

power of life : therefore death is called sleep, to show that it has a fixed end coming. Much as the heathen felt after this, and mused, and boded, yet, after all, death and the world of the dead was to them a dreary night. They saw men going down into the dust, but they saw none come back again ; they had heard no whispers of the resurrection of the body. If the disembodied spirit should live on, that was all they could attain unto ; but even this was clouded and dim. And their poets were wont to bewail the fleet-
ingness of life, and the unknown condition of the dead.— They were wont to say : “Alas, alas, the mallows and the fresh herbs of the field, when they die, return again to life, and spring another year ; but we, the great, the mighty, the wise, when once we die, and are laid in the hollow earth, we sleep a long, an endless, and unbroken sleep !” Even the Jews but dimly saw the coming shadows of the resurrection. Death was too nigh, too mighty, and too absolute ; they saw and felt his dominion. Of his overthrow they had both promise and prophecy ; but as yet he seemed too tyrannously strong to pass away into a transitory sleep. It was for the Gospel to reveal this mystery by the miracle of Christ’s resurrection. It was revealed in act ; and now death is destroyed. It is a kindly soothing rest to the wearied and world-worn spirit ; and there is a fixed end to its duration. There is a waking nigh at hand ; so that the grave is little more than the longest night’s sleep in the life of an undying soul.

Again ; death is changed to sleep, because they whom men call dead do really live unto God. They were dead while they lived this dying life on earth, and dead when they were in the last avenues of death. But after they had once died, death had no more dominion : they escaped as a “bird out of the snare of the fowler : the snare” was “broken,” and they were delivered. It may sound strange to unbelieving ears to say, that we are dead while we live,