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ARTICLE I.

SPIRITUALITY OF THE BOOK OF JOB AS EXHIBITED IN A
COMMENTARY ON CHAPTER XIV, EXAMINED IN CONNECTION
WITH OTHER PASSAGES.

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THE chief point of interest in this portion of Holy Writ is found in the touching interrogatory contained in the fourteenth verse—*If a man die, shall he live again?* It was to be expected that the unevangelical or Grotian class of commentators would give the least spiritual view of this and other similar passages. Critics of this kind generally profess to be, beyond all other expositors, free from any bias that may lead to results not sanctioned by the most legitimate principles of hermeneutics. And yet it may be maintained, that even they, with all their boasted claims to fairness and freedom from prejudice, do actually start with a prejudged theory, which modifies, controls, and in many cases, suggests the very interpretations on which they so strongly insist as arising directly from the *usus loquendi*, or strict philological examination of the text.

They too, we maintain, have *their* prejudged theory. They start with the assumption that neither the writer of the book of Job, whoever he may have been, nor the age, nor the country in which he lived, could have had any idea of a future, separate, spiritual state of existence, much less of any future judgment, much less of any resur-

rection of the body, and still less of any Divine Redeemer to appear in the flesh.

By the light of this theory, opposed as it is to what we know of the most ancient nations mentioned in profane history, must its advocates, of course, decide all questions of probability. When, therefore, they meet with passages, which, as far as grammatical interpretation is alone concerned, may present either a spiritual or a naturalistic aspect according to the side from whence they are viewed, such interpreters do not hesitate to adopt the latter as the most easy, the most obvious, the most in accordance with what they assume to be the *usus loquendi* of the writer, and of the age in which he lived. What makes this, in some respects, the more strange, is the fact, that such an unevangelical view is held the more firmly by those who insist upon bringing down the date of the book to the latest period,—even to the time when, according to another of their favorite theories, the Jews themselves began to learn the doctrine of a future life from the nations among whom they had been led captive. These nations, too, they can believe, had long been in possession of it, whilst the chosen people of God had never risen above the grossest materialistic belief in our merest animal existence, and had never exhibited the least trace of that which forms the first essential element of spiritual religion.

We may keep very far from that extreme which finds almost any doctrine of the New Testament in the book of Job, and yet believe, both from external and internal evidence, that it manifests a higher spirituality than has generally been conceded to it. The internal evidence of this kind may be concisely presented under three heads.

1st. *Its pure moral theism*, embracing such sublime views of the Divine purity, holiness and uncompromising righteousness, as have never, in any other age or country been found associated with materialism in respect to man.

2d. The positive doctrine of a spiritual world as presented in the introductory chapters, and to which we may rightly attach a similar inferential scholium, namely, that the belief in angels, or sons of God, and ministering spirits, and evil demons, has never since been found joined with that remaining dogma of the Sadducean creed which denies a separate spiritual life of the human soul.

3d. The revelation of an antagonism going on in this spiritual world for the trial of our moral integrity, which representation necessarily suggests the correlative idea of some great beneficent heavenly power contending on our behalf against the evil adversary, thus making probable what have been regarded as Job's allusions to a Redeemer, or Messiah, and also rendering easy of belief the supposition that he

sometimes speaks of deliverances connected with another state of existence.

Under these general heads we would briefly present a few introductory inferences, which the reader is desired to keep in mind throughout the whole of the following interpretation. The true key of the poem, we assume, is most naturally to be sought in the first two chapters. Nothing could seem at first view, and on almost any view, to be fairer than such a position as this; and yet it has been strangely overlooked by almost all who have written on the book. In these introductory chapters, there can be no doubt of an intention to bring before the mind, in some way, vivid ideas of invisible or spiritual beings, and of a spiritual world. This would seem clear enough as a fact in itself, whatever we may think of the manner of making the representation,—whether we regard it as subjective or objective, as mythical or real. The poem, most strikingly commences with the supernatural, the superhuman, and the unearthly. It also most impressively closes in the same remarkable manner. It is not easy, therefore, nor natural, to suppose that the intervening parts suddenly lose every trace of this character, and have reference only to *earthly* trials, *earthly* retributions, *earthly* vindications of the divine justice, and contain only a sort of Confucian morality, presenting the merest *earthly* manifestations of man's highest accountabilities. Again, it is hard to believe, that the writer meant to represent the great evil spiritual being as playing so important a part in these impressive opening scenes, and then that there should be not the least allusion to him in anything that follows. Among all other manifestations of religious belief, or in all other mythologies (to use a favorite phrase of the unevangelical school), *the doctrine of a spiritual world* inhabited by good and bad *spiritual agents*, has ever existed in conjunction with the idea of a surviving and separate future life for the human spirit. And so, on the other hand, as far as we can historically trace its effects, either as a philosophical or a popular tenet; a denial of such a separate and surviving human principle, or, in other words, *materialism in respect to man*, has ever, and from the very nature of the connection between the two dogmas, must ever ally itself with some species of *atheism in respect to the universe*. We do not believe that a pure *moral theism*, especially so sublime an aspect of it as is exhibited in the Psalms and in the book of Job, could exist for one century among a people who had no such belief in the soul as a separate essence surviving dissolution. Such a theism could have no *moral* sustaining power, and would inevitably soon sink down into a pantheistic impersonal naturalism.

In the view we have thus presented of the book, it would indeed be, what it has so often been styled without much meaning,—a *grand drama*, or rather epic,—a most sublime poetical representation in which revelation withdraws the curtain from *one scene* in that universal battle (*μάχη ἀθάνατος*) between good and evil, and between good and evil powers, which has been going on from the creation. In this sacred Iliad, if we may so speak of it, the field of the strife may be said to lie in the hopes, and fears, and faith of the tempted sufferer. The prize of victory is his moral integrity, in view of all the influences that might be brought to bear upon it both from the good and evil department of the spiritual or superhuman world. There is a more than Homeric grandeur of conception here. The *ἀθλον* proposed in this spiritual *ἀγών* is something far transcending that of the ordinary heroic.

*ὄχι ληήτιον, οὐδε βοείη,
ἀλλὰ περὶ ΨΥΧΗΣ μάρανται ὑδανύοιο.*¹

Again, this grand conflict necessarily suggests the idea of two chief antagonistic powers essentially pertaining to it. In respect to one of these the introduction, or argument of the poem, leaves no doubt. It is Satan, the old adversary, the enemy of man, the accuser, who is represented as roving to and fro in the earth, in search of the victims of his never sleeping malice.² Who then can be the other but HE, who, as we have good reason to believe, is repeatedly alluded to throughout the book? Who else can it be but Satan's ancient and everlasting opponent—The Only Begotten among the Sons of God—The Angel of the Presence—The Guardian Angel of the people of God in all ages—The Goel, or the Near Kinsman—The Angel Mediator—The Interpreter—The Witness on high—The Friend of man—The Divine Redeemer whose incarnation was promised away

¹ An accommodation or rather elevation of Homer. Iliad XXII. 161.

² It would certainly be very strange, as we have said, that Satan should never again be alluded to after the opening chapters, or that there should be no intimation of Job's having any belief or knowledge of the evil being, who was the immediate cause of all his miseries. We therefore think that there are such allusions in repeated instances, especially in those agonizing speeches in which the tempted sufferer is supposed to utter such violent and even blasphemous declarations against his Maker, but which, in reality may have been directed against his tormenting adversary! Of such a nature may be regarded those in Chap. 16: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. In verse 11, he would seem to have in his mind's eye a company or legion of mocking fiends—"They have gaped upon me with their mouth," etc. In verse 11, *בְּרִיז*, instead of *ungodly*, may be rendered, *The evil one*; and when thus viewed, compare it with ch. 1: 12. 2: 6. How natural then the transition to *The Friend on High*, verse 19.

back in the very beginning of the roll of revelation—HE “*whose delight had ever been with the sons of men, rejoicing always in the habitable parts of our earth*”—HE whose theophany, at some future period, was the theme of obscure tradition all over the eastern world—HE in whom (unless we are to discard the express testimony of the very men commissioned by our Lord for the very purpose of declaring the truth respecting himself), the most ancient patriarchs did, in some shadowy, it may be, and yet consoling, form, hope and believe.

But this is not the place for a full argument on this and the related subject. It is enough, for the present, to ask the reader to bear in mind, in connection with the following comments, a few suggested propositions, which will commend themselves, we think, to such as believe in the integrity and mutual relation of all the parts of God's word.

Without asserting that the doctrine of a future life, distinctly conceived, was the formal, habitual belief of Job and his immediate contemporaries, we may, at least, regard him as having occasionally recurring to his mind some such hope as Paul says the patriarchs possessed, when they called themselves pilgrims and sojourners upon earth, thereby professing to seek an unearthly *abiding place*, a city with foundations; which hope was grounded mainly on those oft repeated declarations, with one of which Christ confounded the Sadducees, “*because He was not ashamed to be called their God.*” With them a spiritual theism and a moral providence were connected with the hope of an abiding life for man; which hope necessarily grows out of the sense of such a relation to the Eternal One. So our Saviour taught the neologists of his day, when from one of the most common texts of the Old Testament (chosen because it was so common, and not because it contained any peculiarly recondite meaning), he showed the inseparable union of these truths with any scheme which had the least claim to be called a spiritual religion. Such a connection is also taught by reason and by that which is higher than reason, the human conscience. It may, therefore, be maintained, that it is not *improbable* that the soul of Job (even on the supposition that he lived in the days of the patriarchs) did, at times, in the midst of afflictions so adapted to drive him out of all earthly expectations, and in view of the dark dispensations of God in this world, revert to a more spiritual hope, although such hope might be of the most shadowy kind, and almost instantly lose itself again in the gloom of his desponding spirit. We say, then, that it is *improbable*, in view of all the considerations suggested, that Job should, under no circumstances, make allusion to the hope of another life.

Our second proposition is, that it is a *still more improbable* view which represents him (according to Rosenmüller and others) as *expressly denying* it; and not only that, but also as using terms which would seem to imply, that the thought could not be for a moment entertained, and, should it ever occur to the mind, must be silenced by the strongest form of negation. We may have doubts about the distinctness and firmness of his faith; but the supposition that would make him a dogmatic materialist, a stubborn denier of any spirituality in man, or of any connection with an unseen world beyond what belongs to the lowest *animality*—this, we say, ought to transcend the credulity even of the most obstinate rationalist.

The third proposition is, that both these improbabilities are greatly enhanced, even on the reasoning of the neological interpreters themselves, in view of that theory which brings down the writing of the book, if not the life of Job himself, to the later age of the Jewish State, or to a time near or subsequent to the Babylonish captivity.

Our ideas of a future life, generally, as one doctrine, and of the resurrection of the body as another, are usually kept tolerably distinct. It was not so, however, in the time of our Saviour. He himself, in his reply to the Sadducees, did not deem it necessary to view separately the then existing spiritual state of the Old Testament saints (as affirmed by him,) and their more distinct and higher life after the general resurrection. There was doubtless still more of this blending of the two ideas, or rather this dim accompaniment of the latter was still more obscurely apprehended, if at all, in earlier periods of the Old Testament history. And yet the idea once received of a renewed life for the spirit, it would seem to be most naturally followed by a shadowy hope, that the body also might, in some way, be a partaker of the same. It seems difficult on any other ground to account for the early and universal care manifested in the embalming, careful sepulture, and solemn funeral rites, which have ever attended the last disposal of the poor remains of our corporeal humanity. But it is time to commence our explanation of the chapter before us.

Verse 1. אָרָם קְלֵיָר אִשָּׁוּ — *Man of woman born*. An expression as Rosenmüller well observes, used to denote the frailty of our physical origin—*de infirmo stipite*. The same idea, ch. 15: 14, and 25: 4. *How shall man be just unto God; and how shall he be clean that is born of woman*. See Matt. 11: 11. Luke 7: 28, γεννητοὶ γυναικῶν. There are circumstances which have ever attended the first introduction of man into this fallen world, that seem to give peculiar emphasis to the expression which introduces this wailing lamentation over the weakness and darkness of our physical humanity. Whether a part

of the primal curse or not, there are scenes of anguish attending the human birth, and even of revolting deformity, which seem to await no other physical generation. They can only be alluded to, and our meaning cannot be better expressed than in the words of Plutarch's comment on the *Iliad* XVII. 446.

Οὐ μὲν γὰρ τί που ἐστὶν ὑψιζωώτερον ἀνδρῶς
Πάντων, ὅσα τε γαίαν ἐπιπνέει τε καὶ ἔρπει.

On which the philosopher remarks: *Τοῦτο οὐ ψεύδεται λέγων*—*οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν οὕτως ἀταλὲς, οὐδ' ἀπορον, οὐδὲ γυμνόν, οὐδ' ἄμορφον, οὐδὲ μαρὸν, ὡς ἀνθρώπος ἐν γοναῖς ὀρώμενος, ἢ μόνῳ σχεδὸν οὐδὰ καθαρὰν ἔδωκεν εἰς φῶς ὄδον ἢ φύσις· ἀλλ' αἵματι πεφουρμένον, καὶ λύθρον περίπλεον, καὶ φουενομένῳ μᾶλλον ἢ γεννωμένῳ ἰοικώς.*—Plutarch *De Amore Proliis*.

יָמֵי חַיֵּינוּ קְצָרִים—*Short of days*—*brevis dierum*. יָמֵינוּ מְבֻבְבִים—*Full of commotion or excitement*. Jerome: *Repletus multis miseriis*. From the cradle to the grave, one scene of excitement and unrest. Compare the description given in the book of *Ecclesiasticus* or *Wisdom of Sirach*, ch. 40: 1, 2, 3, *ἀσχολία μεγάλη—ζήλος καὶ ταραχή—ὀλίγον ὡς οὐδὲν ἐν ἀναπαύσει*.

V. 2. וְיֵצֵא כְּפִיּוֹסֵת פֶּתַח—*He cometh forth like a flower*. The responding mourner views man here solely in his physical relations. The allusion is to his mother earth. He cometh forth from her bosom and soon returns to it again. The term פֶּתַח also strikingly suggests a sort of scenic or phantasmagoric representation, as though the brief human existence were a mere *transitus*—a coming out from a dark past eternity, and a rapid passing in to a darker still to succeed. There is this thought, *Eccles.* 6: 4, וְיֵצֵא בְּחֹשֶׁךְ וְיִשָּׁחַף שְׁמוֹ—*He cometh in with vanity, and he departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness*. He comes forth from one חֹשֶׁךְ, or *hidden state*, flits swiftly across the narrow isthmus of time, and seems to be lost in the great עֹשֶׁךְ that follows. In contrast with such a view, God is said to be, וְיֵצֵא מִן הַחַיָּתִים, *ab eternitate ad eternitatem*, or as the LXX. express it, *Ps.* 90, ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος οὐ ἐλ.

וְיָבֵן כְּצֵל וְלֹא יִבָּנֶה—*He fleeth like a shadow, and abideth not*. The Greek poets are so full of these two most simple yet expressive comparisons, that we hope to be pardoned in presenting them at some length, although but little necessary by way of interpretation of a passage which so interprets itself to the conscious human sentiment. It is well to bring out comparisons of this kind, because they present a species of language which is confined to no one age or aspect of the world. It dates from the fall; it is found abundantly in the Scriptures

(see Ps. 108: 15. 90: 5. Job 7: 9. 18: 12, etc.) and in all the most ancient reminiscences of our world. This universal wailing cry could only have proceeded from some deep impression of a fall, from some consciousness of a strangely perverted condition, in which all the hopes and fears of the soul, its reminiscences of some heavenly origin, its conviction of a deeper inner life, and of the high moral importance of its relations to the Divine government, seem ever in strange contrast with its sense of the inadequacy, and inefficiency, and dream-like nature of its outward phenomenal existence. We find it in Homer, in the midst of all that pride of martial and heroic inspiration which would seem the furthest removed from any such humiliating confession of human insignificance.

Οἱε περ φύλλων γενεή, τοιῆδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.
 φύλλα τὰ μὲν ἴ' ἄνεμος χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα δε θ' ἔλη
 Τηλεθόωσα φύει· ἔπρος δ' ἐπιγίγνεται ὥρη.
 Ὡς ἀνδρῶν γενεή, ἡμὲν φύει, ἢ θ' ἀπολήγει.

Iliad, VI. 146.

We might almost translate Homer here by David, and give a version of the passage in the very words of the Psalmist: *Frail man, (ψῆξ) as grass are his days; as the flower of the field, so he flourisheth. The wind passes over it and it is gone, and the place thereof knoweth it no more.*

The other comparison of the flitting shadow is still more common. *Man*, says the writer of the 39th Psalm, *walks in a shadow* (צֶלֶל), a shade, an image, a land of unreality. Watts, in his beautiful yet somewhat inaccurate version, has made it more conform to the idea of the present passage.

See the vain race of mortals move
 Like shadows o'er the plain.

A more striking resemblance may be found in the Ajax of Sophocles, 125.

Ὅρῳ γὰρ ἡμῶς οὐδὲν ὄντας ἄλλο πλὴν
 εἰδῶλ', ὁσοῦπερ ζῶμεν, ἢ ποῖφην ΣΚΙΑΝ.

The same, Euripides' *Medea*, 1220.

τὰ θνητὰ θ' σὲ νῦν πρῶτον ἡγούμαι ΣΚΙΑΝ.

So again, in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, 1259.

ὠ βρόβεια πράγματ'· εὐτυχούντα μὲν
 ΣΚΙΑ τὺς ἀν τρέφειεν· εἰ δὲ θυσσυχῆ,
 βολαῖς τυρώσεων σπέγγος ὄλεσεν γραφῆν.

which may be paraphrased—"Human life, when prosperous, is such a shadow, that even a shadow may turn it; or rather, a picture which a shadow may spoil (as it is admirably rendered by Professor Felton, in his edition of the Agamemnon), but adversity, like a sponge, blots out every lineament,"—that is, reduces again, to utter darkness, the visionary representation of human life, which gleamed but for a moment, to disappear in the greater obscurity.

In like manner, Pindar, Pyth. Od. VIII. Last Epod.

Ἐπάμφοι· τί δέ τις; τί δ' οὐ τις;
ΣΚΙΑΣ ἕναρ ἀνθρώπος—

Of a similar kind, although with somewhat different imagery, is Soph. Oed. Tyr. 1186, or that most striking passage, commencing—

ὼ γενεαὶ βροτῶν,
ὡς ἡμῶς ἴσα καὶ τὸ μηδὲν
ζώσας ἐναριθμῶ.

Even the light hearted Aristophanes joins in the wailing strain, and writes, in one passage, almost every epithet descriptive of the frailty, transitoriness, dream-like, shadowy nature of human life—

Ἄγε δὴ φέσιν ἄνδρες ἀμανρόβιοι ΦΥΛΑΔΩΝ ΓΕΝΕΑ προσόμοιοι,
ὀλιγοδρανέες, κλίμακα πηλοῦ, ΣΚΙΟΕΙΔΕΑ φύλ' ἀμενηνῶν,
ἀπτήνες ἐφημέριοι, ταλαοὶ βροτοὶ, ἀνέρες ΕΙΚΕΑΟΝΕΙΠΟΙ.

Birds, 686.

וַיִּזְרַח — *It fleeth swiftly.* The image or shadow intended, is doubtless that of a cloud or vapor (καπνοῦ σκία, Soph. Antig. 1170) which seems to pass so swiftly over the plain, and which never, for a moment, stands (ἴσῳ) or keeps the same position, but is ever passing away, as some of the old Ionic materialists said of *all things* — οὐδὲν ἴσῳσιν — πάντα πάντως κινεῖται. It is certainly true of man physically, and of the whole physical system. It *standeth not*, but is ever passing away. It reminds us of Paul's most solemn declaration— "*the fashion of this world* (its σχῆμα, figure, outline, phenomenal being) *passeth away*; it abideth or standeth not.

V. 3. וַיִּזְרַח — *Upon such an one*—on such a being, so frail, so transient,—on such a fleeing shadow, coming out of darkness and going into darkness, dost thou open thine eye? The expression may be taken *in bonam vel in malam partem*. An example of the former may be found Zech. 12: 4. Here, however, it is to be regarded as having the latter sense. It is *the eye of justice*, the ἔκδικον ὄμμα of the Grecian drama. This is determined by the succeeding clause — וְהָיָה עֵינִי בְּעֵינֶיךָ — *And bring me into judgment with*

thee? Compare Job 7: 8, *Thine eye is upon me, and I am not; that is, I cannot endure it.* In reference to the same idea, God is called the *watcher of men*, Job 7: 20, as the word נָצַח there should be rendered, instead of *preserver*.

There is no mode of expression which varies more, according to the accompanying conception or aspect in which it is viewed, than this kind of impassioned interrogatory. Under each such aspect, it admits of a widely different answer; and this, too, varies very much according to our view of the emphatic point of the question. Thus, there may be here imagined a threefold latent response. It may be the strong negative—*minime vero*—which Rosenmüller and Mr. Barnes so unhesitatingly regard as the true answer intended to the famous question, verse 14; and it would be difficult to say why this positiveness would not be as much warranted in the one case as in the other. This same negative answer, too, would vary much, according as we regarded the emphasis of the interrogatory as concentrated on the object, or the action, or the agent. Is it *SUCH AN ONE* that thou bringest, etc.? Again—Dost *THOU* bring such an one into judgment with *thee*? Or, thirdly—Dost thou bring such an one into *JUDGMENT* with *thee*? Is he an object not merely of thy general physical providence, like other insignificant parts of the creation, but also of a *moral* contest, and dost thou judge the actions of this brief temporal being by laws and principles eternal in their nature and their sanctions? In one case, and according to one assumption, the supposed negative answer would be the strongest affirmation, that man was not *wholly* such an one as had been described, and which description was doubtless intended as true of him, considered in his mere physical relations. It would be equivalent to asserting that there really is something more than this physical aspect, to be taken into our entire estimate of humanity; however ill defined may have been the conceptions of the interrogator respecting it. Again, on the assumption that man is wholly *such an one*, the same supposed answer would be a denial that God attaches importance to his moral conduct; or, in other words, that the good or evil that befel him had anything to do with any moral considerations. An assumed affirmative would give rise to a similar variety in the statement of its bearings. So also the question itself, as a whole, takes different aspects, from a consideration of the state of mind from whence it may be supposed to have emanated. It may be regarded, if we choose to take the lowest view, as the language of one who has no doubt of the mere *animality* of the human condition. It may be, on the other hand, the mode in which the clearest faith expresses its assurance that man has a higher being, and is related to a higher world

of truth than would seem from the contemplation of his mere phenomenal existence. It may, again,—and to this middle view the whole aspect of the passage forces us,—be rather a musing soliloquy, than any strong expression of belief or disbelief. It may be the language of one seeking to invigorate a desponding faith; or of surprise at some great conception which passes through the mind, seeming for the moment too great to be entertained, and yet too intensely solemn and interesting to be rejected. Can it be, that man has no higher destiny than this! Why, then, should God bring him into judgment?

V. 4. The same train of thought may be regarded as pursued in the succeeding verse—*מִי יָבִיא טוֹרָה לְעַוְבָה*—*Who can bring purity out of impurity?* How can holiness, or moral excellence, be derived from so low a state, from such a mere *physical* existence? How can any moral relations be at all connected with such a being?

We need not suppose that there passed through the mind of Job just such a development of this thought, as would now result from viewing man in the clearer light which Christianity and an improved philosophy have shed upon his moral existence. Still, may we believe, that in this musing of the spirit, the ground of the developed thought was there, and that in that germ was contained, *potentially*, all that will be ever brought out in its highest and most perfect manifestation. In reading and interpreting Holy Writ, we are not shut up to the precise measure of the conception, as it may have darkly existed in the mind of the ancient writer or speaker through whom any parts have been transmitted to us. To put ourselves just in their position—according to what some have styled the great law of Biblical hermeneutics—would be to forget that inspired revelation was actually, in some high sense, the product of the Eternal Spirit, and that, therefore, its fulness of meaning cannot be wholly bounded by the inadequate conceptions of those who were used as the medium of its utterance. Some check, of course, must be interposed to extravagant and false interpretation; and this is found in the safe principle, that the law above mentioned must be carefully applied to limit and define the external and internal circumstances attending the origin of the thought, and the true conditions under which it was first given forth. These must certainly be regarded as indicative and regulative of its true *nature*, if not of its extent, and as presenting the true germ of subsequent development. By the nature of the *thought* we mean—whether it is moral or physical, whether it has respect alone to animal and earthly, or to moral and spiritual relations, even though it be but the merest glimmering view of them, in their most germinal aspects. But when this has been carefully determined, then we are to make a distinction—

and a most important distinction it is—between the *thought* or *idea*, which may be expanded ad infinitum, and the *inadequate conception*, by which it may have been at first represented, or by which it may afterwards have been measured, according to the varying knowledge, or capacities, or circumstances of human readers. The former, in the largest extent to which it can be carried by finite faculties, and even far beyond them, may be regarded as the mind of the Spirit. This may be taken as the true *word*, in a sense as real and as much intended by the author of the inspired volume, as the more limited view of its meaning which may have attended its first utterance recorded in the Bible. We may even say, in a sense still more real and true, rising higher and higher, (after having been thus grounded in a true hermeneutical foundation, as the security against cabalistical, mystical, or visionary interpretations,) according to the reader's spiritual-mindedness, or his communion with that Spirit of Truth through whom all *γραφή θείων εννοιών* was given to mankind. In other words, we are bound to get at the sacred writer's *true thought*, as distinguished from every other, and as built upon the true historical or hermeneutical sense of the passage; but then we are not to be limited by his measurement of the *thought*, or to take his objective *conception* as the full interpretation of his own idea,—so as to regard this conception and nothing more as being alone *the word*, or as all that God intended to say to the church through him. The *Thought* has a true existence *per se*, for all mind, and independent of the particular mind through which it is originally given. Whatever soul possesses it, even with the feeblest *conception*, may, in one sense, and a most real sense, be said to have it all; and yet it may be far more fully *developed* in one mind than in another,—far more fully developed, it may be sometimes, in the mind of the scholar than in that of the teacher, in the mind of the reader than in that of the author, in the mind of the humblest gospel-enlightened student of the Bible, than as it presented itself to some of those holy men through whom God imparted his primitive embryonic revelations in the earliest periods of our race.

Such a germ we conceive to be presented here. The thought would seem to have respect to our moral relations, and to be capable of immense expansion. It affirms that we are not beings of a day, by seeming to ask—*What would such have to do with the ETERNAL principles of moral obligation? How can moral purity be deduced from a merely animal or physical existence?* These ideas may have just gleamed upon the mind of Job, under circumstances so adapted to the springing forth of their germ, and then have passed away again as rapidly into the gloom of his despondency. Yet still it may be

maintained, that they are not only consistent with the context, but suit it the best of any answer that may be implied to his impassioned imagination. Compare the similar language, Job 7: 17—19, *What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him* (that is, make his action of great moral account), *or that thou shouldest set thy thought intently upon him; that thou shouldest visit him every morning and try him every moment!* So also the closing verses of the chapter just preceding—*Wouldst thou frighten the driven leaf? Wouldst thou chase the withered stubble; that thou shouldest write bitter things against me, and make me inherit the sins of my youth?* If he is *such an one*, why shouldest thou make him an object of thy constant providence, and bind him by the laws of thine eternal justice?

There is here an expressive force in the sudden change of the person, so common in the Hebrew—*And bring ME into judgment with thee*. By this the speaker, without any new declaration, fixes attention upon himself, as the being whose frail physical life seems connected with such wondrous moral and providential relations. It is also important, in a hermeneutical point of view, as striking evidence of the soliloquizing nature of the whole chapter.

V. 5. *חָרַץ* *decided, decreed; literally, cut short*. It contains the same etymological metaphor with the Latin *decido* and Greek *συνείμας*. There is a continuance of the same train of thought in the style of expostulation, strongly implying that this is not all of human destiny. *If his days are determined; if the number of his months are with thee; if thou hast made a decree which he cannot pass; if this indeed be so, and this is the whole of man, then—*

V. 6. *שָׁמַר מֵעֵינָיו*—*Look away from him*. It is to be contrasted with the expression above—*On such an one dost thou open thine eyes!* Compare Job 7: 19, *How long will it be that thou look not away from me?* Also Isa. 22: 4 and Ps. 39: 14 (in Hiphil), with the same sense and in a similar connection—*Avert thine eye from me, that I may enjoy myself before I go hence and be no more*.

יִרְחַק—*And let him cease—let him rest*. The same word is used below (v. 8) of the tree. This, and the meaning required Ps. 49: 9, seems to show that something more expressive is intended here, and would justify the paraphrastic rendering that has been given—*et desinat esse ac vivere*. Take from him *thine eye of judgment*, and let him die (or, that he may die), *that he may* (at length) *enjoy like a hireling his day*. See also the use of the verbal adjective *חָרַץ*, Ps. 39: 5 *Let me know the measure of my days*, *בְּחָרְצִי אֶנְי*. From the same idea comes the noun *חָרְץ*, as used in the lamentation of Hezekiah, Isa. 38: 11—*I shall no more look upon men when I am with the inhabi-*

tants of *Hedol*—namely, the place of rest or cessation from all that occupies men in the land of the living. So also in Greek, ἀβολίγης and ἀπόληξις are used for death or the decline of life.

V. 7. *For there is hope of a tree, that if it be cut down, it will again spring up*—תִּחְיֶה. Few words in Hebrew are more difficult to translate than this, so as to give its true spirit in many places, by any one English term. It is rendered—to change, to pass through, to pass away, to perish, to disappear,—perit, praeterit, abiit, transit, evanuit, also revivuit. Its Hiphil and Kal senses are very much alike. In its most primary and general sense it may be defined as meaning to pass from one state to another; hence ever including the idea of phenomenal change, whether from life to death or from death to life. Thus, it may mean to perish, or pass off from the organized to the unorganized; also the contrary, from the unorganized to the organic state—to revive, or be renewed. Along with the idea of change, there is also generally implied that of suddenness. Thus, as it is used in Kal Job 4: 15, where it is rendered, “A spirit passed before my face,” there is evidently intended something more than that mere motion, which might have been expressed by עָבַר. There seems to be denoted one of those fitting and unaccountable transitions which are so common in dreams, and which we find it so difficult to define in language, or even to explain to our own thoughts—

“A change came o’er the spirit of my dream.”—In its Hiphil sense of renewal or substitution, it admirably expresses the transition intended in this place, and described more fully in the two subsequent verses. For a parallel use of the word, see Ps. 90: 6.

V. 8. תִּחְיֶה מִמַּיִם. Rendered—*From the scent of water*. More properly—*From the breath*; or, more correctly still, *from the inhalation of water*; referring to the absorption of moisture through the fibres of the roots, which, in respect to the plant or tree, may be regarded as somewhat analogous to lungs in the human body. To preserve this analogy, water is treated as the breath of vegetable life; and thus it is said to revive, to breathe again—ἀναψύχω to live a new life, whilst,—

Va. 10. *Man dies, and loses the vital energy; man exhales (ἐκψύχεται), or gives up, his breath, and where is he!* נָפַח is a word which seems evidently derived from the action it represents—*expiravit, efflevit*; like the Greek *νασ*, or *κασ*, in *νάστω*, *νάσσω*, whence the Homeric phrase *νασασθόνα θυμῶν*—*gaspings forth one’s soul*; see Iliad 5. 698. Odyssey 5. 468; hence the noun *νάστος*, Eolic *νάστος*, *breath*; also *νάστος*, and the Latin *vapor*. On the same resemblance are built our English words *gape* and *gasp*.

וְיָבֵשׁ. This word is rendered, actively, to subdue, bring low;

passively, *to be subdued*. The primary sense seems to be *to weaken*, or *render powerless*; or, intransitively, *to become powerless*. In Joel 4: 10, we have the derivative adjective, in the same sense of *debilis*, *weak—without energy*. This seems well adapted to the context here. Its position after $\kappa\alpha\mu\acute{o}\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ is some evidence that it means a state or process posterior in nature and time to dissolution—something which follows death, and which therefore cannot be referred to the sickness or debilitation which precedes it. The rendering of our common version—*wastes away*—as though referring to the body in the grave, has nothing to warrant it in any other application of the word. We cannot help regarding it as having here, very much such a sense as the Greeks attached to their word $\kappa\alpha\mu\acute{o}\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$, when applied by them, not to the body, but to the departed shade, or ghost. As in the Iliad III. 278.

*Kai oi h̄p̄ter̄de KAMONTAS
ἀνθρώπους τίνυσθον, ὅτις κ' ἐπίορκον ἠμόσα·*

So also the Odyssey XXIV. 16.

$\Psi\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota$ εἰδῶλα KAMONTΩΝ.

Buttmann regards this as merely a euphemism for—the *dead*, the *weary*, the *weak*—as though referring to the body. It seems astonishing, that he should not have seen that this is utterly inconsistent with most of the passages in which the term occurs, and especially those where the $\kappa\alpha\mu\acute{o}\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ are spoken of as the subjects of moral retribution,—as in the first of the last two quoted; or where they are described as acting and conversing—as in the example from the Odyssey XXIV. 14. It rather represents the most ancient Greek conception of the state of the departed yet still existing *spirits*. Their condition, although one of continuous, and, to a great extent, conscious being, was yet comparatively the mere shade or *umbra* of the former life. The *post-mortem* animation, we might almost say, was regarded as the ghost of the former intelligence; very much as the ghostly form itself represented the appearance of the former living body. They appear to have, in imagination, transferred to this state of existence the continuance of the phenomena first presented, and of the thoughts immediately suggested by dissolution. Hence the $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ itself was regarded as weak, emaciated, powerless; and we may almost say, although it implies a seeming paradox, *mindless* and *senseless*. Thus the ghosts are so frequently called, in Homer, $\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\tau\eta\gamma\acute{\alpha}$ $\nu\acute{\alpha}\rho\eta\eta\alpha$, $\phi\upsilon\lambda'$ $\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\tau\eta\gamma\acute{\alpha}$, etc. They were said to be without $\phi\rho\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\varsigma$, having no thought or recollection of previous existence; in fact, reduced or carried back very far towards the rudimentary or embryo state of human animation. Hence

is is said of Tiresias (Odys. X. 498), that *his* mind, or φρένες, remained firm (ἐμπεδοὶ ἦσαν),¹ and that to him alone it was given, as a special favor, to exercise understanding (πεννύσθαι), whilst the others were but fitting shades (τοὶ δὲ οὐαὶ αἰσσοσύν) who had to drink of the blood—the ancient symbol of life, or rather the life itself—before they could have firm thoughts or recollections.

According to Herder, and as we think can be shown from various passages in the Old Testament, something of this kind entered also into the common conceptions of the Jews, and of the people around them, respecting the inhabitants of Sheol. The departed were regarded as still having an animate though shadowy existence, and yet without that living power and activity which distinguished them in this world. Quietness was the predominant idea, and yet it was not strictly repose. Instead of a real life of energy, and of motion regarded as proceeding from thought and purpose, they wandered, or—to use the more appropriate phrase, which has ever been applied to the motion of ghosts—they only *flitted* about in the realms of the dead, in the valley of *Tzalmaveth* (צֶלְמַת צְרִיָא), *the shadow of death*, or *the nether world of shades*, as we think was intended by this expression in its most primary sense, although it is sometimes used metaphorically of sombre scenes and circumstances in the present life.²

For other passages illustrative of the word *καμόντες*, and of the ideas of Homer and the other Greek poets on this subject, see the *Odyssey* XI. 475—Aesch. *Supplioes* 231, where the *καμόντες* are also represented as subjects of justice, and of punishment by the Infernal Zeus. A similar use of the perfect participle *κακμήκοντες*, may be seen in Aesch. *Sup.* 164; Eurip. *Troad.* 96; Eurip. *Sup.* 758; Plato, *Legg.* 718 A.; Thucyd. III. 59.

A very strong proof that the Hebrew conception, in this respect, was about the same with the Greek, is found in a Hebrew word for the shades or manes, namely רָפָאִים. Gesenius rightly defines it, from its etymology, *umbras, manes in orco degentes, quos et sanguine et vi vitali destitutos, neque tamen animi viribus, ut memoria, plane carentes, sibi fingebant veteres Hebraici.* See Isa. 14: 19: 10. Ps. 88:

¹ Some critics have regarded this expression as having reference to the unflinching nature of the prophecies of Tiresias, and not to any peculiarity of his ghostly state. That it refers, however, to the active exercise of mind, in distinction from the condition of the other shades, will appear from comparing *Odys.* X. 240.

² In Ps. 23: 4, there is strong reason to believe that a state after death is intended. *Though I walk through the valley of shades, the terra umbrarum, still thou wilt be with me.* In Job 38: 17, the *gates of Tzalmaveth*, come in the parallelism after the more common expression, the *gates of death*, as though denoting something more interior, consummate, and remote.—*Portas mortis umbrarum.*

11. Prov. 2: 18. 9: 18. 21: 16, and Job 26: 5, where it is applied to the *manes*, or ghosts, beneath the waters; referring, in all probability, to the ancient sinners who were swept away by the flood, and whom Peter describes as the *spirits in prison*, 1 Pet. 3: 19. This other Hebrew term, שָׁרֵי, which we are now considering, seems to have the same etymological significance, and to be grounded on the same idea in its applications to the departed, as the Greek *καμόντες*. So also the similar word, חַלְוֵי, as used Isa. 14: 10, where the ghosts are represented as saying to the descending shade of the Babylonian monarch,—“Hast thou also become *feeble* (*ἀμενηνός*), like one of us?”

The whole passage, in this view, may be thus paraphrased: “Man dies, and lies down among the *καμόντες*, the שָׁרֵי, the shadowy, nerveless, dreamy tribes of the ghostly world, whose thoughts,¹ that is, their active schemes and purposes, “*have perished*” (Ps. 146: 6), and who have no more part in anything that takes place beneath the sun. Man exhales his breath, and Oh! where is he? To what region of the *Terra Umbrarum* has he departed; to what undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller has ever yet been known to return?”

This explanatory manner of putting the question, shows that Job was far from denying the possibility of a separate existence for the soul after death, whatever he may have thought of any future revivification of the body. It is the tone and language of one striving to pierce the unknown, and yet with feelings of repressing awe, rather than of dogmatic and denying scepticism. It is very much in the spirit of the famous interrogatory, Eccles. 3: 21—*Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth up, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?* The ancient traditional distinction is not there denied by the soliloquizing philosopher; it is only intended to suggest the incompetency of man ever, in this life, to pass beyond the mere fact, or to explain the law of the matter, or to trace the way of the spirit, either in its upward or downward course; or to show how the spiritual and material elements do respectively return, at dissolution, to their appropriate departments—

¹ There is probably something of this same strange conception of a state of conscious animation, yet almost without mind or memory, in Ecclesiastes 9: 10 *אין מעשה ויחכמה ודעת ויחכמה ודעת אין מעשה ויחכמה ודעת* “For there is no *work*, no *invention*, or *purpose*, no *wisdom* in Sheol.” We cannot think that is intended to denote absolute cessation, or *annihilation*, but rather a state of being almost entirely rudimentary and *introspective*—without outward energy, or purpose, or that active employment of means to ends which characterizes the present busy life—a state where men are no longer *ἀλφειοται*, *gain-seeking*, *enterprising*, etc. as Homer styles them, but are reduced to an inward rudimentary condition of life, it may be (although this is very imperfectly revealed in the O. T.), as preparatory to a more perfect existence.

πνεῦμα μὲν πρὸς αἰθέρα
τὸ σῶμα δ' εἰς γῆν.¹

The resemblance between this comparison of the tree and the striking lines of Moschus, in his epitaph on Bion, have attracted the notice of almost all classical and biblical scholars.

Αἱ αἰ τὰ μαλάχαι μὲν ἐπὶν κατὰ κύβου ὄλωνται,
ἢ τὰ χλωρὰ σέλινα, τὸ τ' ἐνθάλῃς οὐλον ἀνηθον
ἕστερον αὐ ζῶοντι, καὶ εἰς ἔτος ἄλλο φύοντι.
ἄμμες δ' οἱ μεγάλοι, καὶ καρτεροὶ, ἢ σοφοί, ἄνδρες,
ὅπποτε πρῶτα θάνωμες, ἀνάκοι ἐν χθονὶ κοίλα,
εἴδομες εὖ μάλα μακρὸν ἀτέρμονά νήγητον ἔπνον.²

V. 11. ἠβηξ — *The waters fail*; more properly, *depart, flow away*. This verb is of comparatively rare occurrence, but is evidently allied to the more common βηξ, *fluctit*, which is ever applied to water. See 1 Sam. 9: 7, where the present word is used of food; also, Deut. 32: 36, where it is used of strength; and Prov. 20: 14, where it denotes a secret withdrawal. The LXX. render it *σπασίζεσθαι*. Grotius and Rosenmüller understand βηξ, not as the sea, but as a stagnant lake. There is, however, no need of any such explanation (having no warrant from any other passage), if we regard the comparison as purely hypothetical; which seems to be the most natural view of it. *As if the waters failed from the sea, so man, etc.*—intimating the most complete view that could be taken of his dissolution under this mere physical aspect. There is a *fountain* of nature, from whence the tree may drink a new supply of life; but when man dies, it seems to us as though the *ocean* had failed, the very source of physical life had been (for him) forever dried up. Or it may be intended as a measure of an immensely long period, by way of heightening the conception, here presented, of the apparently long sleep of the grave. The LXX. seem to have had some idea of this kind. *Χρόνῳ γὰρ σπασίζεσθαι θάλασσα*—*in time, or at length, even the sea fails*, or may be supposed to fail; that is, the longest processes in nature may be regarded as having their determined periods; but “man lieth down and riseth not.” *Can this be!*

¹ Eurip. Sup. 533.

² Alas! the herbs, the tender herbs, that in the garden lie;
The spring returns, they live again, and bloom once more to die;
But man, the great, the strong, the wise, when once he yields his breath,
Nor morn or spring disturbs again that endless sleep of death.

Or, as the last part has been accidentally paraphrased in a modern hymn:

His labors done, securely laid in this his last retreat,
Unheeded o'er his silent dust the storms of life shall beat.

Is man so inferior to nature!—is the silent query that underlies the passage. Such may be regarded as the implied force of the declaration; which, instead of intending doubt or denial, may have been used rather to bring the gloomy thought distinctly before the mind, in order that its contrasted shade might give relief and distinctness to the feeling which seeks encouragement for the opposite hope. But of this elsewhere.

V. 12. *וְעַד אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּח הַשָּׁמַיִם* may be rendered—*until*—or *quoadmōdum*—as *long as the heavens are*—*usque dum non erunt coeli*—that is, *nequamquam*, as Rosenmüller observes. It might be maintained that here is an assigned period, and that it was meant that then, when the heavens were no more, man *should* awake out of his sleep; at the last trump, when the elements were melting with fervent heat, and the heavens were departing as a scroll. Although it is said that such an interpretation “is not countenanced by the most ‘respectable critics,’ and would be inconsistent with the *usus loquendi*,” etc., still it might be maintained to be in harmony with that *analogy of faith*, or that evangelical and apostolical law of hermeneutics, which regards all the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, as being not merely the productions of the authors whose names are attached to them, but as the work of one Eternal Spirit, and as designed to have relation, more or less, in every part, to one harmonious system of revealed truth. On the ground of such an analogy of inspiration—an analogy in the highest degree rational if revelation itself is a rational idea—it would be no absurdity to refer to a passage in Peter by way of illustration of one in Job, any more than to cite, as Paul does, the books of Genesis and Leviticus in support of doctrines maintained in the Epistle to the Galatians. One who held this view might give all due weight to the common objections arising from the age, and style, and historical circumstances of particular books, as far as they were not carried to the extreme of breaking up into a fragmentary chaos the whole canon of Scripture. He might admit that particular views and doctrines are more naturally to be looked for in certain parts than in others. With all this, he would most rationally contend, that some account be taken of the fact—if it be a fact—that the Bible is a supernatural revelation from God, and cannot, therefore, have been written like any other book. He might maintain that this at once introduces a new, and, to say the least, *modifying* law of hermeneutics which it would be most absurd for one who believes in it to overlook, and that warrants the most rational expectation of finding germs, at least, of evangelical truths, more or less vividly presented, in portions where the neologist never discovers them, for the plain reason, that he cannot, in any case,

admit the probability or even possibility of their presence there. In whatever book (or by whatever book) God has made a revelation to us, there must be a most important fulness of meaning, for which, in the exercise of a devout and chastened judgment, we are to seek as for hid treasures. It was in the acknowledgment of this principle, that Jesus and his apostles found so much more in the Old Scriptures than has since been discovered by Grotius and Rosenmüller. But our rational commentator, as he styles himself, does not truly believe that God thus speaks to us in the Old Scriptures. He would never have allowed of any rational antecedent probability in the interpretation with which Christ confounded the materializing Sadducees; and yet what Christian will dare to say that the Lights of the world did not follow a safe and rational law of hermeneutics?

We may not expect to find the system of the gospel truth distinctly set forth in the Jewish Scriptures, but what faith can stand the shock, or rather who can have any faith in revelation at all, if he is compelled to believe that those who are called God's chosen people, and even the most pious among them, were for so many centuries the veriest materialists, or annihilationists, destitute of the first elements of anything like spiritual religion, in perfect ignorance of any key to the mysteries of God's providence or of his moral justice, inferior, in this respect, not only to all the other nations of antiquity, but even to the savage tribes of our own continent—in short, with no more conception of another life, or of the eternal moral ideas that have no true existence apart from it, than the beasts that perish. Believe this who can. If we must have either extreme, I would prefer to it all the dreams of Origen, and all the wild interpretations of a Cocceius or a Parkhurst.

To a consistent believer, then, in the true idea of revelation, there should be no difficulty in such a view of this passage as has been taken by Drs. Good, Chalmers, and many others—that is, no difficulty arising from any alleged antecedent improbability, if the words and context will fairly bear the interpretation. In the passage before us, however, we think that the whole purpose may be regarded as better answered by taking this verse in the way of the strongest hypothetical negation, and the expression, *until the heavens be no more*, for the common method of denoting unbounded time.¹

The greater part of the verse admits of being regarded as a direct interrogatory. *Man lieth down, and shall he arise no more? Shall they never awake out of their sleep?* This method has sometimes been

¹ To the ancient mind, the revolutions of the visible heavens were much more the actual measures of time than to us. Artificial expedients have superceded the constant and necessary observation of the celestial motions.

recorted to by the best critics, when there were far less grounds for it than in this case. According to another view, it may be regarded as a desponding denial, from which the writer represents the sufferer as recovering in the next verse. Or it may, more properly, be taken as neither interrogatory, nor affirmation, nor denial, but rather, as before intimated, as a meditative or ejaculatory presentation of the darkest side of the case, for the very purpose of strengthening, by such a contemplation of an extreme hypothesis, a weak yet hoping and rising faith. Why may we not suppose Job to have talked with himself after the manner of Beattie's minstrel?—

Nor yet for the ravage of winter I mourn ;
 Kind nature the embryo blossom will save ;
 But when shall spring visit the mouldering urn ?
 O when shall day dawn on the night of the grave !

It might as well be said that this, too, was the language of an unbeliever in any future existence. Here, too, the merely exegetical or rhetorical answer, necessary to preserve the keeping of the despondent thought, would be a strong negative ; just as Rosenmüller and Mr. Barnes say *minime vero* to the impassioned interrogatory, verse 14 ; and yet the very tone of the verse above quoted, and of the similar verses of the poem, considered independently of anything else in any other parts of the context, would of themselves show that they were used for a very opposite purpose. The pensive strain was intended to usher in the more cheerful note of hope ; and so here, in the passage before us, it is followed, at once, by an earnest prayer, springing from a feeling altogether different from that which seemed to prompt the apparent denial, and in fact irreconcilable with it.

It may be justly said, too, and the remark is applicable to a great part of the chapter, that Job here confines his contemplations of man mainly to his *physical* or *phenomenal relations*, it may be, to bring out more strongly the apparent contradictions between this aspect of humanity, and the importance he is compelled to attach to our moral being, of which importance, he never seems to entertain a doubt. Contemplated thus in his mere *animal nature* (and by this term, in its widest sense, we mean what may be called the physiology or physical constitution of the soul regulated as a physical production under physical laws as well as of the body), everything in man does seem to come to an end in death. So strong, so exclusive, so unbroken is this negative evidence which comes up from the phenomenal world, from all that we see and hear and feel of dissolution, that we may well wonder how this universal belief in some future life and a ghostly state,—a belief held by the most savage as well as the most

enlightened—has ever maintained its ground against so powerful an antagonistic influence. And yet both views, we know from experience, have a *mysterious practical consistency*. The most firm Christian may at times indulge in the contemplation of this aspect of his nature, and, whilst thus confining his mind to it, employ just such language as is sometimes used by Job and the speaker in Ecclesiastes. We too may talk, and talk consistently, of our existence as but a handbreadth, our life as a vapor, as a cloud that goeth and returneth not again. We may speak of the grave as our long home, our resting place. We may even, at times, feel a sort of melancholy pleasure in regarding it mainly in its aspect of repose from the toils and anxieties of the present stormy life—as a state where the small and the great, the bond and the free, lie down together—where the wicked cease from troubling and the *weary are at rest*. We may also, as Job seems to have done here, contrast our physical frailty and transitoriness, with the apparent stability and immensely long periods of nature. Such language is everywhere congenial to humanity. It is to be found, in very numerous places, among the Grecian poets; and yet we know that the common belief of their age respecting another world was the very ground and life of their highest poetry. Pindar, for example, will tell us in one place of the “Isles of the Blessed,” of the “tearless eternity” (*ἄδακρον αἰῶνα*) where “those who have rejoiced in piety and revered their oaths, enjoy the never setting sun of one eternal day.”

Ἴσον δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεὶ,
Ἴσα δ' ἐν ἡμέραις,
Ἄλιον ἔχοντες, ὑπονέστερον
Ἑσλοὶ δέκονται βίον.
Παρὰ μὲν τιμίους θεῶν,
Οἴτινες ἔχαιρον εὐσερκίαις,
Ἄδακρον νέμονται αἰῶνα.

Olymp. II. Σ. δ.

He speaks, too, most distinctly of that world of awful retribution where incorrigible lost spirits suffer the dread penalty of their sins.

Θανόντων μὲν ἐνθάδ' αὐτίκ' ἀπύλαμοι φέρεις
Ποινὴς ἔτισαν.

and “from whose fearful doom the eye of the soul turns away with horror,”

Τοὶ δ' ἀπροσάρατον ὀκχέοντι πόνον.

Viewing man, also, in his higher aspect, he represents him as the subject of Immortal Law, and of an Eternal Justice; and then again,

Like Job he speaks of us as the merest ephemerae (Pyth. VIII. 'E. ε'), or beings "crushed before the moth,"—as a *passing shade*,—as the *shadow of a dream*, or the *dream of a shadow*.

Ἐπάμεροι τί δέ τις; τί δ' οὐ τις
ΣΚΙΑΣ θναρ ἄνθρωπος.

The poet Moschus, from whom we have quoted that touching comparison, so much resembling Job's, and seeming to imply a hopeless cessation of human existence, had just before in the very same poem, spoken of his departed friend as "still singing sweet strains in the realm of Hades." Homer certainly manifests an undoubting belief in a ghostly world, or separate place of souls, as the settled opinion of his day, and yet he does not hesitate at other times, to speak of us as the most transient and ephemeral of all existences; φύλλον γενεή, "leaves which the winds scatter upon the ground, and which perish in every revolving season," (see the lines quoted p. 212). One of his most common epithets of death, is etymologically opposed to every idea of continuous conscious being—*κατηλεγής*—not simply *lying prostrate*, as some grammarians say, but rather *long-oblivious* or *uncaring*. The term seems to be derived directly from the most exclusively phenomenal aspect of mortality.

The Christian, too, as we have said, may indulge, and sometimes rightly indulge, in similar pensive strains. It is good for him sometimes to contemplate this mere physical aspect of frail humanity, and he may do so without any disparagement of his highest and purest faith. Of this kind are the lines from Beattie's minstrel above quoted. Such effusions are frequent in the poetry of the pious and heavenly minded Watts. With what solemnity of feeling does Dr. Dwight indulge in the expression of similar thoughts:

In those lone, silent realms of night,
Shall peace and hope no more arise?
No future morning light the tomb,
Nor day-star gild the morning skies?

Such language, we say, even when unqualified by anything of a contrary kind, is not only lawful, but appropriate, when the mind is led by peculiar circumstances to dwell on the physical frailty of our human state, as presented in most impressive contrast with the *real* eternity of God, and the *apparent* eternity of nature. We may properly wish to take a steady view of this side of our being, unaffected, for the moment, by any other considerations; or we may entertain such thoughts as preparatory to, and suggestive of, a higher faith in our moral and spiritual relations. On either ground, it is a sufficient justi-

fication for us, that the language occurs so often in the Scriptures, not only in the Old Testament, but also, occasionally, in the New. We therefore adopt, without misgiving, into our hymns, and, at times, even into our prayers, the very words which are found in passages of this nature, from Job and the Psalms. We sing and repeat, with emotion, in which there mingles no consciousness of inconsistency, such lines as these—

Silence and solitude and gloom
In those forgetful realms appear;
Deep darkness fills the silent tomb,
And hope can never enter there.

The same may be said of that solemn dirge, so often sung on funeral occasions—

Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb;
Take this new treasure to thy trust;
And give these sacred relics room
To slumber in the silent dust.
Nor pain, nor grief, nor anxious fear
Invade thy bounds; no mortal woes
Can reach the peaceful sleeper here.

We feel no inconsistency between such strains and the bright hopes to which they sometimes serve as the dark, minor prelude. They no more jar upon our speculative theology, than that touching language of the New Testament which represents death under the soothing conception of a sleep. In the same way, and on the same principle, are we fond of employing the words of the Preacher, whose sermon was ever upon the frailty and nothingness of the present life, and the silence which, to the natural ear, seems to rest on all beyond it. "*The living know that they must die, but the dead know not anything; their love, their hatred, their zeal, has perished; they have no part in anything that is done beneath the sun.*"

There are no acts of pardon passed
In the cold grave to which we haste.

The pious and intelligent Christian discovers no inconsistency here. All is in accordance with his own most serious feelings and thoughts, until "rational criticism" steps in and turns into infidel poison one of the most interesting and instructive portions of Holy Writ.

Even He who brought life and immortality to light, not by revealing, but by shedding light upon Sheol—even He seems to give us a warrant for occasionally dwelling on this aspect of humanity, when he speaks of "*the night coming, in which no man can work.*" The very

fact, then, that such passages, from the Old Testament, so well fall in with even a Christian train of thought, shows that our nature may yet sympathize with this language of the Idumean Mourner; and that, even with our boast of a better faith and a higher spirituality, he was, after all, not so far behind us *practically*, however dark he may have been in his theoretical views.

[To be concluded.]

ARTICLE II.

THE SOOFEEES.

Compiled from Tholuck's *Sufismus sive Theosophia Persarum Pantheistica*, and from other sources, by Daniel P. Noyes, M. A., Byfield, Mass.

THE Soofees are a sect of Mohammedan Mystics, or Quietists. "Traces of the Soofee doctrine," says Sir John Malcolm, "exist, in some shape or other, in every region of the world. It is to be found in the most splendid theories of the ancient schools of Greece, and of the modern philosophers of Europe. It is the dream of the most ignorant and the most learned, and is seen at one time indulging in the shade of ease, at another traversing the pathless desert." The opinions of this sect have prevailed most extensively in Hindostan and Persia. At the time when the author just quoted wrote his history (which was published in 1829), their numbers, in the latter kingdom, were estimated by some as high as two, or even three hundred thousand; and the great reputation acquired by one of their ancient priests, enabled his descendants to occupy the Persian throne from A. D. 1500 to 1736.

The name (Soofee) is derived, in the opinion of Tholuck, from the Arabic "*sof*" (wool), in allusion to the material of their garments. Others have referred it to the Arabic "*sufa*" (pure), and some to the Greek "*σοφός*" (wise).

A variety of opinions have prevailed, likewise, with regard to the origin of the Soofic doctrines. Some have been disposed to look for it in the philosophy of India; others, in that of Greece; and Tholuck was, at one time, inclined to the opinion that it took its rise shortly after the death of Haroun Al Raschid, among the Magi of Khorassan. But these views, on thorough examination, appear to be untenable; and we must, therefore, look to Mohammedanism itself, and the native character of the Eastern nations, for the source of this ancient mysticism.