

'I will go!' 'But the steps are very steep;
 If you would climb up there,
 You must lie at its foot, as still as sleep,
 And be a step of the stair

For others to put their feet on you
 To reach the stones high-piled,
 Till Jesus comes and takes you too,
 And leads you up, my child.'

GEORGE MACDONALD.

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Zoroastrian Influences on Judaism.

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FEW problems in these days agitate more extensively the minds of thinking men than that which concerns the nature and the history of Inspiration. Had the Jews a monopoly of Revelation, and, if so, why? What is the difference, if any, between the inspiration of Isaiah and that of Robert Browning? I am about to summarize some modern researches into the history of two great systems of religion, and I am not without hope that the results described may do something to alleviate the difficulty which perplexes so many, and alleviate it the more effectively as it is approached by an indirect way. Before, however, I embark upon the special investigation which has done much to confirm me in what I have found a satisfying answer to these problems, I think it will be well to state prematurely the nature of this answer, that we may be able to fit into their proper place as we go along the successive steps in the evidence I wish to offer.

Had then the Jews reserved for themselves the exclusive possession of Revelation? In one sense most assuredly yes. Nothing can touch the fact that Jesus Christ came to the Jews and the Jews alone. Nor is anything more obvious or more encouraging in these days than the tendency

to identify Revelation with the Person of Jesus Christ. Outsiders have always loved to taunt Christendom with its divisions, and hosts of well-meaning and earnest Christians have striven to heal these divisions by schemes of external union. Meanwhile, all the human wisdom is being silently anticipated by a mighty movement which is flooding all the Churches. More and more does the divinity and supremacy of Christ form the beliefs and the lives of those who profess and call themselves Christians; and when such a movement has had time to perfect itself, we shall find ourselves one before we know it. In Christian Evidences this tendency produces splendid effect. The apologist no longer leads up to Christ: he starts with Him, deduces all other truths from His personality, and leads back to Him at the end. No longer does he pause to prove the miracles or the accuracy of Scripture: the Gospels may, for the sake of argument, be late and the miracles unsupported, but the figure of Christ stands there and *somehow* has to be explained. No candid explanation can fail to draw the inquirer on till he admits what he never would have admitted had he begun at the other end. If, then, Jesus Christ is what we claim Him to be—using no

evidence beyond that of His words and the parts of His life which men with curious irony call unmiraculous—it follows that the Revelation which He brings must be unique. And when we study the prophets, we soon see that the Jews were unique because they had a unique mission. They were trained to receive and then to preach a Divine Saviour to the world, and their sole possession of an extraordinary privilege turns out to be—what all privileges are when rightly understood—merely the condition of an extraordinary duty. Palestine was the training school of a missionary nation, and the more we study it the more we see how perfectly adapted the school was to its purpose. Its narrow limits and its isolation kept the people out of the worldly ambitions of the nations around, and in that kindly shelter inspired men trained the nation which was to preach Jesus the Messiah to the world.

A great deal might be said about the plan of that training and the development of Israel's religion, but I leave that to the experts in Old Testament studies. The question I propose to ask is, Whether the development of doctrine in Israel was produced solely by the growth of ideas native to the religion of Jehovah, or was influenced in important matters by foreign religious conceptions? As before, I will state my answer first and try to prove it afterwards. I believe that in two matters of supreme importance—immortality and the doctrine of angels and demons—Jewish beliefs were profoundly influenced by Parseism, and that Christianity to-day inherits elements derived from Zoroaster as well as elements derived from Moses.

In case there are any to whom this proposition is new, I had better say a little to conciliate objectors. Let me point out that this is one among very many points in which our current theories about Revelation are not fairly deducible from Revelation itself. Of course there are great bodies of Christians who would reply that the Church's deductions from Scripture must be held authoritative in the same way as Scripture itself. Whether Christendom *has* definitely pronounced on this question I really do not know: I must fall back on the only point which concerns me, and that is whether Scripture itself forbids the proposed opinion as to the history of these most important doctrines. I cannot see any evidence that it does. Revelation tells us that God spoke to the Fathers through the prophets, but it does not

say that He never spoke to other peoples through prophets. As a matter of fact two Gentile prophets appear in Scripture, Balaam in the O.T. and Epimenides (?) in the New, and in both cases their witness is cited as true. I admit that this argument is worth little enough. What weighs more is that Paul distinctly declares that God left not Himself without witness among the Gentiles, giving them the double witness of conscience and of that goodness which was designed to lead unto repentance. Very impressive, also, is the Epistle to the Hebrews when it lays such immense stress on the office of the Gentile Melchizedek.

It seems to me that it is quite in accord with the spirit of Scripture to believe that here God 'provoked Israel to jealousy with that which was not a' chosen 'nation,' teaching them truths latent in their own Revelation through their knowledge that they were already contained in another faith. If anyone objects that the gods of the nation are severely denounced as 'idols,' 'things of naught,' or even as 'devils,' I may fairly answer that this applies perfectly to the gods of Israel's neighbours, and very largely to the deities of Greece as they were in St. Paul's day, but that we have no sort of proof that Inspiration would have thus condemned the Zoroastrian Deity, who is portrayed without a single unworthy feature or a single merely human characteristic, as the One Wise Lord, the Holiest Spirit, the Almighty Creator, in the hymns of the Prophet Founder of Parseism. There is indeed one passage in the O.T. prophets which might seem to justify an opposite opinion. Ezekiel (8^{16, 17}) describes a series of abominations, each one worse than the last, which he sees in vision as perpetrated by the Jews in Jerusalem, apparently before the Captivity. As climax among these, worse than even the worship of the swine-god Tammuz or Adonis, he tells us he saw five-and-twenty men at the door of the temple, with their backs to it and worshipping the sun to the east; 'and lo, they put the branch to their nose.' Now the Parsees are always supposed to be sun-worshippers, and in any case the 'branch' here must be the sacred bundle of tamarisk twigs, the *bares-man* or *barsom*, held in the priest's hand as he recites the prayers. But it is perfectly impossible to conceive Zoroastrianism as manifesting itself so far west *before* or even *during* the Captivity. Cyrus is the earliest possible introducer of the Zoroastrian faith, and, as we shall see, it is more than doubtful

whether he was a Zoroastrian.¹ The sun-worshippers in Ezekiel were apparently Magians, but not Zoroastrians: the Magi, a Semitic priesthood as I think, fastened on Zoroastrianism at a much later date, and brought their *barsom* and other ritual with them. So that the condemnation of Magi before they became Parsees may be fairly balanced by the unique honour paid to Magi by the author of the First Gospel. Ministers of the only creed outside Judaism which acknowledged One God, the Magi recognized in some brilliant new star the guardian spirit—*fravashi*, to use their own term—of a great one just born, and came to Bethlehem to lay their treasures at His feet. May not Christians fairly believe that the pure monotheism which was chosen to offer the world's first homage to the Infant Saviour, was good enough to offer its richest pearls of truth to the people among whom He came?

Here I should like to begin definite construction by sketching the earlier history of Parseeism as I read it. It is unnecessary to say that Parseeism, though like Christianity it has tasted of the cruelty of Islam and has been reduced in numbers at least as mercilessly as the Armenians in our own day, is still a power in the East. The Parsees of Bombay are influential to an extent absurdly disproportionate to their numbers. They are among the leaders of India, and their little community is by far the most enlightened and progressive people in the country. But their present beliefs and customs do not of course concern my subject. In giving their earliest history I must premise that many points, and important points too, are still regrettably obscure. The subject has been deplorably neglected in England, and though wide and thorough researches have been made in Germany and France and America,—to say nothing of Bombay,—a general agreement is very far from being reached. If I give my own reading it is only because I hope it will at least serve to show how many points of contact there are between Parseeism and Christianity, and how worthy was this great system to contribute precious elements to the Truth in which we expect the whole world to believe one day.

Zoroaster, or Zarathushtra—to give him his proper name—was born most probably in Media, at an epoch which tradition fixes in the seventh

¹ The alternative is that he professed the *unreformed* Mazdean religion, a polytheism, but of an elevated type.

century B.C. On the whole, this seems the most likely of the immensely varying epochs accepted by authorities of weight in ancient and modern times. He began his mission in the west, but was driven thence by persecution, to which he makes pathetic reference in his hymns which have come down to us. In Bactria he found a royal disciple in the person of King Vishtâspa or Hystaspes,—*not* the father of Darius,—and his doctrine in succeeding generations spread westward, until at last it became the established religion at the court of the Persian kings. Unfortunately, we cannot prove at what epoch this happened. Zoroaster was a reformer, not an inventor, and we cannot tell whether the religion of Darius, as evidenced by his own great inscription and the very precise account of Herodotus, has elements introduced by the reformer. If it has, the Jews who remained in Babylonia, under the happier conditions which followed the edict of Cyrus, were directly in contact with a faith highly calculated to influence them, especially when held by the nation that had avenged them on Babylon. If, on the other hand, Darius's religion was untouched by Zoroaster, the period when the reform reached Persia must almost certainly have been the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon, the king whose country, as every schoolboy knows, one Xenophon raided in the interests of the younger Cyrus. In that case, Zoroastrian influences could hardly have been effective till a period later than the latest O.T. prophets. I am sorry that the evidence on this vital point is too technical to present or discuss here. There has been some new evidence discovered lately, which makes me waver considerably in my adherence to the second alternative I have just described; and if, with many of the best authorities, we regard Darius as essentially a Zoroastrian, we can fit together the phenomena of Judaism much more easily.

The essence of the teaching of Zoroaster is contained in his Gâthâs, or hymns, a few brief and very difficult poems composed in an archaic dialect, which has a close relationship to the Sanskrit of the Vedas. The centre of the theology is Ahura Mazdâh, the Wise Lord, often designated as the Holiest Spirit. He has no anthropomorphic features, nor any which even Christian feeling could regard as unworthy of an Almighty God. There are certain abstractions which are apparently

invoked with him, viz. good mind, best righteousness, sovereignty, devotion, health, and immortality; but as they are only semi-personifications of the Divine attributes; they cannot be said to compromise the rigid monotheism of the system. Zoroaster makes no allusion to the old Iranian nature powers, Mithra, the god of the sun and of truth, and Anâhita, the river genius, who appears in the Acts as the great Artemis of the Ephesians. They reappear with many others in the later hymns of the Avesta,—the sacred book of Parseeism,—and some excellent authorities favour the theory that their absence from the Gâthâs is due to the esoteric character of those poems, the prophet not intending to promote a monotheistic propaganda outside his own circle. I prefer to believe that he tried to expel polytheism by the exaltation of the old supreme deity of the Iranians to a position which would swallow up all the essential features of other cults, but that long prescription was too strong when he had passed away. In any case, there is no doubt that in the later parts of the Avesta these powers have great prominence. They do not, however, dispute the supremacy of Ahura Mazdâh; and their worship is best illustrated—if my view of their history is correct—by the recrudescence of the old classical mythology, thinly veiled under the cults of saints, in various half-Christianized countries during the Middle Ages.

Such then is Zoroaster's doctrine of God, a spiritual Being, almighty, the creator of the worlds and of righteousness, and a hearer and answerer of prayer. Like every thinker, he had to solve in some way the mystery of Evil. Most people who have heard of Zoroaster will tell us that he was a fire-worshipper and preached Dualism. This is correct in the same sense as was the famous definition of a crab as a red fish that walked sideways. Zoroaster did not worship fire, though he taught his people to reverence Fire as the only appropriate visible emblem of Deity. Nor was he a Dualist, except in the sense in which we are. He seems to have found the Iranians believing in an evil principle which they called the Lie, and he worked upon this belief till he made it a philosophical system. He taught that the principle of Evil, which he called Angra Mainyu (later *Ahriman*), or 'Hurtful Spirit,' had in the beginning chosen evil when the Holy Spirit chose the good. I will quote his own words:—

'Now these two primeval spirits, who have been called twin self-acting powers,
Even the better and the bad in thought, word, and action,
Between these twain the wise are right-choosing,
the foolish not so.
And then when these twain spirits went together at the first,
They made both life and death, and how the world shall be at the last.
The worst mind is of the wicked, and the best mind is for the righteous man.
Of these twain spirits he who is false chose the worst action :
The Holiest Spirit chose righteousness, he who clothes him in the strongest rocks ;
And those also chose the same who satisfy Mazdâh by good actions of their own will.'—Yasna 30³⁻⁵.

It is not easy to tell from this whether the prophet conceived a time when the evil spirit first chose evil, but there is very fair ground for deducing this. In any case, the only difference between Zoroaster's faith and our own will lie here, in the merely speculative point: he *seems*, but not with any certainty, to have cut the knot by declaring that Evil existed from eternity. This once given, he proceeds in essence as Christianity does. The world is the arena of a never-ceasing battle between good and evil, between the worshippers of Ahura, followers of the Zoroastrian law, and the worshippers of the demons. But the battle is to end in victory for the right, and the Prince of Evil with his angels and the men he has deluded, will go for ever to the House of the Lie—

'He who maketh a righteous man deceived, for him is after-destruction,
Age-long, in darkness, full of vile food and sad voices (?)

To that world the Law will by their own actions bring the wicked.'—Y. 31²⁰.

This is Zoroaster's own doctrine of Evil, and I cannot allow that it is rightly described as dualistic. It is rather a different matter with the system found in the later Avesta, in the treatise called the Vendidad—the Leviticus of Parseeism. There the struggle between good and evil has been considerably materialized. Creation is mapped out with mechanical precision into creatures of Ormuzd and creatures of Ahriman, and a burdensome and mechanical ritual takes the place of the

purely spiritual weapons by which Zoroaster had sought to conquer evil. I believe that, like one or two other features which deface the system of Parseeism, these things were imported into it by foreigners, the Median sacred tribe of the Magi, which obtained a footing in Parseeism by virtue of a surface resemblance between their dualistic tenets and fire-worship, and the principal external features of pure Zoroastrianism. As with Buddhism, Confucianism, even Mohammedanism, and certainly with Christianity, the cry of the reformer must be, Back to the Founder! How strange it is that whereas in other parts of life evolution is seen to be working upwards, in Religion the tendency is always the other way—from the spiritual to the external, from enthusiasm to formality, from life to dogma! The sacred fire is kindled by a messenger of God, and awhile it burns brightly, but soon begins to grow dim, till God sends another prophet to make it burn once more.

Before passing on to the most important contribution of Zoroaster to the world's thought, let me turn aside to Judaism. Every student of the Old Testament has noticed what a difference there is between the earlier and the latest parts in the matter of the spiritual creation. In the earlier days, Jehovah, though only the tribal God of Israel, was sole and supreme there. The Israelite often lapsed into worshipping the tribal gods of the nations among whom he dwelt, but while he kept to Jehovism he seemed hardly to conceive of other inhabitants of the spirit world. When we read of a messenger of Jehovah, the word *angel* is rather misleading here. We often find that the *messenger* dissolves into the personality of Jehovah Himself; and if the bare existence of God's spirit-servants is allowed, they seem not to be reckoned with as permanent inhabitants of the unseen world—they are almost created for the occasion. Hence, for the simple and unphilosophic faith of the Israelite, Jehovah is the author of every phenomenon, good or evil. Even the Second Isaiah, the very prince of all prophecy, expressly rebukes some kind of Oriental Dualism—certainly *not* Parseeism, as Kohut thought—in the words, 'I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things.' With this we naturally note the famous difference between the Book of Kings, compiled before 600 B.C., and that of Chronicles, some three cen-

turies later. In Kings, *Jehovah* is angry with Israel, and moves David to number them. In Chronicles, '*Satan* stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.' Note, again, how in the latest writings of the Old Testament, such as Daniel, the angels acquire a distinct and definite personality, with names and functions of their own. All this has been accentuated by the time of Christ. We know how the Pharisees believed in angels and spirits, which the Sadducees denied. In these matters the Sadducees stood upon the older parts of the Old Testament revelation, the Pharisees on the development of revelation through new teaching, which time had brought. We find in the Talmud an advanced and symmetrical system of angels and demons. The belief in guardian angels was fully developed, and on the other side popular thought connected perhaps the majority of diseases with the indwelling of demons.

Now in all these things there is a very striking resemblance to the Zoroastrian system. The hierarchy of six Amshaspands—the already named six personified attributes of God which surround His throne—is very much like the Jewish hierarchy of angels: Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, Uriel, Sandalfon, etc. So, too, is the much less precisely marked anthierarchy of evil. It is not the names and functions, or the number, between which we draw close parallels, but rather the general conception in the two cases, and particularly that matching of the powers of Good and Evil which is the leading principle of the later Avesta and no less of Judaism. We note how in the Revelation of St. John this idea is latent everywhere. There are not merely surface parallels, which might be fortuitous. The seven spirits which are before the throne are like the Amshaspands, who are often regarded as seven, not six. The contest of Michael and his angels with the dragon and his angels is matched by the Parsee conflict of Vohumanô, Good Mind, with the corresponding evil powers, and especially by the thousand years' struggle against Aži Dahâka, the Destructive Serpent. But the subtler resemblances are more striking. Note how naturally and without emphasis St. John conceives of a trinity of hell—the devil, the beast, and the false prophet—to match in their relations and functions the heavenly Trinity. The other two beliefs mentioned above are

exactly paralleled in Parseeism. Guardian angels I spoke of earlier. In Parseeism the Fravashis, or guardian spirits, are assigned to all good beings, past, present, and future, and the conception of an angel of a whole church would be, I take it, perfectly natural: at anyrate, in later times the collocation 'Fravashis of the Pious' becomes a singular entity. Further, the idea of demons possessing men is at the root of a large part of the Parsee ritual, the most important difference being that such possession is usually of a kind only affecting the man ceremonially.

In these points of contact I do not mean to suggest that the Jews consciously and intentionally borrowed from the Persians, even granted that we can establish a satisfactory historical connexion between the two creeds. The Jews were never enamoured of foreign intermeddling, least of all in the period within which this borrowing must have taken place. When they did borrow, as in the case of the demon Asmodaeus, the *Aešma Daeva*, or Wrath Demon, of the Avesta, they altered most freely: when we pass from the thoroughly Zoroastrian Asmodaeus of the Book of Tobit to the Ashmedai of the Talmud, the change is very radical. In general, the *detailed* resemblances are not telling enough to demand any such explanation. Rather, I should say, the Jews of the Dispersion, with an openness to receive new ideas considerably beyond that of their brethren in Palestine, found when in contact with Zoroastrians that their neighbours held many doctrines much like their own, and others which were in advance of theirs. Becoming used to these, they gradually came to see that they were not inconsistent with their own faith; and before long the step was easily taken by which the Jews, almost unconsciously, deduced such doctrines from their own revelation, with hardly an idea that they were borrowing at all. The passage from foreign Jews to Jews in Palestine would be easy in this case; and as it presumably took place in the Persian age, —an age of which the history is almost a blank,—we are the less hampered. Professor Cheyne dumps down a good many psalms into this period, as one in which the desiderated external conditions may very well have been fulfilled—no one can say they were not. With much more justification, I may submit, we can place our postulated process there.

Much of what I have already said will apply to the yet more important subject of Immortality.

The belief in the immortality of the soul, and the rewards and punishments of the hereafter, is established in the Gâthâs, and is, therefore, at least as old as Zoroaster himself. Whether the resurrection of the body is included is much more doubtful. It certainly appears in the later parts of the Avesta and the later Parsee books, but these are not free from the possible suspicion of having borrowed from Christianity. In the Gâthâs the most plausible hint is in two passages (49¹¹, 31²⁰), where *evil food* seems to be given as part of the penalty of the wicked: one might deduce the necessity of a body for this, but it may only mean much what fire means in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus, the *symbol* of punishment for a disembodied spirit. Two other passages state that the wicked will be for all time in the House of the Fiend (46¹¹, 49¹¹); but unfortunately the rendering 'their *bodies* will be . . .' is not sufficiently sure. Perhaps the safest course is to assert only—a thing which is obvious—that the Gâthâs are full of a future existence for the righteous of happiness in the House of Song, for the wicked of misery in the House of the Fiend. We must leave it doubtful whether Zoroaster had definitely conceived of the two classes as being embodied or incorporeal; but in later stages there is certainly a bodily resurrection. The really important thing to note is that a judgment dividing good and evil men is clearly conceived in the Gâthâs, and a definite personal conscious existence of happiness or misery. The righteous are to be taken by Zoroaster himself over the Bridge of the Judge into the House of Song, and Ahura Himself will meet them: they will be praising Him and Righteousness when they dwell there for all time. Of the wicked we hear that their own souls and thoughts will torment them when they come thither where is the Bridge of the Judge. Such are some of the clearest eschatological passages in the Gâthâs. I cannot resist sketching the exquisite passage of the later Avesta, in which the soul is followed on its journey. For three days it hovers round the body and then flies towards the Bridge. On the wings of a fragrant South wind comes to meet it a lovely maiden of fifteen years. The soul asks, 'Who art thou, O maid, fairest of all that I have ever seen?' She replies, 'I am thine own good thoughts, good words, and good actions,' and she tells it that all these as they have been achieved have made her more and more fair.

What, meanwhile, were the views of the Israelites on the Future Life? It hardly needs proving that their conceptions until a late period were shadowy in the extreme. Their Sheol was as unsubstantial and as gloomy as the Hades of Homer. In the year 712 we hear King Hezekiah declaring, 'Sheol cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth.' As late as Ecclesiastes, which is assigned by Professor Driver to the third or fourth century B.C., and by Plumptre and others to the year 200 *cir.*, we find Sheol still described in the same way: there is no knowledge, work, device, nor wisdom there; and even the return of the spirit to God who gave it does not, in this context, appear to imply a belief in immortality. It was only in outbursts of special inspiration that the Jew dared to imagine a future life worthy of the name: witness Pss 16, 17, 49, 73, and perhaps the 19th chapter of Job. But the last chapter of the Book of Daniel, written certainly after 300, and probably about 168 B.C., has a clear prophecy of a physical resurrection, and of a life of everlasting bliss for wise teachers, shame and everlasting contempt for the wicked. It seems possible that this belief grew up in two forms—the Essenes teaching simply the immortality of the soul, the doctrine which inspires the Book of Wisdom; the Pharisees, like Daniel, 2 Maccabees, and Enoch, defending the resurrection of the body. It is noteworthy that these three books and the sect of the Pharisees are found on the same side also in the doctrine of angels.

There is surely a strong probability about the view that would make this doctrine, as well as the other, a development in Judaism produced by the influence of Parseeism. In this connexion we naturally compare what I stated above, that Parseeism itself is not homogeneous. The Gâthâs are, in general, on the side of the Essenes and the Book of Wisdom in laying stress on the immortality of the soul, while later Parseeism preaches the resurrection of the body. It might indeed be even conjectured that immortality was the essential doctrine of Parseeism, and the resurrection that of Judaism—the two creeds mutually influencing each other. Considering that Judaism, until its latest stages, made happiness in this life the one great mark of God's favour, we should naturally expect that when the idea of a continued existence after death dawned on the Jews, it would take the form of a new life upon earth. But since we have seen that

the idea of a future life was absolutely dormant in Israel till the post-exilic period, and, indeed, the post-prophetic period, we need some powerful impetus to account for the adoption of so startling an innovation. The knowledge that the Zoroastrians held the doctrine of immortality gives just the stimulus required. We need not say that Israel borrowed the doctrine. But when they found another nation actually accepting and holding with fervour the hope of immortality, they could not but ask themselves whether their own faith left no opening for that hope. The question could only be answered in one way. The moments of ecstasy in which prophets like Second Isaiah had risen to entertain the hope, might well encourage thoughtful Jews who studied their words. This account of the rise of this great doctrine suits exactly the tone in which our Lord rebukes the Sadducees. They had refused to accept the resurrection mainly because they could not find it in the older Scriptures. Jesus shows them it was latent there all the time. The very terms of God's revelation of Himself to the Fathers demanded immortality as their necessary corollary. In other words, the Sadducees were bidden to search the old Scriptures in the same receptive spirit as that which had animated students of a few generations before, who, when the hint was once given, examined the Scriptures whether these things were so.

I have been trying to show how these doctrines reached Israel. We need something more: Are they *true*? If we test them by the words of Him who for us is the sum of all truth, I should decidedly say they are. Jesus expressly spoke of the angels of the little ones—their Fravashis, as a Parsee would say. I cannot at present discuss the question whether He endorsed the Jewish beliefs in demons, but I believe, speaking broadly, that He did. And certainly there can be no question about His accepting the doctrine of the Resurrection, and of eternal life and eternal death. So that, if we are right, Parseeism has had a most profoundly important part to play in the history of the human soul's awakening. Does it not make us rejoice that God reveals Himself in many ways? I like to think that all that was best in the world—derived, as it all must have been, from God Himself—joined itself to the stream which flows deep and strong as the great world religion, the only religion that has even claimed to become universal. We have been seeing that the noblest and

purest of Gentile religions took a representative place in the evolution of a system of doctrine which Jesus Christ adopted, vivified, and proclaimed. Are we not justified in appealing to Jew and Parsee alike to ask whether Christianity is not the legitimate heir of their great Revelations, rather than the Judaism and Parseeism of to-day? Jewish prophets foretold of a Messiah: we say, He has come. Zoroaster—so says the Avesta—promised the coming of a Saoshyant, or Saviour, from his

own race, who should accomplish the *frashô-kereti*, the *παλιγγενεσία*, regeneration, of the world. And we say the Saoshyant has indeed come, and that Parseeism in a manner worthy of itself acknowledged Him when the star-led wizards knelt to the Babe of Bethlehem. May the day soon come when all the world's hoary faiths, each with its own treasure of truth, greater or less, shall thus come and lay them at the feet of Him who is God's final and perfect revelation unto man!

Recent Foreign Theology.

The Qualifications of an Old Testament Prophet.

THERE is the ring of genuine enthusiasm in the words with which Cornill closes his short series of lectures entitled *Der Israelitische Prophetismus*: 'Israelite prophecy is the Mary who gave birth to Christianity, and the Christian Church has found no better designation of her Founder's pilgrimage on earth than in speaking of it as His Prophetic Office. Even to this day the effects of prophecy are felt as far as the influence of Christianity extends. And if Amos, the very oldest of the literary prophets, speaks of prophecy as the most splendid of God's gifts, the history of twenty-five centuries has but confirmed the assertion. The history of the whole human race has produced nothing which can be at all compared with prophecy in Israel; by its means Israel became the prophet of mankind. May it never be forgotten that mankind owes its noblest and most precious possession to Israel and Israelite prophecy!'

The writer of this peroration has treated his theme throughout in the spirit thus warmly and worthily expressed. His lectures bring home to us afresh the immense importance of the part played in the history of religion by the goodly fellowship of the prophets.

And yet they leave behind a sense of something lacking. Cornill did not reach the heart of the subject. We are grateful for what he says, but we wish he had gone on to explain what it was that enabled the holy men of old to become such

mighty forces in the affairs of Israel and the world. 'The prophet,' he says, 'has the faculty of recognizing God in history. When catastrophes are in the air, he feels it. Then he stands on the watchtower and looks out for the signs of the times, in order to point them out to his people and indicate the right way which will lead safely through the catastrophes. But the prophet is also the incarnate conscience of the people, feeling and bringing to light everything that is corrupt in them and displeasing to God. . . . This is the prophet of Israel in his true nature and deepest significance—a man who has the faculty of looking on things temporal from eternal standpoints, who discerns God's working everywhere, and, as the embodied voice of God, can point out the Divine plan to his contemporaries and lead them according to God's will.' Leaving aside for the present the question whether we find here a complete account of the prophet's *work*, we must needs confess that we desiderate a fuller account of the faculties and endowments without which he could not have done his work.

This is the subject to which Professor Giesebrecht addressed himself in an exceedingly interesting essay on *Grundlinien für die Berufsbegabung der Alttestamentlichen Propheten*, published in the *Greifswalder Studien* in 1895. He has returned to it, with very good effect, in a monograph called *Die Berufsbegabung der Alttestamentlichen Propheten*. His results may be summarized under three heads.

1. The men who were called to this great office were possessed of a natural gift which predisposed them towards it. The Egyptian proverb says, 'I