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And it is certainly in favour of such a view that, thus understood, the account of our Lord's first visit to Jerusalem takes a significant and defined place in the record of his life. It is not a mere accidental accretion, but an organized member of it, having a distinct relation to the general development of his personal experience, as He grew "in wisdom and age and in favour with God and man." This one event diffuses a light over the thirty years' silence of our Lord's private history, whereby we may see to gather up all that is desirable for us to know of the spirit which animated Him, of the discipline which He underwent, of the way in which, even in the sanctuary of the domestic affections, He had to endure the "contradiction of sinners against Himself."¹ We learn from it how, in the retired household of Nazareth, He was being prepared for the coarser misunderstandings and jealousies which attended his public ministry. And, above all, the above view of the Gospel narrative, if it may be allowed to have any verisimilitude, claims consideration, if only on the ground, that it leaves our Lord's conduct, in this case as in every other, open to the most microscopic criticism, and absolutely unclouded by any shadow of real undutifulness, or of indifference to the anxieties of those whom He loved.

ROBT. E. WALLIS.

THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY:

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN.

ISAIAH XXVI. 19.

I. IT is a standing puzzle to students of the Bible why a doctrine which we hold to be so essential to Religion as the hope of Immortality is either not taught at all in the Old

¹ Heb. xii. 3.

Testament Scriptures, or is taught so rarely and obscurely that it did not enter into the popular Jewish creed till long after Malachi, the last of the prophets, had ceased to speak for God. We can hardly assume that the Hebrew race were destitute of that craving for a life beyond the grave which is common to us all. We know that Moses, their first great teacher, might have met that craving, that *he* could not have been ignorant of the doctrine of an after-life; for he was learned in all the sacred lore of Egypt: and in the religious creed of ancient Egypt the doctrine of a resurrection of the dead, of a Divine judgment in which every man should receive the due reward of his deeds, and of a future state of happiness for the good and of misery for the wicked, were announced with a vigour, an emphasis, a profusion of detail, an impressiveness of imagery, never rivalled, much less surpassed. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say, as every student of the picturesque ornamentation of the temples and tombs will admit, that these doctrines *constituted* the popular religion of the Egypt Moses knew; and that, for once in the history of the world, the present life of an entire race was dominated by the terrors and hopes of the life to come.

How came it to pass, then, that in all his dealings with the stiffnecked Israelites, whom he found it so hard to govern, Moses never once appealed to these terrors and hopes; that the commandments he gave them carried with them none but temporal sanctions and rewards? Many answers to this question have found acceptance which, though perhaps they contain some measure of truth, nevertheless fail to satisfy an earnest and enquiring mind.

(1) We are told, for example, that the first duty of Moses was to teach the children of Israel how to live in *this* world, how so to order their lives here, to bring them into such accordance with the will of God, as that they might grow up into a strong, righteous, and free people; and that, for

this purpose, it was necessary "to hold motives drawn from another world in reserve." And perhaps it was. It is so difficult to determine what is the best and wisest way of educating a horde of ignorant and barbarized slaves—sensual, fickle, mutinous—into habits of order, obedience, justice, and neighbourly kindness, into all that we include under "a moral and religious life" in this world, that it might be presumptuous in us to say that Moses did not take that way with the suddenly enfranchised slaves whom he led up out of Egypt. And yet, if we are sure that that *was* the best way, why do we not ourselves adopt it? why do we not deal with slaves and barbarians on the same principle? why are we so eager to carry them the Gospel, with all its bright hopes, and to ply them with motives from the life to be? Even in dealing with the outcasts of our own cities we have much the same material to work upon that Moses had. We begin pretty much where, and with what, he began. Why, then, do we not begin *as* he began, with none but motives drawn from the present life?

And why are we so suspicious of that same doctrine of "reserve," if he held it? Do we expect the priests who practise it, and whom we condemn for practising it, to be wiser and better than "the man of God"?

Nay, has not experience taught us, that when we have to deal with the ignorant and rude—slaves of their own passions and lusts, if they are no man's slave but their own—we often most effectually reach and raise them when we appeal to their craving for a future life, and ply them with motives drawn from its retributions of glory or of terror?

When we enter on such reflections as these, "we falter where we firmly trod." If *this* was Moses' motive, we cannot honestly say that, in our judgment, he took the best way with Israel. We cannot say that, even in training them for the duties of *this* life, he was wise in hiding from

them the life to come; for we feel that many of the strongest motives for present duty are to be drawn from the future strength and joy and peace which a faithful discharge of duty will ensure. No doubt a man must take heed to his *steps*, if he is to keep a straight path; he must not fix his eyes on the zenith: but is he never to look up? does not all the light by which he walks come from the heaven to which he aspires and climbs?

(2) Another solution of the problem—and I am not picking out the worst, but the best, I can find in the books that treat of it—is, that it was precisely *because* the doctrine of a future life was so popular in Egypt that Moses feared to give it to Israel. “Had Moses,” we are told, “inscribed the word Immortality upon the Ark of the Covenant, the people might very probably have remembered Osiris rather than have feared Jehovah. The first duty of the hour was to separate from this world ‘a holy people’; and consequently any truth associated with idolatry it may have been necessary to leave alone for a season.”

No doubt it may: but surely this reason for the reticence of Moses is not so obvious and indubitable that it is to be quietly assumed. It seems a rather questionable way of making men “holy,” to hide from them any great truth I know, and by which I myself am strengthened and sustained in my personal conflict with evil. And if Moses feared to utter this word “Immortality” to Israel lest they should remember “him that sleeps at Philœ,” Osiris rather than Jehovah, how came it that he did not fear to teach them many other truths which were quite as intimately “associated with idolatry,”—such truths, *e.g.* as the being, the justice, the providence of God? Many of the ten commandments were known and enforced in Egypt. Most of the Hebrew ceremonies and rites and sacred vestments, even to the High-Priest’s robes and the Urim and Thummim he wore in his breast-plate, were drawn from

Egyptian models. We know of no single case, moral or ritual, in which Moses declined to profit by the wisdom of the Egyptians, whereas we know of scores of cases in which he gladly and thoroughly accepted all that he could learn from them. And if he took so many truths and rites and laws from them, *although* they had been associated with idolatry, with what face can we plead that he refused to take the truth of a personal immortality from them simply because it had been associated with the worship of Osiris?

These are the two chief solutions of our problem which are commonly offered to us; and, as a rule, they seem to be received as satisfactory, and without a word of demur, by men who like to hear religious topics discussed but will not be at the pains of thinking them out for themselves. Theologian after theologian goes on repeating, age after age, that, in order to secure due attention to the duties of this life, Moses was obliged to conceal from the Children of Israel what he knew of the future life; and that he was also obliged to conceal the terrors and glories of that life from them lest they should fall back into the idolatrous superstitions of Egypt: and the Church, so far as we can see, is quite content to accept these reasons, albeit they clash with her own practice, as they also clash with the habit and method of Moses. In fine, no sooner do we examine these reasons carefully, than they utterly break down; or, if they still retain some little modicum of truth in them, it is so little as to be wholly inadequate to bear the grave conclusion imposed upon them.

(3) We are compelled, therefore, to look for some stronger and more adequate reason for the strange silence of Moses on a theme so vital and momentous. Nor need we look long, or far, to find it. There is one solution of the problem so clear and obvious—when at least it has once been pointed out—that it instantly commends itself to our

judgment and verifies itself in our own experience. It is this :—

We have it on the best authority that God reveals truth to men as they are able to bear it. But the truth of a personal immortality is one which men are not able to bear, which only breeds the most injurious misconceptions, until they have mastered other truths and have wrought them into the very texture of their thoughts. If the hope of an immortal life is to have a wholesome moral influence upon us, we must know, in some good measure, what that life really means and involves—as we may learn from the history of Egypt and Greece, and indeed of every other Pagan religion in which this hope has found expression.

What, then, does it mean and involve? Even for us, who do not know half its secrets, half even of that which may be known, it means so much that we are compelled to state our conception of it in many different ways; and when we have used them all, we still feel that we have not expressed the half of what we take it to be. We say, perhaps, that “heaven” means, for us, a life of unbroken but growing communion with God, the Father of our spirits, a full and unclouded enjoyment of his presence and favour. Or we say that, for us, it means the perfect peace which springs from a perfect righteousness. Or we say that, for us, it means a life of constant service and yet of constant rest. These, and the like, are the terms in which we strive, and know that we strive in vain, to convey our best conceptions of a blessedness which no words can render, a peace that passeth all understanding, a joy that can never be expressed.

But even these terms, inadequate as they are to express even our inadequate conception of the lot of the blessed in the life to come, are terms which “the natural man” must of necessity fail to apprehend, terms the significance and value of which he can only be taught to apprehend by

a long education, a long discipline in righteousness. Before a man can at all enter into their meaning and worth he must, at least in some measure, learn by personal experience what God is, what communion with Him means, and why to rise into an unbroken communion with Him is to touch the topmost round of human blessedness. He must learn what God's commandments are, and what the peace which springs from obedience to them is like. He must have engaged in service before he can understand the joy of a Divine service, and have entered into rest—rest from himself and his selfish cravings and desires—before he can know the sweetness of a Divine rest.

Take the hope of immortality in what simplest words you will to any man unversed in the religious use of words, unpractised in the duties of the religious life, and will he not infallibly put a false and misleading construction upon them, and translate your spiritual joys into sensual and selfish gratifications and indulgences such as he craves with an incessant and unslakable hunger? Nothing surely can be more simple, homely, and beautiful than the words and images in which the New Testament allures us to the heavenly life. Yet how are they read? how are they read even by the majority of those who accept them with an unquestioning faith and dwell on them with an un failing delight? Not only do they make the pardonable, and yet unpardonable, blunder of conceiving of the life *eternal* as though it were simply a *future* life, with little or no vital or moral connection with the life that now is. It is a standing reproach that they also put the most material construction on what they yet call the spiritual life, and the most selfish construction on what they nevertheless confess to be a life of love. They think and speak of it mainly as a fair large country, by whose pure streams and on whose flowery banks they may recline, clothed in white, eating sweet fruits, or striking golden harps as they sing

their songs of praise ; or as a vast splendid city, adorned with all manner of precious stones, in which they may enjoy all the pleasures denied to them here : while some of them even hold that their sense of security and their joy will be enhanced by occasional glimpses into the irremediable misery of those who have been shut out from the golden city, to dwell in darkness and in woe. In short, they literalize the beautiful metaphors of the New Testament, and use its language without any suspicion of its deep spiritual significance. Even in the Christian Church, and now that life and immortality have been brought to light, the popular conception of Heaven is hardly less wide of the mark, it is sometimes more gross, material, and selfish, than that which obtained in ancient Egypt or Greece. Instead, therefore, of saying that the doctrine of personal immortality was revealed to the world too late, we might rather be tempted to say that it was revealed too soon, did we not know to how many gracious and devout souls it has brought the strength and the comfort of a sustaining and unconquerable hope.

Is it any wonder, then, that Moses did not convey this truth to the rude and ignorant men who took a law from his mouth, men who had yet to learn the simplest rudiments of morality and religion? There is no need, as there is no warrant, to assume that he *concealed* this truth from them of set purpose and design. When he began his work he may have intended to reveal it to them as soon as they were able to bear it and likely to profit by it. All we need assume is that he felt it was of no use to *begin* with it; that, before they could apprehend it, they must be taught what God was, what He demanded of them, how much He cared for them, how willing He was to guide, protect, and redeem them. Before they could be allured by the hope of an unbroken communion with Him, they needed to know, by a present and happy experience, what

communion with Him was like, how full it was of joy and rest. Before a constant and perfect service, or righteousness, could have any meaning, or any charm, for them, they must feel the blessedness of obeying his commandments. Till they did his will on earth, how could they care for the heaven of always and in all things doing his will?

Moses may have found his task—nay, we know that he did find it—much heavier and longer than he expected it to be. He found that he could only commence, not complete, it; that he must leave the completion of it to those who should come after him, and, above all, to Him to whom there is no before and after. But are we to blame him either for teaching the most necessary and elementary truths first, or for not carrying his unwilling pupils, slow of brain and slow of heart, on to truths which they could not touch till they had mastered the rudiments they would not learn? Even when the Prophet like unto Moses, but so much greater than Moses, left the world, He said to his disciples, “I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them yet.” And shall we blame the servant for being *as* his Master,—as patient, as willing to wait, as ready to leave the world before he had taught it all that he had it in his heart to teach? Let us not blame *him*, but blame rather the hardness of their hearts who would not take all that he could give. Let us, rather, blame ourselves and the hardness of our hearts, that we have still so much to learn; and that even yet, with the New Testament before us, we frame such poor imperfect conceptions—conceptions so selfish, so sensuous, so unspiritual—of the fair and sacred realities of the spiritual life and the spiritual world.

(4) Let us mark, too, that so soon as any Jew *had* mastered the rudiments of the law that came by Moses, and shewed that he had mastered them by incorporating

them in his daily life and by trusting the impulses they kindled within him, he attained to at least some dim conception of the life beyond the bourn. The poets of Israel who sang of what they loved—as all poets must, and who therefore loved the Law of which they sang, were very sure that God would not leave his holy ones to see corruption, that He would shew them a path of life winding upward even through the darkness of death; that even in the valley of many shadows, and above all of that Shadow, cloaked from head to foot, who keeps the keys of all the creeds, his rod and staff would still guide and protect them. And the prophets of Israel, who were also poets and sang of the Law they loved, and who *were* prophets simply because they knew and were sure that God was the real Ruler of men and that his will *must* be done on earth—the prophets also looked for a day on which those who dwelt in the dust would arise from the dust, and the dead would live again, quickened by a dew which fell from heaven.

Their vision of that life may have been imperfect and obscure. It must have been as compared with that which we cherish, on whom the true Light has shined. But it was clear enough to inspire them with courage and hope in darker days than any we have ever known, and under the pressure of far severer trials. It set them singing, and even shouting, for joy. And it will be but a poor tale if we, who have the brighter larger hope, are less resolute and less joyful than were they.

II. How much less large and bright their hope was than that which Christ has kindled in our hearts, we must now proceed to shew, since on this point the views of many lovers of the Word seem to be singularly hazy and unsettled. It is not unnatural that they should be indistinct, since, unless we are on our guard against it, we are prone to take

any words we read in the sense which has come to be familiar to us, however foreign that sense may have been to the minds of those by whom the words were indited.

When, for example, we read such passages as that which I have just cited from the writings of Isaiah (xxvi. 19), we are apt to read all manner of Christian intentions into them, and to ask, a little impatiently, what certain of our teachers mean when they tell us that the hope of Immortality was only dimly revealed to them of old time; that they spoke of it but in part, and understood it but in part. And, of course, there is no harm in our reading Christian meanings into such words as these, if only we know what we are doing, if we do not assume either that the Prophet used or that his hearers took them in the sense in which we employ them.

Shakespeare makes Hamlet say,

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

And if I should quote these words in discussing Miracles with a sceptic, who refuses to believe in any miracle because he never saw one, I should make a perfectly legitimate use of them. But if, forgetting that Hamlet was speaking only of apparitions which bring with them "airs from heaven or blasts from hell," I should go on to infer from these words that either Hamlet or Shakespeare believed in the miraculous appearances and advents recorded in the Bible, my legitimate would instantly become an illegitimate use of them, and I should simply throw myself into my opponent's hands. In like manner, if I use the words of Isaiah to *express* the hope of immortality which I have learned from Christ, I make a lawful and intelligent use of them; but if I go on to infer that *Isaiah* employed them, or was understood to employ them, to express the very hope which I cherish, my use of them instantly

becomes unintelligent and unlawful. For we have only to read his words in their original connection, and to compare them with other Old Testament utterances of a similar kind, in order to ascertain that his hope was a wholly different one to ours, very much more contracted and dubious; in order to be sure that he used these words in another sense from that in which it is natural for us to use them.

(1) The Chapter of which this verse forms part consists of a Song which the Prophet puts into the mouth of the captive Israelites, and teaches them to sing when the Lord shall have turned again their captivity, and have brought them back to the land of their fathers in peace. Among the themes of this song of joy and deliverance there is one which turns—we can hardly say on *the* future life, but—on *a* future life. It commences thus (Verses 13, 14): “O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us, and it is through thee alone that *we* make mention of thy name. *Their* dead live not again; *their* shades arise not: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.” And it concludes thus (Verse 19): But “*thy* dead *shall* live again; *our* (my) dead bodies *shall* arise. Awake, and sing for joy, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is a dew of lights, and the earth *shall* cast forth *thy* shades.” Obviously, the Prophet is denying, as well as affirming, a resurrection unto life. Those who have served, and continue to serve, other gods, are *not* to live again; *their* shades are *not* to come up from the dust, *i.e.* from the Hadean world which lies below the dusty surface of the earth. It is only the servants of Jehovah who are to have part in this resurrection—though it is purely through his grace that they know and serve Him; only those who have been taught to renounce that idolatrous worship and to wait on Jehovah in his temple. In a word, it is a resurrection of the just, but not of the unjust.

And, strange as this limited conception of the Resurrection may appear to us, it obtained among the Jews for a thousand years, and is held by many of them to the present day. Thus, for example, in Psalm xvi. verses 10 and 11, we have a passage which is constantly adduced to prove that David cherished the Christian hope, a passage than which none is deemed more clear and full: "Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, neither wilt thou suffer (me) thy holy (or godly, or beloved) one to see the pit. Thou wilt shew me (make me to know, teach me to find) the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand pleasures for evermore." And yet, even here, it is only the godly, or the holy, or the beloved, for whom this great hope is entertained; it is only because David knows he has set the Lord always before him, that he believes he shall never be moved, but outlive even the stroke and change of death.¹ And our great authority on the belief of the later Jews assures us² that even in the time of Christ—when at least the great bulk of the Jews are supposed to have cherished the hope of an universal resurrection, they really held—some, that *all Jews* should rise "except those who affirmed that the Law was not from Heaven, or that the Resurrection could not be proved from the Law"; some that "*only the blessed* were to inherit everlasting happiness, since it is the indwelling of the Spirit which raises men to immortal life, and He abides not with the evil"; and some, "that *no Gentiles*, but only pious Israelites would rise," or that of the Jews themselves only "the good would arise *at the coming of the Messiah*, and the rest of the nation" not until "the end of the world."

Here, then, is one great difference between the Christian

¹ This same view is stated more fully in Psalm xlix., though I have never seen that Psalm quoted as an argument for a life beyond death.

² Rev. W. J. Deane, M.A., in THE EXPOSITOR (Second Series), vol. vii. page 398.

faith and the faith of Isaiah. *We* believe that we must *all* appear before the judgment-seat, to receive the due reward of our deeds, whether they be good or bad; *he* taught that only the Jewish dead, perhaps that only the faithful Remnant, would live again, that only *their* dead bodies would arise, that it was only *their* shades which Hades would give up. He held (Verse 10) that even if favour *were* shewn to the wicked, they would not learn righteousness; that even in the land of uprightness they would still deal unjustly, and would have no eye for the majesty of the Lord.

(2) But even this great difference sinks to nothing when compared with one that breaks upon us as we apply our minds to his words, and mark how he unfolds his hope for the dead. The more closely we look into that hope the more shadowy and indefinite it grows. For what the Prophet is teaching the people to look for is—a reign of righteousness *in the land to which they are about to be restored*. And this reign of righteousness he connects with the advent of the Messiah (Chap. xxiv. 23) and *his* reign “in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem.” But they, the restored captives, are few in number and of no strength. The nation must be increased, for its borders are to be extended (Chap. xxvi. 15). Whence are its inhabitants to come?

And their godly fathers, who have perished miserably in the miseries of the Captivity—are *they* to have no lot or part in the Kingdom of Messiah? Are they never to see the things which they desired to see? Is their faith, their fidelity, to go unrewarded for ever? It cannot be. They must, they will, live again. Their dead bodies *will* rise. Their shades will return from the underworld in which they have been “kept” by the mighty power of God. They will share, and enhance, the joy. A quickening influence will fall from Heaven, touched by which those who long since returned to the dust from which they

came will spring up into new life, just as under the magical touch of the dew, born of the sun and reflecting the light of the sun, the dry and dusty earth breaks into vital beauty and fruitfulness.¹ Hades will give up the spirits of the faithful dead, that the Kingdom of Messiah may be full of men.

In short, what the Prophet contemplates, what he teaches the people to expect is that, *when they are restored to their native land*, the Messiah will appear among them; and that, in some mysterious way, their faithful and godly ancestors will come with Him, in order that the full tale of his subjects may be complete, and that the faithful dead may receive the due reward of their fidelity. The resurrection for which he looks, and teaches them to look, is to have earth for its scene, and time for its portion.

That this is the general strain of thought in Isaiah's Song our best commentators admit (Cheyne and Plumptre *in loco*). And strangely as it may sound in our ears, it is by no means peculiar to Isaiah. It is common to many of the prophets—how strange, then, that it should be strange to us!—and receives notable expression in Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of Dry Bones (Chap. xxxvii.)—another of the Old Testament passages which we are apt to misinterpret by reading it in a Christian sense. Indeed few passages are oftener cited in proof that the Jews, or at all events the later Jews, shared our hope of immortality, than this sublime Vision; whereas, in truth, it proves conclusively that their hope was a very different one from ours. Even the most orthodox of commentators² confesses that, "by the image of the resurrection of the body, Ezekiel

¹ One of the inscriptions found on the old Jewish tombs in the Crimea (A.D. 6 to A.D. 960) runs thus: "May the dew go up over thy resting-place." And Mr. Deane explains it by a still more ancient Rabbinical belief (which I suppose the rabbis derived from Isaiah's curious phrase, "*Thy dew shall be a dew of lights*," i.e. a quickening dew), that "the resuscitation of the dead should be effected by a heavenly dew which should fall upon their graves and quicken their dust to life." THE EXPOSITOR (Second Series), vol. vii. page 396.

² See Dr. Currey's comment on this Chapter in *The Speaker's Commentary*.

prefigures *the re-instatement of Israel*, now scattered and lifeless, *as a community restored to their home, and re-invigorated with spiritual life.*" And, indeed, we need no further witness than the Prophet himself, if only we mark what he says and hear him out. For, after describing how, at the word of the Lord, the dry bones came together and were clothed with flesh, and how, when the wind blew upon them, "the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up on their feet an exceeding great army," he himself proceeds to explain his parable and tell us what it means (Verses 11-14): "Then he (the Lord) said unto me, Son of man, these bones are *the whole house of Israel*. Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: . . . therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, *and bring you into the land of Israel*. . . . And I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live; *and I will place you in your own land.*"

Like David and Isaiah, then, Ezekiel is speaking only of the Jews, perhaps only of the godly among the Jews, not of a general resurrection; and with him, as with Isaiah, it is by no means the general resurrection *at the last day* which he has in view, but only a restoration of the faithful Israel to their native land and to the blessings of the Messianic reign. In fine, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, when they seek to penetrate the mysteries of the future life, see but through a glass darkly: it is not theirs to know times and seasons, or to anticipate the truths that came with Christ, and which only He could bring to light. Nor did Isaiah, though perhaps the greatest of the prophetic brotherhood, see farther or more clearly into the mystery. To him, as to them, the dead who were to live again were the godly Jews; and they were to live again on earth, not in heaven; in time, not in eternity.

(3) And if we could get behind the words of the Prophets and see into their minds, I suspect we should find that the basis on which they built, the root from which they evolved, their hope of a future life for the pious dead was their firm conviction, a conviction which they would not suffer any of the shows of time to shake, that God is the real Ruler of men, and that He is just ; that, because He is just, He will not suffer any good man to serve Him for nought : that if men are cut off from life before they have received the due reward of their fidelity, they *must* live again in order to reap that reward.¹ This conviction—so hard to reach, so much harder to hold amid all the apparent oppositions and contradictions of human life and experience, that it must be the gift or inspiration of God—was the ruling and shaping fact which moulded all their thoughts, all their teaching. If we trace back to its source any of the principles they lived to assert, or even any of the predictions they ventured to utter, we find it here,—in the conviction that God is in very deed the Judge of all the earth, and that the Judge of all the earth must do right. And this conviction may very well have given birth and strength to such hopes of a future life for the faithful dead as they were able to frame or to receive. For what is the argumentative basis of the hope *we* cherish but this very conviction more logically worked out and carried to a still larger conclusion? Happily *we* have a more sure word than any logical deduction on which to rest our belief that all who dwell in the dust will awake : but in so far as we appeal to reason instead of Revelation, do not we also argue thus?—"Because God rules, and God is just, every man must receive the due reward of his deeds ; and as, for the most part, men do not receive that reward here, or do not receive it in full, they will receive it hereafter."

¹ This conviction is elaborately wrought out on these very lines in Psalm xlix. (*Heb.*) See THE EXPOSITOR (First Series), vol. x. pp. 466 ff.

The main logical difference between our position and that of the Prophets of Israel is, that we make an *universal* use of the very argument of which they made only a *national* use, and extend to *all* men the inference which their habits of thought led them to apply only to *a few*. That we see more, and more clearly, than they saw we owe, not to any superiority in our reasoning faculty, but to the larger and brighter light which Christ has thrown on the realities of the heavenly world—from which He came, and to which He has returned.

(4) It may, then, be taken as proved, I think, that the Prophets, from Moses to Malachi, taught a very different, a much less clear and certain, hope of immortality—in so far as they taught it at all—than that which we have received from Christ: for where does their hope find fuller expression than in the passages which we have now examined? no one of which, as we have seen, can be fairly read in the Christian significance. And to some, no doubt, the conclusion at which we have arrived will be very unwelcome. Above all those who affect to be “Evangelical,” in some superior or exclusive sense, will be offended by it; though why they of all men should resent, or, rather, how they are to justify their resentment of, a conclusion which exalts the truth and grace that came by Christ, so far above the law that came by Moses, it is difficult to say. It is easy enough to see why they will resent it; for it will deprive them of certain “proof passages” which they have been in the habit of quoting in support of the doctrine of the Resurrection. But that doctrine needs no such support, nor can any doctrine be supported by passages which, when fairly read, do not affirm it. And unless we prefer our own indolent and insincere habits of thought to the claims of truth and the honour of our Lord, to whom alone we owe *our* hope of immortality, we at least shall cease to cite such passages as these in a sense they will not

bear, and to put the prophets of Israel on the same level with Him to whom they gave witness, and from whom they drew their wisdom and strength. We shall remember that the Sadducees, who denied a resurrection, were the disciples of Moses, as well as the Pharisees, who believed at most that *the Jews* would rise again to share in the glories of Messiah's kingdom. We shall remember that even when our Lord Himself set Himself to prove out of the Scriptures that the dead live unto God, He cited no one of the passages which we commonly cite from the Old Testament, as surely He would have done had they meant what we have taken them to mean; but, instead of quoting texts which seem so plain, confined Himself to the obscure argument that, since long after they were dead, God called Himself the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, these patriarchs must still live unto Him who is the God of the living and not of the dead. And that is an argument which none of the Pharisees had discovered for themselves. It is an argument—I say it with all reverence—on which no one of us would have dared to rely save on his authority; which we might even have smiled at as forced had it fallen from the lips of a rabbi; which, even if it had flowed from the pen of an Apostle, we might have ranked with St. Paul's curious argument in *Galatians* (iii. 16), "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." It is an argument in which even now, if we take it to the dying, or to bereaved mourners who have just buried their dead out of their sight, they will find no rest or consolation unless they believe on Him; while, if they do believe on Him we have arguments and assurances of a force so superior that we should never think of plying them with this.

(5) If not unwelcome, our conclusion will still be perplexing to others, on the ground that, if Isaiah was looking for no more than his words, fairly taken, seem to mean,

his hope made him ashamed, that no such resurrection, on earth and in time, as he expected, ever took place; and that therefore he was moved to utter a prediction which was never fulfilled. But, formidable as this objection appears, the answer to it is plain. His hope *has* been fulfilled, though in a much larger sense and in nobler ways than he was able to grasp, just as the hope of the Patriarchs was fulfilled in "a better country, even a heavenly" (Heb. xi. 13-16): fulfilled in part, as St. Peter argues (1 Epis. i. 10-12), in "the salvation of souls" already wrought by Christ and in all the glorious consequences which that salvation implies: and it will yet be still more wondrously and perfectly fulfilled, as St. Paul argues at length (in Romans xi.), when "all Israel shall be saved." That the Prophets, "searching what, and what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify," often failed to discover the full meaning of the visions they saw and the words they were impelled to utter, or even saw in them a nearer and lesser and more earthly meaning than they bore in the inspiring Mind, is now a mere exegetical truism, and should surely occasion no more surprise than the admitted fact, that the primitive Christians, and even some of the Apostles, till experience corrected their first impressions, looked for an immediate second advent of the Lord, and hoped to see Him set up his throne on earth. In all its parts Revelation is, and through the limitations of our nature of necessity must be, progressive, and grows from less to more; and the interpretation of that which has been revealed lags behind even the movement of Revelation itself. Instead of doubting that the hope of Isaiah was less clear, less steadfast, less certain than that which Christ came to reveal, it would better become us to doubt whether we ourselves have half mastered the significance of the hope He revealed, whether there is not yet much more light to break

out upon us from his Word, if only we are looking for more light.

(6) But though we must not cite Isaiah's Song to *prove*, we may use it, if only we use it wisely, to *express* the immortal hope we have received from Christ, in so far as we have received it. Putting all the fulness and certainty we have derived from Him into our Song, we may sing with the restored Israelites, and in a larger happier sense than they ever knew,—

*Our dead shall live again ;
Our dead bodies shall arise.*

Even as we stand by the graves of those whom we held most dear and can never forget, we may take on our lips the victorious summons and challenge,—

Awake, and sing for joy, ye that dwell in the dust,
For your dew is a dew of lights,
And the earth shall yet cast forth her shades.

Nay, we may go far beyond the scope of this lovely Song, and joyfully assert that our dead *do* live even now already, that they do *not* dwell in the dust to which we committed their dust; but that that which was mortal in them has already been swallowed up of life and has put on immortality. We may think of them, we are bound to think of them, not as unclothed, but as clothed upon, as having gone up on high to sit down in heavenly places with Christ Jesus their Lord, as dwelling with Him in the mansions of his Father's house. And who does not see the immense difference between this large, present, divine hope, a hope already fulfilled in part, and the obscure forecast of the Prophet that, in some mysterious way, the Hebrew fathers were to rejoin their children, who without them could not be made perfect, to be restored to life in order that they might possess themselves of the land

which God had given them, and partake the triumphs of Messiah's advent?

The practical lesson of this contrast between the hope of Israel and the Christian hope is, that our conceptions of the future life must of necessity depend on our present experience of spiritual good and the desires and aspirations which that experience breeds in us. The Jews cherished no higher aspiration than that, under the sceptre of Messiah, their heavenly King, the whole Hebrew race should become one; and that they all, fathers and children, should enjoy the peace and prosperity which spring from a loyal obedience to his law (*e.g.* Ezek. xxxvii. 18-28). And this aspiration, as we have seen, gave form and colour to all their hopes for the future. *Their* heaven would be reached when the Messiah came to set up his kingdom among them, and to make the Jewish empire the ruling empire of the world. They did not so much as dream that when He came, bringing righteousness and peace, and came to his own, his own would not receive Him, that they would reject Him and the blessings of his reign, and so turn their heaven of righteousness and peace and abundance into a hell of infamy and strife, defeat and death.

And it is with us as it was with them. We can no more rise above the level prescribed by our own experience than could they. In whatever gracious and luminous words or forms the Heavenly Life has been revealed to us, we put our own construction on them and drag them down to the level of our knowledge and our desires. It is not only that those who are sensual in their thoughts frame a sensuous and material conception of the spiritual life, and that those who are selfish look for a selfish enjoyment even in the life of charity and love. But even those of us who are looking for an unselfish and spiritual

life are equally unable to transcend the bounds of our own experience of that life, and can only desire *more* of that which we already have and know to be good. It may be pourtrayed to us, and we ourselves may speak of it, as a life of unsullied righteousness, or a life of unbroken service, or a life of constant and growing communion with God; and beyond this we can hardly go. But even so, our conception of that life must depend on what we *mean* by communion with God, what we mean by service or by righteousness; and what we mean by these terms will depend mainly on our personal experience of the sacred realities which we use them to convey. To one man, righteousness may mean only a wise compliance with an outward law; while, to another, it may mean a voluntary, unconscious, and happy obedience to a law graven on the heart. To one, service may denote little more than unwelcome toil for a welcome reward; while, to another, it may denote a delight in wholesome and beneficent activities which asks for no reward but larger opportunities and an added power of doing well. To one, communion with God may signify nothing more than a happy use of enjoyable forms of worship; while, to another, it may signify nothing less than an ever enlarging comprehension of God's thoughts, an ever deepening sympathy with his ways, an ever growing unity of spirit, will, affection, and aim with Him. What these terms mean to us severally will, and must, determine our several conceptions of the heavenly life, even though we all express them in the same words and breathe them with an equal earnestness. And, therefore, we shall best conceive of that perfect life, as we shall also best prepare ourselves for it, in proportion as we set ourselves to live that life here and now. We shall best learn how the will of God is done in heaven by doing that will, with all our hearts, on earth, and so bringing down to earth as much of heaven as we can. Even

the Christian hope can only become ours in its full power and splendour as we become more truly Christian, more like Him who is the very soul and joy of heaven.

I append, for the judgment of experts and the help of the unlettered, a translation of the Chapter in Isaiah from which I have so often quoted in this Article. Nothing is more bewildering than the frequent and unaccountable, or unaccounted for, changes of number and person which the Hebrew poets affect, when, nevertheless, it is one person who speaks, or is intended to speak, throughout; and nothing does more to obscure the sense of the Prophetical Scriptures for the student who depends on our English Version than the fidelity with which, in this respect, it follows the Original. In this twenty-sixth Chapter, for example, Isaiah puts a song into the mouth of the restored Jewish remnant. It is the Israelitish people who are speaking, or singing, to us from the first verse to the last. Yet, in the Hebrew, the speaker uses indifferently the pronouns "I" and "my," "we" and "our," "they" and "them," and is slavishly followed by our translators, without a word of warning or explanation. What the real and main reason for these curious changes is, I have never been able fully to ascertain. Sometimes, no doubt, they result from personification; sometimes from the use of nouns of multitude; and sometimes, probably, they are to be attributed to the mistakes of copyists, the close resemblance of form between some of the singular and plural pronouns rendering it easy to confuse them. But, surely, a habit which seems so ingrained in Hebrew poetry, as well as in some other Oriental tongues, must have a cause in modes of thought and expression with which we are not familiar. Whatever the reason may be, there can be no question that this trick of composition utterly perplexes and misleads the ordinary reader. I have tried the experiment,

with this Chapter, on several intelligent men, and found that they did not so much as suspect that the People were speaking throughout, but were puzzling themselves with the question, Sayeth the prophet this of himself or of some other man? And when the state of the case was explained to them, they were not a little indignant that our translators had not been at the pains to make the general flow of thought clear to them. Hence, in order to make it clear, I have ventured to retain but one of the many pronominal forms employed by the Prophet. And if any reader will take the trouble of comparing this rendering with that of the Authorized Version, he will begin to suspect how much he loses by the too close addiction of our translators to the curious license of expression which the Hebrew admits. I may add that the translation has been submitted to more than one scholar of distinction, and has been generally approved by them.

ISAIAH XXVI.

1 *In that day shall this Song be sung in the land of Judah:—A strong city is ours; salvation doth God appoint for walls and bulwarks.*

2 *Open ye the gates that a righteous nation, which keepeth truth, may enter in.*

3 *Peace, peace, hast thou ordained for us, because we put our trust in thee.*

4 *Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah ye have the Rock of Ages:*

5 *For he hath cast down them that dwell on high; he hath brought low the lofty city, he hath brought it down to the earth: he hath cast it down to the dust.*

6 *The foot trode it down, even the feet of the poor, the steps of the weak.*

7 *The path of the righteous is level; thou makest the path of the righteous level with a guage.*

8 *Yea, in the path of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our heart was for thy name and for thy memorial.*

9 *With our soul we desired thee in the night; yea, with our spirit within us we sought thee earnestly; for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.*

10 *If favour be showed to the wicked, he learneth not righteousness; in the land of uprightness he dealeth unjustly, and hath no eye for the majesty of the Lord.*

11 *Lord, thy hand hath been lifted up, but they saw it not. They shall see thy jealousy for thy people, and be ashamed; yea, fire shall devour thine adversaries.*

12 *Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou hast wrought all our work for us.*

13 *O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us. Through thee alone do we celebrate thy name.*

14 *Their dead live not again; their shades rise not: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.*

15 *Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, thou hast increased the nation; thou hast won thyself glory: thou hast extended all the borders of the land.*

16 *Lord, in trouble have we missed thee; we have mourned in prayer when thy chastening came upon us.*

17 *Like as a woman with child, and near her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so were we at thy presence, O Lord.*

18 *We were with child, we were in pain; we brought forth as it were wind: we wrought no salvation in the land, neither were inhabitants of the world brought to birth.*

19 *Thy dead shall live again; our dead bodies shall arise. Awake, and sing for joy, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is a dew of lights, and the earth shall cast forth thy shades.*

20 *Go, my people, enter into thy chamber, and shut thy door behind thee; hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation shall have passed by.*

21 *For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the world for their guilt, and the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.*
