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A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

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as answering to the High Priest and the heads of the fourand-twenty courses), worshipping the dawning light of the sun.<sup>1</sup> Their idolatry reached its climax when they were seen, after the manner of the ancient Sabians and the later Parsees, to be holding over their mouths a branch of the sacred *Hom* tree, probably pomegranate or tamarisk,<sup>2</sup> as an act of homage or as a charm against demons (Ezek. viii. 15-17).

To the heart of the priest-prophet, as to the mind of Jehovah, it was no light matter that these successive tableaux should represent the religious state of the people. How was the evil to be remedied or punished? Was it possible to assert the righteous law of retribution and yet to preserve a remnant of the people as witnesses to the truth, who, like the seven thousand in the time of Elijah who had not bowed the knee to Baal, were yet faithful found among the faithless? The answer to those questions was found in the symbolic visions that followed.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

## THE GOSPEL TO THE GREEKS.

(John xii. 20-36.)

## II. THE PARADOX.

"He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." (Verse 25.)

This paradox, under slight variations, was often on the lips of our Lord; even in our brief record of his teaching we

<sup>1</sup> It may be that this also connects itself with the Thammuz ritual. Adonis, in one aspect of the mythos, was a sun god.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> I follow the interpretation of most modern critics. By others the word is taken as proverbial, "They put a branch to wrath," *i.e.* "they add fuel to the fire"; or, "They put the sickle to their nose," *i.e.* injure themselves in their defiant insults to Jehovah.

meet with it again and again. And wherever we meet it, in whatever connection of thought, it instantly arrests our attention in virtue of a certain difficulty that we find in it. We quite understand that it is a compressed saying, full of matter, full of truth even, if only we could get at it, and that it is purposely thrown into a paradoxical form in order that it may attach itself to our minds, cleave to them, and set us on thinking how much it covers and means; for paradoxes are the burrs of literature—they stick. But our difficulty lies in getting at its meaning, in absorbing its contents. Nevertheless, we all have glimpses of its meaning I suppose, and half our difficulty in being sure that we have seized its true meaning springs from our natural repugnance to the moral ideal it sets before us.

Take it as it stands here, for example, and carry on into it the illustration of the Parable which precedes it. Imagine a grain of wheat to be sentient, and to have it at its option whether or not it will lie still in the granary, or be sown in the field. And, surely, there is no difficulty in seeing that, should it elect to remain in the warmth and comfort of the granary, it would both fall short of its proper function, its highest destiny and usefulness, and sooner or later mould and wither into absolute uselessness; while. if it elected to be cast into the earth, it would, on the contrary, reach its being's end and aim, would live and multiply, and yield its contribution to the wealth and welfare of the world. Nor can there be any great difficulty in inferring, as a moral from this parable, that there are certain kinds of deaths which men must die if they would both live and contribute to the life and well-being of their fellows; that they too are born for usefulness, for fruitfulness, and that they must willingly sacrifice whatever would impair their usefulness or render them unfruitful.

Take the Paradox in any connection, and is it difficult to see that just as the man who is always thinking how he

may preserve his health is only too likely to lose it, and to sink into a confirmed invalid or hypochondriac, so the man who is always studying how he may save his life is only too likely to lose his life, or all the sweet uses of it? To live is not by any means our first duty, but to do our duty even at the cost of life, if it can be done on no other terms.

This is the general scope and intention of the Paradox which was so often on the lips of Christ. And, taken in this general way, it is confirmed by our daily experience. For who are the men who, even in the judgment of the world, have saved their lives—carried them to the highest goal, turned them to the best account? Not those who have lived for themselves, for their own comfort, their own enrichment, their own culture or happiness mainly; but those who have scorned wealth and ease, who have braved all perils, endured all hardships, made all sacrifices, in order to advance the borders of our common knowledge or to promote the common welfare; those, in short, who have been willing to fall to the earth and die if only they might thus bring forth much fruit.

But if we would enter into the full meaning of this Paradox, we must study it in the light of the New Testament psychology. For the word here rendered "life" is, in the Greek, as the margin of the Revised Version reminds us, psyche or "soul." Now the Lord Jesus and his Apostles held and taught that, as there is a trinity in the Godhead, so also there is a tripartite nature in man. There is his body, his physical frame, with its organs and senses, and their several lusts or delights. There is the soul—the mind—which he shares with the animal creation, with its instincts and intelligence, in virtue of which he in some measure understands himself and the world around him, and knows how to make that world minister to his wants. And there is the spirit—the reason and conscience,

the moral sense, which raises him above the beasts, which is his special distinction and crown, or which he shares only with the unseen orders of being revealed to his imagination and faith. By the soul he is attached to the visible world, with its pomps and shows, its wealth and honours. By the spirit he is made free of the ethical and spiritual world, and comes to apprehend its laws and mysteries. Thus the soul stands, and mediates, between the body and the spirit; and according as it leans toward the one or the other, it determines the character of the man. If the soul lean toward the body, and finds its chief good and supreme delight in gratifying the senses and all that holds by sense, he becomes a carnal man; the soul subdues the spirit, with its passion for truth, righteousness, love, to its own baser quality. While if the spirit rule the soul, the soul subdues the body, and the man becomes a spiritual man; for his chief good and supreme delight consist in serving and walking after the spirit; and he subordinates to the claims of truth, duty, love, not the mere gratification of the senses alone, but also that pursuit of wealth, knowledge, distinction in which, left to itself, the soul delights—in short, all that is merely temporal and visible.

Now we may either reject or accept this conception of the nature of man with perfect honesty—holding, if we reject it, that on the lips of Christ it was but an accommodation to the current conceptions of his race and time. But for myself I accept it, not simply because I have received it from the lips of Him who "knew what was in man," and bow to his authority, but also because it seems to me the truest and completest account of what I find in myself and see in my fellows, the theory which covers all the facts of the case, and most adequately explains them. But even those who reject it cannot but admit that this is the theory assumed in the New Testament, and that

we can only get at the meaning of our Lord's paradox as we apply it to his words.

If, then, we apply this tripartite conception of the nature of man to the Paradox before us, what it comes to is this: that he who loves his soul supremely, and will not sacrifice its hankerings after wealth, ease, distinction, to the welfare of his spirit, loses, wastes, destroys even the soul itself; while he who, at the call of the spirit, i.e., at the prompting of truth, righteousness, and a pure unselfish love, "hates his soul," i.e., treats its hankerings after comfort, wealth, honour, with a generous contempt, or daffs them aside with a generous indignation, saves even the life of the soul, and rises into the eternal life, the life that cannot die.

Lest even now the fundamental thought of this Paradox should be difficult to grasp, we may put it in one or two other forms. Death is the condition of all life; but the true law is that the death should fall on the lower forms of life in order that the higher forms may thrive and multiply. The man in whom the soul rules reverses this order: he inflicts death on the spirit to feed the hunger of the soul, sacrificing the higher to the lower. But the man in whom the spirit rules keeps the true order, sacrificing the lower to the higher: he starves and denies the wants and cravings of the soul whenever they would interfere with the claims of the spirit, lets them die, crucifies them, in order that the spirit may live.

Or, again: he who lives in the perishable elements of this world, and thinks that his true wealth consists in the abundance of them which he possesses, perishes amid and with these perishable things. But he who lives in and for the spiritual and eternal world, and lays up for himself treasure in that, dies to the perishable indeed and the transitory, but lives in that which abides for ever. Dies to the perishable, did I say? Nay, but rather it is he

alone who puts even the perishable elements of the world to their true use, and so saves his soul, as well as his spirit, unto life eternal.

Or, again: Selfishness is death in life; self-renunciation, life in death.

We might throw the Paradox into many other forms, and possibly ought; for I know no saying of Christ's which is so perplexing to many thoughtful and devout minds, none which I have found it more difficult to render plain and clear to my own mind; but perhaps one more will suffice—one which, if it a little limits the immense scope of our Lord's words, may make their meaning more evident. The soul, as I have said, loves ease, wealth, distinction; the spirit hungers for truth, duty, righteousness, love. If, then, a man so love his soul as to make comfort, opulent conditions, and the honour that comes from men, his chief or sole aim, while he neglects to cultivate the charity, the sense of duty, the quest of truth to which his spirit prompts him, does he not lose and destroy himself, even here and now? Does he not sink into base and selfish moods which expose him to the scorn of those whose honour he covets? does he not grow so ardent in his pursuit of wealth that he forgets to use and to enjoy it? or, in his pursuit of comfort, does he not neglect plain duties-a neglect which promptly avenges itself upon him by sapping and destroying his comfort? But if he does, he loses his soul, as well as his spirit. He not only loses, i.e. knowledge of the truth, the quick keen sense of duty, the pure joys of the pure unselfish love which does good looking for no return; he also loses the very comfort, the very wealth, the very honour, of which he went in quest. On the other hand, does not the man who seeks truth, who will do his duty even at the cost of ease and gain, who shews a simple and unstinted charity even to the evil and the unthankful, besides saving and cultivating his spirit, very commonly save his soul also,

and win the very distinction and good-will, the ease and comfort, at which he did not directly aim, and at least wealth enough for all his wants, for all innocent and true enjoyments?

If the Lord Jesus had loved his life too much to part with it, would He have had the good conscience which feared no evil, or the respect and reverent affection of mankind—all that the soul longs for, as well as the pure and ineffable delight of spirit which He obtained by being faithful unto death?

We call this saying a paradox, and find it hard to understand. And yet do we not understand it well enough when we see it incarnated in a life or embodied in a tale? For who, after all, are the men whom we ourselves most reverence and admire? Are they the soulish men who care only for themselves, care only to be rich, only to be at ease, only to rise to conspicuous place and to force their name on the lips of their fellows? Or are they the spiritual men who willingly sacrifice themselves, and their own interests and cravings, in order that they may be useful and fruitful members of society, the leaders and martyrs of some good cause? What do we mean by heroism but just this power of subordinating self to the common welfare—this losing the soul in order to save it?

If we want a commentary on this Paradox which will make it clear to the simplest understanding, we may find it, not in the heroes of the historic page alone, but in almost every newspaper we read. Here, for instance, is what I have read in my newspaper on the very day on which these sentences were written. "Joseph Sieg, an engine-driver on the Pennsylvanian Railway, saved the lives of six hundred passengers by an extraordinary act of heroism." Extraordinary? Yes: and yet similar acts occur every day. "The furnace door was opened by the fireman, to replenish the fire, while the train was going

thirty-five miles an hour. The back draught forced the flames out, so that the car of the locomotive caught fire, and the engine-driver and the fireman were driven back over the tender into a passenger car, leaving the engine without control. The speed increased, and the volume of flame with it. There was imminent danger that all the carriages would take fire, and the whole train be consumed. The engine-driver, seeing that the only way to save the passengers was to return to the engine and stop the train, plunged into the flames, climbed back into the red-hot tender, and reversed the engine. When the train came to a standstill, he was found in the water-tank, into which he had dropped, with his clothes entirely burned off, his face disfigured, his hands shockingly burned, and his whole body blistered so badly that he is not expected to survive." In the light of such a noble deed, such self-sacrifice, as that, is there any difficulty in entering into the meaning of the paradox, "He that loveth his life loseth it, and he that hateth his life saveth it"? If love of life, or fear of death, had held back Joseph Sieg from doing his duty, he might have been alive to-day, and yet dead to all that makes man man. Hating his life at the call of duty, and dying in the performance of his duty, has he not saved it-doing more for man and God in that brief moment than many do in threescore years and ten? That was the life eternal on which he entered, not when he died a few days after the great deed was done, but when he plunged into the flames to save others from the flames. whatever his creed may have been, who can doubt that Jesus loved him, as he loved the young man in the Gospels. and has recognized in him, under whatever disguise, a spirit akin to his own?

No, it is not the Paradox in itself which is so hard to understand, but our wills which are so hard to bend, our souls which are so reluctant to be controlled and brought into their due subjection to the spirit. Our creed may be sound enough; but how many of us would have done what that brave engine-driver did, had we stood in his place? As many of us as feel that we could not have risen to his heroic level have the proof in ourselves that, despite our creed, we have not gone so far as he had gone to master what Christ Himself affirms to be a fundamental law of his kingdom; that we are not as yet so willing to lose our life at the call of duty as he was. And it therefore behoves us to ask ourselves whether we are, in any true sense of the words, hating and crucifying our soul that we may live and walk in the spirit: whether our love of truth is a passion, and our love of righteousness and charity a passion, to which we cheerfully sacrifice ease, wealth, or the pursuit of wealth, the admiration, and even the goodwill of our neighbours? That is a searching question for any man to ask of himself or of others-for which of us can answer it as he would wish to answer and knows he ought to answer it? but it is none the less a question which we are bound to ask at least of ourselves. For Christ, who did not love his life, but freely gave it up for us all, Himself assures us, with a solemn "Verily, verily," that if we do not thus hate our souls and all that our souls hanker after, we have not yet possessed ourselves of the life eternal.

Nor is it safe to plead, as many do, that they are at least earnestly trying to save their souls by faith in Christ and by a diligent attention to religious duties. For it is Christ Himself who says, "He that saveth his soul shall lose it." It is not our souls that have to be saved, but our spirits, that in us which seeks truth, hungers after righteousness, and breathes love to all mankind. And, in the Church, there is perhaps no commoner mistake than this attempt to save the soul rather than the spirit. For in what Church do we not find men to whom "heaven" means a

place in which they who are poor here shall be rich for ever, they who are here oppressed with toil shall enter into an everlasting comfort and rest, they who are unknown here shall be known and honoured? That is to say, there are only too many in every Church who project the lusts of the soul into the world to come, and hope to enjoy there the very gratifications which they have missed here! But such a saving of the soul would be a losing of it. What Christ bids us do is to treat this hungry soul of ours with a generous scorn and contempt, to love and pursue truth, not wealth; duty, not comfort; and the charity which shares all it has with others, not the honour which lifts us above others and separates us from them. And it is only as we do thus subordinate the soul, with its eager cravings, to the spirit's demand for truth, righteousness, love, that we become of one mind and purpose with Christ and can share in his salvation.

## III.—THE PROMISE.

"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am there shall my servant be also: if any man serve me, him will the Father honour." (Verse 26.)

Here, then, our Lord, having laid his foundation broad and deep in Nature and in Human Nature, applies his law of self-renunciation to the Church, to the obedience of his Disciples. They can only serve Him by following Him; and they can only follow Him by sharing in the spirit of his self-sacrifice. He was about to take up his cross, to be lifted up from the earth upon it, a sacrifice for the sin of the world; the Highest giving Himself for the lowest, the Best for the worst, In Him, therefore, both his parable and his paradox find their supreme illustration: For did not He fall into the earth and die only to bring forth "much fruit," a harvest with which the

world is still white? Did not He, in very deed, save his life by losing it? and would He not have lost it if He had saved it?

Assume that these Greeks came to ask Him to leave the hostile and ungrateful Jews, and become the honoured Sage and Councillor of a foreign Court. Had He listened to their request, He might have escaped the Cross, and have resided in a palace, or a college, surrounded for years with honour, love, and troops of friends; but what would have become of the work which his Father gave Him to do? how should the world have been redeemed and reconciled unto God? nay, how should He Himself have been other than dead to name and fame and use? The Name which is above every name would have been unknown, and He who is the Life indeed would long since have mouldered in an obscure grave, as dead as many another Eastern sage who, while he lived, was the pride of an Academy or a Court. Even if his words had kept his memory green, must we not have mourned over Him Himself as a "lost leader," a traitor to his own teaching, an apostate from the high cause He had espoused, instead of saving, as we can now say with sacred joy and reverence and pride, "Albeit his life was the fairest and greatest, and his teaching the purest and noblest, that the world has ever seen, yet nothing in his life became Him like the leaving it."

On the other hand, by being true to his Father and his work, He lost his life only to save it—lost it not without effort and pain, as we are reminded by his exclamation in Verse 27, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?" an exclamation to which we cannot listen without becoming aware of the natural and strong recoil of his soul from death, and of the strife between soul and spirit, between the lower and higher natures which were in Him. But this strife ended in the victory of the higher over

the lower when the inward debate closed in the resolve to pray, not, "Father, save me from this hour," but, "Father, glorify thy name." By thus losing his life in this world, He not only saved it unto life eternal; He also became the Author of eternal life to as many as believe on his Name.

This law of self-sacrifice, then, was the law of his own life, and must become the law of life to these Greeks if they would follow Him. That which is highest and best in them can only live and quicken life in others, it can only become vigorous, perfect, eternal, as that which is lower in them is subdued and mortified. Did they understand how much was involved in serving Him? Were they prepared to find their ideal in self-renunciation instead of self-culture, in self-sacrifice rather than in self-gratification? If they were and did, He would welcome them to his service as cordially as if they were sons of faithful Abraham: for, said He, "If any man," Gentile or Jew, "will serve me, let him follow me, and where I am there shall he also come"; and again, "If any man," Jew or Gentile, "will serve me, him will my Father honour." But let him understand that, if he would serve Me, he must deny himself, must be prepared to lose his life; let him understand that he must die to himself, and to all merely selfish aims, if he would walk in the path which I tread. If he will do this, his loss shall turn to gain. Not only will he save himself, by losing or dying to self, but him will my Father honour—as certainly honour him as He will glorify In him life shall pass and rise into life everlasting, and whither I go thither shall he come. So that this promise is a double promise; it resolves itself into a promise for this world, and a promise for the world to come.

The promise for this world is, "If any man will serve me, him will the Father honour,"—a promise which sounds too good to be true. As we ponder it in our hearts we are tempted to say, "What, God honour a man: how can that be?" It seems incredible that we should be able to do anything to win the respect, the esteem, the affectionate admiration of the Maker and Ruler of the universe. We honour those who are above us: how, then, can the Almighty honour those who are so far beneath Him?

And yet so long ago as the time of Eli and Samuel Jehovah is represented as saying, "Them that honour me I will honour," while "they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Here, too, the very structure of the sentence shews that the word "honour" is used in its usual sense, and that our Lord means to affirm that God sincerely reverences and esteems any man who lives for others rather than for himself. As why should He not? It is not true that we honour only that which is above us. We honour even a dog if he serve us with sagacity and fidelity, if, i.e. he acts on the prompting of that which is highest and best in his nature, and denies the greedy and selfish impulses of his lower nature. A common Latin proverb bids us "reverence" the innocence of the young; and even the worst of men have been stricken with awe at the spectacle of an unstained and virginal purity. And who does not honour the weak of this world when they overcome the strong, when they shew themselves brave and cheerful and kind, lovers of truth and lovers of righteousness, amid manifold temptations, from without and from within, to be disloyal, selfish, cowardly, indolent, and yielding? In short, we honour any one, however low in the scale of being he may stand, who is true to his better impulses, and who, that he may be true to them, imposes a yoke or a cross on his baser passions and lusts.

Why, then, should not the Most High honour us? why should He not reverence and love us if we, his servants and children, serve Him truly; if we are honest, loyal, brave, diligent, cheerful, kind, amid a thousand temptations

to be false and cowardly, lazy and surly, indolent, selfish, unkind? The greater a man is the more generously he appreciates, the more unaffectedly and unreservedly he reverences and admires, the moral victories achieved by those who are less richly endowed than himself, the virtues which they cherish, the self-mastery and self-sacrifice they display. And if men are made in the image of God, must we not infer that in proportion to his greatness will be his generosity, his reverence and admiration for any man who serves and follows Christ, for any man, i.e. who, though drawn on every hand to seek his own things, really lives for others rather than for himself, really values truth above wealth, righteousness before comfort, charity more than self-indulgence?

Must not He who is our Father, in whom therefore love quickens insight, see far more in any service we can render, any self-denying deed by which we help on his great work—the illumination and redemption of the world -than we can see in it, and put a far higher value on it than that at which even the kindest of our neighbours appraises it? How much did Christ see in the coming of these Greeks to Him which they themselves could not see, which even Andrew and Philip could not see! What joy it gave Him that "the Gentiles also" should be seeking life! What a holy strife and trouble it kindled in his soul. and what a divine victory and calm came out of that trouble and strife! And who was it that saw Peter, the stedfast Rock, in the wavering and inconstant Simon? who that saw in the poor widow's two mites "more" than all the shekels of the Scribes? who that turned Mary's "alabaster" of spikenard into a standing "memorial" of her throughout all the world? But Christ is the very brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. need not and cannot doubt, therefore, that if we walk after the spirit and not after the flesh, if we follow the promptings of our higher and not our lower nature, if we deny ourselves and take up the Cross that we may follow Christ and be like Him, even God Himself will "honour" us, that He will reverence, admire, and love whatever in us is pure, whatever good, whatever honourable, whatever unselfish and fruitful. Even this fine motive and inspiration to a life higher than that which is natural and easy to us is not withheld from us. And if this will not nerve and animate us to live above the world, and the world's law, what will?

But there is a second promise in this Promise, a promise for the world to come. The man whom God honours cannot die, cannot lack any felicity which his Father can confer upon him. Life, in him, will rise and flower into life everlasting. There is an exquisite simplicity in the form which this promise of future good assumes on the lips of our Lord: "If any man follow me, where I am there also shall my servant come." Why, of course he will! one man follows another, he must come successively to every spot which his leader has occupied, and will only rest where he rests. There is a kind of parable in the words; and in the parable the strongest of all arguments. Difficult as we find it to persuade ourselves that we shall ever share the everlasting bliss and glory which we confess that Christ fully deserves, though we can never deserve it, we can hardly resist the force of the argument when He Himself throws it into this simple and inimitable, this gracious and most encouraging form. If we follow Him, we must at last come to the place in which He awaits us.

All depends, therefore, on following Him, on our fidelity in following Him. God will honour us here, and take us to dwell with Him hereafter, if we make the law of his life the law of our life, and tread in the path He trod. And we follow Him and keep his law whenever, like the dog, the servant, the child of whom I have spoken, we are faithful and diligent, brave, cheerful, unselfish, kind; when-

ever we subdue and deny the baser elements and passions of our nature in order that we may live in that in us which is highest and best; whenever we are true though we lose by it, honest in scorn of consequence, kind even to the evil and unthankful, and do good to the unjust as well as the just. We serve and follow Christ, and win the honour which comes from God, when we walk by faith in spiritual and eternal realities, not by our perception of what will promote our immediate gain or comfort; when we rule ourselves that we may be faithful to the true ends of life, and deny ourselves that we may minister to the wants of others.

In this simple summary of the contents of this Promise, as interpreted by its preceding context, there surely is nothing technical or mystical, nothing which any plain man cannot grasp. Nor is there anything arbitrary, capricious, or excessive in the demand that, to serve and follow Christ, to live in those higher chambers of our nature which open heavenward, shall be our end and aim. It is our reasonable service. It is the plain dictate of our own good sense when once that good sense has been illuminated by the truths and hopes of religion. And yet to be true to it is, as we find the moment we make the attempt, to take up a cross. For is it not hard to deny the lower nature, with its hungry cravings for comfort and pleasure, for opulence and the good word of man? Is it not hard to follow after truth when untruth would save us from loss or shame, to pursue righteousness when unrighteousness looks easy and profitable, to shew charity when selfishness is so natural to us and so pleasant? Is it not hard to refrain from snatching at the indulgences which injure but allure us, at the gains which promise to enrich although they really impoverish us, and to press on to the best and noblest ends amid an endless array of temptations and doubts and fears?

The course to which Christ invites us, then, is one to

which our own good sense prompts us, and yet to flesh and blood it is most hard, full of loss and pain. It is a course on which we can only enter by a kind of death, and in which we can only continue by suffering death in many forms; and yet it is the one only course by which we can rise into a true life, a life which will prove itself to be true by flowering out into life everlasting. That it is our true life, and that it will blossom into life eternal, should be a sufficient "spur in the sides of our intent." But lest it should not prove sufficient, we are still further incited and encouraged by the assurance that, if we serve the cause and follow the example of Christ, God will "honour" us even here and now, and by honouring us bring a new strength and sweetness into our lives; while, hereafter, we shall infallibly reach that great home and city of the soul to which our path conducts, and arrive where He is in whose steps we have trodden, and there be changed into his image, satisfied with his likeness, and invested with his glory.

EDITOR.

## THE GROWTH OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AMONG THE JEWS.

"Martha said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again (ἀναστήσεται). Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection (ἐν τῆ ἀναστάσει) at the last day" (John xi. 21-24). Now how did Martha know this? It seems to have been a novel doctrine to some of the Apostles. At the Transfiguration, when the Lord told the chosen three