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the Book of the Law that Ezra is said to have brought with him. I think that this is an argument for the thesis that the greater part of the laws contained in our Pentateuch are older than Ezra. It seems that only the additions to these laws that were inserted in the manuscripts have been admitted into the canon. If we think of the great honour in which Ezra was held by the successive generations of priests and scribes it is astonishing that his book is lost. If even his laws are not handed down to us, it will be safe not to underrate the antiquity of the laws preserved by the Israelitic traditions.

B. D. EERDMANS.

JOB'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE STATE.

EVERY serious-minded person has at one time or another debated it in his own mind, "If a man die shall he live again?" Is life after death possible or does the grave end all? But in spite of the much argumentation, the remarkable thing is how little we really know upon the subject, how little we really have to tell to one another, and to support ourselves. The greatest of our English dramatists has written on that "something after death." But the something after death he calls an "undiscovered country." He calls it, and he rightly calls it, a destiny from which no traveller returns. Another has written in a similar strain,

> "Strange, is it not, that of the myriads who
> Before us passed the door of darkness through
> Not one returns to tell us of the road
> Which to discover we must travel too."

Let us not, then, in taking up the problem of immortality and the future state expect too much. We are not to suppose that if we have been at sea on the subject before,

we shall be able to make up our minds once for all and never hereafter be troubled and uneasy. It is unlikely that we shall arrive at any such positive and triumphant conclusion.

This Arab prince who sat on his ash-heap was a man of flesh and blood like the rest of us. He had his hopes but he had his doubts. He had his trusts but he had his fears. The immortality and life of the Gospel might in his case be compared to a beacon that burned with varying brightness. Sometimes it shone. It shone as the sun in the sky. At other times it flickered like a candle that would have seemed capable of being extinguished and blown out by the faintest breeze. And the utmost that we can expect from his utterances are hints, suggestions, aids to faith, evidences, helps. We must not think that we are going to get formal arguments. We must not think that we are going to have it proved with the certainty of a mathematical proposition. That was not his way.

I.

The Argument from Analogy.

In the first place, he makes use of a simple nature illustration. It was noticeable, then as now, that when the trees are cut down, the stumps, if they receive rain and are watered begin to put out new shoots. Indeed, when they have been hacked down to the earth and the very roots would appear to have decayed and rotted, they cling so tenaciously to life that on the most trifling provocation, the mere "scent of water," they will bud and blossom and continue to live with the freshness and vitality and vigour of former times. Hence he says—or rather he does not say it, he draws back just when he seems on the point of saying it; but he certainly suggests it, let us say that he says it, he could not have come so close to it and not have seen it—

just as there is[1] hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again; so there is hope of a man, if he dieth and giveth up the ghost, that he will continue to live in some altered sphere of existence elsewhere. It was an "argument" from analogy. And have we not all had our imagination kindled and fed by such arguments? Have we not all, for example, had our attention called to the caterpillar on the green blade? What a wonderful transformation takes place there! We perceive it at first able to enjoy the life of a limited world. Then it dies to live a larger, fuller life. Through the metamorphosis of the chrysalis it becomes a butterfly. And when we see it spread forth its wings and fly in the sunshine we could hardly believe that out of a thing so miserable there could come a creature so lovely and fair to look upon. You would not believe it did you not with your own eye watch it. It is impossible in its first state to imagine the hidden possibility it has got and which in its future state it is capable of having developed and brought out. Ergo: what can be done in a caterpillar may be done in a man, may it not? Nature offers many similar analogies. With every recurring spring time do we not find the truth set forth in parable, we die to live? The autumn is the period of the yellow leaf. It is the time of change and decay. It is the time of dissolution. It is the time of death. But when the earth revolves with the processes of the sun, we find that nature undergoes a strange and curious resurrection. It is clothed upon. All things become new. There are abundant signs and evidences of activity and productivity and life and growth and progress. Such analogies may not convince the reason and lay the spectres of the mind. Even Job did not feel inclined to press his. When he is on the point of suggesting the comparison between man and the tree that sprouts

[1] xiv. 7 ff.

again, he draws back and does not actually say it. He goes off to give [1] another which is less favourable to his earlier point of view. The analogy of the sprouting tree is immediately followed by the "counter-analogy" of the dried-up river. Job seems to be balancing their relative worth and is not yet able to make up his mind between them. Canon Cheyne lays great stress on the next verse [2] as proof positive that for ordinary mortals no resurrection was entertained. They were incapable of being "roused" from the endless sleep that awaited all. But since Job's views are so much in solution, one must be chary of fastening on any single statement to the neglect of others and treating it as if it were his last and only word upon the subject.

Taken for what they are worth, then, and studied and meditated upon, the favourable analogies help us to live and to believe that there is a life beyond this one. When we have thoroughly persuaded ourselves that the whole world proceeds upon the principle that we shall not all die but we shall be changed, when we have seen it not only in the case of the caterpillar becoming butterfly, but when we have seen it in the case of the tadpole becoming frog, it does not die but it is changed; when we have seen it in the hundred similar cases of metamorphosis which the experts on crustacea and amphibious creatures furnish us with—we shall have our faith quickened. We shall begin to take our belief in immortality more seriously. We shall begin to ask, is it likely that man should be the exception to the general rule? Is it not more likely that under the guidance of such a wonderful Creator, he should not die but be changed and have immortality "put on" in place of the mortal shape and form that he has shed?

[1] xiv. 11 ff.
[2] xiv. 12.

II.

Man's Claim on his Creator.

But Job did not leave it there. He has another line of thought running through his utterances. It seemed to him incredible that the God who had been at such trouble and pains to make him, should at the hour and instant of death proceed to unmake him.[1] "Thine hands have framed me and fashioned me. Wilt thou bring me unto dust again?" Was it for this that His creating processes had been exerted? Was it simply to vex him? Was it simply to visit him with troubles and bodily sores and mental perplexities? Surely, he would not despise and scorn the work of His hands. I cannot think, he virtually says in the [2] locus classicus, that it was for this purpose that my days were determined and the number of my months. Thou hast appointed the limits of my life but it was not with that end in view. If I am to be snuffed out like a candle in a few years' time, why can you not leave me alone? Why do you watch me and take notice of me and send me sorrow? Thou art a great God. Thou art an All-Wise and All-Loving Creator. It is not becoming of you to take such a mean advantage of me. Will you employ all the divinity and power that is yours by right [3] to harass a driven leaf? Or will you employ it [4] to pursue the short stubble that is scattered by the breeze? It sets him thinking. It does not seem worthy of the God he has worshipped or like His general character for goodness. There must be something wrong with the argument. But what that something is, he is not quite able to say. Still—what if death does not end all? [5] What if a man at death

[1] x. 8.

[2] c. 14. [3] xiii. 25. [4] xiii. 26.

[5] xiv. 14. The famous phrase, "if a man die, shall he live?" is felt by some to be a break in the consecutiveness of the thought. What goes before does not prepare for it. What follows does not develop it. Hence

should live again? That would put a new complexion on it. It would enable him to suffer without complaining in the present and give God an opportunity in the future of making up to him what he had missed and had to do without. Job did not get beyond this and he would not appear to have held it with any particular strength of conviction. He might be said to have "faintly trusted it." He "stretched out lame hands of faith" for it. But in so far as he held it at all he was a man before his time, and we may be grateful for his suggestion?

For what is it? What is it that he has spoken but an ancient way of putting the modern argument that we have some claim on God. Even as He has all claim on us, we have some claim on Him and particularly when by the unfairness of this world the wicked escape. He is under obligation to remember us and provide a future state where He will be able to redress the balance and give us the chance that we do not have now. He made us. We are the work of His hands. What would we think of a human father that said to the five year old he had called into existence and reared thus far, "Now then, my child, you must look after yourself and get along as well as you can. I wash my hands of you." We would not think very much of him and we would set the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children on his track and get him to do his bare duty. Then when the child grew to boyhood and from boyhood to youth and young manhood, if he tried to slip his responsibility and

the conjecture has been offered that the phrase was, in the first place, a marginal note made by some early copyist or reader and that in the course of time it slipped into the text and came to be read along with the rest. This explanation would seem, however, to be hardly necessary. If we imagine the passage in which the words stand to be one of those "lyric monologues" Canon Cheyne speaks of, if Job was less talking to his "comforters" than soliloquising and thinking aloud, we can well believe such a question might start into his mind without much to lead up to it and without his being there and then drawn to attempt an answer.

did not direct his steps and guard him from evil and give him a chance, even then, we would think that he had done less than might be reasonably expected of him. It is even thus that Jesus Christ taught the Fatherhood of God, and it is even thus that Job anticipated it. We are the work of His hands and now that He has made us, He must and He will stand by us. It is to His credit that He should. If He is Le Bon Dieu, if He is a God that is true and fair and honest and honourable, He cannot trifle with us. He cannot make little of our misery, but will give us some return for the misery we have been in. These are very human ways in which to speak about God. Our Calvinistic forefathers might have been shocked to have it stated so. But we are learning at the feet of Jesus to begin from human ways when arguing for the Divine. They are less likely to lead astray than anything else. And if God is a Father who accepts His responsibility for us all, He must have a better life in store in which all the accidents by which we are presently perplexed shall be put right and we shall see that He has been leading us all along the toilsome way.

This was keenly felt by George Eliot in her early days. "Her own filial piety was sufficiently manifest: but of the converse obligation, that of the claim of child upon parent, she was wont to speak thus strongly. "There may be," she would say, "conduct on the part of a parent which should exonerate his child from further obligation to him: but there cannot be action conceivable which should absolve the parent from obligation to serve his child, seeing that for that child's existence he is responsible." I did not at the time see the connexion between this view and the change of a fundamental nature marked by Miss Evans's earlier contention for our "claim on God." The bearing of the above on orthodox religion I did not see. Some time ago, however, I came across this reflection, made by a clergyman

of the Broad Church school—that since the *claims* of children had, in the plea for schools, been based on the responsibility of parents towards them, a higher principle had been maintained on the platform than was preached from the pulpit, as the basis of the popular theology." [1] This was in 1841.

"Janet," said a Calvinistic minister to his old retainer, "you know well there is nothing in you worthy of salvation. Now suppose at the last, God should let you drop into hell —what would you say to that?" "Minister," replied Janet, "I have thought it all over: I believe that God will do with me just what He has a mind to do. But this I know: He made me: I am the work of His hands; and if He puts me down into hell, He will lose more by doing it than I shall by bearing it." Our British insistence on constitutional monarchs has banished from our minds the belief in Turkish despots or irresponsible rulers either in the heaven above or on the earth beneath.

III.

The Darker Side.

But the evidences are not all "for." They are partially "against." If there is light ahead, the vision and the view are frequently blurred by darkness. Job is much too honest not to see this. "And yet," [2] he says, as his soul wrestles with the hostile suggestions of the physical world. And yet! Look at the most permanent objects of the universe. The mountains! They fall and perish. Even the rocks are capable of being shifted out of their place. "The flowing of the rivers" are sufficient to wash the stones and wear them away. What is man upon the face of the earth but a tiny pin-point, a speck, an atom, a molecule? How can

[1] Cross's *Biography of George Eliot*, p. 58.
[2] xiv. 18, Genung's translation.

he expect to escape the general destruction? Why should he expect to escape it? One is set thinking of what was written by that intrepid Alpine climber who was first to scale the heights of the mighty Matterhorn. A day may come, he declares, when the Matterhorn will have passed away or be reduced to a heap of shapeless atoms. That will be all that there will be to mark the spot where the great mountain stood, for even at this moment he noticed, "atom by atom, inch by inch, yard by yard, it yields to forces that nothing can withstand."

Then for us, too, like the rest of the world that has gone before, there is hastening on that fight which we all must fight and fight to lose. Death itself is a mighty avenger. Who has not witnessed the havoc that it makes in homes?[1] It prevails over some frail mortal and he passeth. Quickly his countenance is changed to the pallor of the sheets he lies on. He is taken away to corrupt in the grave and rot. When his children rise to distinction he never hears of it. When they are brought low he cannot bear their burden. The concerns of the living are veiled and kept hid from the dead. This is the gloomy strain in which he brings up to its finish his chapter on immortality.

It is very certain that people share these sentiments yet. There are some who dwell continually on what argues against the future state and never seem to weary pointing it out to us. They say the mind will not survive any more than the body. Why should it? Is it not obvious that our mental capacities "increase and fade" with our physical ones? When the one grows, does not the other? The young man who is in the vigour of health and alert and active, does he not enjoy the best of intellectual vigour, and when the body fails, is there not a sad falling off in other ways? Is the old man's judgment not less sound?

[1] xiv. 20 ff.

Is the old man's memory not less retentive? Is the old man's acuteness not less sharp? There is, of course, only one answer to such questions. Hence it is argued, body and soul go together. The two are mutually dependent. The fate of the one must be the fortune of the other. When the body is buried in the grave, the soul will be snuffed out along with it. No notice is taken of the fact that men like William Ewart Gladstone, for example, have notwithstanding physical illness had their wits about them and been in full possession of their faculties. No notice is taken of the fact that sceptical scientists like Professor Tyndall have believed that between body and mind an "impassable gulf" was fixed. It was absurd to talk of the one necessarily sharing the same fate as the other. No notice is taken of the fact that it may be just because the physical instrument through which thought expresses itself has become impaired and weakened, that it has to wait for a new instrument when it will express itself with all the vigour that ever it did and greater than ever. These facts mean much to us. By them is our faith in the future state quickened and renewed. And in the strength of them we believe that our beloved whom we have lost awhile have gone to larger spheres where they will be able to display all the qualities that we admired them for and grow better than ever we knew them. "And yet," others say, "it is the opposite arguments that prevail with them on this matter. Like body, like soul, at death both are at an end.

It need hardly be said that the familiar passage which begins,[1] "I know that my Redeemer liveth," does not contribute much to the subject under discussion. The words are regularly read at the Funeral Service, and by reason of their constant use in this connexion they have in the long

[1] xix. 25.

ages been charged with Christian sentiment and experience. Indeed, there is no reason why we should not continue to use them and read them, so long as we see clearly what we are doing. They have been "fulfilled" in the sense of being filled full with larger meaning. But it is another matter when they are considered as one of Job's utterances. The passage, certainly, gives us no ground for believing in the resurrection of our human body. This is a view which only found support from the Authorised Version of the English Bible and the plentiful supply of italics tells its own tale. Even the marginal readings of the Revised Version warn us off such an interpretation. The only sense the last line of verse 26 is capable of bearing, according to the general agreement of scholars, is that which makes it refer to a disembodied state. "Apart from my flesh," "without my flesh shall I see God." The word "redeemer" which is the Hebrew *gō'ēl* has a long history. It was originally the "avenger" and particularly the next of kin in a primitive tribe or clan. He, when a kinsman in the flesh had been murderously put to death, undertook to avenge his blood and kill the man-slayer. This was the meaning adopted by the historian Froude for example. But his brilliant essay on the Book of Job, though it remarkably anticipates the methods of modern criticism and some of its findings, was written before the critical results were fairly established. It leaves in consequence much to be desired. A maturer criticism decides in favour of a divine *gō'ēl* rather than a human one. It calls attention to the fact that there is no suggestion of Job being about to come to a violent death and in the case of natural death there would be nothing for the relative, under the primitive law, to avenge. Then *gō'ēl* is freely used in the Second Isaiah of God. [1] "Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer." And again, [2] "Our

[1] Is. xliv. 24. [2] Is. lxiii. 16.

Redeemer from everlasting is Thy name." This gives the conclusion that Job believed his *Divine* avenger to live, or perhaps better, as the Revised Version margin suggests, his Divine vindicator. This living Divinity would make short shrift of the charges the superficial comforters had brought in against him and establish his innocence. Then it is not much satisfaction to a poor mortal asleep in Sheol if he cannot be present when his character is vindicated and witness the chagrin of his enemies. Hence Job's mind steadily advances to the point of perceiving that *he* will "see God." Canon Cheyne, however, qualifies this. He does not think an endless Vision could have been anticipated. Consistently with what has gone before it could only have been intended that "the unbodied spirit of Job should for a moment be transferred to the upper world," and how this momentary transference is to take place is left unmentioned. It is not much that the critics will concede to us. What they grant, they grant grudgingly.

The only justification for taking up the dark side along with the bright side is that the two together, bright and dark, are the general experience of mankind. It was the experience of Job, as we have seen. He saw the light that lighted the way to dusty death and illuminated the vistas of eternity that lay beyond it. He saw it. But he had to contend with clouds of fog and darkness that rolled up his sky and at times well-nigh obscured his vision. Similarly, if we had been born to be devils we would not have had this difficulty. We would not have had the two sides to look at. We would only have had the dark side. And we would have arrived at the cynical conclusion that this life is a banquet where we are all at liberty to eat, drink, and be merry because the next life is a coffin. Then if we had been born to be gods we would not have had that difficulty either. We would not have had the two sides to look at. We would have

only had the bright side. And the doubts and the mists and the fears would have utterly vanished away. But we are neither. We are not God. We are not devil. We are not even angelic beings and we cannot dwell in the "eternal light" because that is "theirs and theirs alone." We are but frail mortals, and so long as we are in this body pent and burdened with our mortality we must be prepared for intervals of darkness succeeding our moments of light. Myself, personally, when I am asked, Do you believe in the Christian doctrine of immortality and the future state, I often feel inclined to say yes and no. My convictions are not always equally strong within me. They vary. They rise and fall, like the tides. They ebb and flow. I find the belief at one time takes firm hold upon me. At another, if I must confess it, it is weak and uncertain. It becomes a problem and an effort to hold it at all. I thank my God that I have stood upon the mount of vision. I have seemed to see former friends in a happier home than ever this earth gave them and only waiting for me to join them and be happy with them. I have seemed to see students who were cut off at their studies, able to prosecute them afresh and under more favourable conditions. I have seemed to see the wearied rested and the invalids restored and in their right mind. I have seemed to see preachers who were taken hence before their work was well begun preaching, as St. Peter expresses it, to the spirits in prison. I have seemed to see in that land of pure delight many things that mingled with my thoughts and made me walk the footway of this life with a firmer tread and a surer step. These were my best moments, I feel sure. And I pray the Father of Lights that He will let the light of eternity stream in upon my soul from more to more. But I should not be honest in making that statement if I did not acknowledge that I have had and do still have my doubts. What these doubts are, why I have doubted, to what extent

and in what respect I have doubted, need not be stated, because I do not conceive it to be the preacher's business to preach his doubts. It rather is to preach the few practical certainties and convictions that he has to live by. "And yet," I have them. There is my little bit of personal confession. The reader may compare my experience with his own and see whether he is not in the same pass concerning it.

IV.

The Way out of Darkness.

When these dark moments assail us, however, when we are in doubting castle, when we are a prisoner of Giant Despair and longing for the key of hope that Christian plucked from his bosom, we can do what Job did not do and could not do. We can read the good report that has gone out of Jesus Christ. He did not prove the soul immortal as a professor of mathematics might prove a proposition of Euclid on the blackboard. He did not argue for it as a philosopher might or as an argumentative preacher would. No, when He had these dispirited disciples round about Him in the upper room, He did not have resort to any of these devices. He made them feel it. "He lifted them out of time and made them feel eternal," says Emerson. He had that influence upon them. And if we read the written records that have come down concerning Him, He will produce a similar result upon our minds and spirits. As we imbibe the spirit of the Speaker, as we reach His point of view, as we follow Him from step to step, as we realise that this was the living conviction of the Purest and Best that ever lived and breathed, the Man at one with God, and who was so anxious for His conviction to be published and made known that He sealed it with His blood, when we come at that conclusion the instinct for immortality will assert itself.

"Read to me," said Sir Walter Scott to his son-in-law

as he lay dying at Abbotsford. "What shall I read?" inquired Lockhart. "How can you ask? There is but one book for me now." Then his son-in-law took down the New Testament and read the fourteenth chapter of John. "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." And when he had read that, the dying man lifted himself up in his couch and said, "Well, this is a great comfort. I have followed you distinctly and I *feel* as if I were yet to be myself again." It is a fine thing to have this assuring word from so great and so good a man as Sir Walter Scott; but what the New Testament did for him, it can do for us. The instinct for immortality will thrive and grow and flourish, if that influence of Jesus be upon us. And when it is not green pastures that we walk through, but when we have to descend into the vale of deep darkness, we will fear no evil because Jesus has gone this way before us and His voice through the darkness says that there is light beyond and all is well.

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SIN AS A PROBLEM OF TO-DAY.

IX. SIN AS GUILT—THE DIVINE JUDGMENT.

HITHERTO, though constantly implied in what has preceded, the character of "guilt" in sin has not received any independent investigation. The feeling of guilt, indeed, in weaker or stronger degree, is an element in the consciousness of every moral being who knows himself as a wrong-doer. It is there naturally and spontaneously, a spring of disquiet and remorse, neither waiting on theoretical considerations for its justification, nor capable of being