

THE CONCEPTION OF LIFE AFTER DEATH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (CONTINUED)

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III. Immortality, Resurrection, and Judgment

Until the rise of individualism from the teaching of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the thought of Israel centered about the nation. It was with the nation that Yahweh had made his covenant. Israel as a nation would not be cut off. Yahweh had made his covenant with the nation through the House of David, and not through David as an individual. We see in the early literature an emphasis upon the preservation of the nation through the propagation of children. It was an unfortunate thing for a woman to be barren, and for a man to be left without male heirs was thought to be a punishment from God. It was for this reason that the Levirate Law was formulated.⁴⁶ In the event that a man died and had left no male descendants, his brother was to take his wife and raise seed to him. The first male child of the new union took the name of the deceased and was considered his child and heir. This was done so that there would be preservation of the family, and possibly to provide someone to tend the graves of the deceased. If the man refused to perform the obligations of the Levirate Law, his sister-in-law could cause him public disgrace, and the shame would rest upon him and his household forever.

It was because of this law that Boaz and Ruth hesitated about marriage.⁴⁷ Until the near kinsman had forfeited his claim, Boaz and Ruth could not be united. But when the GOEL stated that he was unable to fulfill his obligations, and signified his willingness to forego his rights by "loosing the sandal," then Boaz could take Ruth for himself. The significance for us in this passage is that here again is emphasis upon the national life. Without the propagation of children the nation could

not last. National immortality consisted, not of resumption of national life in a hereafter, but in the continuation of the Hebrew nation upon the earth.

The account in Ezekiel 37:1-14 has been taken to be a description of an actual miracle by the prophet. Now that the story is doubted, the question arises as to the significance of the vision, for such it was. Ezekiel himself records the purpose. It was a message from Yahweh. He envisions the people in captivity as being dead, at least as far as their national life is concerned. With the return of the people to Palestine and the resumption of national life, it would have been the equivalent of a resurrection. So he pictures the people of captivity as dead bones, their very dryness signifying the utter hopelessness of the situation. Then by a cataclysmic act, Yahweh causes the "very dry bones" to become men of flesh and blood.⁴⁸ In this act Ezekiel sees the return of the people from their now helpless position to their former place of significance as an independent nation.

It is true that Ezekiel had a message of individualism, and it is also true that, as far as the future life was concerned, he had no hope for the individual, but the Hebrew people, as a people, would not die.

We see, therefore, that from the beginning of national life, and after the rise of individualism, no thought of resurrection was yet in evidence, but national immortality was plasmic.

Though a doctrine of resurrection was not formulated until a late date, there are hints in the early sources that man had in him a divine element that is immortal. Man naturally be-

⁴⁶ Deut. 25:5-10

⁴⁷ Ruth 4:5, 6

⁴⁸ Ezek. 37:7

lieves in immortality, as is evidenced by the fact that no primitive people have yet been found who believe that death is a total annihilation of life. The personality may be effaced by mergence with a greater power, or the existence may be nerveless, "a shadowy reproduction of earthly life", but some form of continuance is recognized. It is only with the beginning of speculation that man begins to suspect that he might cease to be.

It is after such speculation had begun that the Bible stories of the creation were produced. The earliest account was written down sometime in the last part of the ninth or the beginning of the eighth century. In it an attempt is made to explain why it is that man does not have immortal life, since he was like unto God, "knowing good and evil". The emphasis has been placed by succeeding generations upon the origin of sin, whereas the real point of emphasis is upon the loss of eternal life. Man was sent from the garden, not primarily because of disobedience, but so that he could not obtain immortal life. It was a defense measure upon the part of Yahweh.

The later account was produced about 450 B. C. There is a less anthropomorphic conception of God. Man was created in the image of God. Therefore he had a divine element in him. Because of the fact that it was produced late, the growing conception of a possibility of an after life may have influenced the writer. The Priestly writer gives no account of the "fall of man", though he may have endorsed the teaching of "J2".

Hebrew literature has two accounts of individuals who were thought not to have died. The oldest of these is the story of Elijah. Tradition says that he was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire.⁴⁹ The other account is another story from the pen of the Priestly writer.⁵⁰ Because of the good life of Enoch he was taken directly to heaven. "He was not, for God took him." Again,

since it comes from a relatively late period, perhaps the diction, if not the incident, is influenced by the developing thought regarding life after death. There is justification for believing that upon the basis of these stories, Psalmists hoped that their lives might be so intimately connected with Yahweh, that their lives might be so good, that they too could be taken to be with him as were these men.

There are two problems that seem to be uppermost in the minds of the Psalmists. First is the problem of good and evil. Throughout the Psalms is expressed the intense personal relation that can exist between God and man. But the rise of the doctrine of individualism brought with it a new problem. What of the justness of God? If Sheol is for all with no punishment for evil or reward for good, what of the righteous man who had had adversity or has been cut off in the prime of life, and what of the sinner who has had prosperity or lived to a ripe old age? The Psalmists are constantly wrestling with the problem. The prosperity of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked are pleaded and longed for. In Psalm 37 the writer begins: "Fret not thyself because of evil doers." Why? Because "they shall soon be cut off". "Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be, you shall diligently consider concerning his place and it shall not be." Later in the Psalm we are cautioned to "Guard integrity and desire righteousness, for the latter end to man is peace, but transgressors shall be exterminated together, the latter end of the wicked shall be cut off". The Psalmist here makes no reference to life after death. He is thinking only in terms of a long life for the righteous and a short one for the wicked. Again, in Psalm 16 we have an expression of the highest faith in Yahweh. "Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol,

⁴⁹ II Kings 2:11

⁵⁰ Gen. 5:22

thou wilt not let thy pious one see the pit." This expression of confidence is determined by the Psalmist's deep sense of communion with God. But experience did not bear out the hope that the wicked would be punished with a short life and the righteous rewarded by long life. Good men still continued to die and the wicked still continued to prosper. The Psalmist answered this by showing that the highest thing in life was communion with God. This the righteous man had, but the wicked had not. In the seventeenth Psalm, the writer declares, "As for me, I shall see thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I wake up, by thy likeness".

The other great problem, then, that confronted the Psalmists was the relation of God and man. To them, this was the great punishment, that in death man was to be cut off from communion with Yahweh. Simpson states, "It is important, therefore, to note that the Old Testament is not really interested in personal immortality except so far as that involves a personal relationship to God".⁵¹ This is the position of the Psalmists. Life is dear only so far as God is near to them. They are content to let the future wait. Robert Louis Stephenson said, "To believe in immortality is one thing, but it is first needful to believe in life". The Psalmists believed so thoroughly in life that at times it seems that the future was forgotten.

Throughout the Psalms there is no definite expression of a belief in a future life. There is hope. But the great concern is for the continuation of the present close relationship between Yahweh and man upon the earth. "There is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."

From the book of Job, expressions epitomizing the Christian faith have been culled. "If a man die, shall he live?"⁵² "Yes" has been the answer of the Christian church but it certainly was not Job's. Properly translated the

question should give the sense "If a man dies, he certainly isn't alive, is he?" "I know that my redeemer liveth"⁵³ has been taken as the theme of one of one of the great anthems of the Church, but here again we have taken words from a translation colored by Christian theology and not the thought of Job. At least according to the beginning of Job's story it does not appear to be, for he fully expects to go to Sheol.⁵⁴ He is utterly weary of life, he is tired from the struggle, and looks for rest. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary rest." The utter hopelessness of the situation is revealed in the following speech. He is as a cloud consumed. "Thus he, going down to Sheol, shall not come up; he shall not return again to his house. His place shall not recognize him any more."⁵⁵ Once he has gone to Sheol there is no hope for him, for he is utterly cut off from Yahweh. Restitution must be made on earth. His friend had reprimanded him for his complaint in chapter 3. In chapter 6 Job defended himself, and now his complaint naturally turns to Yahweh whom he holds responsible for his present condition. Unless Yahweh comes to the rescue and vindicates him before his friends, Job's character will be blemished forever, for after death there is no chance of vindication.

Again in chapter 14, Job looks for hope. There is hope for a tree. If it is cut down it will sprout again. The smell of water, faint as it is, will revive it. But alas, such is not the case with men. Man lies down in death and where is he? Once he dies, that is the end. He will lie there forever. Verse 14a is either out of place or is an interpolation. It interrupts the thought, but in any case the answer to the question,

⁵¹ Simpson, *Man and the Attainment of Immortality*, p. 279.

⁵² Job 14:14a.

⁵³ Job 19:25.

⁵⁴ Job 3:13-19

⁵⁵ Job 7:7-10

"If a man die, can he be alive?" must be answered with an emphatic NO! There is no hope. Verse 14b continued the thought of verse 13. If there were any hope at all Job would be willing to wait. If he thought that Yahweh could hide him in Sheol until his vindication, he would be satisfied. The unbearable thing is to suffer the condemnation of his friends when he knows very well that he has not sinned and that the punishment is unjustified. Something has gone wrong with the eternal laws, but if there is a possibility of their being rectified, and Job could be hidden until that time, then he would be happy.

"I know that my redeemer liveth." Has Job found an answer to his longings? It has been taken that he has, and that his answer is, that the vindication may not come within this life, but that there is a life beyond, and in that life, Job may hope for acquittal. But this interpretation has been moulded by Christian philosophy. Job has found an answer, but not in immortal life. The answer is clear. His redeemer, the Yahweh whom Job had known through the years before the calamity came, would come to his rescue, and vindicate him. It would be in this life, for it would be useless unless his friends could witness his vindication. So Job expresses complete confidence in Yahweh, but he gives no expression of belief in an uninterrupted individual eternal life.

It is through the book of Ecclesiastes that some scholars seek to establish proof that the Hebrew thought of a resurrection was greatly influenced by the Greeks. Therefore, it is important to see just exactly what Ecclesiastes has to say about life after death. Coming as it does from a late date, it would seem that the viewpoint should be rather fully developed.

Koheleth was an old man. He had sought the *summum bonum* of life and had been disappointed. He "saw under the sun, in a place of justice there was

wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, there was wickedness". Life had been a disappointment. Would a life hereafter answer the difficulty? Apparently it does it, for he writes that there is one circumstance to man and beast. As the one dies, so does the other. There is no difference. "There is no advantage to man over the beast, for all is vanity." There is a faint ray of hope in verse 17 but this verse is generally conceded to be an interpolation by a later scribe. Man and the beast are equal, they not only die the same, but they both are composed of the dust, and they shall return to the dust. There is no hope of immortality in that. Then he philosophizes, "Who knows the spirit of the sons of men? Does it go upward to the height? And the spirit of the beast, does it go downward to the earth?" The best answer that he can find is that there is nothing better than for a man to make the most of his opportunities here, and rejoice in his work, for after he is dead he cannot come back to rejoice in it.

A final statement comes from the last chapter. "The dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the breath to Elohim who gave it."⁵⁶ The breath is evidently not the man himself but a loaned element from Elohim to give life to the man and at death it is returned to the giver. The man himself returns to the dust and is no more, for "Futility of Futilities", sayeth Koheleth, "All is Futility."

Whether or not Ecclesiastes has been influenced by the Greeks seems to matter little as far as we are concerned in this particular problem, for there is no hope of future life in Koheleth.

Following the collapse of the nation and the crushing experience of the exile, there came a change in the thought of Life after Death. The individual had become the point of emphasis. Exilic prophets laid stress upon

⁵⁶ Eccles. 3:16f., 19, 21, 5:19, 12:7.

personal responsibility. It was only natural, then, that with the development of the idea of the resurrection, the individual should be considered. Some would suggest that the idea started before the exile and find in Hosea 6:1-2 a clear indication of this. But a closer examination of the passage will reveal that reference is not made to a resurrection. The prophet has been picturing the wrath of Yahweh. He will punish the people for their apostasy. He will rend, as does a lion, and there will be none to help. "Come, let us return to Yahweh." Yahweh has punished, but if the people will return to Him, He will heal them. "Chayah" is not to be translated in the sense of raising from the dead but that Yahweh will revive the people. The expression "after two days and on the third" has been taken as foretelling the experience of Jesus, but it expresses nothing more than an indefinite but a short time before the fulfillment of the promise.

The first clear indication of a definite belief in individual resurrection is to be found in Isaiah 26:19. The prophet is painting a picture of the Day of Yahweh. He addresses Yahweh and ascribes all power and praise to him. Then comes the picture that on the Day of Yahweh there shall be a resurrection. It is not national but individual, for "**Thy** dead shall live". Clearly the reference is to the Jews and to the good among the Jews. Yahweh is responsible for the resurrection and the "dew of lights" is the immediate cause.⁵⁷ The dead are brought from Sheol for they are now dwelling in the dust and the earth will cast them out. The picture comes to us from the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third century B.C.

In the book of Daniel, written during the second century B.C., a development is to be seen. Here again the resurrection is to be on the Day of Yahweh. The resurrection is not general but

"**many** of them that sleep in the land of the dust" shall awake. Apparently only the exceptionally good, or the martyrs in the conflict with the Greeks, and the apostates, are concerned. This passage reflects the feeling during the period of the conflict. There is development beyond Isaiah in the concept of the resurrection for both the good and the bad are raised and come to their reward. Here again the dead are brought from Sheol. Some would suggest that there is reflected a decline in moral concepts, for, the dead are raised to see the vindication of the righteous while the wicked suffer torment to the delight of the righteous, but this is not expressed by the passage.

Of these passages (Isa. 26:19 and Dan. 12:2) Knudson says: "The two Old Testament passages which we have just considered belong to a late date. Daniel comes from the Maccabean Period, and the apocalypse in Isa. 24-27 was probably not more than a century earlier. The late appearance of the doctrine of the resurrection suggests the theory that the doctrine was borrowed from the Persians, with whom it originated earlier, and with whom the Jews had been in constant contact since the latter part of the sixth century. In favor of the theory not a little can be said. The resemblances between the Mazdean and the Jewish doctrine, especially in the form represented in Daniel 12:2 are manifest. Both teach the resurrection of the wicked as well as the righteous and both connect it with the final judgment. But along with these resemblances there are a number of points of difference. In one the resurrection is universal, in the other limited; in the one the judgment follows the Messianic era, in the other it precedes it; in the one the departed go to their reward or punishment, heaven or hell, immediately after death, in the

⁵⁷ "Dew of herbs" is difficult to understand in this connection and "Dew of lights" has been accepted as preferable.

other they are all detained together in Sheol until the new era dawns."⁵⁸

But it is doubtful if there is foreign influence for the expressions are the natural development of Hebrew thought. It was at this period, too, that the Hebrews fought so hard against anything not Hebrew.

IV. Important Factors in the Development of a More Ethical Conception of Life After Death

It is generally conceded that among all peoples there is a belief in some kind of immortality. The various beliefs may be grouped under three heads:⁵⁹ belief in personal immortality; in influential immortality, as the Buddhists; and belief in plasmic immortality. As we have seen the Hebrews belonged until a comparatively late date to the third group. They believed that national immortality was achieved through the propagation of children. But by the time of Jesus, thought had so changed that his teaching of personal resurrection did not fall on unprepared ground, and he was understood by his contemporaries. What were the reasons for this change?

The first factor responsible for a more ethical concept of life after death was a more ethical concept of God. In the early pre-prophetic period Yahwism was monolatry rather than monotheism. Yahweh was the God peculiar to the Hebrews. Other national gods were recognized. To go out of Canaan was to go away from Yahweh. Jacob was surprised to have a visitation of Yahweh while away from home. At death relation between God and man was cut off.

With the change from the nomadic life to that of the farmer and villager, a change came in the concept of God. It was indirect but nevertheless effective. As man came into closer relation with his fellow men, social ethics had to be higher, at least in theory. If in practice man fell below the standard, he had to be punished for the protection of society. With the elevation of

standards for mankind, the standards of Yahweh had to be elevated.

As Yahweh became more ethical than the surrounding Gods, and the people became more nationalistic, he was conceived of as being more powerful. Gradually his power was extended until he was God of the whole earth, but still retained Israel as his chosen people. At last, there was no other god but Yahweh. Naturally when his power was world wide, he was also thought to have power over Sheol. Pre-exilic literature is lacking in extension of Yahweh's sway to Sheol,⁶⁰ but from the eighth century, he is thought to have authority over Sheol, at least His presence may be felt there, although the place retained its old characteristics.⁶¹

With the emphasis upon the worship of Yahweh only, the worship of the spirits of the dead was forbidden and Yahweh appropriated the cult of the dead. Rites of the dead that were not clearly acts of worship were still permitted, but they rendered the participant unclean. In the period of the prophets the activity of the dead was denied. Rites of mourning were restricted. All of this tended to make the power of Yahweh greater.⁶²

During the exile the worship of Yahweh by sacrifice was forbidden. The effect of this was to produce a more spiritual type of worship, which, in its turn, induced a higher concept of the spiritual relation between God and man. Another effect of the exile was to emphasize the fact that Yahweh was not limited to Palestine, but his power extended even to Babylon. The combination of the power of Yahweh with a more ethical conception of the char-

⁵⁸ Knudson, *Religious Teaching in the Old Testament*, p. 405.

⁵⁹ Ellis, *Study in Psychology of Religion*, p. 466ff.

⁶⁰ Isa. 38:10-11, Psalms 88:5, 6:5, 115:17, 88:10.

⁶¹ Amos 9:2, Hosea 13:14, Psalm 139:7, 8; see also Job 26:6, and Will, *Life After Death*, p. 22.

⁶² Paton, *Biblical World*, Vol. 35, pp. 246ff.

acter of Yahweh, provided the groundwork upon which could be built a high concept of life after death.

A second great factor responsible for the development in the thought regarding life after death was the rise of the doctrine of individualism. Here again the change from the nomadic life to the pastoral and urban life played its part. With a greater concourse of people the emphasis upon tribal and clan loyalty tended to decrease, and the individual came into more prominence. The commercial life was so constructed that emphasis was upon the individual rather than upon the tribe and clan. The establishment of a monarchical form of government, while it had a strong national emphasis, was not without its emphasis upon the individual.

The message of the "screaming prophet" Jeremiah was to show the responsibility of the individual.⁶³ Until now Israel had believed that the nation was the unit. The relation between Yahweh and Israel was on a national basis and not individual. The Covenant was with the Nation. Only in this way was it possible to account for the fact that the "sins of fathers were visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation". But with the downfall of the nation and the beginning of the exile, thought necessarily had to change. Either Yahweh was not as powerful as he had been thought to be, or the nation was not the unit. Ezekiel carried forward the message of Jeremiah.⁶⁴ If the individual was the important unit, then the relation between Yahweh and men could be personal. And this it was, as we have seen, for the Psalmist.

With the development of priestcraft, too, there was necessarily a recognition of the individual. While the organization was primarily national, the individual could not be overlooked. It was with the individual that the priest had to deal. It was for him, as well

as for the nation, that he had to officiate.⁶⁵

One result of the rise of the doctrine of individualism was increased emphasis upon the problem of good and evil. The Psalmists, Job and Ecclesiastes, wrestled with the problem. Experience did not endorse the theory that "Piety equals Prosperity". Sheol could not be the end. Burney points out that it was out of this speculation "that the idea of personal immortality appears to have arisen, at times as an aspiration or merely tentative solution of the anomalies and the present life, at times as a dearly prized conviction of individual hearts, but not yet as a definitely formulated dogma of religion."⁶⁶

As we pointed out before, an even greater problem to the Psalmists was that of the separation of man from Yahweh at the time of death. Life had become very important to the Psalmist because of his contact with Yahweh. Would death end it all? The Psalmists pray for a long life in order that the relationship between them and God might be as long as possible, but at times there seems to be a fervent prayer, a hope that death might not end the companionship. It is interesting to note that it is the question of rewards and punishments that brings forth such thought as we have in Daniel 12:2, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to life everlasting, some to reproach and abhorrence eternal".

Three things, then, were necessary for the background of a high ethical concept of Life after Death: a high concept of the character of Yahweh; a recognition of the importance of the individual; and a sane approach to the problem of good and evil.

⁶³ Jer. 31:29. Cf. 31:33-34.

⁶⁴ Ezek. 18:4, 30-32.

⁶⁵ J. M. P. Smith, *American Journal of Theology*, Vol. 10, pp. 251ff.

⁶⁶ Burney, *Israel's Hope of Immortality*, p. 32.

V. Foreign Influences in the Development of the Old Testament Conception of the Resurrection

We have alluded from time to time to possible outside influence upon the Hebrew thinking of Life after Death. It is now necessary to push investigation further and draw together such allusions as have already been made in order to test the validity of the claims that belief in a resurrection is not native to Hebrew thinking.

Studies of the literatures of peoples with whom the Hebrews came into contact during their history reveals that many of them had developed an idea of resurrection long before the Hebrews. It is because of this fact that it has been argued with some logic that the Hebrews borrowed their conception of a resurrection.

The Egyptians, Persians, Babylonians, and Greeks have all been named father to the Hebrew thought. These will be examined in turn.⁶⁷

a) Egyptian

Herodotus, in the second book of his *Histories*,⁶⁸ says, "The Egyptians are the first who reported the doctrine that the soul of man is immortal, and that when the body dies, the soul enters into another creature which chances then to be coming to the birth".

Until the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in 1799, the literature and teachings of Egypt were lost to the world. Since that discovery much progress has been made in rediscovering the teaching of that ancient civilization. The world has long wondered at the enormous monuments built in that past age. What inspired them? Wrappings from the mummies indicate that great care in the preservation of the bodies was taken because of a belief in an after-life. Had not Osiris, the son of Seb and Nut, been killed and restored to Life? "Like corresponding myths among other peoples, the history of the god who was dead and is alive again opened a door of hope for men."⁶⁹ The means

by which Osiris was restored to life must be equally potent for others. If, then, the body is made to undergo the same process of preparation and burial, the same ritual followed, the same words repeated at each stage of the ceremony, the dead man will be made to live again, not a life in this world, but a life in the new world in which Osiris lives. In the Pyramid texts such an expression of faith is found, "As he (Osiris) lives, this king lives; as he dies not, this king dies not; as he perishes not, this king perishes not."⁷⁰

In the Book of the Dead there is a picture of the judgment of a soul. After fighting its way through the dark valley that intervenes between time and eternity, it appears for judgment in the dreaded hall of Osiris, where the heart is placed in an immense balance and weighed against the feather of truth. In defense the soul speaks; "O ye Lords of Truth, let me utter truth. I have privily done evil against no man. I have not been idle, given to intoxication or unchaste. I have not exacted of the laborer more than his daily task. I have caused none to hunger, made none to weep. I have murdered none, defrauded none. I have not eaten the sacred bread of the temple. I have not cheated in weights or measures. I have not slandered. I have not netted the sacred birds. I have offered to the gods the sacrifices that were their due. I have given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty and clothes to the naked. I am pure! I am pure!"⁷¹

The story of restored life is entirely dissimilar to the Hebrew thought of the Old Testament though there is re-

⁶⁷ cf. Williams: *AJSJL*, vol. 51, pp. 233ff., for a discussion of early Canaanitic background. Since Canaanite and Hebrew cultures became one, we shall not consider Canaanite as "outside influence."

⁶⁸ Herodotus, *Account of Egypt*, Harvard Classics, Vol. 33, p. 62.

⁶⁹ Moore, *History of Religions*, Vol. I, p. 162.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁷¹ Burrell, *The Religions of the World*, p. 38.

markable likeness to the picture painted by Jesus of the last judgment.

Attempts have been made to establish connection between Egyptian and Hebrew literatures. Results have been meagre until a short time ago, when the dependence of Proverbs upon an Egyptian writing **The Teaching of Amen-em-ope** (or Amenophis) was demonstrated.⁷² It is interesting to note that secular instruction is accepted verbatim (except for a change of local figures, e.g., eagles for geese, etc.), but the religious ideas are not accepted. In Amen. 24:19ff. we read:

How happy is he who hath reached
the west

When he is safe in the land of God.

This is entirely rejected by the Hebrew writer. In no case is a religious idea taken over by the Hebrew writer.

Thus we see that in a case of dependence of Hebrew upon Egyptian literature, the direct dependence of religious thought cannot be demonstrated. The possible similarity, then, of conceptions of life after death proves nothing of dependence of one upon the other unless literary dependence in this particular thought can be proved. In the case of the Hebrews and the Egyptians it has not yet been done.

b) Persian

"Zoroastrianism is the main document of our eschatology, a fact which should be taken everywhere for granted, as the slightest examination would confirm it." This is the assertion made by Mills.⁷³ He recognizes that it is useless to assert dependence unless literary transmission can be established. Such a connection he seeks to make through the book of Daniel. In addition to the similarity of the resurrection stories he establishes linguistic evidence of dependence of the apocalyptic literature. Of Isaiah, chapters 24-27, he says nothing. He takes certain syllables of proper nouns and demonstrates that they are intimately tied

up with Avesta theology. He also shows a comparison of the Hebrew names of months such as "Adar" and the Persian name for fire. Such comparison is of doubtful value, for, though proper nouns may be readily accepted, and necessarily are in time of persecution, the theological content may be rejected.

Charles rejects the theory of dependence upon the Mazdean doctrine for though there are parallels of thought he believes that the Hebrew is a more spiritual concept than is that of the Persians. In Isaiah 26:19 Charles sees foreign element and yet there is nothing there that is not the natural outcome of the Hebrew thought. Some would suggest that in Daniel 12:2 the expression "Dew of lights" is a clear indication of influence of fire worship,⁷⁴ but such a connection can hardly be made. In the Zend-Avesta is a description of the resurrection at which the soul (Fraveshi) re-enters the body. The resurrected must then cross the bridge that leads to the dwelling place of the pure and is stretched across the abyss Duzah, the awful abyss where Ahriman dwells. To the wicked the bridge is a razor's edge and he is quickly lost, but to those who have loved pure thoughts, pure words, and pure deeds, the bridge is wide and they reach in safety the other side. (Contrast Jesus' portrayal of the broad and narrow ways to death and life.)

There is no parallel of this in the Old Testament, even in Daniel where both the righteous and the wicked are raised. The resurrection of the Persians is universal while in Daniel it is limited to the very good and the very bad. In Daniel the Messianic era is to

⁷² Cf. Cadbury, "Egyptian Influence in the Book of Proverbs," *Journal of Religion*, Vol. 9, pp. 99ff. See also Breasted: *Dawn of Conscience*.

⁷³ Mills, *Avesta Eschatology*.

⁷⁴ It is admitted that fire worship was adopted by the Zoroastrians from Magism, but at the period of contact with the Hebrews it was part of the Mazdean belief.

follow the judgment, while the Persian account makes it precede. Likewise, the Persian judgment is immediately after death, while according to Daniel, all wait in Sheol until the new era is about to dawn.

It must be admitted⁶ that the dependence of Hebrew thought upon the Persian is by no means demonstrated.

c) Babylonian

The Hebrews were constantly in contact with the followers of Enlil of Nippur, who was the head of the old Sumerian Pantheon. Since the great discovery in 1872 by George Smith of the parallels of the Babylonian flood story with that of the Hebrews, much work has been done by the archaeologists and philologists to show similarities in other parts of the literature. It is largely conceded that early Hebrew and Babylonian conceptions of Sheol are derived from a common source. There is a similarity, e.g., in the creation story:⁷⁵

Marduk laid a reed upon the face of the waters;

He formed dust and poured it out beside the reed,

That he might cause the gods to dwell in the habitation of their hearts' desire,

He formed mankind.

Does the similarity obtain until the end of man, and if it does, are they interdependent? Some see in the experience of Utnapishtim a beginning of Hebrew thought of life after death, but there is nothing more there than in the preservation of Noah from death. The hereafter never occupied the imaginations of the Babylonians as it did that of the Egyptians, and their notions about it never got beyond a very primitive stage.⁷⁶ The descent of Ishtar into the lower world and her return is without doubt a poetical version of an old vegetation myth and there appears to be a little application to a doctrine of resurrection though the formula

used for the recovery of a sick person was based upon it.

The basis of the Hebrew and Babylonian thought of life after death seems to have started similarly, and early development was along parallel lines, but the Hebrew consciousness of the presence of Yahweh caused the Hebrews to develop a doctrine of resurrection not to be paralleled in Babylonian literature.

d) Greek

In the latter part of the fourth century the Hebrews came into intimate contact with the Greeks though it is more than possible that there had been infiltrations of Greek thought long before this. Since the Hebrew concept of a resurrection was stated after this contact it is thought by some that the Hebrews were indebted to the Greeks for it. Claim is made that Ecclesiastes is greatly influenced by the Greek philosophers. Even granting that such a thesis is correct it does not help the hypothesis that the Hebrews were indebted to the Greeks for a more ethical concept of life after death for in Ecclesiastes, as we pointed out before, there is no such belief. Death is the end of all life.

From the Greek poets and philosophers much is recovered of their belief in life after death. Homer describes the underworld. From Xenophon comes the comparison of death and sleep. Plato's Socrates expresses great faith in the hereafter. "Wherefore, O Judges, be of good cheer after death, and know this of a truth—that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are no neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by chance."

The Greek view of life after death was highly philosophical and spiritual. For man the only hope of escape from the gloomy nether-world is participation in the divine nature. They turned,

⁷⁵ Moore, *History of Religions*, Vol. I, p. 213.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

not to Zeus nor Apollo, but to Demeter-Koré and Dionysius who had experienced and triumphed over pain and death.⁷⁷ Hebrew psychology pointed in another direction, that leading to the idea of the resurrection of the body.

Intense nationalism may have had its influence at this point. By life the Hebrew meant what we mean by life. The body was essential to it. In Daniel 12:2 the resurrection-life is to be realized in Palestine. Reference to future life in another world is absent in contradistinction to the Greek thought. A further difference is pointed out by Robinson.⁷⁸ "A natural immortality (on Greek lines) would have made man too independent of God for Hebrew-Jewish thought."⁷⁹

It is significant, too, both for the strength and character of Jewish nationalism, that the Maccabean Revolt was provoked by the Syrian attempt to Hellenize the Jewish religion and not by Jewish desire to gain political liberty.⁸⁰

The evidence is against the theory that the Hebrews were dependent upon the Greeks for an advanced concept of life after death, at least in Old Testament Literature.

Nationalism and Resurrection

The Jewish belief in Life after Death gradually underwent change from the time of belief in a shadowy existence in Sheol to a belief in a resurrection of the body. The development was the result of two stimuli. One was a more ethical concept of God and man; the other was the attempt to provide a solution to the problem of good and evil. These were natural products of their experience. This much must be said for foreign influence: the fact that other religions had a belief in life after death may have stimulated the Jews to seek within their own for similar thought.⁸¹ The evolution was bound to come, for the ultimate thought of reunion of God and man is a direct an-

swer to the prayer of the Psalmist. There is nothing in the thought of the resurrection as expressed in the Old Testament that is foreign to Hebrew thought. Whatever may be said for foreign influence, it cannot be maintained that a belief in an after life and a resurrection was the product of such influence. The thought evolved logically and naturally.

One other factor needs to be considered. In the post-exilic period an intense nationalism developed in Judaism. Additions to the writings of the prophets attest the renewed hope for the nation, and much of the hope revolved around material prosperity and political triumph. Jerusalem was to be the political and religious center for all peoples. It was through the Jews that religious knowledge would come to mankind. Is it possible that the political and religious ambitions of the Jews were determining factors in the development of teachings concerning immortality? What more natural than to desire that the heroes and saints of Hebrew history should participate in the glories of Israel. Since that glory was to be manifest in a new kingdom to be established upon the earth it was necessary that those participating should in some way be restored to the earth. Physical resurrection was therefore a necessity. (We should note that personal immortality and physical resurrection are not necessarily dependent each upon the other.) It is within later Judaism alone that we find the concept of a physical resurrection combined with the teaching of a Kingdom of God upon the earth. The conclusion seems to be clear that post-exilic nationalism dictated this particular combination.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 443ff.

⁷⁸ Cf. Sellin, *Die Altest. Relig.* p. 55.

⁷⁹ Robinson, *Religious Ideas in the Old Testament*, p. 96.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁸¹ Cf. Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, Vol. 3, p. 43.