

## Books for the Young.

Let us single out for special notice two books published by the S.P.C.K. They are suitable for children of ten or eleven. *A Little Military Knight* (2s.) reminds one of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, and does not fall very far short of it. The author, E. M. Green, has succeeded, we believe, in adding one to the list of children's classics.

What will appeal to a child most? the things of the imagination. And in this book there is sanctified imagination. After imagination comes incident. The little military knight has many adventures. The third thing which affects a child is the wording of the story, and here we have a tale told in language that is simple and picturesque.

The second children's book which we would recommend is *Mr. Punch and Party* (1s. 6d.), by Louisa Bedford. Ursula and Alick come from India to stay with their guardian Mr. Punch. This is an account of their adventures, and of the change which took place in them.

But now, let us recommend a third book. If it is not quite so edifying, it is more exciting than either of these. *Two in a Tangle* (1s. 6d.), by Alice Massie, contains a most realistic account of what happened to Kathleen and Philip O'Brien on a cycling tour. The Secretary of the S.P.C.K. has been very fortunate in securing three children's books so good as these.

Next, we have four books which would be

suitable for gifts in adult sewing classes, etc. Of these we like *Miss Haldane's Lodger*, by Katherine E. Vernham (1s.), best. The plot is cleverly worked out, and there is much earnest religious feeling. *Young Mrs. Harris* (2s.), by Lucy M. Parker is a brightly told tale of village life. The other two are *Meg's Fortune* (2s.), by Emily Pearson Finnemore, and *In Quest of a Heritage* (1s.).

*Shepperton Manor* (2s. 6d.), by the Rev. J. M. Neale, and *The Failure of a Hero* (2s.), by M. Bramston, are historical novels. The scene of the first is laid in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and of the second in the end of the sixteenth. We have had just a suspicion that historical tales are being overdone, but perhaps it is not so, since there is a short notice at the beginning of *Shepperton Manor* to say that it has been reprinted 'to meet a continuous demand.'

*The Prize* (Wells Gardner; 1s. 6d.) is a delightful children's magazine. The binding is attractive, and it contains twelve bright bold coloured pictures. The stories are written in the simple direct fashion that appeals to children, and they are well-sandwiched between poetry and pictures.

*Chatterbox* (Wells Gardner; 3s.)—wonderful value for the money—would make an excellent family gift. It contains over four hundred pages of continued and short stories, articles on many interesting and practical subjects, puzzles, anecdotes, jokes and poetry, and all profusely illustrated.

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## Identity in Creeds without Historical Connexion.

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WILL you allow me to fix a point which involves expository exegesis at every line, and which seems somewhat difficult to keep from shifting; or rather to disentangle two interesting facts, the one from the other, and from their more or less equivocal connexions?

My business is this. I take it for granted that all unprejudiced readers of the Bible accede to the opinion that the pre-Exilic eschatology differed very greatly from its successor, the Exilic—and this, not only as regards the distinctness and in-

tensity of the assertions in which each expressed certain views, but also as regards some vital points in the doctrines themselves.

We are especially struck with the absence of all animated immortality in the early books. Recall the monotone in Kings and Chronicles; the Kings of both Judah and Israel, good or bad, died in their day, 'were buried' in their respective sepulchres, and their varying sons 'reigned in their stead.' Where is there any hint of an account beyond the grave?—no judgment, no Heaven, and no Hell.

Even in the *Decalogue* how often we have all of us missed these hopes, in the exact place of all others where we should most expect to find them. All seems to be like the classic Hades, if indeed the pre-Exilic picture possessed quite so much activity.

But from the Exilic Scriptures onwards, these deficiencies are made up, focusing in Daniel, and in its splendid echo, Revelation. So the Creed moved on; not, indeed, without a singular dissenting side-current. The superior Sadducees were often high priests, especially under the Maccabees.

The items in the Exilic Creeds need hardly be recalled; they were, first, a *God-unity* of the better sort, with a *Holy Spirit* somewhat dimly figured, an *angelology* with named *arch-angels*, becoming also '*princes*,' and an *immortality* fully conscious and developed. There was a *Satan*, with his host, later the 'God of this world'; there was a *fall of man*, continuing Eden—with a *soteriology*—and a *virgin birth*, a *temptation* and a *victory*; a *resurrection*, a *forensic judgment*, a *millennium* in a *paradise* (N.T.), a *Heaven* and a *Hell*.

These points seem all very plain in the Exilic pages, and they were continuously asserted by the dominant(?) party,<sup>1</sup> even during the life of Christ, as long previously. But in *North Persia* these views had been settled, and quite as firmly and as fully enounced as their counterparts in Judah, with one added item of well-nigh supreme influence. Thus in North Persia there was also a *God-unity* (see the *Avesta* and the *Inscriptions*); for *Ahura* was the '*Greatest*,'—there can be but *One* Greatest. He was also *Creator* of 'this earth' and 'yon Heaven,' and, constructively, of all that was within them; there can be but *One Creator*. It is so *redundantly* everywhere in both *Avesta* and *Inscriptions*. He made man, as a matter of course. He made His angels, some of them angels only in a secondary sense. This last limitation intervenes from the sublime fact that the chief *arch-angels* were His *attributes personified* (see even Plutarch citing Theopompos; compare also the *Sabellian Trinity* for analogy and illustration). He created *Mithra*, at times almost His mate, recalling again the *Trinity*. The things called '*Gods*' in *Avesta* and *Inscriptions* were like our *angels*—the chief of them—and they by no means compro-

<sup>1</sup> Though 'life and immortality' needed to be more distinctly 'brought to light' at the Advent.

mise the *God-unity*. He, *Ahura*, had also His *most holy Spirit*,—so others; I prefer '*most bounteous*' (this for safety). He had an *eternity*, while man had a *deathless long life*—immortality. There was a Devil,—the most pronounced in literature. In fact, he was a 'twin,' but evil, Deity. He had his *angels*, the chief being the harmful *Druj* or lie; and they were not fallen angels—*the evil angels were originally bad*.

There were falls of man, however. In some sixteen Edens, where the Devil wrought his work, though the Edens were not so graphic as in the Bible, man fell; and the story is not told so minutely as in Genesis. There was to be a judgment, closely personal, but not so full in most particulars as those in Daniel and Revelation, while one astonishing element, the Iranian Assize, was greatly superior (see below).

There was to be a *Restoring Renovator*—a good Saviour,—the *One* about to *prosper*. He was to be virgin born, but not immediately from the Divine Power. After his mythification, Zarathustra met a temptation, as did our Lord, Hercules, and Buddha. Zarathustra's was much like that in Matthew.

He was to overcome—but not to be ultimately crucified—his remote virgin-born descendant was to assist in raising the dead (cp. the N.T.). There was to be a *Paradise*<sup>2</sup> of risen and beautified mankind, to last for a *thousand years*,—with a Heaven and an antithetic Hell.

Here is obviously an identity in constitutive elements—articles, as it were, of a common faith, and each of dominant importance, with one or two supreme principles; and they must have exercised a deepened influence on either side. I suppose no one will think of disputing this. The *Avesta* texts, while they may bristle with minor difficulties everywhere, are irresistible here as to this. It protrudes and obtrudes everywhere in both *Avesta* and its sequents. The one point where North Persia went far beyond Exilic Judah (see above), was that of *Subjective Recompense*. Heaven was to consist, centrally, of good thoughts, words, and deeds; and, contrariwise, Hell of evil thoughts, words, and deeds. Virtue was in fact to be, for the most part, its own reward, and vice its own punishment.

Such were these two great systems—essentially

<sup>2</sup> The word 'Paradise' is here used in its general sense of walled-in garden.

twin-sisters or twin-brothers, as we might term them. And my object just at present is first to point them out, and then to view each of them as if there were absolutely no historical connexion between them. Not so most other writers who have seriously examined the point. For a long time back critics like Matter<sup>1</sup> (of Strassburg), Deutsch, a Jew (see his article in the *Quarterly* of about fifty years ago), and many others, have insisted upon the historical as well as the interior identity of the two systems; while, on the contrary, some non-experts, perhaps piqued at the situation, have actually reiterated their negations, not only denying all mutual influence between the Jews and Persians, but also asserting that the Jews never came in contact with the Persians.

Now, suppose that, for the sake of putting the facts in a clear light, we *accept* this latter view, hypothetically and for the moment. By doing so, it may be possible for us to unravel the tangled issues. Let the reader, then, for the moment provisionally accept, with me, for the sake of clearness, that extreme conservative negation, just mentioned. Let it be supposed that the Jews had indeed actually never heard the name of *Persia*, and that such a person as *Cyrus* had never patronized them in the matter of restoring their city and temple; that Is 44. 45 may be considered a forgery or otherwise explained away; that *Ézra* is a religious novel. Let us deny that the Jews were *Persian* subjects from about 539 B.C., till the *Achaemenids* went out. Let us assert that the hundred odd words supposed to be of *Persian* origin in the Exilic Bible are in fact wholly *Semitic*; that the expression *King of kings* did not come from Iran, and that it does not stand to-day upon *Behistun*; that '*Paradise*' was not uttered by Christ upon the cross, nor was it an *Avestic* expression; and that the *thousand years* of Paradise was not a familiar concept in *Avesta* and its descendants, unknown in Judah before *Revelation*.

What then? Why, simply, we have here before us two of the most obtrusive and, at the same time, also uncontested facts of well-nigh supreme interest in all our 'Records of the Past.' For no beginner in *Avesta* can over-

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire Critique de Gnosticisme*, 1828.

look the *Persian* system, nor can a Bible-reader ignore the *Jewish* Exilic. Here, then, are *two systems*, with *essential elements* practically *identical*, differing greatly as to the fringes of their detail,—this of course,—and each has arisen and developed absolutely without any influence from the other, great or little, mediate or immediate. And if this be the state of the case, we have here obviously and simply the finest instance of that wonderful thing called *Parallel Development*, in all religious history; indeed, we might delete the adjective. Is it then permissible to us to close our mental eye to such a thing as this? I think not.

I will not enlarge; the thing is solemn enough, if anything be solemn. What I add is solely by way of postscript. First, there is the significant fact that, of these twin theologies, that of the *Avesta*, and its now lost sisters, was by far *more ancient* than its Jewish mate. For, putting the Gāthas at, say, 700 to 900 B.C., they presuppose some centuries for the slow growth of their system—being also closely related to the *Veda*, whose antecedents came down from *Iran* into *India*—whereas the Jewish dates from the Exile with little basis in the pre-Exilic documents. Secondly, the Persian twin of the two had a *vast field* of influence, many times greater than that reached or touched by the Jewish Exilic and post-Exilic before the date of Constantine. The field of the *Persian* scheme included millions(?), where Exilic *Judah* numbered tens of thousands. Thirdly, the Persian *civilization* was far higher. Recall the enormous military and political influence of *Persia*, her conquests and her annexations, from India to Egypt, and from the Caspian to the Ocean; recall also her interior organization, with her leading postal system, her military and business roads, 'every valley being exalted and every mountain and hill made low,' etc.—an exaggeration indeed, but still expressive. Yet, except these external particulars and the subjective recompense, the *two eschatologies* are *approximately identical* in their points as in their fervour.<sup>2</sup> And their separate origin, in which I personally partly believe, is one of the marvels of all experience. To ignore any item here is to be remiss in duty.

<sup>2</sup> The *Avesta* and *Inscriptions* are well-nigh the '*document*' of personal religious fervour, certainly so, next after the Psalms,