

THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

VOLUME VI

APRIL 1908

NUMBER 2

THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY AND ITS WORK.

The "Westminster Assembly of Divines" derives its name from the ancient conventual church of Westminster Abbey, situated in the western district of the county of London. It was convened in the most ornate portion of this noble fabric, the Chapel of Henry VII, on the first day of July, 1643; but, as the cold weather of autumn came on, it was transferred (October 2nd, 1643) to a more comfortable room (the so-called "Jerusalem Chamber") in the adjoining Deanery. In that room it thereafter sat, not merely to the end of the 1163 numbered sessions, during which its important labors were transacted (up to Feb. 22, 1649), but through some three years more of irregular life, acting as a committee for the examination of appointees to charges and applicants for licensure to preach. It ultimately vanished with the famous "Long Parliament" to which it owed its being. The last entry in its Minutes is dated March 25th, 1652.¹

The summoning of the Westminster Assembly was an important incident in the conflict between the Parliament and the king, which was the form taken on English soil by the ecclesiastico-political struggle by which all Europe was

¹In the ordinance convening the Assembly, it is commissioned to sit "during this present Parliament, or until further order be taken by both the said houses".

THE FUTURE LIFE IN HEBREW THOUGHT DURING THE PRE-PERSIAN PERIOD.

The abode of departed spirits, as it was pictured by the imagination of the early Semites is finely described in the story of the descent of the goddess Ishtar into the nether world, her forcible detention there, and her eventual release. The tale is a nature-myth. The goddess is a planet, commonly identified with the planet Venus, which blazes in the sky for a season, then disappears below the horizon, and after a time returns. The story is well known; it is repeated here only for the purpose of comparison. The goddess Ishtar, daughter of the moon-god, determined to visit

The land whence none returns,
The house of darkness, the dwelling of the goddess Irkigal,¹
The house from which he who enters comes not forth,
The pathway whose course returns not,
The house where he who enters is deprived of the light,
 where dust is their nourishment, mud their food,
 where they see no light, but sit in darkness,
 where they are clothed like birds in raiment of feathers,
 where dust is spread over door and bar.

On arriving at the gate, she called to the porter, saying imperiously:

“Keeper of the waters, open thy gate!
Open thy gate . . .
Else will I crush the door, break the bar,
 crush the sill, tear open the doors;
 will bring up the dead that they eat and live,
 and take their places among them that live.”

The gatekeeper persuaded the impetuous goddess to re-

¹The habitation of the dead; and, personified, one of the deities of the place.

strain her violence until he should announce her name to the queen of the place. From his mistress he received command to admit the new comer and subject her to the ancient custom. Thereupon he opened the gate, saying:

“Enter, my lady, and let Cuthah rejoice;
Let the palace of the land whence none returns exult in thine arrival.”

On passing the first gate, the noble crown was lifted from the head of the goddess; after the second gate her earrings were taken away; after the third gate the chain was unbound from her neck; after the fourth gate the ornaments were stripped from her breast; after the fifth gate the jeweled girdle was loosed from her loins; after the sixth gate the bracelets and anklets were removed from her hands and feet; and on passing the seventh gate her only garment was stripped from her body. She had descended to the land whence none returns, and according to custom had entered it naked and divested of the insignia of rank. She was filled with wrath. On seeing Allatu, the queen of the place, she unluckily forgot herself so far as to revile the mistress of the realm. She soon learned her mistake. Allatu gave the word, and Ishtar was smitten with disease in the eyes, the loins, the feet, in heart and head, and throughout the body.

In consequence, however, of the absence of Ishtar from the earth, the processes of nature which are dependent on her agency ceased. Love languished, the impulse to fruitfulness was no longer obeyed. In this distress Ea, the god of wisdom, bethought him of a plan. He created a being to act as a messenger, and sent him to the nether world to placate the queen, put her into a good humor, and then conjure her by the name of the great gods and force her to let him have the use of certain water. The messenger followed his instructions, and finally proffered his request for the water. It met with a stern refusal from Allatu the queen. “Thou hast made a request that cannot be granted,” said she.

“Away with thee: I will cast thee into the great prison;
The slime of the city shall be thy food,
The gutters of the city thy drink,
The shadow of the wall thine abode,
The threshold thy dwelling place.
Imprisonment and restraint shall break thy strength.”

But she had been exorcised, and must release Ishtar. So she bade her servant sprinkle the goddess with the water of life, which seems to have been vigilantly guarded beneath the palace by the sprites. The servant shattered the door-posts of the palace, led the sprites forth and set them on golden thrones. Then he sprinkled Ishtar with the water of life, conducted her back through the seven gates, and restored to her her raiment and her ornaments.

The tablet on which this story is written bears the name of Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria. It belonged to the library which he gathered about the year 650 before Christ. The story itself is unquestionably older; exactly how much older it is impossible at present to determine. It doubtless dates from the myth-making age of the Babylonians. At any rate its descriptions are largely derived from old conceptions of the place of the dead.

Besides this myth of the descent of Ishtar to the nether world there are occasional allusions in the native literature to the abode of the dead and to the conditions that prevail there. From these several sources it is learned that

1. The abode of the dead was thought of as situated under the earth. “Ishtar has descended into the earth and has not come up again” (Rev. 5, 6). If men are in distress, they speak of “going down into Aralu”. The earth opened and Eabani ascended from sheol. The scorpion men, those fabulous monsters that guard the pathway that leads to the island of the blessed and keep it closed to mortal man, are described as being so immense that their back touches heaven while their breast reaches beneath to sheol. Sheol is called “wide”. It is spoken of as a land; “the land whence none returns”. And so too Gilgamesh speaks of it

as a country, but it was as readily conceived of as "the great city;" walled and entered through gates, seven in number, or, according to another tradition, fourteen, and having its palace and its prison, its queen and her servant and a gatekeeper.

2. The existence of this place of itself implies the continuance of the soul after death; otherwise "the great city" would be tenantless. The separate existence of soul and body after death was the current belief. If the corpse remained unburied, the soul wandered restlessly on earth; conversely when the body was interred, the soul went down to sheol. All men without distinction descend thither. No class or condition is exempt. "In the land whence none returns, in the house of darkness, the abode of the goddess Irkalla, in that house, my friend, crowns lie on the ground whose wearers of old ruled the land; there dwell the priest and his fellow, the exorcist and the conjuror". And accordingly to venerable custom, those who enter are stripped of all earthly insignia of rank and wealth, and are ushered naked into their lasting home. Even a goddess who lived there, none else than the mother of a husband of Ereshkigal, was like others unclothed; her shining hips were not covered by any garments. The multitude who inhabit "the great city" dwell in darkness and feed upon dust.

3. Yet they possess the power of perception; for Eabani's spirit, which had descended to the region of the dead and returned to the upper world, had seen the country and had a tale which he could tell if he would, but which he hesitated to tell. The soul after death is capable of experiencing distress; for the provisions in sheol for imprisonment and bodily torments imply the consciousness of the soul and its capacity for degrees of suffering. The soul of the deceased is capable of some measure of comfort also. The fallen warrior possesses it. "Upon a couch doth rest and pure water drink he who hath been slain in battle". "Thou sawest it?" asks Gilgamesh. "Yes"; replies Eabani,

"I saw it. His father and his mother support his head, and his wife is at his side".

4. Thus varying degrees of happiness and misery are remotely alluded to, based on civic virtues practised during the earthly life and on behavior in sheol. Warriors who lose their life in battle are rewarded in the other world with a place for rest and water to drink, with the presence of parents and wife. Insubordination to authority in the nether world is punished by disease, by imprisonment, by water from the gutters of the city to drink and the city's slime for food. The tradition of the flood as reported by Berossus, himself a Babylonian, states that the principal survivors because of their piety were translated to dwell with the gods. This may possibly be an ancient feature of the story.

5. While sheol is characteristically a land whence none returns, yet a return to the regions of light and life is not unthinkable. The gods devised and carried out a plan for the release of Ishtar. This goddess herself threatened to lead forth the dead and restore them to life. The queen of the place has water of life which she can dispense at pleasure.

The Hebrews were a branch of the same Semitic stock as the Babylonians and Assyrians, and in the earliest ages they naturally had the same general conception of the future state. In a casual remark the patriarch Jacob gives utterance apparently to the common belief. When his heartless sons laid the bloody coat of Joseph before him, he said: "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces." And the bereaved father refused to be comforted, saying: "I will go down to sheol to my son mourning." (Gen. xxxvii. 33, 35). In these words Jacob doubtless expressed his belief that Joseph's body had been devoured by a beast, but that Joseph was in sheol; and that one day he himself would descend

thither to his son. It is safe to say that here are three fundamental points of the early Hebrew belief concerning the dead: 1. There is a distinction between the body and the person or soul. 2. The body may be destroyed by violence of may moulder to dust, but the person survives the destruction of the body. 3. The soul or person dwells in sheol. These three articles belonged to the common Semitic belief concerning the dead. They are found in the creed of the Christian also. He confesses them to be truths. But respecting the dwelling place of the dead, he regards it naive to locate sheol, even in imagination, underneath the world.

ABRAHAM DECLARING THAT HE WOULD RETURN WITH
THE LAD.

Abraham was accustomed to reason. He had long been promised an heir; but no child had been born to him, and he and Sarah were both old, well stricken in years. He had pondered the question how the promise was to be fulfilled; and he and Sarah had decided that he might become the father of a son, but by the young Egyptian maid. Now, however, Isaac has been born to Abraham and Sarah, and God has promised a numerous posterity to Abraham through this son. But the command comes to him to offer the lad for a burnt offering. What becomes, then, of the promise that "in Isaac shall thy seed be called"? Abraham reasoned. He knew of only one way by which the promise could be fulfilled in case Isaac was sacrificed on the altar. He believed in the omnipotence of God. He had faith that the Almighty, the creator and possessor of heaven and earth, who had given a son to him when his wife was past age and he himself as good as dead, had power to bring that child back to life, to restore him even from sheol. And as he went forward with his son to the appointed place of sacrifice, he calmly said to his servants: "Abide ye here, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you."

And thus the inspired author of the Epistle to the Hebrews traces the secret workings of Abraham's mind. "He that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead". (Heb. xi. 17-19).

Such reasoning was within the bounds of even the heathen thought of the day. In the traditions of the race to which Abraham belonged the restoration of the dead to life, release from sheol, a return to the abodes of men, were conceivable. The story of Tammuz was, indeed, a myth concerning a natural phenomenon, but even so it spoke of the release of dead vegetation from the power of death. The story of Gilgamesh told of the faith of a man that his companion might be brought back even from the land whence there is no return. And in the fancies of men about that dread place was not the water of life there, although carefully guarded? The thought of the possible restoration of the dead to life was present to the mind of the Semite; and Abraham, with his higher doctrine of God and under the pressure of God's promise concerning Isaac, passed from careless fancy to lively hope and sure conviction. "I and the lad will come again to you."

ABRAHAM LOOKING FOR THE CITY THAT HATH THE FOUNDATIONS.

Abraham waited for a country that was not yet his. He believed that in and through him God was laying the foundations of a heavenly kingdom among men. He indeed should go to his fathers in peace, but in and with him his descendants should have the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession (Gen. xiii. 15; xvii.8), and, expanding (xii. 2, 3; xiii. 16; xv. 18; xxii. 17), constitute God's kingdom of righteousness on earth (xvii. 1, 7; xviii. 19), and form an integral part of God's universal realm (xiv. 22; xxiv. 3, 7). Actuated by this hope and to obtain this reward he willingly left kindred and native land and became a pil-

grim in a country not his own. For God rules in righteousness (xviii. 25); and his kingdom in heaven and, coming down thence, on earth also is the city that alone hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. xi. 10, 16; xii. 22; xiii. 14; Rev. xxi. 2). The kingdom is one and indivisible. To this kingdom Abraham belonged, although in this earthly life he was sojourning in a part of God's earthly dominion still unpossessed by the people of God. The Canaanite was still in the land. He had reason to cherish the hope of a continuance of blessed association with God in the life beyond (see remarks on "the God of Abraham").

ACQUAINTANCE WITH CONTEMPORARY EGYPTIAN THOUGHT.

A new era dawned. During the centuries from the close of the patriarchal period to the exile the Hebrews and the Egyptians were in almost uninterrupted contact. The relation was sometimes that of master and slave, or at least of ruling race and oppressed people, to the sorrow of the Hebrews; but more often the association was friendly and close, that of husband and wife, parent and child, teacher and pupil. There was also intercourse with travelers, resident business men, and proselytes; and there were alliances between the two nations for the purpose of waging war against the common foe. It is necessary, therefore, to inquire what notions the Egyptians entertained regarding the future state. Without entering upon an elaborate discussion, it is sufficient to recall the consensus of opinion among modern Egyptologists. Briefly stated, the Egyptians believed: 1. In a distinction between soul and body. 2. In the continued conscious existence of the soul after death. Belief in an after-existence can be traced back into the time of the second dynasty, some four thousand years before Christ. 3. That final happiness in the world to come is conditioned upon a righteous life on earth. The idea of a future judgment was entertained as early as the fourth dynasty at least, or about three thousand years before

Christ. And in the New Empire, which began shortly after the exodus of the Hebrews and continued until the Persian conquest of Egypt, there is everywhere evidence of the thought of judgment, and of the belief that the awards of the future world are distributed according to the moral character of the life on earth. In the presence of the forty-two gods the heart of the deceased is weighed over against righteousness, and the soul must make specific confession that it has practised the moral virtues and fulfilled religious duties during life. 4. That they who successfully pass through this ordeal attain to an active existence, recover bodily and mental powers, and devote themselves to the service of the gods.

And among the Israelites during this period, as in former days, it was the general belief that the soul continues its conscious existence after death.²

² Did any of the Israelites believe in the dissolution of conscious existence at death? Perhaps there were skeptics who did. But no basis for such a belief on their part is found in the psychology of the Hebrews which is involved in the account of man's creation given in the second chapter of Genesis.

The logical foundation for a doctrine declaring the cessation of man's conscious existence at death has been discovered, it is alleged, in the account of man's nature as given in Gen. ii. 7, "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul". It is true that the asserted psychology of that account, or a kindred psychology, is an essential postulate of the doctrine of annihilation; but the converse is, of course, not true. The doctrine of annihilation is not the necessary corollary of the hypothetical psychology. But what is the asserted teaching of the second chapter of Genesis concerning the constitution of man? In his book on Eschatology, Hebrew, Jewish, and Christian, Professor Charles of Trinity College, Dublin, says:

The "later view, which practically denies knowledge and life to the inhabitants of Sheol, follows logically from the account in Gen. ii. 4—iii, according to which the material form when animated by the spirit became a living soul. . . . The soul is the result of the indwelling of the spirit in the material body, and has no independent existence of its own. It is really a function of the material body when quickened by the spirit. . . . When the spirit is withdrawn, the vitality of the soul is destroyed, and it becomes a dead soul (נֶפֶשׁ חַיִּית), or corpse (Num.

The worship of ancestors, if it existed in Israel, would reveal such faith. But proof of this practice among the Hebrews, even sporadically, either as a relic of past heathenism or as a recent importation from contemporary paganism, is entirely wanting. Schwally, it is true, after an exhaustive investigation concludes that ancestor-worship did have vogue among the Israelites, but he admits that conclusive evidence is lacking (Zandstra, *Princeton Theological Review*, April, 1907, p. 282). The popular belief in the continued conscious existence of the soul after death man-vi. 6; Lev. xxi. 11). . . . The annihilation of the soul ensues inevitably at death, that is, when the spirit is withdrawn." Pp. 41-43.

By way of general comment, it is proper to remark first, that Professor Charles identifies "the breath of life" in Gen. ii. 7 (J) with "the spirit of life" in Gen. vi. 17; vii. 15, passages attributed to P, and in vii. 22, where the asserted "conflation" involves the admission that "spirit" comes from P or some other source foreign to J. Yet surely when J's doctrine is under discussion, the investigation should be rigidly restricted to the document assigned to him. The introduction of P is legitimate for purposes of comparison only, not as an essential part of the argument. Second, Professor Charles understands, and expressly states, that the teaching of the writer who penned Gen. ii. 7 clearly involves the doctrine of trichotomy; but if so, this ancient Hebrew conceived of the spirit, and not of the soul, as the animating principle, and in this respect he differs from the current modern trichotomistic exposition of the Scriptures. Third, biblical writers do not make the sharp distinction between soul and spirit which J observes according to Professor Charles' interpretation of him. In general what the teachers of Israel predicate of the soul, they predicate of the spirit also. But notwithstanding these strictures, it may be well to assume the correctness of Professor Charles' exposition of the psychology that underlies Gen. ii. 7, and to devote inquiry merely to ascertaining, first, whether the Hebrew writer entertained the views regarding the nature and fate of the spirit which Professor Charles holds to be involved in this account of man's origin; and second, whether these opinions were actually confessed by a biblical writer of later date, as Professor Charles asserts.

And, first, the nature and fate of man's spirit. "Since 'the breath of life' (J), or 'the spirit of life' (P), is common to man and the rest of the animal creation (Gen. vi. 17; vii. 15, both P), the spirit of life conceived of as thus existing in all living things is life in an impersonal sense. The spirit, therefore, in man can never in this sense be the bearer of the personality."

This argument for the impersonality of the spirit has no validity. For
1. The soul also is common to man and the rest of the animal crea-

ifests itself, however, in another heathenish custom. The attempt was made to consult familiar spirits. During the entire period of Hebrew national history professional necromancers kept appearing in Israel, who pretended to exorcise the dead and obtain revelations from the spirits of the departed. The people were warned against them by Moses; but they were plying their nefarious trade in Saul's day, they were in great request in Isaiah's time (Is. viii. 19), and they were still making profit of credulity in the reign of Josiah (2 Ki. xxiii. 24). The prophets strenuously opposed

tion, according to the document J (Gen. ii. 7, 19); and hence, by parity of reasoning, the soul should be impersonal. But it is not. In man it has all the elements of personality, as Professor Charles rightly insists. According to J the soul has life (Gen. xii. 13; xix. 19; xxxvii. 21), and feelings (Gen. xxxiv. 3; xlv. 30; Judg. xviii. 25); and it represents the *ego* (Gen. xxvii. 4, 25; xlix. 6). In beasts it was doubtless considered to be, as in man, a center of life and feeling.

2. Moreover, contrary to the hypothesis of Professor Charles, according to J the spirit is itself a bearer of the personality. The human spirit is referred to perhaps three times only in passages that may be assigned to the school of J; yet from one of these it appears that disposition and character were attributed to the spirit (Nnm. xiv. 24, see Charles' citation on p. 46). In this respect J's statement agrees with the references to the matter which are found elsewhere in the Scriptures. The spirit feels emotions, according to E (Gen. xli. 8; Judg. viii. 3, cited by Charles on p. 45); and according to P it suffers emotions and possesses intelligence (Gen. xxvi. 33; Ex. vi. 9; xxviii. 3; xxxv. 21; Num. v. 14).

3. It is natural to understand J to mean that the person, the *ego*, goes down to sheol, the abode of the departed (Gen. xxxvii. 35).

The conclusion, therefore, seems to be warranted that in the conception of the school of J the spirit, which according to Professor Charles was thought of as existing in man "a thing apart by itself," could bear personality, and bore it even when separated from the body at death.

Second, the views of that later biblical writer to whom Professor Charles ascribes belief in the impersonality of the spirit.

"This dissolution of the personality at death is frankly recognized in Eccl. xii. 7, and the impersonal breath of life returns to the Supreme Fount of Life: 'the spirit shall return to God, who gave it' . . . And thus all personal existence ceases at death", pp. 43, 44.

The writer of Ecc. xii. 7 does not, however, speak of God as "the Fount of Life"; and there is no allusion in the divine title which he employs to suggest that the spirit returns like a drop of water to a reservoir, to lose its identity in the great body of water. The verse is

necromancy, but not the belief in the continued conscious existence of the soul in sheol. And of this belief there is evidence in the writings of the accredited teachers of Israel. It does not appear as formulated doctrine, for that was unnecessary, but in allusions to the accepted faith. Yet although there was known to be a continuance of conscious existence after death, the future life had no attractions. For some, indeed, this state, so different from that on earth, held out the only hope of relief; for "there the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest". But to most men it loomed up cheerless, dreary, forbidding, the end of pomp and power, the end of opportunity and achievement, the end of all service for one's family, for the nation, for the kingdom of God. It was a cessation of activity: a sleep, as it were; "the night when no man can work".

The place of the departed spirits was thought to lie beneath the earth. This location was not doctrinally assigned to sheol; it was not a tenet of religion, and no teaching was based upon it. It was due to a naive conception of the universe, and apparently undisputed. The uniform term employed to describe the going to sheol is "go down or

couched in the words of plain, unfigurative speech; and the idea of absorption, if sought in this verse, must be imported from the figurative language of the preceding verse. But there is no necessity for so interpreting the words. The spirit of man can dwell in the presence of God without absorption into the divine Spirit. Compare Luke xxiii. 46, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit".

And Professor Charles should quote the entire conception of the spirit as entertained by the Preacher. To him the spirit is more than Professor Charles' impersonal existence, which cannot be the bearer of personality; for it is distinctly a bearer of the emotions. Patience or hastiness, pride or anger, may belong to it, as in vii. 8, 9. It may experience displeasure, according to x. 4.

What becomes of the spirit after its departure from the body? Certain statements in the book about the conditions which prevail in sheol have sometimes startled the readers (ix. 5, 10). They must not be exaggerated. Beware of ascribing absolute universality to the Hebrew negative. Beware of excluding from the Preacher's words the belief of his age that the dead in sheol possess a certain degree of consciousness. Beware of ignoring the Preacher's own allusions to the human spirit as the seat of the emotions.

descend". When great contrasts are sought, heaven above is set over against, not the earth, but sheol beneath. The prophet Amos places the earth between sheol and heaven (ix. 2). There is no escape for the wicked from God, he declares. "Though they dig into sheol, thence shall my hand take them; and though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down". Ezekiel, using trees as symbols, says: "The trees of Eden. . . were comforted in the nether parts of the earth. They also went down into sheol" (xxx. 17). As a sign that Korah and his crew were rebels against divinely constituted authority, Moses said: "If the Lord make a new thing — something unprecedented — and the ground open her mouth and swallow them up, and they go down alive into sheol, then ye shall understand that these men have despised the Lord. . . . So they went down alive into sheol, and the earth closed upon them" (Num. xvi. 30, 33). Thought of either as a region or as a pit, sheol has boundaries, outermost and inmost parts, and depths (Deut. xxxii. 22; Ps. lxxxvi. 13; Prov. ix. 18; Is. xiv. 15; Ezek. xxxii. 23). When it is said that the enemies of God and his kingdom are thrust into the deepest depths or inmost parts of sheol, the meaning is that they are imprisoned there beyond the hope of escape.

Into this nether world all men without distinction, righteous and wicked, go down at death. Pharaoh was "cast down to sheol with them that descend into the pit" (Ezek. xxxi. 16). The young Joseph, the good king Hezekiah in the noontide of his days, and the aged Jacob, might descend into sheol. The wicked go down to sheol (Job xxi. 13, comp. 7; xxiv. 9, comp. Ps. xxxi. 17; ix. 17; lxiii. 9). Their beauty is for sheol to consume (Ps. xlix. 14). Such a sheol needs illumination.

THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB.

It was the common belief of men in the age in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived that the life of man con-

tinues beyond the grave. It was also an accepted truism in those days that the place of departed souls is under divine government. Deity is there, and in full control. According to the Scriptures Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob acknowledged the existence of one God only; and therefore, without question, they thought of Him as their Lord both for this life and for that which is to come. They could have said with the later psalmist: "Though I make my bed in sheol, thou art there".

The same belief was shared by Moses, and the same conclusion was involved. This particular aspect of the truth was not, however, most prominently before his mind when at the bush God appeared to him and announced Himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Ex. iii. 6; Mark xii. 26; Luke xx. 37). Precious though this title was when viewed in relation to the future life, it was of cardinal interest just then in its bearing on the sore distress of the descendants of Abraham in Egypt. It reminded them of the everlasting covenant, of the promise of redemption, of intimate fellowship with God, and of an almighty friend.

The truths of continued conscious existence in sheol and the authority of God there were truths of God; and it was He who chose for Himself the title "God of Abraham". To God there lay in His own chosen designation the fact that He was the God of the patriarchs both for this life and for that which is to come.

THE JURISDICTION OF JEHOVAH OVER SHEOL.

There is but one God; He is everywhere, and is everlasting. Monotheism and the doctrines of the omnipresence and eternity of God at once introduced the thought of Jehovah's presence and authority into any conception that man forms of the place of departed spirits. It is not strange, therefore, that in Israel the openness of sheol to the gaze of Jehovah early became proverbial (Prov. xv. 11, a section of the book expressly ascribed to Solomon; Job xxvi. 6), nor that poet

and prophet taught that God is present there (Ps. cxxxix. 8) and that His power there is irresistible (Amos ix. 2). And lo! so far as known, it is theology alone that has brought these truths concerning the other world to the apprehension of men. The doctrine concerning God illumined the darkness of the grave with a ray of blessed light. For the believer in Jehovah its gloom had already begun to pass away. And further, as will be observed on noting the last citation at least, the dawn had risen centuries before the exile.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD BEYOND THE GRAVE.

In three psalms particularly a great hope finds expression. In the Davidic Psalter, Ps. xvi. 10:

Thou wilt not abandon my soul to sheol,
Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one[s] to see the pit.

In the hymnary of the Sons of Korah, Ps. xlix. 15:

But God will redeem my soul
From the power of sheol, for he will take me.

And among the Songs of Asaph, in Ps. lxxiii. 24:

Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel,
And afterward take me to glory.

In the 16th Psalm the expression "abandon to" is peculiarly strong, as is shown by every passage where it occurs.³ In the 49th Psalm the order of words in the second clause, and the gender and historical expressiveness of the verb "he will take me" (Gen. v. 24), naturally yield for the meaning a reference to the future life.⁴ In its tone the

³"Thou shalt leave them (the vineyard and its fruit) for (to) the poor;" hand the gleanings over to the poor, for them to take and use at will (Lev. xix. 10). It was commonly supposed that the ostrich, having laid her eggs on the ground, abandons them; "leaveth her eggs on (to) the earth, and warmeth them in the dust" (Job xxxix. 14). Men "perish and leave their wealth to others" (Ps. xlix. 11 [10]). In view of these passages the words "abandon my soul to sheol" appear to be equivalent to saying "have nothing further to do with it, hand it over to sheol to be used by sheol at will".

⁴The phrase of two rhythmical beats, "from the power of sheol," belongs rhythmically to the second member of the verse, while it limits

psalm is distinctively the voice of a preacher. Wisdom is crying aloud in the streets, a prophet is instructing the peoples on "the folly of trusting in riches" (vs. 1-4; comp. Mic. i. 2; Num. xxiii. 18; Prov. i. 20). In the 73d Psalm, whether the first word of the second member be regarded as an adverb, according to the accentuation, or be construed as a preposition governing "glory",⁵ the reference is to the future life, especially in view of the verb "thou wilt take me".

Certain expositors, particularly Graetz, Wellhausen, and latterly Cheyne (Book of Psalms), construe Psalm 49 harshly or ignore its text, and alter the text of Psalm 73, although it is not in any wise suspicious from the standpoint of textual criticism.⁶ Among biblical scholars who interpret the text as it is, whether they regard the verses under consideration as original or interpolated, a reference in some one or in all these passages cited from the Psalms at least to the future life with God is discerned, for example, by Hupfeld, Alexander, Delitzsch, Klostermann, Oehler, Dillmann, Schultz, Cheyne (Origin of the Psalter), Baethgen, Duhm, Briggs. And these exegetes, as will be noticed, are representative men of the three schools of higher criticism.

How early did it fall within the range of Hebrew thought

the meaning of the first member. The same phenomenon appears elsewhere, as Ps. l. 4; xcvi. 8, 9; Lam. v. 6.

⁵ So Hitzig, Ewald, Hengstenberg, Schultz, neglecting the accents. Comp. "after glory" (Zech. ii. 12 [Eng. 8]), and "before glory" (Prov. xv. 33). The verse may then perhaps be best interpreted in this wise: "By thy counsel thou wilt guide me to glory," *i. e.* to good success and the esteem of men (Josh. i. 8; Prov. iv. 8) in contrast to his present shame and suffering (vs. 14, 20), "and after having attained honor thou wilt take me". The word rendered "glory" often denotes honor as opposed to contempt; esteem (1 Sam. ix. 6; 2 Sam. vi. 20); that respect from men and true success in life which result from humbly heeding instruction and walking in the fear of the Lord (Prov. xiii. 18; xv. 33; xviii. 12). Humble submission to God's guidance comes before honor, and after honor comes reception into God's presence.

⁶ The text is attested by LXX (translated by *meta* with the genitive, as in Ex. xxiii. 2), Symmachus, Jerome, Targum, Syriac.

confidently to expect fellowship with God in the future world? Could the hope of a blessed communion with God after death have been attained by any of his children before the exile; as early, for example, as the eighth century before Christ? The Israelites believed, and had believed from time immemorial, in the continuance of personal existence after death, and their teachers were publishing the doctrine of Jehovah's presence and power in sheol. The world of departed souls lies within his dominion. His eye is still upon its inhabitants, his power reaches unto them. At death his people do not remove from his knowledge and his might. From this truth, which has its foundations laid firmly and securely in monotheism, it was but a short step to the further truth that death does not deprive his people of communion with him. Being a spiritual function, it is quite as possible in the world to come as in this life.

Not only was the truth of continued fellowship with God beyond the grave within their easy grasp, but the stimulus to lay hold on it was present. To every one who prized fellowship with God above earthly treasure, and had more joy in it than others have when their corn and wine are increased; to him who could sing the song of Habakkuk (iii. 18), and to those who could say: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple", who "had rather be a door-keeper in the courts of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of wickedness"; to those to whom fellowship with God had become a passion of the soul;—for such yearners after God, possessors of such a theology, it was natural both to see and to seize the truth of continued blessed fellowship with God in the world to come.

If more stimulus was needed, it was furnished by the hard pressure of long and grievous suffering and reproach entailed by fidelity to God, or by enforced thought upon the moral problem presented by the life-long suffering of the righteous, and the frequent exemption of the wicked

from trouble and their uninterrupted and unexampled prosperity. It only required these things to thrust the hope of fellowship with God in the future life into the forefront.

And these psalmists found themselves in such circumstances. In the 16th Psalm the solace of communion with God is mentioned side by side with confidence of deliverance from the domination of sheol. In the 49th and 73d psalms the singer is driven by the thought of his own hardships and troubles in contrast with the unbroken prosperity and the pomp of the wicked to find the solution for the moral problem that vexes and perplexes his soul in the hope that is held out to the righteous of companionship with God. "God will take me." The problem has been argued and the solution found. God will take the righteous. The godly man has herein his compensation for the earthly loss and reproach caused by his fidelity to God. Theology and experience made it possible for the people of God even in the centuries before the exile to grasp the hope of their continued fellowship with God in the future life; and the intellectual and spiritual impulse to do so was there.

The Hebrews might well be independent of the thought of the world in the development of this doctrine, for they had all the elements of it in their own noble theology, and the impelling forces thereto emerged in their individual and national experiences. It is, however, interesting to observe that the apprehension of this truth was due in the period before the exile, when viewed in the light of contemporary gentile thought. The race to which Abraham belonged were telling in story the translation of the hero of the flood to dwell with the gods, and the Egyptians were teaching that the reward of righteous living on earth is life with the gods hereafter, engaged in their service, with renewed faculties and bodily powers.

THE VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS AFTER DEATH.

In Job xix. 25-27 there may perhaps be a reference to the resurrection of the body; but that question of exegesis

does not demand attention now. Common to the divergent translations represented in the text and on the margin of the revised version is the assurance: "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he will at last (or as the last and final participant) arise to vindicate me: and after my death and the decomposition of my skin I shall see God."

The doctrine of the moral government of God, which was a part of Israel's creed centuries before the exile (Gen. vi. 5; xviii. 25), underlies this triumphant declaration of Job. A perversion of this doctrine formed the premise in the exhaustive argument that was carried on between Job and his friends. They based their entire reasoning on the assumption that all human suffering is a punishment for personal sin. Job's friends insisted that his grievous afflictions were clear proof of guilt. He protested his innocence; but he could not answer the argument, for his premise was at first the same as theirs. Still he knew that their accusation was untrue. He was conscious of his integrity; and he could at length only declare that, although God was thrusting him down to the grave (xiii. 15, 16; xvii. 1; xix. 6), yet he was innocent of crime (xvi. 16, 17); and his innocence was known to God (xvi. 19-21), and would eventually be made manifest by the Lord and he himself would know of his vindication (xix. 25-27).

Job's faith, though it was not formulated in his words, was contained in all its essentials in the Egyptian teaching that at death the soul of man passed into the presence of the forty-two gods and the heart of the deceased was weighed before them in the scales over against righteousness. The earthly life was brought into judgment and its morality determined. The result of the inquiry was the condemnation of the guilty and the justification of the righteous. It was practically a vindication of the righteous after death. Job's discovery of the truth, in whatever age of the world he lived, was not in advance of contemporary thought. But whether it was suggested by Egyptian teaching or not, it had its own doctrinal foundation; it rested definitely on the

truth that God is just, and it was wrought out of that truth under the stress of suffering while conscious of innocence.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

“Thy dead [O Jehovah] shall live”, exclaims the remnant of Israel, “my dead bodies shall arise; . . . for thy dew shall be as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead” (Is. xxvi. 19).

These words of the godly remnant of Israel have been understood (1) Figuratively: God will raise his people from the dust of degradation and oppression, and restore them from exile as from a grave, where they had long seemed dead (Alexander, Reuss, Delitzsch). (2) Literally; and this either as a hope or prayer (Gesenius, Ewald, Oehler, Dillmann, Driver) or as an assurance (Delitzsch, Cheyne) that God will call the dead members of the nation to life again, to increase the population of the kingdom and share in its duties and privileges.

The literal interpretation yields a doctrine of the resurrection of the righteous. Such a doctrine, whether expressed by the prophet in this passage or not, was not inopportune as early as the eighth century before Christ. For the resurrection is thought of by the prophet as effected by the creative power of God, comparable to the influence of the reviving dew, and thus the conception is akin to the faith of Abraham, recorded in Gen. xxii. 5, that though he obeyed the divine command to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering, yet God would enable him to return with the lad. At the end of the eighth century the Israelites could also point to the history of Elijah and Elisha and tell of the dead brought to life again, of corpses reanimated. Furthermore, the Semites did not hesitate to speak of release from sheol. To be sure, it was sometimes a myth, in which the processes of nature were described under the guise of persons; but even so it was talk of the potent influence of the gods to secure deliverance from sheol, and it kept the thought suggestively before the minds of men. So, too,

was the possibility of a return dreamt of when men spoke of the water of life that was kept in sheol, and which, sprinkled upon the deceased, enabled them to go back to the land of the living. And the thought of the possible return of the dead, and of divine power as the effective means, found clear expression when the goddess of the nether world is made in the story to threaten to bring the dead from the grave. The prophet does not go beyond this thought when, strong in his faith in Jehovah's omnipotence, his jurisdiction over sheol, his loving kindness to his people, and his ultimate vindication of their cause, he declares: "Thy dead, O Jehovah, shall live; my dead bodies shall arise."

THE DOOM OF THE UNGODLY.

"And they shall go forth, and look upon the dead bodies of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

This scene, described in Is. lxvi. 24, is not located in the underworld, but in the environs of Jerusalem in the new world of the future (vs. 6, 20; comp. "worship before me", vs. 23). The corpses of the enemies of Jehovah are lying unburied round about Jerusalem, being continually eaten by worms and burning forever in the fires of the scavengers; an enduring and terrible spectacle to the godly, which bears witness day and night that the wicked have been completely overthrown and that their destruction is everlasting. The prophet speaks of eternal doom. He says nothing of torment; and that he had penal pains in mind cannot be affirmed. He exhibits pictorially the complete triumph of the cause of truth and holiness and the eternal overthrow of its foes; and he also sets forth by his picture that these things are not hidden from the inhabitants of Zion, but come under their observation. It is a grand, though ghastly, picture; and the portrayal retains its aptness to delineate the doom of the ungodly even after the particulars of their punishment become apprehended.

GLOOMY THOUGHTS OF SHEOL.

There is no evidence of a retrogression of doctrine after these advances. The creed was standard. It bore the stamp of prophetic authority and was imbedded in irrefutable logic. But the creed did not dispel the gloom of sheol from the mind of every man. It was not the creed, however, that was at fault; the hindrance lay in the man. For the wicked the future world still had its terrors. They knew that they would still be under the searching gaze of God, that his eye would be fixed upon their guilt, and that his power would reach to them. The stories of the Semites might, perhaps, also cause them anxiety, which told of a prison in sheol and disease and degradation for those who offended the ruler of the place. They had, too, the moral teaching of the Egyptians that character in this life determines destiny in the world to come. It would not be surprising were the voice of despair heard in Israel when the conscience was ill at ease.

But the wicked were not alone in failing to derive comfort from Israel's doctrine of the future life. There were skeptics in Israel, and in some of the literature it is intended to let the voice of skepticism be heard. Then there were godly men who were spiritually dull. Their experience in life had not forced them to throw themselves for succor on God alone, had not compelled them to find their solace in the truths of religion, had not brought the unseen world into the foreground of their hopes. Their need to obtain strength for the present from the truth concerning the future world was not pressing, and consequently their thought had not been directed to the world to come and their view of it was not clear. And there were men of keen spiritual vision who yet felt dismay at the approach of death. There is here no denial of the ultimate bliss that awaits the people of God. But the gloom of sheol was still lying like a pall over the hearts of men, with its check upon human activity and its blasting of earthly hopes. The pious Israelite might have believed that he would be with God and

be the recipient of divine loving-kindness in the future life, and yet have dreaded sheol. Does the true Christian man of to-day amidst the full light of the gospel, when like Hezekiah he is brought to the verge of the grave in the noontide of his days, with a family dependent upon him, with grave national affairs resting upon his shoulders, or the determination of the religious life of his people for years to come in his hands, never think of the inability of men in sheol? Do Christians never earnestly plead with God for a further lease of life and opportunity to labor? We know that they do. The saints of the Old Testament often mean just what Christ meant when he said: "The night cometh when no man can work."

These different classes of men, and these various causes for dismay at the approach of death, must be duly considered in connection with every utterance concerning the future world, else the would-be interpreter will surely go astray; and also the period in the credal history of Israel when the cry of despair arose. The expositor and the critic must discriminate. Does the cry come from the time before these higher stages of teaching had been reached by psalmists and prophets? In point of fact, the cry may be a mark of the early date of the literature in which it is heard. Does the complaint proceed from the wicked, or from a skeptic, or from a man of little knowledge of doctrine, or from one whose work in the world is of great moment and is yet undone? For the apprehension of all the truths regarding sheol which have been mentioned there was adequate opportunity in the period of Israel's credal growth before the advent of the Persians. Notwithstanding the creed, there was faltering faith on the part of some and a reluctance to die. But this is explicable.

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