

played in expressing, and in some cases moulding, the national Messianic hopes

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The Zodia, or the Cherubim in the Bible and the Cherubim in the Sky, by E. M. SMITH (Elliot Stock, London, 1906), is a book which, with its charts of the constellations, at first sight attracts us with a promise of scientific investigation; but in the first few pages we are plunged into a species of popular theology, recommended by much inconsequent reasoning. The author has read many books on Assyriology, and marked many resemblances between Bible facts and facts of astronomy and the calendar, but he has framed an erroneous theory to account for them. The 'coincidences' could not all be sustained; though many of them must be admitted. So early a writer as Hippolytus sought to refute the heresy that the Bible stories are astral allegories (p. 84). Our author believes that the story of the Fall is written on the sky (p. 196). The Eden story seems to be taken literally; Adam, Noah, Abraham, are accorded a real human existence; a literal Deluge is not called in question. Yet the early civilization of Egypt is accepted; and 3800 A. D. as the date of Sargon of Agadè; and the still more ancient records of Babylonia. The author believes that there was a primitive revelation, from which both Genesis and some of the Chaldean writings draw their inspiration; and that all human history follows a plan sketched by the finger of God in the Zodiac first of all.

The theory of the book is erroneous and fantastic. What then is the explanation of the coincidences or the frequent astral reference of Scripture phrase and illustration? It must be sought in the ancient background of thought against which the Scripture narrative is projected. There had been a worship in which the ritual marked the seasons of the year; the regularity of Nature revealed the will of heaven, time was measured out to men by stars and sun; the sun was lord of the year and representative of Deity. The full Zodiac was the full year of four quarters; and the cherubim united four in one to represent the deity. The worshippers came into relation with the signs, and the sons of Jacob became associated with the Bull, the Lion, &c. After long time the Ram sign displaced the Bull, through the precession of the equinoxes; and the ram of the flock assumed a deeper symbolic meaning in ritual sacrifice. We might soon get upon the track, and recover so much of the ancient background of thought as would serve to give truer definition and meaning to Bible records.

The constellation names and figures are so old that their origin is unknown ; but we must conceive of very early astronomers devising them, not of angels unrolling a prophetic scroll.

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Other books bearing on Old Testament study received since our last Chronicle are (1) *The Papal Commission and the Pentateuch* (Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1906), two letters by Dr C. A. Briggs and Baron F. Von Hügel, in which these two distinguished scholars express their opinion of what is commonly regarded as the obscurantist policy of the Vatican in regard to Biblical study :—a concise and careful statement of high value as to facts and methods of investigation ; (2) *Historic Notes on the Books of the Old and New Testaments* by Samuel Sharpe (Elliot Stock, London, 1907), originally published in 1858 and republished now, with the claim that it foreshadowed ‘many of the modern conclusions as to the historic facts of the Bible history’ ; (3) *Old Testament Miracles in the light of the Gospel*, by A. A. Brockington, with an introductory note by the Bishop of Gloucester (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1907), the aim of which is to shew that the miracles of the Old Testament cease to be ‘difficulties’ if they are brought into close connexion with the history of the New Testament and regarded as ‘teaching signs’, the Gospel sign being the ‘distilled essence’ of the Old Testament sign ; (4) *Psalmi Poenitentiales*, by A. Ward (C. North, the Blackheath Press, London, 1906), a short exposition verse by verse of the meaning of these seven psalms ; (5) *The Book of Esther*, with introduction and notes, by the Rev. A. W. Streane, D.D. (University Press, Cambridge, 1907)—a welcome addition to the series ‘The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges’ ; (6) *Bible Lessons for Schools : Genesis*, by E. M. Knox (Macmillan & Co., London, 1907)—each lesson containing the story of one or more chapters of Genesis, with the moral and spiritual truths to be deduced from them ; (7) *The People’s Psalter with Cathedral Pointing*, by the Rev. G. H. S. Walpole (Elliot Stock, London, 1907), which may be mentioned here because of the great value of the headings and divisions of the Psalms as aids to the true understanding of them, admirably fulfilling the purpose of the book as originally published, without pointing, in 1903.

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