Reading the other day the prospectus of a new theological review, which undertook to satisfy the claims alike of practical and of scientific theology, and to bring the ordinary reader into contact with university professors in their studies, I was startled to find the editor expressing his complete indifference to one of those subjects which some biblical professors most affect—the comparative history of religions. No doubt this old school theologian would regard my present thesis as fanciful in the extreme, and would remonstrate with me for seeking to divert the theological students of Oxford from more useful pursuits. I trust, however, that those who followed my first lecture will not be led astray by the narrow views of which this editor is the mouthpiece, and which are still too common in England. There are few more important studies for the theologian of to-day than that of the great religions, not only for the reasons which Professor Max Müller and others have again and again so ably urged, but because, until we know the facts respecting these religions and their relation to the religion or religions of the Bible, we cannot formulate a defensible doctrine of revelation, and it is surely such a doctrine the want of which is in ever-widening circles most painfully felt. Of course, too, this study has an important bearing on some of the most interesting questions of biblical criticism and exegesis. Undeterred, therefore, by the probable imputation of fancifulness (which merely means a willingness to encounter difficult problems), I resume the subject at the point which I had reached in my first lecture.

I attempted, as you will remember, to show that there is a strong affinity between the religion of Ahura Mazda and that of Jehovah (Yahveh), and that being brought into contact with the Persians, the Jews, alike in Palestine and elsewhere, could not remain wholly uninfluenced by Persian religion. This presumption is verified by facts in the case of angelology and dualism; it is not likely to be also verified in the case of the Jewish doctrine of the "last things"? Resurrection and the higher immortality are two of the most striking features of the Zoroastrian faith; is it not reasonable to hold that any traces of these beliefs in the later religious books and systems of Palestine must be partly accounted for by Persian influence? It was shown in the first lecture that in certain leading expressions of Jewish belief—Essenism, the Book of Enoch, and (though this was but touched upon) the New Testament—Zoroastrian influence on their view of a future life could with much probability be indicated. To-day we must cross the border into the Old Testament, and inquire whether the later books, or parts of books, do not contain passages which express to some extent a Zoroastrian view of the "last things." The inquiry is, I know, a difficult one. Partly because, at any rate in the Psalms, the language is vague and admits different interpretations; partly, too, from the keen controversy of which the dates of many of the Hebrew books are the subject. The vagueness of the expressions does, indeed, preclude any peremptory and dogmatic assertion as to the religious belief of the writer; but I maintain that when the date of the work in which they occur is fixed on independent critical grounds in the late Persian period, we are justified in selecting out of two equally possible interpretations that which involves supposing Zoroastrian influence. You will not, I hope, misunderstand me. I maintain the essential originality of the higher Jewish religion equally with Dean Church in his fine eulogium of the Psalms. I think that germs of Zoroastrianising beliefs existed in Israel before its religion was brought face to face with Mazdeism, and that, when this critical event took place, the presence within the Church-nation of a principle, called by a prophet of the late Persian age "the spirit of holiness" (Isa. lxiii. 10, 11), hindered the adoption of any manifestly dangerous Persian belief.

The inquiry which I opened in my eighth Bampton Lecture in 1889, and which I reopen to-day, is practically a new one. Twenty years ago it would have been impossible. By asking whether some of the Hebrew Scriptures do not express or imply ideas closely akin to Christian ones, I should have appeared to convict myself of critical incapacity. The reason simply is, that the criticism of the majority had erected certain conclusions of its own into dogmas, and had not faced the possibility that a large part of the Old Testament might be of post-Exilic origin. The Book of Job, for instance, was placed in the period of Isaiah, or between Isaiah and Jeremiah; of the Psalms some were Davidic, many, at any rate, pre-Exilic; of few could it be said with much confidence that they belonged to the period verging on the Greek domination; while as to Isaiah, the

1 Iranian influence was not and could not be confined to the Iranian lands. Zoroastrian ideas were (as I observed in Lecture I.) in the air, and circulated freely throughout the empire. This was facilitated, so far as Israel was concerned, by the constant intercourse which existed between the Jews of Persia and Mesopotamia and those of Palestine. Cf. the quotation from Grätz, p. 236, note.

2 See The Sacred Poetry of Early Religions (1874).
last twenty-seven chapters belonged, as a whole, to
the close of the Babylonian Exile. This moderate
conservatism was not without a temporary justifi­
cation; it enforced greater circumspection alike
on the advanced critics and on Christian apologists.
It has, however, ceased to be undeniably pre­
dominant among critics, and we may venture to
take this as a sign that the need of it is passing away.
A criticism which is not indeed entirely new, but
which may seem so, because it has hitherto been
unfashionable, and which has certainly learned
while in disgrace to know its own mind better and
to strengthen its defences, has come, or is coming,
to the front. Its claim is, not to have settled
everything, but to have offered solutions of some
biblical problems which may be modified and
expanded, but cannot be altogether overturned.
Now the acceptance of those solutions has a direct
and important bearing on exegesis. It at once
gives historical probability to interpretations which
twenty years ago seemed irreconcilable with the
chronological position of certain books. If, for
instance, the Psalms be, with few if any excep­
tions, written in the post-Exile period, it is no
longer anachronistic to assume in some of the
psalmists a large development of religious thought,
stimulated in no slight degree by the kindred
Persian religion. I do not mean that we are perfectly
free to assert, as the old interpreters asserted, the
presence of late ideas whenever it may for any
reason be convenient. We are only entitled to
admit them when, besides being favoured by
criticism, they help instead of hindering the con­
nection of thought. For instance, even if Job
should turn out to be most probably a post-Exilic
work (this question requires a re-examination),
we must not admit a reference to the Resurrection,
or even to the “beatific vision” alone, in Job xix. 26,
27, because (apart from the difficulty and probable
corruption of the text) such a reference would be
altogether inconsistent with the connection. But
there are, at any rate, some passages in the later
Hebrew Scriptures where this is not the case, and
where what I may call a Zoroastrianising inter­
pretation is in harmony with the context, and adds
fulness and richness to the meaning. May I add
that there is one more limitation which I should
like to impose on those who may apply this
theory to the Psalms? These poems were, with
very few exceptions, intended for liturgical use.
It seems to me reasonable to suppose that the
writers both anticipated and sanctioned diverse
interpretations of certain expressions. It was long
before such ideas as the resurrection and the higher
immortality became a part of the popular ortho­
dox. The psalmists could not have desired to
exclude all who were not as advanced as them­
selves from the use of their works. Not merely
because they were Eastern poets, but in obedience
probably to the law of charity, they used vague
expressions which needed to be explained mentally
from the stock of ideas which the worshippers
brought with them. To those whose religious
position was the comparatively dry and meagre
one of the older orthodoxy of Israel, those expres­
sions had a dry and meagre sense; but to those
who were being led to the confines of a nobler
faith the same words acquired a depth of signifi­
cance which the older interpreters only erred in
making too logically definite. I would have the
expositor recognise in such cases this willingly
accepted ambiguity, and admit the legitimacy of
two diverse interpretations.

Let us now turn to certain books which most
probably belong to the late Persian and early
Greek period, and read some passages over again
in a Zoroastrian light. I must ask you pro­
visionally to accept my own conclusions as to the
dates of the biblical and Zoroastrian writings.
The grounds of these conclusions you will naturally
seek elsewhere—for instance (not to speak now of
the Avesta), in those two lectures on the Problems
of the Second Isaiah which I delivered here this
term. My present object is not to prove to you
the comparative accuracy of my critical theo­
fies, but to show you what some of them come to when
applied in illustration of exegesis. And in order
to do this, I must read certain passages with you in
the light of my theory that the Jewish Church, at
the time when they were written, was not un­
influenced by Zoroastrianism. Let us not be
discouraged at the vagueness and even the variety
of the expressions; there is vagueness and variety
enough in the Zoroastrian Scriptures, though
the fundamental beliefs of the early Zoroastrianism are
sufficiently well known. But let us always re­
member that, on the present hypothesis, the
Jewish Church is less developed religiously than
the Zoroastrian Church of the same period; we
must, therefore, be especially on our guard against
assuming a logically formulated doctrine. The
passages to which we shall refer are:—(a) Isa.
xxv. 8, xxvi. 19; (b) Isa. lxv. 17-25, lxvi. 22;

1 The reader must always bear in mind the qualifications
of my theory. Persian influence upon the Jews was both
direct and indirect. It was strongest upon those of Persia
and Mesopotamia, but far from insignificant upon those of
Palestine. But even the former can by no means be
supposed to have read the Zoroastrian writings. Does this
admission ruin my theory? Surely not. The ideas of
book-religions are not propagated even now merely by their
religious books. It must also be constantly remembered
that Zoroastrian influence was limited by Jewish pre­
suppositions. Even the demon Aeshma-deva (Asmodeus)
was Hebraised as to his functions.
2 These lectures will appear in the Jewish Quarterly
Review for July and October 1891.
3 The prevalence of the resurrection-belief in the Achme­
enian period is hardly doubtful. But that it was questioned
by some (we know not exactly when), must be inferred from
the Bundeshesh (see Spiegel, Eran. Alterthümer, ii. 160).
aspects of death to this prophet—the one comfort-
context seems to me to mean. There are two
of Isa. xxvi. 19 but this is what the passage in its
group with Isa. xxv. 8, we can, I think, see that he
illuminated thinker might have inferred the future
realm of death shall, by a solemn act of the King
was. I cannot, of course, stop to justify my view of
Isa. xxvi. 19, but this is what the passage in its
context seems to me to mean. There are two
aspects of death to this prophet—the one comfort-

In other words, the prophecies of restored
Israel's happiness have not been fulfilled, and, in
particular, whether from famines or from some
other of the manifold miseries of the second
Persian century, Israel's land is now insufficiently
peopled. Cyrus gave but a faint shadow of
"salvation," which, with all its efforts, the people
of Jehovah cannot make more real. So the
Church-nation, in whose name the prophet speaks,
casts itself upon the divine faithfulness, and by a
mighty act of faith supplicates, or, shall I say?
demands, that Jehovah's dead (faithful Israelites of
the latter time) may live, and that Israel's dead
bodies (which have, perhaps, been "given as food
to the birds of heaven," Ps. lxxix. 2) may arise
Those bodies are a precious seed, which the dew
of Jehovah, which is the "dew of lights," can bring
to light. You will tell me that this was a perfectly
legitimate inference from the old prophecy of the
revival of the dry bones of the collective nation
(Ezek. xxxvii. 1-10), which, as the later prophet
saw, implied the revival of each member of the
nation. But why is it that no one drew this
inference before? Read the passage in the light
of Zoroastrianism, and you will find an answer.
Its spirit is thoroughly Zoroastian, and the singular
phrase "dew of lights" may be illustrated from the
Avesta, where the "endless lights" are the highest
heaven where Ahura Mazda dwells. The Church,
in ver. 19, is not the recipient of a new revelation;
the Zoroastrianising belief in a resurrection must
already be current among some, or even many, of
its members. Nor need we be surprised to read
only of a limited resurrection, for Zoroastrian
influence was necessarily limited by Jewish pre-
suppositions. But is there not a discrepancy
between xxv. 8 and xxvi. 19? For nothing is said
in the former passage of resurrection, nor in the
latter of immortality. True; but this is an example
of that variety of statement of which I have already
spoken. Obviously the two passages were not
written at quite the same time, and Ewald thinks
that they are not by the same author. But even
upon Ewald's hypothesis, the writer who combined
them must have considered them reconcilable.
And surely they are so. Take them together, and
you get a consistent picture of the "last things,"

Nor do I deny the possibility that somewhat older
passages may have been found with his own
composition by this very late prophet.

Let me try to paraphrase and explain this great
prophetic utterance. The sense of mortality has
hitherto been to all nations like a mourner's veil
(cf. lxi. 3, corrected text), stifling all natural joy,
and restraining the expression of activity. But
now, Jehovah having in the fullest sense "become
King," it is fitting that all who in many tongues
acknowledge Him should realise in their own
persons what it is to be in communion with the
"living God." Hitherto tears have been a com-
moner sight than smiles, but now the basis of
redeemed human nature shall be joy (cf. lxv. 18).
Hitherto it has been Sheol which has swallowed
up (cf. V. 14), but now both death and the unseen
realm of death shall, by a solemn act of the King
in His capital city, be themselves swallowed up.

Now I will not deny a priori that a devout and
illuminated thinker might have inferred the future
destruction of death from certain fundamental
elements of his religion, but it is a striking fact
that even such a great prophet as the Second
Isaiah did not do so. We cannot leave the
difference between the earlier and the later prophet
unaccounted for. May not the secret of it be that
the one prophet was open, and the other not, to
Zoroastrian influences? For it is the glory of the
religion of Zaratustra that it has always placed the
destruction of death in the forefront of its teaching.

But was the later prophet really so open to
Zoroastrian influences? From his date he ought
to have been, and from the passage which we
with Isa. xxv. 8, we can, I think, see that he
was. I cannot, of course, stop to justify my view of
Isa. xxvi. 19, but this is what the passage in its
context seems to me to mean. There are two
aspects of death to this prophet—the one comfort-

(c) Dan. xii. 2; (d) Ps. xlix. 15, 16; (e) Ps. xvii.
15; (f) Ps. xvi. 10, 11; (g) Ps. lxxiii. 24-27;
(h) Ps. xxi. 5; (i) Ps. xlvi. 3; (k) Ps. lxi. 7; (l)
Pslxxii. 5; (m) Ps. lxiii. 9, 10; (n) Ps. xi. 7
(cf. cxi. 14); (o) Ps. xli. 13b; (p) Ps. xxxvi. 10.
You will notice that I have put the prophetic
passages first—this is because they are the easiest
to interpret definitely; also that I have adopted
the Hebrew numeration of the verses.

(a) Isa. xxv. 7, 8. This passage belongs to a
most interesting but highly artificial work, such as
the devout students and imitators of Scripture
produced in the post-Exile period. This is a
result which is now more and more commonly
accepted by critics, and the only question is
whether the work belongs to the first or to the
second century of Persian rule. To me the latter
alternative seems by far the easier one, though I
am not prepared to give a historical explanation of
all the circumstances alluded to in the prophecy.
Nor do I deny the possibility that somewhat older
passages may have been found with his own
composition by this very late prophet.
in the Messianic period (and, of course, the 
viz. that the deceased faithful Israelites will rise 
in the Messianic period (and, of course, the 
converts from "all nations") live for ever. 

(b) Isa. lxv. 17-25.—These verses, which belong 
to the latest of the passages added to the great Prophecy of Restoration, and to be referred (as I have 
sought to prove) to the closing part of the Persian 
period. It is at first, however, very difficult to read 
them in a Persian light, and even to seize their characteristic idea in its purity, because of the conventionality of the style. It will be helpful to look 
both at the nearer and at the more distant context 
(i.e. the statements of chap. lxvi. must not be left out 
of account). Those who believe that they can trace 
different hands may be reminded that it is no slight 
things to get at the meaning which the latest of the 
writers (who cannot have lived much later than the 
earliest) gave to the passage. Now, taking lxvi. 
18-24 into account, we cannot hesitate to conclude 
that the time to which the prophecy points is (in 
the larger sense of the term) the Messianic period, 
which the writer believes to be close at hand. It 
is in this period, which is introduced by the last 
great judgment upon the hostile powers of the 
world, that Jehovah says that He will "create new 
heavens and a new earth." (lxv. 17), which, unlike 
the old, "shall stand perpetually before me" (lxvi. 22). What is the meaning of this? From 
the older parts of the Book of Isaiah we see that 
the final transformation of nature in accordance 
with the changed fortunes of Israel formed part of 
the prophetic ideal (see xi. 6-9, xxx. 26, xxxv. 
1, 2, 6, 7), and twice (xxxiii. 24, xxxv. 5, 6) the 
removal of bodily infirmities forms part of a 
Messianic description. Antediluvian longevity is 
not elsewhere referred to in such a context, and 
the mention of sinners in the new Jerusalem is in 
seeming contradiction (I cannot pause to account 
for this) to the earlier Messianic promises, Isa. 
xxxiii. 24, xxxv. 8. At first sight, then, our pro-
phet is developing eschatological germs of genuine 
Israelitish origin, except in two points which have 
no affinity to anything in Zoroastrianism. 

But let us look a little closer at the passage in 
its context; we may perhaps have mistaken its 
meaning, or missed something which modifies it in 
some essential respect. This strange description 
may be merely a concession to the weak brethren, 
like the epitome of Job, according to the prevailing 
opinion of commentators. Is there anything in 
the context which favours this view? Yes, if at 
least we take the next chapter into account. In 
lxvi. 24 we read, "And they shall go forth, and 
look upon the carcasses of the men that have 
rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, 
neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall 
be an abhorrence unto all flesh." It is, I know, 
common to say that these words only refer to the 
unburied bodies of the dead enemies, which are 
supposed, by a survival of primitive thought, to 
retain the consciousness of pain. The sight of the 
unburied and still tormented bodies will, according 
to this view of the writer's meaning, fill the spec-
tators with an awful sense of the divine justice. 
But, on a closer observation, it is but half the 
primitive theory which this interpretation gives us. 
The connection of soul and body is not supposed 
by the child-man to be broken by death. The 
perpetuation of pain in the dead body necessarily 
Involves the perpetuation of pain in the soul, or in 
that idolon of a body which belongs to the soul in the 
underworld. The divine justice, therefore, 
pursues the wicked after death; this is part of 
what the prophet means, though with seemly reserve 
he leaves it unspoken. You may object that the 
words of an author are the sole data of the com-
mentators. But is this true? For my own part I 
think that we have not only to study the words of 
an author (a mere linguist can do this), but sedu-
lously to think ourselves into his mental and 
emotional situation. The psalmists and prophets 
continually leave things to be supplied by the 
reader, and our prophet does so here. 

And now can we not see that Isa. lxv. 17-25 
and lxvi. 24 express or imply mutually comple-
mentary ideas? The explanation which I offer is 
probably as old as the earliest writer in Enoch. It 
seems to me none the worse on this account; the 
history of early exegesis may sometimes suggest 
neglected exegetical truths. I need not add that 
I am as far as possible from wishing to adopt the 
developed eschatology of any later writer. Briefly, 
then, my view of the prophet's meaning is this. 
He admits, in defiance to the weaker brethren, 
and against the letter of Zoroastrianism, that death 
continues to exist in the new creation, but the 
death which he means is no evil. For the divine 
justice, which echoes within the human heart, 
demands not only everlasting pain, but everlasting 
happiness. "My servants shall rejoice, but ye 
shall be ashamed" (lxv. 13). Now the shame of 
rebellion, as the prophet distinctly says in lxvi. 24, 
must be perpetual (lxvi. 24); how, then, should the 
joy of redemption be limited to a few hundred 
years of life? And how can perpetual joy be attained 
but through death? Now the lastimgness of future rewards and 
penalties is a thoroughly Zoroastrian con-
ception, which must have had a stimulating influ-
ence for good and for evil on later Jewish thought. 
So too is that of the new heaven and the new 

1 See the notes on Isa. lvii. 2, lxvi. 24, in my commentary. 
2 Comp. Delitzsch's striking description of the condensed 
Hebrew and indeed Oriental style in his early work, Geschicht-
e der jüdischen Poesie, p. 189. 
3 The tradition of the destruction of hell in Bundeshesh, 
xxx. 31, 32 (West's translation), is self-evidently the product 
of late theological reflection—late, that is, in comparison 
with the period of the Achamenid rule.
earth. Our prophet may indeed have had in his mind two passages of the Second Isaiah (li. 16, l. 11), as he wrote lxv. 17 (lxvi. 22) and lxvi. 24 respectively; but there is a wide difference between the glowing poetical style of the former and the cool, deliberate, not to say dogmatic manner of the latter, which implies a different situation, and can be partly accounted for by Zoroastrian influence on the later Jews. It is by no means fatal to this view that our prophet does not copy Zoroastrian details, for instance, the destruction of the old world by fire (see 2 Peter iii. 10).

[We are compelled to do Canon Cheyne the injustice of breaking off his article at this point. The larger and more important portion of it which remains will appear in The Expository Times for August.—EDITOR.]

---

**Recent Literature on the Writings of St. John.**

**LITERATURE ON THE WHOLE FIELD.**

1. *Introduction to the Johannine Writings.* By Paton J. Gloag, D.D., Minister of Galashiels. London: James Nisbet & Co. 8vo, pp. xvii, 440. 1891, 10s. 6d.


It is marvellous that Dr. Paton Gloag, upon whom there lies so much responsibility of another kind, should have been able to produce a work of the magnitude of this *Introduction to the Johannine Writings.* And the marvel is the greater when we remember his previous *magna opera,* some of which have been but a short time in our hands, his Introductions to the Pauline and to the Catholic Epistles, his Commentary on the Acts, his Baird Lectures on Messianic Prophecy, and his volume of Exegetical Studies. It is another instance in support of the saying that the busiest man has the most time to spare. At the head of each department the literature is given. In no case is the list complete, but the subsequent chapter shows that it has been chosen after personal acquaintance; it is exhausted if not exhaustive. And here and there passing reference to a recent German pamphlet marks the modern open-eyed scholar. Dr. Gloag’s position is conservative. It is the beloved apostle who gave us Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse. But not even the critic who comes with an absolute negative is denied audience, or his case prejudiced in the statement.

The subject of Mr. Simcox’s little book is Style. An earlier volume describes the Greek of the New Testament as a whole, its character as distinguished from classical Greek. In this the several writers of the New Testament are compared with one another as to their peculiarities of language. The writings of St. John occupy barely twenty pages, so that even the limited subject chosen is little more than touched upon. But every line is precious. With the Greek Testament in hand the book must be used, and then it will repay the patient student richly. Once and again in a short sentence some principle is stated: “We feel that, if St. John has an imperfect command of Greek idiom, he has a quite adequate command of Greek vocabulary; he frames his sentences as he can, but he chooses his words as he will.” “It does not follow that his language as it is, is not better for the purpose than that of a better Greek scholar.” But even these are rare; for the most part the inductions are left to the student’s own discernment and patience.

Dr. Lechler’s volumes, like Mr. Simcox’s little