

ANTIOCH, THE SECOND CENTER OF CHURCH EXTENSION,
by Professor J. W. Davis, D. D.

SOME MISSIONARY ASPECTS OF PAUL'S FIRST ITINERATION,
by Mr. Robert E. Speer.

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Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

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The Old Testament and Immortality.

Only a little while ago, all who approached the Old Testament with "critical" intent felt bound to question or deny the recognition of human immortality in it, or at least in its older parts. All this is now changed. Least of all in "critical" circles is there observable to-day any hesitancy to allow with all heartiness that Israel from the beginning of its recorded history cherished the most settled conviction of the persistence of the soul in life after death. The reason for this change of view is not to be sought in a gradually growing better understanding of the passages in the Old Testament which bear witness to life beyond the grave. Rather it is this change of view which has led "critical" students to search out, and more sympathetically to expound the passages which bear this witness. As a result it may be hoped, however, that their testimony has now been so fully developed that it may not again become possible to explain it away or neglect it. And this we may account a substantial gain derived from recent investigation of the Old Testament concep-

tions of death and what lies beyond death.

The Critical Change of Front.

The real reason for so complete a change of view lies in the region not of exegesis, but of speculation. Men have been framing theories of the origin of religion, and then seeking to apply them to the origin of the Israelitish religion. Or men have set themselves to explain the origin of the religion of Israel as a modification, or "development" say, of ideas derived from the religions of surrounding peoples. In neither case have they been willing to recognize in the religion of Israel anything of strikingly exceptional character. They have accordingly stumbled at the current notion that the horizon of Israel's religious thought was bounded by the grave; that as ANDREW LANG puts it, Israel carried Theism to its most austere extreme—"though he slay me yet will I trust in him"—while entirely unconcerned about any existence after the slaying in which the reward of trust could be reaped; that abstracting itself from all personal hopes and fears, from all tendency to project itself into

the future, Israel was "born to give itself up to developing, undisturbed, the theistic conception, the belief in a righteous Eternal." This was not true of any other nation. This certainly was not true of any nation into close contact with which Israel came in its formative years. This emphatically was not true of either Egypt or Babylon, from the womb of the one of which Israel proceeded, on the bosom of the other of which Israel's infancy was fed. If this was really the nature of Israel's religion—high Theism in connection with no belief in human immortality—how, above all, can the origin of Israel's religion be explained on either of the fashionable theories of the origin of all religion—Mr. TYLER's theory of a primitive animism, or Mr. SPENCER's theory of a primitive ancestor-worship, both of which evolve belief in a God out of a previous belief in disembodied souls? It is not strange that men committed to one or the other of these modes of explaining Israel's religion began to search the Scriptures to see if the things that they had been taught concerning the religion of Israel were really true. Nor is it strange that when they began really to seek, they had no difficulty in finding, spread over the whole of the Old Testament, evidence of a vital belief in the persistence of life beyond death. Thus a notable fresh instance has been afforded of a complete somersault of "critical" opinion under the dictation of newly framed speculative views; and of a complete vindication at the hands of the "critics" themselves, of what had been contemptuously spoken of as "apologetic" or "conservative" exegesis.

**The
Determining
Theories.**

Among Old Testament "critics" the fashionable theory of the origin of religion,

just now, is doubtless Mr. SPENCER's. For the last quarter of a century STADE, and his adjutants—OORT, SCHWALLY, MARTI, MATTHES, and the like—have been scrutinizing the Old Testament text with the most painstaking care, in the hope of discovering traces of the worship of the dead among the Israelites. Of course, all such searchers have treated it as an axiom that Israel believed in the continued life of the soul after death. For how should Israel worship that of the existence of which it had no notion? The somewhat fewer advocates of Mr. TYLER's theory have been equally ready to contend for the same fundamental fact. They may refuse to find traces of ancestor-worship in Israel, but they find abundant traces of "animism." And "animism" implies "*animae*" to worship, just as truly as ancestor-worship implies the persistence of ancestors to worship. Nor do those less speculative minds who content themselves with deriving Israel's faith from its Babylonian forefathers find it possible to be backward here. For the Babylonians assuredly believed in a life beyond the grave; and how could Israel, standing on their shoulders, do less? Accordingly, from every quarter of late have come voices loudly proclaiming what was only a few years ago as loudly denied. With these various theories and their modes of working out their several problems we wish now, however, to have nothing to do. What we wish to do is simply to call attention to a recent lecture delivered by Professor FRIEDRICH DELTSCHE, in which he endeavors from the last mentioned of these standpoints to outline the development of Heaven and Hell. The lecture was delivered in the interests of the German Expedition for exploring in Babylonia and has been published under the suggestive title of *Babel und Bibel*.

**Dr. Delitzsch's
Evolution of
Heaven and
Hell.**

This is what Dr. DELITZSCH says: "Man dies, and, as his body is laid in the tomb, his disembodied soul departs into the 'land whence there is no return,' Sheol, Hades, the obscure, dark place, where shades flit about like shadows and lead a gloomy, joyless existence: and on the doorways and fastenings the dust lies thick, and all in which the heart of man once rejoiced has become dust and ashes. With such a comfortless outlook, it is easy to understand that the Hebrews as well as the Babylonians looked on long life here below as the highest good: and indeed the 'Procession Street' of Marduk, disinterred by the German Expedition to Babylon, is adorned with great stone slabs, on every one of which a prayer of Nebuchadnezzar's is inscribed, which closes with the words, 'O Lord Marduk, grant long life!' But it is a thing to be remarked that the Babylonian conception of the under-world is one degree more genial than that of the Old Testament. On the twelfth tablet of the Gilgamic Epic the Babylonian under-world is described in great detail. We read there of a place within the under-world which is evidently intended for the specially pious. 'in which they repose on couches and drink clear water.' Many Babylonian coffins have been found in Warka, Nippur and Babel. The Hither-Asia portion of the Berlin museum has lately acquired a small clay cone, which obviously came from such a coffin, and the inscription on which in pathetic words prays him who finds this coffin to leave it in its place and not to destroy it. And the brief text closes with words of blessing on him who does so good a deed: 'May his name be blessed in the upper-world, and in the under-world may his disembodied spirit drink clear water.' Therefore there is a place in Sheol for the altogether pious where they recline on couches and drink clear water. Is not the rest of Sheol, then, more for those who are not pious, and not merely murky, but also waterless, or at least affording only 'muddy water,' and in any event a thirsty land? In the Book of Job which exhibits great familiarity with Babylonian conceptions, we find (xxiv. 18ff), the con-

trast already drawn between a hot, waterless desert which is intended for the wicked, and a garden with fresh, clear water, which is intended for the pious. And in the New Testament, which unites this conception in a remarkable way with the last verse of the Book of Isaiah, we read already of a fiery hell in which the rich man longs for water, and of a garden (Paradise) full of fresh clear water for Lazarus. And what has since then been made out of this Hell and this Paradise, by painters and poets, theologians and priests, and last of all by Mohammed the Prophet! See there that poor Mussulman who, sick and weak, has been left behind in the desert by the Caravan, because unable longer to endure the fatigue of the journey. A cruse of water by his side, he digs for himself with his own hands a shallow grave in the sands, resignedly expecting his death. His eyes sparkle because only a few steps more and through the open gates of Paradise the anæls will come forth to him with the words on their lips, 'Selam 'alaika, thou hast been pious, so enter now for eternity into the garden that Allah has prepared for his own.' The garden stretches out like the expanse of heaven and earth. Thick-foliaged glades, full of grateful shades and low-hanging fruitage, are threaded in every direction by brooks and fountains, while luxuriant trees grow along the banks of the rivers of Paradise. A Paradisaical brightness illumines the faces of the blessed, full of happiness and serenity. They wear green clothing of the finest silk and brocade, and are adorned with gold and silver bracelets. They repose on couches amid thick cushions and soft pillows, with deep-piled carpets under their feet. So they recline opposite one another by richly appointed tables, laden with whatever their hearts can wish. The cup is circulated, and immortal youths with pearl-like countenances pass around with silver tankards and glass goblets, overflowing with 'Maim,' the beautiful, clear water from the fountain 'Tasnim,' out of which the Archangels drink, fragrant with camphire and ginger; and this water is mixed with costly wine of which they drink as much as they will, since it neither intoxicates nor causes any ill. And then there are the maidens of Para-

dise! Girls with skin as soft as flowers, and budding breasts, and eyes like pearls,—gazelle-eyes full of modest but ravishing glances! Two and seventy of these Paradaisical maidens, every saint may choose for himself, in addition to the wives he may have had on earth, in case he wishes to retain these. All hatred and jealousy depart from the hearts of the saints: there is no chattering, no falsehood in Paradise; 'Selam, Selam' sounds everywhere, and all talk rings with the words: 'Elhamdu lillaki rabbi-l-alamin, Praise belongs to God, the Lord of Creation.' This is the last issue of the simple Babylonian conception of the clear water which the altogether pious attain to drinking in Sheol. And these conceptions of Hell-pains and Paradise-joys rule until to-day over uncounted millions."

Dr. Delitzsch's Omissions. There is much that is attractive in this prettily drawn picture of the gradual invention of Heaven and Hell. But when its sweet music ceases to soothe our enchanted ears, we shall do well to shake ourselves awake and ask in all seriousness, "Men and brethren, are these things so?" Is this really the true account of the origin not merely of the Mohammedan dream of Paradise, but of the Christian doctrine of hell-pains and heaven-joys as well? Nay, put it at its highest—for Dr. DELITZSCH has himself cited a parable of Jesus—is Christ's teaching as to heaven and hell really nothing but a somewhat revised and very much enlarged edition of the primitive Babylonian conception of a Sheol within which there was a place where were to be had couches and clear water? This is obviously Dr. DELITZSCH's theory. But he has neglected to cite any evidence which establishes a genetic connection between the several conceptions he places in lineal relations. Nay, does he not go far towards breaking off all possibility of a genetic conception between them, by remarking that in this very point

of a place of comfort for the righteous within Sheol, the Babylonian conception was more "genial" than that of the Hebrews—the implication being that among the Hebrews there was no differentiation of states in the common indifference of condition in Sheol. This is, no doubt, a serious error; a curious proof of the hold which the old "critical" tradition still has upon Professor DELITZSCH'S mind. If he will sink himself more deeply into the Book, he will discover that the Sheol of the Biblical revelation far less than the Sheol of the Babylonian legends is a featureless country without variety of landscape or distinction of parts: that there are in it heights and depths; that included in its circle there are diverse hemispheres; nay, that its wide expanse is capable of embracing even heaven and hell themselves. Meanwhile it is true enough that the picture of Sheol in the Old Testament is drawn not for the purpose of setting forth these distinctions of state within its bounds, but for the purpose of emphasizing the fact that it is the abode of the dead, into which are gathered, as into a great grave, all from whom the light of life has fled.

The Dead in the Old Testament Conceived as Dead. The dreariness of the picture which is thus drawn in the Old Testament of "the other world"—for that is precisely what the Sheol of the Old Testament stands for—has always been the source of much misapprehension, not merely among the "critics," but also among simple readers of the Bible. But what would we have? Should not the Old Testament represent the dead as *dead*? The plain fact is that, now that Christ has brought life and immortality to light, we have learned to realize so keenly that those in him though they be dead yet live, that we are in

danger of forgetting that those in him who have passed under the power of death though they are still alive in him yet are dead. The primary fact about the dead, it must be remembered, is just that they are *dead*. And that, it was the fundamental task of the Old Testament revelation concerning "the other world" to impress on the hearts of men. The Old Testament never falls into the error of looking upon death as natural to man. It conceives man as a unit, and death—the sundering of soul and body—as the most dreadfully unnatural thing that can befall him. It never falls into the error of conceiving death as in itself an advantage to man. It keeps poignantly before all its readers the deepest fact of all other facts concerning death,—that it is in all alike, good and bad, just the punishment of sin. It never falls into the error of supposing death to concern merely the body. It clearly realizes and makes its every reader realize that it has its profound meaning also for the soul. The body is laid in the grave and the soul departs to Sheol: but every soul that departs to Sheol is a dead soul—just as truly as the body that is laid in the grave is a dead body. Sheol is the abode of the *dead*. Quite irrespective of any and everything else that may be true of any and every soul gathered there (and much else we now know under New Testament light to be true of them) this is the fundamental thing that is true of them all,—they are all *dead*. The whole Old Testament conception of Sheol is formed from this point of view, and the whole description of it in the Old Testament is dominated by the consequent contrast which is drawn between it and the kingdom of life in which man abides in this world. This immense stress that the Old Testament lays on Sheol as the place of death is certainly justified

by the nature of the case. And its effect was to throw the eyes of the Old Testament saint for his hope, not across the gulf that divides "this" from "the other" world, but on into the future. This made the Old Testament religion emphatically an eschatological religion. And in an eschatological religion it is resurrection not mere immortality that men long for.

**Our Lord's
Argument for
Resurrection.**

It is not possible to develop here either the nature or the consequences of this Old Testament teaching. Nor can we even pause to point out how truly it is only a partial and not an erroneous teaching. Or how fully it is therefore taken up into and given just place and significance in the New Testament,—though, of course, largely added to by further revelations of the condition of those who though dead are yet "with Christ," their Life, in the "other world." Or how gloriously it is therefore transfigured with the bliss of the heaven where he is. We shall stay only to illustrate by a single example the light a firm grasp upon this Old Testament conception of death as really death, affecting as such the entire man, throws upon passages which would otherwise remain obscure. There is probably no saying of our Lord's which has created more difficulty for expositors than the argument by which he proved the resurrection to the Sadducees, as recorded in Matthew xxii. 32, and its parallels. "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." How many, as they have read, have stood still at these words, puzzled. How often have we all wondered how

the fact that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" can be used to prove just the resurrection of those whose God he proclaims himself to be. And how much more often still have we wondered at the efforts of the commentators to explain the force and vindicate the justice of the argument. That God is not the God of the dead, but the living, certainly proves (we are prone to think) that those whose God he proclaims himself to be are living. But living they will be, although dead,—that is, if their souls still live in the great beyond. Accordingly the argument seems to us to prove the immortality of the soul, but not the resurrection of the body. But that is simply because we have preferred to be taught by Plato rather than by the Scriptures. From the standpoint of the Bible the souls separated from their bodies, though living, are *dead*: they are under the power of death. They are, because dead, still enduring the penalty threatened against sin. The Living God is the God of the living, not of the dead: he cannot have proclaimed himself the God of those hopelessly under the power of death, suffering the penalty of sin. If he proclaims himself, therefore, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, this is proof beyond cavil, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whatever temporarily may be their state, belong fundamentally to the realm of the living, not to the realm of the dead; and cannot therefore be permanently held by the bonds of death. And the realm of the living is the realm where not dead souls are, but where living souls are, *i. e.*, souls not suffering disabilities through death. Death cannot have permanent dominion over those whose God is the Living God: in the very nature of the case they belong to the Kingdom of Life. They must therefore emerge

from Sheol and return to the light of life—soul and body alike partaking of the undivided life that belongs to human nature. If we believe this, and so far as we believe it, we shall cease to wonder at the effect of our Lord's argument on the people: "And when the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at his teaching." It is the strength of the Old Testament religion, as even a PFELEDERER can tell us, that the Living God has nothing in common with the shades of Sheol: that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" that in him is the fountain of life, which to quaff is to abide forever in fullness of life. B. B. W.

* *

A Statement Furnishing Food For Thought. The implications, distinctions and anticipations in the following extracts will be found worthy of careful study:

"The days when men made the tacit imposition of anachronistic theology a first step in the exegetical process are rapidly passing. We endeavor to think as the biblical writers themselves thought, for we have at hand information sufficient to enable us so to think. . . .

"It is here that the historical method of studying the Scripture will render its greatest service. It will enable us to distinguish between the thought and its dress, the truth revealed and the medium of the revelation, that which is essential and that which is the word or concept in which the essential is displayed to people of the different biblical periods. In truth, it is already doing this, only we have not as yet awakened to the measureless importance of the service. We know the message of the prophets as never before; we understand the sorrow or the joy that fills the Psalms; we read the Pauline letters in the light of the times that gave them birth. How far do these historical interpretations resolve difficulties and illuminate matters already judged clear! But the work is as yet incomplete. Some