

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

THE  
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA

---

ARTICLE I.

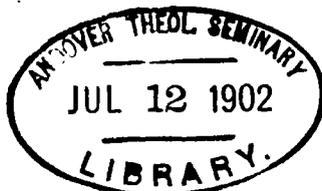
RESURRECTION 3000-4000 B.C. AND THE OLD  
TESTAMENT.<sup>1</sup>

BY HOWARD OSGOOD.

OLD as the history of man is the outstanding, clear, indubitable belief in resurrection, in a life beyond death, where man does not lose his identity, but, body and soul reunited, lives forever in happiness or pain. Every tomb in Egypt from the first bears witness to it. That belief was the main topic of their largest writings. It was the chief doctrine of their religion and the absorbing thought of men. They were ready with lavish wealth to build for a single person tombs of dimensions unheard of to-day in

- <sup>1</sup> *Maspero*. *Recueil de Travaux*. Vols. iii.-xiv. Paris, 1882 and ff.  
*Naville*. *Das Ägyptische Todtenbuch*. 3 Vols. Berlin, 1885 and f.  
*Renouf*. *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*. London, 1893 and ff.  
*Budge*. *The Book of the Dead*. *The Papyrus of Ani*. London, 1895.  
*Naville*. *Literature de l'Ancienne Égypte*. 1871.  
*Guiyasse*. *Rituel Funéraire*. 1876.  
——— *Papyrus Funéraire de Soutimes*. 1877.  
*Renouf*. *Egyptian Religion*. 1880.  
*Lanzone*. *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia* (1881), pp. 690-812.  
*Schiaparelli*. *Libro dei funerali degli antichi Egiziani*. 1882 and ff.  
*Tiele*. *Egyptian Religion*. 1882.  
*Lieblein*. *Egyptian Religion*. 1882.  
*Erman*. *Ägypten*. 1885. Translated by Tirard, 1894.

VOL. LIX. No. 235. 1



any land and to hide the body a hundred and more feet beneath the earth, or to raise, as with arms of giants, the numerous pyramids and seal them to endure as long as the earth. They preserved the body with a care that called to its aid all the skill of the physicians and priests, and adorned the coverings of the body as well as the rooms and halls of the tombs with a refined art that is the astonishment of the present day. Tender care, and skill, and art, and learning, and uncounted wealth,—all tell one clear story, the belief in the future eternal life with their gods. Egyptian priests and people of the earliest history would join heartily with the Christian Latin poet in his English form:—

“ Here brief is the sighing,  
And brief is the crying;  
For brief is the life.  
The life there is endless,  
The joy there is endless,  
And ended the strife.”

These facts are too well known from the monuments and from the numerous writings of the foremost Egyptologists of many lands to need more than mention. They are

- Ebers. *Études Archéologiques.* 1885.  
 Lefebure. *Hypogées Royaux de Thebes.* 1886.  
 Maspero. *Revue de l'Histoire de Religions.* 1887 and ff.  
 ——— *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie Égyptiennes.* 1893.  
 ——— *Archæology.* 1895.  
 Brugsch. *Religion u. Mythologie der alten Ægypter.* 1888.  
 Loret. *L'Égypte.* 1889.  
 Revillout. *Egyptian Ethics.* *Bibliotheca Sacra,* 1890.  
 Jequier. *Livre de ce qu'il y a dans l'Hadès.* 1894.  
 Lieblein. *Que mon nom fleurisse.* 1895.  
 Wiedemann. *Ancient Egyptian Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul.* 1895.  
 ——— *Religion of Ancient Egypt.* 1897.  
 Budge. *Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life.* 1900.  
 Jeremias. *Babylonisch-Assyrische Vorstellungen vom Leben nach dem Tode.* 1887.  
 ——— *Hölle und Paradies.* 1900.  
 Boscawen. *Sheol.* n. d.

indisputable for rational observers. But the security of the facts incites a search for their basis,—the ideas, the doctrines, which held imperial sway over this enlightened people from the dawn of human history.

The Book of the Dead is not a funeral service on earth for the dead. Not a word of it is to be spoken on earth. It is a collection of word-charms, of magic incantations and prayers, to be used after death by the departed. The first death was the separation of soul from body, to which all men were subject. The second death was the terror, to be devoured by the serpent, the ruler of the lower world of darkness, or cut to pieces by angry gods or cast into lakes of fire. These word-charms will enable the deceased to escape all these terrors, to be reunited body and soul, to gain the fields of the blessed, to be made like to the gods, to eat of the tree of life, to live eternally.

Naville's critical edition of the Book of the Dead gives the text as it was in the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties, that is about the time of Moses. While it contains parts older than the eighteenth dynasty, we take it as giving us the common dominant belief of the Egyptians at the time of Moses. But there is a larger and far more ancient witness than the Book of the Dead, that requires no critical edition, for its text on stone has come down to the present hour unaltered. About twenty years ago, five pyramids of the fifth and sixth dynasties (3000 to 4000 B.C.) were entered and, to the astonishment of all Egyptologists, were found covered on their inner walls with inscriptions. These have been carefully copied and twice published by Maspero with translations, and are constantly referred to by the best writers on Egypt. They furnish an indubitable record of the belief of the Egyptians 1500 to 2000 years before Moses. The texts in the pyramids of Unas, Teti, Pepi I., Mirinri, and Pepi II. are not wholly repetitions, but serve to explain each other. The ideal scene is

the same in all and the general doctrine identical, and both scene and doctrine agree with that of the still earlier tombs.

These inscriptions reveal at that time a high degree of civilization and art. There were then vast temples, served by a minutely ordered priesthood, with an ancient, precise ritual of prayers and forms. Writings were abundant. The country was covered with cities and canals for navigation and for irrigation. Cleanliness of person was imperative. Incense, essences, and perfumery were of many kinds. The rules of social intercourse were highly developed. Riches were plentiful. Feasts were of great variety in many courses by skilled cooks and ordered with refinement. Beer and wine of many choice brands are often spoken of. And the vices attendant on a rich, refined, cultured heathenism are manifest. It was a heathenism as highly civilized and educated as was found in Greece and Rome three thousand years later.

The burden of these texts appears at first to be a sublimated symbolism incapable of plain teaching. But that is the oriental spirit, and an earnest study finds the line of thought through the luxuriant jungle of types. The scene is one of intense life. The first death has been left behind, and from the first word to the last of these long inscriptions the king is speaking, praying, charming, defying, commanding the gods.

What then is the plain, repeated teaching of these long inscriptions concerning the resurrection? Only texts similarly repeated are quoted from Maspero's translations in *Recueil d. Travaux*.

*There was life beyond death.*

"O Unas, thou hast not gone away dead, but living" (iii. 200). "Unas goes forth this day in the exact forms of a living soul" (iv. 52). "Teti is the living dead." "Arise, O Teti, to die no more." "[O Pepi] thou diest no more" (v. 33, 41, 180).

*Eternal life beyond death.*

"One has brought eternity to him." "The life of Unas is duration, his period is eternity" (iv. 51, 61). "They render thee [Teti] happy throughout all eternity." "[Teti] ruling for all eternity." "He who has given thee [Pepi] life and eternity is Ra" (v. 18, 35, 160). "Pepi is an Indestructible in the great heaven" (viii. 104).

*Reunion with the body.*

Every bodily part of Unas is said to be a god (iii. 201, 205).

"Rising at his pleasure, gathering his members that are in the tomb, Unas goes forth." "Unas has his heart, his legs, his arms" (iv. 52, 55). "O Pepi, he who has given thee all life, all power and eternity, as well as thy speech and thy body, is Ra" (v. 160).

Every bodily part of Pepi is mentioned, and is said to be a god (viii. 87-89).

*Reunion with the soul.*

"Reunited to thy soul, thou takest thy place among the stars of heaven" (iv. 42). "Thy soul is thine within thee" (v. 157).

*Made a god, and dwelling with the gods.*

"Thou hast gone to sit on the throne of Osiris." "O Ra, thy son comes to thee, this Unas comes to thee." "Thou hast received him, for he is the son of thy body forever" (iii. 200, 206, 207). "You see him who takes the form of the great god. Unas is the great god." "O father of Unas, grant that he may be included in the number of the perfect and wise gods" (iv. 46, 57). "Teti is a god, the son of god." "O Osiris, who is Teti, arise." "O Ra, Teti is thou, thou art Teti." "Pepi sees his father, Pepi sees Ra" (v. 8, 33, 53, 187). "Pepi, the god, the son of god, . . . the son of Ra who loves him. Ra conceived Pepi, Ra brought forth Pepi" (viii. 89).

*This transformation into a god is styled a birth.*

"Whosoever is begotten by a god, his flesh does not pass away, and thy flesh does not pass away." "Thy [Osiris] body is the body of this Unas, thy flesh is the flesh of this Unas, thy bones are the bones of this Unas" (iii. 204, 214). "A god is born, it is Unas" (iv. 44).

The fears of and the incantations against the Serpent and its fellows, the second death, are recorded in *Rec. d. Trav.*, iii. 220-224; iv. 64-66; v. 45-47.

According to these statements, man dying finds himself in another life beyond death, an eternal life, where, with body and soul reunited, he becomes one of the gods, a son of the highest god. When we ask, Whence came this clear, consecutive, minutely articulated belief? we find it in the archaic universal Egyptian belief that Osiris was a god, a son of god, who came in human form to earth, to be of benefit to man. He was slain by the god of evil on earth, but rose from the dead to be the eternal judge of the living and the dead. Before Osiris all the dead must appear, and by him their fate was decided. If they had "known his name" in life, had sought to live as he lived, then at their appearance before him they were passed on to the heavens and sat with Osiris and Ra on the throne. This absolute union of the pure with Osiris after death is clearly expressed by a witness long before the opened pyramids. On the coffin lid of Menkau-Ra of the fourth dynasty is written,

"Osiris, King of the south and the north, Menkau-Ra, living for ever, born of heaven, offspring of Nut, flesh and bone of Seb,"

that is, Menkau-Ra has been born again a god, living for ever, and that god by whom and into whom he has been born is Osiris, who was the son of Nut and Seb. There are many striking similarities in ideas and phrases between these earliest and most authentic of Egyptian records and the Bible, particularly the New Testament, and of the New Testament, the Revelation. For instance: Ra, the chief of the gods, raises the dead and gives life, and Osiris, his son, also has power to raise the dead and give life (comp. John v. 21). Ra raised up Osiris (comp. Acts ii. 24, 32, and often), and Osiris raised himself up (comp. John ii. 19, 21; x. 18). Osiris, being raised, lives for evermore (comp. Rev. i. 18). As Osiris was raised up, so his followers are raised up with him (comp. 1 Cor. vi. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 14). None get access to Ra but by Osiris (comp.

John xiv. 6). Osiris saves from the second death (comp. Rev. ii. 11; xx. 6). The servants of Osiris reign with him (comp. Rev. xxii. 5), clothed in white shining linen (Rev. vii. 13; xix. 14), and eat with the gods from the tree of life in the midst of the garden (comp. Rev. xxii. 2, 14).

The service of the gods in these early days was a religion of works only. It knew no grace nor mercy. Sin was something that might destroy, but it could be washed away by baths in natron water, or charmed away by incantations. Having thus purified himself, one demanded entrance to heaven and his place among the gods as his right which the gods could not refuse. Holiness, moral purity of heart, mind, and body, in either gods or men, this religion did not know; and thus its heaven is the abode of power, of unlimited riches, of sensual enjoyment, streaked with foul dashes of lust and obscenity.

This, then, was the belief and teaching of all Egypt 1500 to 2000 years before Moses, as long before Moses as Moses was before the time of Christ.

We pass over the many monuments of the intervening centuries, all teaching the same belief, to come to the critical edition of the Book of the Dead, and Renouf's translation of that text. We are now in the age of Moses. The Israelites have been for centuries in Egypt, intimately acquainted with Egyptian beliefs and customs. They spoke Egyptian freely, for the speaking of foreign languages was so common in Egypt in Moses' day that the servants were taught them. The majority of the Hebrews in Egypt had been won over to belief in Osiris (Ezek. xx. 7, 8, 16, 18, 24; xxiii. 1-8, 19, 27); so, in their first separation from Moses, they immediately made the golden calf of Osiris as their god and worshiped it, and in their hearts they longed to return to Egypt and its gods. After the conquest they still kept the gods of Egypt by them (Josh. xxiv. 14, 23).

For three hundred years the golden calves of Osiris were the gods of the apostate ten tribes, put in Bethel and Dan by a returned sojourner in Egypt. And in Jerusalem itself the gods of Egypt were more trusted by many than they trusted Jehovah even to the exile (Jer. ii. 36; xlv. 8).

What, then, are the teachings of the Book of the Dead concerning the resurrection of the dead?

*There was life after death.*

"He comes forth as a soul living after death" (chap. 17). "Let me live and be saved after death" (chap. 41). "I enter and have life." "I am he who dieth not a second time" (chap. 42). "I die not a second time in the underworld" (chap. 44). "That the soul die not a second time" (chap. 64).

*Life after death was eternal.*

"Let me reach the land of ages, let me gain the land of eternity; for thou, my lord, hast destined them for me." "Freedom forever from perdition is derived through this book, and upon it I take my firm stand" (chap. 15). "Let the person say this chapter and purify himself with the water of natron, he will come forth by day after death, . . . and escape from the fire. With undeviating regularity for times infinite" (chap. 20). "Witness of eternity is my name. I am the everlasting one." "I am Horus who steppeth onwards through eternity" (chap. 42). "I am the heir of endless time, and my attribute is eternity" (chap. 62).

*Reunion with the body.*

Every part of the body is mentioned as a god, and it is added, "There is not a limb on me which is without a god" (chap. 42, and often).

*Reunion with the soul.*

"He comes forth as a living soul after death" (chap. 17). "Chapter whereby the soul is united to the dead body." "Grant that my soul may come to me." "Ye who enable the souls to enter into the mummied forms" (chap. 89). "A book whereby the soul is made to live for ever" (chap. 130).

*He becomes a god.*

"I am Ra." "I, who am Osiris, am Yesterday, and the Kinsman of the Morrow" (chap. 17). "I am Osiris, the great god, the eternal king" (chap. 41). "I am the everlasting one" (chap. 42). "He be-

cometh a god forever . . . undeviatingly, and for times infinite" (chap. 101).

*The hell, the second death.*

"Chapter whereby the person is not devoured by a serpent in the underworld" (chap. 35). "Chapter whereby the serpent Rekek is repulsed in the underworld" (chap. 39). "Deliver me from those guards of the Passages with hurtful fingers. May your knives not get hold of me; may I not fall into your shambles." "Deliver me from that god who liveth upon the damned . . . at the angle of the pool of fire." "Deliver me from that god who seizeth upon souls." "Deliver me from those inquisitorial guards to whom the inviolate god, of glorious attributes, has given guard over his adversaries and the infliction of slaughter in the place of annihilation, from whose guard there is no escape. May I not fall under your knives, may I not sit within your dungeons, may I not come to your places of extermination, may I not fall into your pits" (chap. 17).

So we find that the universal belief of the Egyptians for fifteen hundred years before Moses, and at the time of Moses, was that man lived forever after death in a body united with a soul. If he was accepted by Osiris, he escaped the second death of torment by malicious spirits, serpents, and became, like Osiris, a god, and dwelt with the gods.

The contention by certain learned circles for the past century, that men at this early day could not have had any idea of the Son of God coming to earth as a man, dying in the service of man, and rising again to be the judge of the living and the dead—this contention is, by these records of earliest history, brought face to face with that very fact dominating for three thousand years one of the most enlightened, highly civilized heathen nations. It was the very kernel of all their religious thought. And the other contention which has found favor with many, that belief in the resurrection of the dead was an inheritance from the late Persians, and was unknown to history before their day,—this is proved to be another instance of blind agnosticism. While there has not yet been discovered in Babylonia so full a statement of belief as that of the Egyptians,

yet enough has been discovered to prove that the earliest Babylonians held a decided belief in the resurrection. In Egypt, monuments and papyri show that the belief in the resurrection continued in full vigor for all the centuries from Moses to the time of Christ; that is, during all the time when the Old Testament was being written.

If we believe the statements frequently made that the Old Testament teaches nothing about the resurrection, then we are confronted with a stronger riddle than the strong man devised. We are told that the Hebrews were the best fitted for, most receptive of, religious ideas of all the nations around them. They dwelt for centuries among the Egyptians, whose chief religious belief was the resurrection. Then for fifteen hundred years they lived within one hundred and fifty miles of Egypt, on the main road of its great land commerce and in quick communication with Egypt in all matters of trade and daily life, and they intermarried with Egyptians. Yet it is said that in the voluminous religious writings of the Hebrews there is no intimation that they believed or knew of the doctrine which was held in the home of Abraham and that ruled Egypt. But there is something more. It is not possible to believe with any degree of thought in a supreme eternal being who has made man, and will reward service to him, and will punish his defiant enemies, and not believe in the resurrection. The reward and the punishment are not distributed in this life, by the testimony of Egypt and of the Old Testament. Blindness to the resurrection is always blindness to a supreme, eternal creator. If the Hebrews did not believe in the resurrection, they were stupid beyond the heathen of their day. They did not see as far with regard to Jehovah as the heathen Egyptians with regard to Osiris. But the Hebrews were not stupid. No religious writings of their day bear the slightest comparison with theirs for spirituality, for lofty views of the One, omnipotent, holy,

eternal God who shows mercy to a thousand generations, that is, forever, but who will not pardon his implacable enemies, for then he would abdicate his throne and deny himself.

Against this latter-day denial that the Old Testament teaches the resurrection of the dead we have the iterated and reiterated assertions of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, of the Holy Spirit, and of the whole New Testament, that the resurrection was plainly taught in the Old Testament, that believers in the power and word of God believed the resurrection and lived in expectation of it. Some of these assertions are as follows:—

Jesus Christ our Saviour declares that Moses taught the resurrection.

“But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed [declared] in the place concerning the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him” (Luke xx. 37, 38; Matt. xxii. 31, 32; Mark xii. 26, 27).

Jesus asserts that the prophets and Moses foretold his death and rising again.

“And he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written through the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of Man. For he shall be delivered up unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and shamefully treated, and spit upon; and they shall scourge and kill him; and the third day he shall rise again” (Luke xviii. 31-33; Matt. xx. 18, 19; Mark x. 32-34). “And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” “All things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms concerning me.” “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day” (Luke xxiv. 25-27, 44, 46).

The Holy Spirit, through Peter on the great day of Pentecost, said, that David foresaw and prophesied of the resurrection of Christ.

"I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David. . . . Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption" (Acts ii. 29-31).

And again Peter says,

"The Spirit of Christ [who was in the prophets] testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them" (1 Pet. i. 11).

Paul asserts that the prophets and Moses taught that Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead, and that he should rise on the third day.

"I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what Moses and the prophets did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (Acts xxvi. 22, 23). "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4).

Paul, like Christ, proves from the Old Testament that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead.

"[He] reasoned with them from the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead" (Acts xvii. 2, 3).

Paul declares that the resurrection was the promise made unto the fathers.

"And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, how that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David" (Acts xiii. 32-35).

The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that from Abel to Abraham the believers in the true God

"all died in faith"; "[that God] is a rewarder of them that seek after him"; "not having received [in their fulfillment] the promises, but having seen them and greeted [gladly accepted] them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth [journeying to heaven with God, where these promises were to be fulfilled]. For they who say such things [that they are strangers and pilgrims on earth] make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own"; "they desire a better country [than earth], that is, a heavenly" (Heb. xi. 13-16).

Abraham believed that God was able to raise from the dead.

"By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac, . . . accounting that God is able to raise up even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back" (Heb. xi. 17-19).

Others under the Old Testament believed in the resurrection to life with God in heaven.

"Women received their dead by a resurrection, and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Heb. xi. 35).

There cannot be a reasonable doubt that the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and the New Testament teach that the resurrection was plainly set forth by the Old Testament, and that believers in God from the first knew and lived in expectation of the resurrection. Those who now know Jesus Christ to be God, "the truth," and the Holy Spirit to be God, "the Spirit of truth," who taught the writers of the New Testament what to say, will believe their plain teaching as to the belief of the earlier servants of God, though they may not be able to see the proof; just as we believe their plain teaching concerning the future, though we have no proof of it but their own words. For Christ who was "I am" before Abraham was born, and in whom Abraham delighted, and the Holy Spirit who has ever taught the servants of God, are the only ones who can tell truly what the ancient saints believed.

The glory of the resurrection of Christ has blinded believers to the basis of faith in the resurrection preceding

that great fulfillment of God's promise. The resurrection of Christ was not itself either the promise or the power of God, but the proof of that promise and power; and so it is constantly, some twenty-five times, asserted in the New Testament. It is not said in the New Testament (2 Tim. i. 10), that Christ brought to light, or shed light, upon "immortality," but upon incorruption. The same Greek word is used only in Rom. ii. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 42, 50, 53, 54; Eph. vi. 24; Tit. ii. 7, and in Romans and First Corinthians is carefully distinguished from immortality. Christ did shed light upon the identity of the body before and after death, the incorruption which the corruptible body must put on (1 Cor. xv. 42, 53, 54). It is true that in many ways he shed light upon, illumined for us, immortality. But it is never said in the New Testament that he brought to light immortality that was unknown before. The passages which have been quoted as teaching the resurrection in the Old Testament are a sufficient proof to the contrary.

There were as stout materialists in Christ's day as in ours. They professed to be the only true priests and interpreters of the law. They were high priests and great officers (Acts v. 17), drawing the best salaries, in close touch with the politicians of the day and the Roman governors. They easily shut their eyes to the law in order to condemn Jesus, but professed to be intense followers of the law of Moses, when it was a matter of crucifying Jesus: "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God"; and they stirred up the people to cry, and cried with them, "Crucify him, crucify him." And when the soldiers told them that Christ's tomb was empty, these materialists invented a lie for them to discredit Christ's prophecy that he would rise on the third day. This circle of materialists, high in office and wealth, living in great palaces with ample retinue, had

long schemed and plotted to seize Jesus when they could do so without danger to themselves. They also pursued and scourged the apostles for preaching the resurrection, and it was one of them as high priest, in the midst of his seventy-two fellow-members of the council, who, against the law, ordered one standing by to smite Paul on his mouth, and who for two years sought Paul's death by every means in his power. These rich, learned Sadducees were stark materialists. They did not believe "in the resurrection nor in angels nor spirits." This life was all, and ended all for them, and they felt sure of their position. They framed a query, which to them seemed unanswerable, to show that the law of Moses never contemplated anything beyond this earth, any resurrection, and they brought this supreme evidence of their learning and wit to Jesus. We must remember that, in replying to these Sadducees, Jesus was replying to the highest priests and most learned men of Jerusalem, the party that then held all the reins of place and power, the very men who, he knew, would within that week put him to a torturing death for not agreeing with them. If there ever was an opportunity to answer materialists, and prove that Moses did teach the resurrection, it was then. What did Christ teach was the essential ground, the pivot of belief, in the resurrection? Mark the wide lightning sweep of his simple answer, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." "But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed [declared] in *the place concerning* the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto him." The everlasting assurance "that the dead are raised" is God himself, his word, his power. To know the true God, the source of all life and, above all, of the life of the soul to him on earth, is to believe in eternal life with him and

to him. It ever has been so. It is so to-day. Without spiritual life by God and to God now men will not believe, though one rise from the dead; for men now doubt and laugh even at the resurrection of Christ, as did the Jews and Greeks of old.

Abraham had been dead five hundred years, Isaac and Jacob had been dead over three hundred years; but God was still their God, and they were still living to God. They had not lost their identity and distinction, but, after death, were living to God, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "the eternal life which God who cannot lie promised before times eternal" by his power, by his life given to man, by his word. This is the eternal power and promise that receives its most glorious example in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

At the forefront of the Old Testament stands a narrative whose only issue is the resurrection. Adam was still living. He knew that God had made him out of the dust. God made a body, but that body was not Adam. It was as truly a mere corpse as were those seen by Ezekiel (xxxvii. 1-14). The soul, the life of God, was not Adam. Only body and soul united was Adam. Adam was to return again to earth by the decree of God. He who first made him out of dust could as easily make him again out of dust. Living by the gate and in sight of the land where Adam and Eve had lived by God and to God, their younger son Abel is brutally murdered by their eldest son, simply because Abel had been accepted by God (Gen. iv. 4, 5), and Cain was not accepted (1 John iii. 12). If men believed that God's acceptance meant only long life and his bounties on earth, that this life ended all, then here, at the beginning of the word of God, was the most potent proof that such belief was a delusion, as it ever has been. It is the older son, the murderer, who has long life and riches and power, "God's goodness leading to repentance."

If the only life of reward and punishment is on earth, then this narrative teaches that failure to serve God, hatred of him, and murder of his accepted servants is the sure road to long life, riches, and power. So Cain's descendant Lamech argued, and many in after ages have been governed by that argument.

Christ tells us that Abel was a righteous man and a prophet of God, and we are further told that he was a man who lived by faith in the true God, the "faith that is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen," and through that faith God testified his acceptance of him. Abel believed God's promises that he was a rewarder of those who seek him, and confessed himself a stranger and pilgrim on the earth, desiring a better country, that is a heavenly. At the beginning of life he is murdered. Life, posterity, the bounties of earth, all were denied him. And yet he "died in faith," still believing God. The only solution of God's approbation of his righteous prophet is the resurrection, where Abel will receive the favor God had promised. Without that, God and Abel's faith and life are the delusions of insanity, and the narrative has no meaning.

Enoch had lived so sincerely in faith to God that his life is described as walking with God, just as later saints are described as being "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," as also Abraham walked with God. And "God took him." The same Hebrew word here rendered "took" is so rendered in the relation of Elijah's translation (2 Kings ii. 3, 5, 9, 10); and in other translations to be with God it is rendered "receive" (Ps. xlix. 15; lxxiii. 24). That is, according to the Old Testament, God took Enoch to heaven, received him to himself, to glory. In the Greek of Heb. xi. 5, Enoch's taking-away is said to be a translation, a change from earth to heaven.

Abraham knew the only God as few knew him. God said Abraham was his prophet whose prayers he heard. Eight times God appeared to and talked with Abraham. God assured Abraham, "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward," and Abraham knew God as the God of grace and truth, the maker and possessor of heaven and earth, the Judge of all the earth. God loved Abraham (Deut. iv. 37; x. 15), and God said that Abraham loved him (Isa. xli. 8). God promised to Abraham when seventy-five years old, a son, and to himself and that son the land of Canaan. That promise was renewed within a year, with the addition that his posterity should be as numerous as the dust, and this assurance was again within ten years stamped with the solemnity of a sacrifice appointed by God. Fourteen years more pass away, and Abraham is told by God that he is to be the "father of a multitude of nations." "Kings shall come out of thee," the same is repeated to Sarah, and again these promises are said by God to be an everlasting covenant between God and Abraham and his seed after him. The son, through whom all these promises were to be fulfilled, was to be called by them Isaac, and to be born at a specified time, when Abraham was one hundred years old and Sarah ninety years old. Out of bodies, "now as good as dead," God fulfilled his promise by the birth of Isaac. He grew to manhood, but before his marriage, and before any of God's many promises had been fulfilled, God called upon Abraham to offer up to him Isaac, which Abraham in sorrow, but unquestioning, proceeded to do.

A simple point of hard fact meets us here. If Abraham believed that this life ended all, he could not have believed that God called him to give the lie to all his promises by destroying forever the only God-appointed means of fulfilling those promises. If the promises were valid, the call for Isaac could not be. If he was called by God to destroy

forever the only door for the promises, then the promises were a lie. The dullest dullard could see that.

But if Abraham believed that God, who made Adam from dust, and in his own case had brought life out of death by the birth of Isaac, would just as surely in his own time bring Isaac again from death to life and fulfill all his promises, then Abraham could, as he did, hold fast to the promises and offer Isaac at God's demand. There is no other rational solution of his obedience possible. On the basis of a sure belief in God's raising-up from the dead, Abraham's obedience is the sublime proof of his belief in God's power and sure fulfillment of his promises. So God himself stamps it. So the New Testament explains it.

Historically, Abraham's failure to believe in the resurrection, would have been contrary to his whole environment. For he had grown to manhood and wealth in a land where belief in the resurrection was a cardinal point, and he spent all the remainder of his life in the immediate vicinity of Egypt, where for many centuries the resurrection had been almost the whole of religion.

There is another compulsory proof of Abraham's belief in life beyond death with God. God had promised again and again to give the land of Canaan to him as well as to his seed. But the only plot of it ever in his possession was a burial-place, which he paid for at a high price. For the rest "God gave him no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on." And yet Abraham believed God, and died believing all the promises. If Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob understood those promises mainly of this life, and believed that this life ended all, they could not, as intelligent or even as dull, selfish men, have died believing in those promises, or in the God who made them, for they were never fulfilled to them in this life. But if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob understood those promises as types yet to be fulfilled of the better country, as they had lived in

peace and comfort in a country not theirs, we can see why "they all died in faith." They knew themselves strangers and pilgrims on earth to that better country where God had built a city for them far from the desert of the world (Ps. cvii. 1-9). Upon that city Abraham set his hope (Heb. xi. 10); just as the far more ancient Egyptian, groping in his blindness, lived in expectation of the city of his gods in heaven.<sup>1</sup> And so the spiritual seed of Abraham knew themselves God's pilgrims to God's country, and sang his word and promises in their pilgrimage (Ps. xxxix. 12; cxix. 19, 54), while they passed through the valley of the shadow of death, the valley of weeping beyond which lay the eternal Zion of God (Ps. xxiii. 4; lxxxiv. 6, 7; cvii. 10-16).

In Egypt, as we have seen, there were two deaths; in Babylonia there were two deaths; in the New Testament there are two deaths (Matt. x. 28; Luke xii. 5; Rev. ii. 11; xx. 6, 14; xxi. 8). In all these the first death is the departure of the spirit, soul, from the body, to which all men are subject; the second death is passing to "the lake of fire," the place of punishment for the implacable enemies of the true God; in Egypt and Babylonia, for the enemies of their gods.

In the Old Testament the same distinction is made, though the term "second death" is not used. All men go to Sheol (Gen. xxxvii. 31-35; xlii. 38; xliv. 29, 31; Ps. xvi. 10; lxxxix. 48; Eccl. ix. 10; Isa. xxxviii. 10); but the true servants of God are delivered from the region of death (Deut. xxxii. 39; 1 Sam. ii. 6; Ps. xvi. 10; xlix. 15; lv. 15, 16; Hos. xiii. 14); while the enemies of God remain in, and are given over to, the power of Sheol. "Death is their shepherd" (Ps. xlix. 14); "their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched" (Isa. xiv. 11; lxvi. 24; Job xxi. 13; xxiv. 19; Ps. ix. 17; xxxi. 17; Prov. v.

<sup>1</sup>Renouf, *Book of Dead*, pp. 166 f., 176 f.

5; vii. 27; ix. 18; Isa. xiv. 9-15; Ezek. xxxi. 14-18; xxxii. 18-32).

The Old Testament at times pictured death as a region where men were "cut off from God's hand" (Ps. lxxxviii. 5); where there is said to be silence, no thanksgiving or remembrance of God: "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest" (Eccl. ix. 10; Ps. vi. 5; xxxi. 17; lxxxviii. 10-12; cxv. 17, 18; Isa. xxxviii. 18). But, on the other side, these passages must be explained together with other statements, that Jehovah is Lord of Sheol, it is open before him, under his power to save or destroy those who go there (Job xiv. 7-15; xxvi. 6; Prov. xv. 11; Amos. ix. 2), and that men retain their identity there, and memory, and infamy, and pain, and delight that others are like themselves, are active in Sheol (Isa. xiv. 9-17; lxvi. 24; Ezek. xxxii. 21, 24, 27, 30).

Sheol is, according to the Old Testament, the region of death from which God delivers his servants and takes them to be with him; but it is the permanent abode of God's enemies, where they are silent as to his praises and know no gratitude, where none of the works of earth are done, and where God no more remembers his implacable enemies to show them the grace they despise (Ps. lxxxvii. 10-12). From that Sheol the psalmists in deep distress pray to be delivered. The certainty of being delivered from Sheol by God is so fully assured to the saints of old that they use that deliverance as a metaphor of God's great deliverance from desperate trials (Ps. ix. 13; xviii. 4-6; xxx. 3; xxxi. 17; xxxiii. 18, 19; lvi. 13; lxviii. 20; lxxxvi. 13; cxvi. 3-8; Isa. xxv. 8; Jonah ii. 2).

Hannah, Samuel's mother, knew and rejoiced in the fact that God brings down to Sheol, and also brings up from Sheol (1 Sam. ii. 6). David knew and rejoiced that God was his inheritance, and that he was not to be aban-

doned to Sheol, but would be led by God in the path to life with him, in his presence, where there is fullness of joy, pleasures forevermore; that when he awoke from death he should behold God's face in righteousness, and be satisfied (Ps. xvi., xvii.). A son of Korah in full view of the life that has Sheol forever for its destination, sang of God's redemption of him from Sheol, and God's taking him to himself (Ps. xlix.). Asaph saw this world the possession of the proud, the enemies of God and man, who mocked at God and trampled down their fellow-men, whose end is sudden destruction and desolation. But he rejoiced, that, through the bewildering maze of the present prosperity of the wicked and the present sharp oppressions and trials of the servants of God, God would guide him with his counsel, and afterward take him to be with him in glory, for God was his eternal portion (Ps. lxxiii.).

"Forever" in the Old Testament means just what it does with us. It is used with the same variety of meaning. When we convey property to another to hold forever, it is absurd to suppose that eternity or the other world is intended. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever"; that is, as long as the thing of beauty lasts. "The flag of our Union forever," surely not in heaven. "Forever" in all languages is conditioned by its connection. It is precisely so in Hebrew. "Forever" used of the true God, of his reign and grace, of the joy and the life he gives to be with him, to behold his presence, to thank and praise him, certainly means eternity. To read the Psalms with any lesser meaning to "forever" in connection with God and life to and with God, is to debase these sublime spiritual poems below the level of heathen ideas and incantations of the preceding two thousand years and to deny their historical environment when they were written. The life the psalmists pray for is not the life of the body, but the life of the soul to God, which only God gives, and by which

they may walk in God's way of grace and truth with the consciousness of God's presence now, and so reach the eternal abode with God. Without full belief in and expectation of the resurrection, of identity of person in future life with God, the Psalms would sink below the heathen songs, would be expressions of unfounded hopes without a glimmer of assurance of fulfillment.

Isaiah knew that God's dead shall live; their dead bodies shall arise, and they that dwell in the dust shall awake and sing (xxviii. 19). And that pivotal chapter, the fifty-third of Isaiah, as fully turns on the resurrection as the atonement of Christ on his resurrection. He who died for his people and was buried shall see his seed, have long life, do the pleasure of Jehovah, and receive Jehovah's reward. Daniel knew that many of them that "sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to reproaches and everlasting abhorrence." And Ezekiel, the contemporary of Daniel, gives the most realistic picture of the resurrection to be found in the Old or the New Testament. "Behold an earthquake ["earth shall cast forth its dead" (Isa. xxvi. 19)] and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I beheld, and lo, there were sinews upon them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above, but there was no breath in them" (as it was with the body before Adam). "Then the breath [better, spirit] came into them, and they lived" (Ezek. xxxvii. 7-10).

Job knew that man would live after death and see God (Job xiv. 7-15; xix. 25-27). It makes no difference as to the historical interpretation of these passages when Job lived, whether two thousand or four hundred years before Christ. He was surrounded by nations believing that after death they would live again and see their gods, and it would be as inexplicable in Job as in Abraham if he did not believe as much in the promise and power of the liv-

ing God as the contemporary heathen attributed to their imaginary gods.

Too long have the Old Testament and the ruling ideas of early ages been interpreted by learning exclusively Greek and Latin. The agnosticism of Greek and Latin mythology has been transferred to the Old Testament. But the multitudinous writings and monuments of Egypt and Asia have risen from the dust, and given us the real unmistakable surroundings of the Old Testament in peoples, their ideas, mode of life, religious views, commerce. It has been truly said by an eminent Egyptologist, that we know more of the daily life, the homes, the religious views, the moral teachings, of the Egyptians three thousand years before Christ, than we do of those of the Greeks and Romans at the time of Christ. The Latin and Greek interpretation of the Old Testament and Hebrew has fought stoutly against the bringing-in of contemporary oriental thought to show the historical setting and meaning of the Old Testament. But the ocean is too large for that broom to make a permanent impression. The day is not distant when we shall understand the Old Testament by its own testimony and its historical surroundings.

The resurrection is the inseparable accompaniment of belief in the true God. To believe that he exists is to believe that he is a rewarder of those who seek him. This belief is founded, as Christ teaches, on the power and word of God that man shall retain his identity in the next world, whether living with God or in rebellion against him.

The Egyptian elaborated an immense spider's web of speculation about the future body and the future soul. Speculations concerning that body were as active two thousand years before Moses as they were fifteen hundred years later, in Paul's day, and as they are to-day. But, after all the speculations of six thousand years, what we know about the future body is confined to what God has

told us. The Old Testament and the New assure us of personal identity in the future life, that our bodies shall rise; but they are silent as to the quality of the body.

“ But some will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come? Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not given life except it die, and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be but a mere kernel, it may be of wheat or of some other grain, but God giveth it a body, even as it pleased him. . . . It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.”

And there we are content to rest our assurance in the power and promise of our covenant-keeping God.