

criticism that was ever applied to the Gospels can he get rid of the motive with which Jesus left His home in Nazareth to go to the heathen. He went 'to seek and to save the lost.' On every page of the Gospels that is written. We cannot have the Gospels without it. Why does Dr. Hastings Rashdall ignore that motive?

He may suggest that He dealt with that motive when He spoke of the fear of hell. Does he mean that when Jesus came out to seek and to save the lost He carried with Him nothing but the hell of a

ferocious theologian? To be lost may be more than the most ferocious theologian ever imagined. But it is not the terror of hell that has ever been the missionary's motive. It is not a future fear of any kind. It is a present fact. It is the difference between being lost and being found. It is because the missionary has discovered the happiness of being found to be so great, that he has realized how great is the misery of being lost. And that contrast has always sent him to the heathen. The 'Modern Missionary Motive' is not Christianity as a civilizing agency, but Christ as a saving power.

## A Zoroastrian Idyll.

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. JAMES HOPE MOULTON, M.A., D.LIT., MANCHESTER.

O Thou Wise Lord, who when Thy world was young  
 Didst pierce the grim night of the eastern sky  
 With gladsome rays of truth and purity,  
 Forgive the error of this venturous song  
 That strives to hymn Thy bounty. May my tongue  
 Tell of Thy Seer, and how against the Lie  
 Pure thoughts, pure words, pure actions' victory  
 Rang from his herald trumpet loud and long:—  
 So from the blaze wherein Thy glories dwell  
 Once more athwart the sunless gloom a star  
 Shall flash its guiding message, and from far  
 The Sage of Iran answer to the spell,  
 And speed with trophies of a faith long dim  
 To find his Lord and bow the knee to Him.

### AD ASTRA.<sup>1</sup>

Glory to Thee, O Mazda! Lo, I turn  
 From dazzling visions of Thy home of light,  
 And find me weary in the strife again,  
 To battle with the watchful fiends that line

<sup>1</sup> The lines which follow are a free paraphrase of the Zoroastrian scriptures describing the destiny of the righteous soul after death. Most of the traits included here are taken from the fragment known as Yasht 22, in which the prophet Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) asks the Deity (Ahura Mazda, later Ormazd, 'Wise Lord') of the destiny of good and evil souls after death. The fate of the evil man is described in terms mechanically balancing the features of the picture presented here—a hideous hag replacing the fair maiden, and so forth. Darmesteter's translation in

Man's path to heaven. Yet in the sacred Fire<sup>2</sup>  
 I pray Thee let my waking thoughts recall  
 Sights that can soothe and strengthen.

I beheld,

And lo, from out the eternal House of Song,<sup>3</sup>  
 One came and answered my unspoken prayer:—  
 'How came I hither? Thou must tell the tale  
 Of what I was, a mortal, for the years  
 Of bliss have swept the memory away.  
 It may be the fell demons of disease  
 Vanquished my body, while the Nasu<sup>4</sup> nigh  
 Waited the hour to swoop upon her prey.  
 What recked I? I was free.

Three days<sup>5</sup> I watched

Hard by the spot whence weeping friends had borne

*Sacred Books of the East* (The Zend Avesta, Part ii.) may be consulted.

<sup>2</sup> In Parsism Fire, the 'body of Ahura Mazda' is the most sacred of elements, and the medium of communion with God.

<sup>3</sup> *Garô demâna*, the supreme Paradise where dwells God with His angels.

<sup>4</sup> *Nasu* (= Greek *νεκρός*), the *daēva* or demon of death and corruption. (In this introductory paragraph there is nothing answering to Yasht 22 or other texts.)

<sup>5</sup> This belief that the soul hovered for three days near the body after death was found among the Jews: see Dr. Marcus Dods on John xi. 39 (*Expos. Greek Test.*). Whether this was independent or borrowed from Parsism is uncertain: see on the whole subject 'Zoroastrianism' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

The demon-haunted frame that once was mine.  
 New light had dawned on all the earthly scenes  
 Where once I seemed to struggle all alone  
 Against the Lie<sup>1</sup>; for myriad angel forms  
 Thronged o'er the foughten field, and silently  
 Strengthened the weary warrior with their aid.  
 And joy whose like the world had never known  
 Bade me forget the tears that death had drawn  
 And death should dry.

Four glorious Dawns had risen,  
 And with the wakening loveliness of day  
 Came breezes whispering from the southern sky,  
 Laden with fragrant sweetness. I beheld,  
 And floating lightly on the enamoured winds  
 A Presence sped and hovered over me,  
 A maiden, roseate as the blush of morn,  
 Stately and pure as heaven, and on her face  
 The freshness of a bloom untouched of Time.  
 Amazed I cried, 'Who art thou, maiden fair,  
 Fairer than aught on earth these eyes have seen?'  
 And she in answer spake, 'I am Thyself,  
 Thy thoughts, thy words, thy actions, glorified  
 By every conquest over base desire,  
 By every offering of a holy prayer  
 To the Wise Lord in Heaven, every deed  
 Of kindly help done to the good and pure;  
 By these I come thus lovely, come to guide  
 Thy steps to that dread Bridge<sup>2</sup> where waits for thee  
 The Prophet, charged with judgement.'

On the winds

A little space we flew, yet spanned therein  
 Ten times the gulf that severs sun and star,

<sup>1</sup> Among the Persians 'the Lie' (*Drauga*, akin to the Avestan demon *Druj*) is a comprehensive term for all evil. Compare Herodotus on the education of a young Persian noble—'to draw the bow, to ride the horse, to speak the truth,' the supreme virtue.

<sup>2</sup> The Bridge of the Judge, over which the good passed into Paradise, while the evil fell off into Hell. Rashnu, the angel of judgement, sat beside it with his scales to weigh the good against the evil. In his own poems (*Gâthâs*) Zarathushtra promises himself to accompany the pious to the Bridge: hence the next line in the text.

On to the South, where like a buried noon  
 Glimmered a growing glory—onward still,  
 Till heavens burning with ethereal light  
 Revealed the House of Song. High-towered it  
 stood,

With flashing diamonds walled, suspense in air;  
 And far beneath a chasm fathomless  
 To keenest vision, whence a muffled wail  
 Strained through the solid darkness and betrayed  
 Fell Angra Mainyu's<sup>3</sup> realm.

Long time I gazed

Dazzled at Heaven, or blinded upon Hell;  
 Till o'er the abyss I saw a thin bright line  
 Stretched up to that fair portal, and I knew  
 The Bridge of Judgement. Lo, an angel dread  
 Sat there beside, and in his hand the scales  
 To weigh the good and evil.<sup>4</sup> At his bar  
 I stood, yet feared not, while good spirits pled  
 And demons fierce accused me, till the scale  
 Sank with the load of everlasting joy.  
 So with my Angel forth I sped and passed  
 The Bridge of Judgement, passed the Heavens  
 Three,

Good Thought, Good Word, Good Action, and  
 beyond

Soared to the place of Everlasting Light,  
 Ahura Mazda's boundless House of Song.  
 A saint's voice hailed me, 'How hast hither come,  
 From carnal world to spiritual, from the realm  
 Of death to life, to bliss that cannot die?'  
 And from the Throne came answer, 'Question not  
 Him that hath trod the dread and unknown path  
 Which parts the body and the soul for aye.'

<sup>3</sup> Angra Mainyu, or Ahriman, the co-eternal Spirit of Evil, who strives with Ahura through the ages of the world's history, but is destined to be destroyed at the *frashôkereti* or regeneration, when Good will triumph for ever.

<sup>4</sup> See above. It was a principle of Persian jurisprudence that a man was not tried for a specific offence only: the whole life of the accused was reviewed, and he was acquitted if good deeds outbalanced evil. This was reflected in the Divine judgement; and, logically enough, a limbo called *Hamestakân* provided for cases where the balance was even.