had done". These images are used not aetiologically but to express the fact that death is opposed to life as the true being of God and also that sin and death belong together. It is worthwhile reminding ourselves that when we talk of death we are not talking about simple mortality (see p 75/76) but of death as an absolute power which stalks man as though he were prey and can consume him for ever.

In the New Testament, death is the consequence and punishment of sin. The question of the origin of death is the question of the origin of sin. Death comes into the world through Adam, i.e. through Adam's sin (Romans 5:12) where we have "death through sin". This is not in any sense speculative on Paul's part. He is not trying to excuse individuals, as though Adam's introduction of sin and death into the world order make sinfulness and its deadly consequence inevitable through a kind of spiritual genetics. Romans 5:12 makes this quite clear. Men condemn themselves to death through their own sinfulness and not through Adam's.

Paul is also clear that the Law is the agent of death. In 2 Cor 3:7 the office of the Law is described as the diakonia tou thanatou which the Revised Standard Version translates "dispensation of death". It is in the manner of man to live of himself, i.e. of his own resources, and not of those of God. Thus the more he seeks life in sarx (which translates "flesh", in the literal sense but is commonly used by Paul in the ethical sense, where "flesh" is "the seat and vehicle of sinful desires")[14] the more he becomes entangled in sin and therefore death. Thus Paul establishes a chain of flesh-sin-death and sees the Law, which ought to lead man to life, as leading him to death.

The Johannine teaching about the inevitability of death is substantially the same as St. Paul's. Apart from the revelation of Jesus Christ, the human race is given up to death and is itself responsible because it is sinful. Its sin is simply that it will not understand itself in its creatureliness from the standpoint of its Creator. Perhaps this is best seen in the prologue to his Gospel, especially vv 9 - 11 where we have "the true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world ..... He was in the world ..... yet the world knew Him not ..... He came to His own home and His own people received Him not but to all who received Him He gave power to become children of God".

Man thinks that he is free. If we consider John 8:33 we find people saying to Jesus that they are descendants of Abraham and have never been in bondage to anyone and then "How is it that you say, "You will be made free?" Most convincingly of all,

we have in 5:41 Jesus stating that He does not receive glory from men. That can only mean that natural man instead of "looking to God's glory sets its own standard of glory".[15] He is thus in sin and death as John clearly shows in 8:21 where Jesus says "and you will die in your sin".

In the New Testament the destructive power of death is thought to rule life even now and rob it of its true quality. The death which awaits us holds us in fear cf Hebrews 2:15 where the ministry of Jesus, especially the fact of His incarnation, was to free those who, through the "fear of death", were subject to lifelong bondage. Those to whom Jesus is sent are regarded as "those who sat in the shadow of death" (Matt 4:16, quoting Isaiah 9:1). It is worth noting in the passing that the shadow of death, as a reducing and debilitating factor in life, is regarded not simply as an idea. For those referred to sit not only in its shadow, in an intellectual or philosophical sense, but also in death's xora which translates "place" or "region" and is quite firmly used in the spatial sense[16] and thus roots the action of death in this world and so gives it existential force. So death stands behind all the pain and grief of the world.

Death, as a destroying power, is suspended over human life and there is no escaping it. In Christ, however, God has destroyed death (2 Tim 1:10, see page 85) "Christ's death and Resurrection comprise the eschatalogical event".[17] His death was different from all others in that while death, in the ordinary course of events, is the consequence of sin, Jesus was sinless but died.

Thus we may say that His death was not His death to sin but ours. In 2 Cor 5:21 there is the great exposition of Christ's death "for our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin so that we in Him might become the righteousness of God".

Believers are still, of course, subject to physical death. The destruction of death will come with the Resurrection. Thus believers are released and pass from death to life while still alive. In John 5:24 we have Jesus saying that "he who hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life"; he does not come into judgement but "has passed from death to life". We have already written about the release from death to life in this world (see pages 76 and 77) and that this release brings a whole new character to living. We observe that this new lifestyle is not engaged upon to earn or attain anything. The goal has been reached and the new life is its product.

These ideas stand in clear contra-distinction to the values and beliefs widely held in the 19th century. The emphasis on this world as the arena of salvation, in particular the apprehension and enjoyment of salvation here and now, would come oddly to the 19th century minds which we have encountered. For them the goal was distant, attainable only after death and even then its attainment could not be depended upon. They had to work so hard to attain their salvation, it seems. There is a great deal of effort required so that God might see how much they will extend themselves to be seen to be worthy of His grace and admission to His Kingdom.

There is much longing for Heavenly reward and much hoping that it will be earned. For them there is no sense that the Kingdom may be entered upon now and its joys experienced in this world. They seem not to have been able to understand that the change in lifestyle which the acceptance of the Gospel brings is a natural extension of the soteriological process rather than an attempt to persuade God that they are worthy of His blessing.

Let Kittel have the last word in this section.

"The controlling idea is that God deals with the world through Jesus Christ and that inasmuch as in this action God took death to Himself in Jesus Christ it lost its destructive power and became a creative, divine act. Thus the Resurrection is grounded in Jesus' death. This death removed sin and therefore death. Life grew out of it".[18]

CHAPTER 4

1. Hastings p.584
2. Ibid p.584
3. Ibid p.585
4. Wisdom of Solomon, Chap. 3, v. 1,2,3,4 and 9
5. Hastings ibid p.585
6. Davis p.576
7. Kittel p.863 Vol. 2
8. Kittel op cit p.864
9. Ibid p.864
10. Ibid p.870
11. Ibid p.870
12. Abbot-Smith ibid p.271
13. Ibid p.308
14. Ibid p.403
15. Kittel ibid p.16 Vol. 3
16. Abbot-Smith ibid p.406
17. Kittel ibid p.18 Vol. 3
18. Ibid p.18 Vol. 3

All Scripture references are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

Chapter 4

Hastings (ed)	Dictionary of the Bible T. & T. Clark Edinburgh 1909
Davis	Westminster Dictionary of the Bible Collins Glasgow
Kittel	Theological Word Book of the New Testament Vol.2 Eerdmans Grand Rapids 1964-76

CHAPTER 5

This thesis began by posing the question "are there differences between the 19th and 20th century attitudes to death?" Clearly there are.

The first observation to be made by way of conclusion is that, for a large proportion of 19th century men and women, this world was to be escaped from and death offered escape to Paradise. Paradise would provide, to those who attained it, rest, reward and peace, all those things which this world denied many people. The nature of life in the 19th century gave a context in which grew the idea that in this world people were tested by calamity in order that God might be certain that they were worthy of the rewards He had in store for them. Both of these ideas gave the 19th century a pre-occupation with death which issued in an equally great curiosity about Paradise. It also issued in a great veneration of the dead and their graves, while death was viewed more calmly than today, although that does not mean that there was neither grief nor mourning.

Consider for instance, Victoria's extended mourning for her Prince Consort. "The death of the Prince Consort, at the age of 42, which was to the Queen at once inexplicable and annihilating, fell on her, her children and the English court with a weight of sorrow which was all-pervading. The black-edged writing paper on which henceforth she always wrote, the widow's weeds which henceforth she always wore out of doors and the white cap and veil - "the sad cap" as her youngest child called it - which was part of her dress indoors for the rest of her life were the insignia

of grief ..... Everything was done to preserve the impression of the Prince's presence, to prevent new persons, new surroundings, new problems and even new ideas from varying that world which once the Prince had known and adorned".[1] It is tempting to think that in all of this she simply mirrored and exemplified the expected reactions of her day. But when we find her upbraiding the Princess Royal of Prussia for travelling on the anniversary of the day of Albert's death - "I should have thought that you would have preferred remaining in the smallest wayside inn and going to pray to God to support your broken hearted mother rather than do that"[2] - we are obliged to take a different view. In 1895, 34 years after Albert's death the 14th of December (the day on which he died) is called Mausoleum Day by the Royal family.[3] The late King George VI was born on that day in 1895 and it is recorded that Queen Victoria's reaction was "it may be a blessing for the dear little boy and may be looked upon as a gift from God".[4] The view is inescapable that because The Queen Empress did not get her mourning worked through properly, trends and styles in mourning were at least confirmed by her behaviour and a style of life-long mourning encouraged for widows.

Social conditions do not provide the whole key to the understanding of the 19th century position. The attitudes to scripture also played a large part. It was held to be divinely inspired from beginning to end, and therefore amenable to no critical approach. The way in which Robertson Smith was pilloried to maintain the conservative position demonstrates the powerful fears which were deeply rooted in the minds of 19th century churchmen .
Their exegesis certainly supported their view of death in a way in which 20th century exegesis would not. Scripture

was to be protected from such upstart sciences as critical analysis based on linguistics and archaeology. There was a great fear that the means of salvation, if shown to be in factual or scientific error, might be destroyed.

Finally, we have seen that, for the 19th century, death was seen as mysterious, seen as an act of transition, and therefore evoking awe and wonder on those who contemplated it. Tolstoy and Dickens both have the idea of a continuum involving this world and the next. In this Tolstoy particularly anticipates 20th century exegesis which says that the future life is a present possession. 19th century writers wrote naturally about death because it was so common and anticipated the next life wistfully because of the Scriptural promises. Dickens' tendency towards universalism, indirectly influenced by nobility of action, was perhaps in its turn based on the Higher Criticism which was more widely known in England in his day than in Scotland.

20th century writers by and large, write differently about death than did their 19th century counterparts. Waugh and Mitford expose the 20th century tendency to dispose of death as significant, far less transitional. We have observed that for large masses of 19th century people this world was a place to be escaped from, a view in which they were encouraged by much contemporary preaching. For much of the 20th century's population this world is to be enjoyed because this is all that there is.

For many 20th century writers there is nothing awesome, mysterious or transitional about death. It is simply a biological fact.

For William Faulkner, a Nobel prizewinner, it simply reduces us to carrion; for John Steinbeck it is extinction and for John D. MacDonald it is a door slammed in our faces. Griffin sees man trapped in this life by the certainty of death.

Not all 20th century authors share this common view that death is extinction and therefore simply to be accepted with resignation. William Golding, for instance, takes the view that death is to be resisted because it is extinction. It might even be the last cruel joke of God who, if He exists, is to be rejected because of his indifference to those who live in fear of death. Iris Murdoch's view is more numinous than this. This life is all that we can know now but it is not all that there is to be known. We may not be certain of existence beyond this life but we may hope for it on the basis that Jesus' redemptive work must have some purpose. Iain Crichton-Smith's view is similar to Iris Murdoch's in that it is equally hopeful of survival. For him, however, hope is grounded not in the pronouncements of religion but in his idea that we are all linked in a chain which stretches to infinity.

These changes have three sources. The first is brought about by advances in medicine. Anaesthesia and antisepsis expand the range of treatments available and reduce death rates. The greater availability of better trained doctors and the transition of poor-houses to hospitals, with the consequent willingness to accept treatment in the latter, mean that a greater proportion of those who do die, die away from home. This process was accelerated by the advent of the National Health Service. Thus, gradually, there is produced a society in which few see death at first hand.

Despite heroic ministries in the 19th century slums, there can be little doubt that thousands of people were lost to the Church and its teachings as the century wore on. A people brutalised by society and their conditions in it, the growth of free-thinking agencies, in which the organisation of labour played such a part and ultimately the slaughter of the First World War, rejected the ideas that those whom God had chosen to place in lowly positions should wait patiently for their reward and would gain it after death. As the present century has progressed, the Church has failed to win back those social groups which most rejected these teachings. Perhaps this is because in today's society the Church is seen to be middle class or is thought to promulgate teachings irrelevant to living in the 20th century.

Wilfred Owen, begins a poem with the question "What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?" and goes on, in the same stanza, to say

> "No mockeries for them from prayers or bells,
> Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, -
> The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
> And bugles calling for them from sad shires".[5]

No awesome contemplation of death there. The endless casualty lists of the First World War, coupled with the experiences of the troops at the front led to the rejection of any romantic notion of death. The First World War is an important stage in the movement of thought which rejected much of the Victorian thinking about death. Those at home, oppressed by the scale of the casualties

and those at the front, numbed by the casual taking of so many lives, together came to a view of death which was quite at variance with that of the Victorians. Those romantic views of death which invested death as an act with nobility and mystery were rejected. Death as an ennobling experience was rejected. Those affected by World War One saw it in quite a different light. Death, as an act, became painful, it robbed them of loved ones and deprived them of life which was dear and that for no good reason. With this change in attitude to death is confirmed a process already begun.

The third factor is the process which, as we have seen, has produced a society which does not believe that home is the appropriate place in which to die. That place has been yielded to the hospital. The generation of this part of the 20th century is unprepared for death because it has been removed from them. Although the practice is increasingly questioned, notably by Richard Lamerton in his book "Care of the Dying", still doctors, inside and outside of hospitals adopt a "don't tell" policy. This is an interesting shift because it represents perhaps a paternalism which has gradually increased as the doctor became a more powerful person in an increasingly secular society but also reflects a turning away from death in the mind of society. The "don't tell" policy thus may be held to illustrate the decline of the spiritual advisor and the growth of the idea that death is the worst thing that can happen to us. In any event, death is "medicalised" today in a way that it was not in the 19th century. Correspondents to the nursing press make clear that the don't tell policy, which

still operates to a large extent, puts strain on nursing staff (vide Journal of Advanced Nursing 1981 vol 6 pp 221 - 229; BMJ vol 282 Jan 1981) in that in their regular contact with patients they are obliged to maintain a fiction. It seems that they are increasingly unwilling to do this as it affects their ability properly to care for their patients. Modern preachers seem to have played their part in the "don't tell" conspiracy since few of them, in the mainstream at any rate, seem ever to preach about death. We are forced to the conclusion that people in our part of the 20th century shy away from death because they don't know what else to do when it confronts them.

The results of the questionnaire, appended after this chapter, fly in the face of 20th century agnosticism. Of all of those whose results were analysed only 1 did not believe in life after death. The movement away from belief to the manner of living one's life as the determining factor in gaining Paradise reflects, I think, the general movement in thought in the 20th century to this world and its importance. It also reflects a loosening of the strict Victorian qualifications for entry to Paradise. Similarly the ideas about Paradise which come through in the answers are interesting in that they show a shift in thought away from the 19th century. The anticipation of peace rather than rest might well reflect social change which has brought different pressures to bear on people. The disappearance of reward as an anticipation also indicates a shift in thinking based on social change. As society has become more equal there is less need to anticipate a a Rolls Royce in Paradise. The one respondent who made any comment

on this point talked of reward in terms of the fulfilment of faith and it is likely that he spoke for many.

The questionnaire was put out to see what Church people thought about Heaven and Hell. It is interesting to note that this thinking is not affected by 20th century agnosticism, although there has been movement in the Church's thinking. These shifts might be explained in a number of ways. The acceptance of this world as a place where God's activity can be discerned and shared is a possibility; so too is the possibility that modern theology, and its influence on preaching, being less romantic and sentimental than that of the 19th century, has reached the popular mind. The Church does not simply reflect the confused thinking about death of the present day. It teaches, as did its 19th century counterpart, that death is a transitional rather than a terminal experience. Its people still believe that.

CHAPTER 5

1. Fulford p.2
2. Ibid p.153
3. Longford p.552
4. Ibid p.552
5. Owen

Chapter 5

Fulford (ed) Dearest Mama
Evans Brothers London 1964

Longford Victoria RI
Weidenfeld & Nicolson London 1964

Owen Anthem for Doomed Youth
Penguin Book of First World War Poetry
ed Silkin Allen Lane London 1979

APPENDIX

In an effort to see what beliefs about life after death were held by Church members I enlisted the help of three colleagues in gathering information from members of their congregations. A parish minister, a parish priest and a Congregational minister assisted. A questionnaire was prepared and a copy is attached. I felt that for the purpose of this thesis it would be sufficient to analyse the results of the largest group in each congregation, unless two or more groups of the same size emerged. As it happened this was not the case. In each case there emerged a significantly large group. Following the analysis of groups individually I will compare them with each other and draw conclusions.
Distribution was randomly carried out on a Sunday morning in the three churches. The questionnaires were left in the pews and people were asked to complete them and hand them in. The congregations are typical of their denominations. The survey is not meant to be statistically significant but only to give some indication of contemporary beliefs about life after death.

Cathcart Congregational Church:

All questionnaires were completed, i.e. 40. One which had been completed by a Roman Catholic was extracted for inclusion with the other Roman Catholic returns. For ease of calculation the Roman Catholic has been statistically retained, i.e. the returns are calculated as percentages of 40.

The largest category was the over sixty group comprising 19 of the total, i.e. 47.5%. Analysis of these figures is as follows.

13 (32.5%) believed in life after death; 1 (2.5%) did not and 6 (15%) did not know.

7 (17.5%) believed in Hell as well as Heaven; 4 (10%) did not and 7 (17.5%) did not know.

5 (12.5%) thought belief determined who goes to Heaven; 1 (2.5%) did not know.

11 (27.5%) thought that living of life determined who goes to Heaven and 2 (5%) thought both belief and life determined this.

2 (5%) thought that belief determined who goes to Hell and an equal number did not know.

12 (30%) thought that living life determined who goes to Hell and 1 (2.5%) did not know.

14 (35%) thought that Heaven would give peace; 5 (12.5%) thought that it would give rest; 1 (2.5%) thought that it would give reward and an equal number thought that it would not. 1 (2.5%) thought that it would give all three.

Seven of the respondents in this section (17.5%) made negative or Don't Know returns about going to Hell but went on to answer the determinative questions as follows : 1 (2.5%) each for Don't Know but belief determines; Don't Know but living of life determines; No to belief in Hell but both belief and living determine; No to Hell but Don't know to both belief and living as determining; a nil return about belief in Hell but living determining and 2 said No to belief in Hell but said that belief was determinative.

There were some interesting comments made by a number of respondents. Here is a selection.

One lady, over 60, said, perhaps contradictorally, that as she

approached the end of her life she saw her hitherto firmly held belief in God in a different light but thought that a belief in God and the Church helped to overcome life's hardships.
Another felt that now is the only understandable reality and so Heaven and Hell are "states of mind related to our present behaviour".

Here is an unusual view of death from someone in the 36 - 45 age group. "I don't believe in death in the accepted sense therefore there can be nothing after it. I believe that the elements that make up me, were part of the world and therefore the universe, and since the creation. This universe is perpetually pulsing energy and life. After death I will be dissolved into the same elements of which I was assembled, and they will continue part of the living universe until the end. As for human death I cannot see that personality can survive it".

Another respondent (46 - 60) says "I think that the concept of a separate Heaven and a separate Hell is outmoded. I believe in an afterlife in which all humans, regardless of race, religion, behaviour, attainment, etc., are united. Beyond this, I can only hazard an opinion that our conduct and quality of life here influence in certain ways the existence (if it can be described in this way) after death". This is echoed to a large degree by the lady in the over 60 category who simply observes that "you go to Heaven no matter your belief or how you have lived your life, for peace and everlasting love", while a younger correspondent (36 - 45) observes "I also believe that we can also make this

life a bit of Heaven or Hell by what we do or say".

Comment

I find it interesting that so many, 15%, returned "Don't Know" to the question of belief in life after death and that the number of people who thought that the living of life determined who goes to Heaven (27.5%) was more than twice those (12.5%) who thought that belief was the determining factor. Even more interesting is the surprisingly low figure (5%) who thought that both belief and living determined. This pattern actually intensifies when we look at what determines going to Hell. Only 5% thought that belief determined while six times as many (30%) thought that living was the determining factor. Again only 5% saw both belief and living as determinative.

The expectations of Heaven make equally interesting reading. They certainly do not reflect the Victorian interest in rest and reward. In fact there is virtually no belief in Heaven offering reward and those who saw peace as the expected characteristic of Heaven outnumber by almost three to one those (12.5%) who expect rest in Heaven. Whether this means that present times are less arduous but more stressful than Victorian times is a matter for further study.

Martyr's Parish Church, Paisley:

23 of the 40 questionnaires were completed and returned and, as with Cathcart Congregational Church, the largest group was that for the over 60's. The figures are presented as percentages of 23. The group from which they are taken comprised 47.85%, i.e. 11 of the 23. The analysis is as follows.

9 (37.15%) believed in life after death and 2 (8.7%) did not know.

3 (13.05%) believed in Hell; 4 (17.4%) did not and 2 (8.7%) did not know.

1 (4.35%) thought that belief determined entry to Heaven; 2 (8.7%) did not know.

5 (21.75%) thought that living determined entry to Heaven; 2 (8.7%) did not know.

4 (17.4%) thought that both determined entry to Heaven and 1 (4.35%) did not know.

1 (4.35%) thought that belief determined entry to Hell; 2 (8.7%) said no to this and 1 (4.35%) did not know.

4 (17.4%) thought that living determined entry to Hell; 1 (4.35%) thought that both determined entry to Hell and 2 (8.7%) did not know.

3 (13.05%) thought that Heaven would give peace; 2 (8.7%) thought it would give rest and none thought it would give reward.

5 (21.7%) thought it would give all three and 1 (4.35%) did not know.

Five of the respondents (21.75%) returned negative or "don't know" answers to the belief in Hell question but returned as follows

on the determinative questions:-

1 - "don't know" but living determines

2 - "no" to belief in Hell but living determines

2 - "no" to belief in Hell, "no" to belief as determinative and "yes" to living as determinative.

There were no comments made on any of the forms.

Comment

While only 8.7% returned "don't know" as their belief in life after death, as against 15% of the Congregational sample, the trend to emphasise living over belief as a determinative factor intensifies in this sample - 21.7% over against 4.35%, a factor of almost 5 , although there is a drop in the figures when applied to what determines entry to Hell with only 17.4% preferring living to belief (4.35%), a factor of 4 . 13.05% thought that Heaven would give peace, while slightly more than half that figure (8.7%) thought it would give rest. None thought it would give reward and 21.7% thought that it would give all three. The larger number of people (17.4%) who see both belief and practice as determining entry to Heaven might be seen to reflect the Church of Scotland's emphasis on traditional teaching and belief. The rejection of reward as a sole predicate of Heaven continues and there is an increased number (21.7%) who think that it will give all three. It seems that the trend away from rest and towards peace as Heavenly gifts (8.7% and 13.05% respectively) is maintained. Insofar as this perhaps relates to social change, i.e. a diminution of arduousness and an increase in stress, it indicates that whatever

the cause for the change it is not brought about by denominational and therefore doctrinal factors.

St. Mary's R.C. Church:

50 out of 120 questionnaires were completed and returned. The largest group was the 46 - 60 age group (18 = 36%). For ease of calculation the figures are shown as percentages of 50. The return added to these figures was in the 26 - 35 age group. The analysis is as follows.

All believed in life after death.

17 (34%) believed in Hell and 1 (2%) did not.

3 (6%) thought belief determined entry to Heaven and 2 (4%) did not.

5 (10%) thought living determined entry to Heaven.

9 (18%) thought both belief and living determined entry to Heaven.

1 (2%) thought belief determined entry to Hell, a similar percentage thought not and 2 (4%) did not know.

12 (24%) thought living determined entry to Hell and 4 (8%) thought belief and living were determinative.

6 (12%) thought Heaven would give Peace; 4 (8%) thought rest; 2 (4% thought reward; 1 (2%) did not know whether Heaven gave reward and 9 (18%) thought Heaven would give all three.

There was an interesting range of comments made by some of these respondents of which the following is a selection.

One rejected the name "Hell" and substituted "another place", with non-belief and the living of life as the determining features in entry there.

Another observes, succinctly, "Peace is the reward".

Another describes Hell as "the loss of the beatific vision", which is, for Roman Catholics, the vision of God in Heaven seen after purgatory. The same respondent says the reward in Heaven is indescribable.

Another says "This life on earth has no meaning unless there is a life to come. Otherwise how do we explain the uneven distribution of health, wealth, ability, etc?"

Another, having said that both belief and the living of life determine who goes to Heaven goes on to quote Matthew 7:21 where Jesus says "Not everyone who calls me Lord will enter the Kingdom of Heaven but only those who do what my father in Heaven wants them to do".

Yet another sees Heaven giving peace that this world cannot, rest from the cares and struggles of this life and goes on to observe that "The reward will be to know that it was all worthwhile".

Comment

Only 10% of respondents see living as determining who goes to Heaven while 6% see belief as the determining factor. 18% see both belief and living as determinative, a figure equal to the Presbyterian at 17.4% and well ahead of the Congregationalists at 5%. A significantly larger number (34%) believed in Hell, although,

given traditional Roman Catholic teaching one might have expected an even higher positive response to this question. The similar figures for the other two denominations are 13.5% for the Presbyterians and 17.5% for Congregationalists. The figures for the rewards of Heaven roughly compare with those of the Presbyterians i.e. 12% R.C. and 13.05% Presbyterians for peace; 8% R.C. and 8.7% Presbyterian for Rest and 18% R.C. and 21.7% Presbyterian for all three. The return for Reward as a gift in Heaven is 4%, against 0% Presbyterian and 2.05% Congregational.

There is little surprising in these figures, except perhaps the move in thought towards a separation of belief and the living of life. It is surprising that, across the denominations, such small percentages saw that both contribute to the gaining of Heaven or Hell. This is not, perhaps, to be wondered at. If theology has become more "this worldly" than that of a century ago, a shift of emphasis to what one does, apart from what one thinks, is perhaps inevitable.

I append a table of extracted statistics and a copy of the questionnaire.

	Cong.	Presb.	R.C.
Do you believe in Hell as well as Heaven?	17.5%	13.05%	34%
What determines who goes to Heaven?			
Belief	12.5%	4.35%	6%
How you have lived your life	27.5%	21.7%	10%
Both	5%	17.4%	18%
What determines who goes to Hell?			
Belief	5%	4.35%	2%
How you have lived your life	30%	17.4%	24%
Both	-	4.35%	8%
Heaven will give -			
Peace	35%	13.05%	12%
Rest	12.5%	8.7%	8%
Reward	2.5%	-	4%
All three	2.5%	21.7%	18%

This questionnaire is completely anonymous. There is no way in which a name can be attached to any completed form. Thank you for participatin

Please, if you wish, add any comments about any or all of the questions.

Please tick your age group

15 - 20		21 - 25		26 - 35	
26 - 45		46 - 60		Over 60	

What is your religious denomination?
(e.g. R.C., Church of Scotland, etc.)

Do you believe in life after death? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

Do you believe in Hell as well as Heaven? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

What determines who goes to Heaven?

Belief? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

How you have lived your life? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

What determines who goes to Hell?

Belief? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

How you have lived your life? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

Do you think Heaven will give :

Peace? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

Rest? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

Reward? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

Comments

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CHAPTER 5

1. Fulford p.2
2. Ibid p.153
3. Longford p.552
4. Ibid p.552
5. Owen