

and the building up of a community that would embody in its life the demands of Israel's God. In later days, outside influences might help in this direction, especially when the sense of communion with God had become personal and spiritual to the extent that is expressed in Job and Ps. 73. Reasoning that the martyrs who had lost their lives for the faith could not, because of Yahweh's faithfulness, lose their share in the new kingdom, might suggest at least a partial resurrection (Dan. 12/2, Is. 26/19; the earlier passage, Ezek. 37, most probably refers to the restoration of the nation). In the OT, then, the doctrine of personal immortality is rather the glimmering of a new hope than a prominent and fixed element of faith.

We cannot regard the recent attempt to carry back the eschatological teaching to the early times as successful. The natural basis of such teaching lies, of course, in the hope that springs eternal in the human breast. As to its imagery, we must remember that we have no colours with which to paint the future except those drawn from the past. The golden age of the past reappears with new glory in the final redemption which ushers in the eternal kingdom and marks the completion of Yahweh's purpose for His people. This consummation seemed to be near at hand to those prophets who had a message of forgiveness and hope. These general considerations, true in themselves, do not lead to the conclusion that there was a fully-developed eschatology in the earliest times. The Israelites had to build up their own nation and learn to review their past history as a discipline of Yahweh; they had to come face to face with a large world and consider their relationship to it, before they could work out elaborate schemes of future development and definite programmes of the final days. These subjects were not in the centre of the early prophetic teaching, though they rest upon the prophetic doctrine of a severe judgment and the salvation of the faithful. The primary prophetic message is one of judgment on Israel; the essential feature of "eschatology" in the strict sense is judgment on the heathen and the exaltation of the Jews. There are various conceptions of the place of "the heathen" in this scheme of things. It is quite clear that this way of regarding the future