

TWO ESSAYS

AS SUPPLEMENTS

TO

THE ARIAN WITNESS

HY

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INTRODUCTION.



It is now over four years since the "*Arian Witness*" was published. It was, by almost all reviewers, called a "*curious book*"—not excepting the one hostile critic to be presently mentioned in passing. With that exception, a favourable but discriminate notice was taken by all who wrote anything on the subject. The work having been partly historical and partly theological, there was no demurrer, as far as I have observed, to the latter portion, though qualified doubts were expressed on the former portion—especially with reference to the interpretation given to the Vedic word "*Asura*." It was said by some that if "*Asura*" could be construed in the sense the "*Arian Witness*" gave to it, a great difficulty would certainly be removed from the task of interpreting the *Rig Veda*. It was thought by others, who appeared satisfied for themselves, that the view taken by the *Arian Witness* was likely to be combated by the holders of the "*solar theory*." These were suggestions worthy of respectful and deliberate consideration, and the present essay is undertaken as the result of that consideration.

Not that the author finds it necessary to *retract* or modify any statement on that subject, but he deems it right in itself, and due to those reviewers, to submit to the public further evidence which he had before thought unnecessary.

The hostile critic, above alluded to, was a writer in the *Academy*, who knew not how to characterize that *curious book*, and yet seemed to think that there was nothing in it worthy of consideration. He did not deign to say anything from which other lessons could be derived than those of greater caution and a more liberal supply of evidence on all points. He sneered

at the idea of "Asurbas" signifying a *residence* of Assura, because "bas" in Assyrian meant "exists." I never pretended to be an Assyrian scholar. I always referred to my authority in everything I brought forward. And, although "bas" means to *exist* (or, as Norris gives it, *to be*) yet the Sanskrit "vas" which currently means to *reside*, is also the root of "vastu" or *substance*—i. e., a really *existing* thing, and therefore it may be supposed to involve the radical meaning of the word in Assyrian.*

The same critic also thought that the very mention of the identification of the Vedic Asura with the Assyrian Asur (of which the Arian Witness was guilty) would prove an effectual *Coup-de-grace*, after which the book *could require no further comment*. On this point, however, the *Arian Witness* had not wandered much further from the beaten path than the learned professors Weber and Haug, whose eminence as scholars is universally acknowledged. I find in Dr. Mann's translation of Weber's *History of Indian Literature* that he had identified "Kavya Usana" and Ahi Dása or Vaitra of the Veda, with "Kava Us" and Azis Dahaka of the Zend, respectively, the former two having been Vedic Asuras, and of the latter two, the first was an Iranian and the second an Assyrian—for it must be remembered that the Azis Dahaka was "in the regions of Bawu (Babylon.)"†

And Professor Haug says: "We derive one important historical fact from the legends on the fight between the ancient Indians (represented by the Devas) and the Iranians (represented by the Asuras, contained in the name Ahura-Muzda=Ormuz)

* Professor Max Müller says (*Hibbert Lectures*) with reference to "Vas, to all" that it still lingers on in the English "I was." I cannot say my imagination can soar so high, but I adduce this only as a testimony to the idea of *being* or *existence* inhering in the root.

† Weber's *History of the Indian Literature*, p. 86. Bleeker's *Zendavesta*, p. 34.

which took place long before the time of the composition of the Brahamanas, that is, before the 12th century, B. C.* If this stride be allowed, from the Punjab to Persia, then the other step to the banks of the Euphrates could scarcely be held more daring, or chargeable with culpable temerity. But I will not further anticipate the detailed evidence in the following Essay on this point.

Another *stroke of grace* consisted, in my critic's opinion, in his simple reference with a note of admiration to a suggestion of the *Arian Witness* that the Greek *κρυξ* was derived from *κρυς*. In this instance the Nemesis against the Arian Witness was provoked by its own fault—its non-acknowledgment of debt due to Hesychius from whom that etymological suggestion was derived. The non-acknowledgment itself was, however, owing to the supposition that every Greek scholar must be aware of the fact. Lexicographers like Scapula, Schrevelius, Donnegan had all accepted the Byzantine's etymology and assigned the same root to that word, and the etymology itself may claim the support of *analogy* with Sanskrit,—in which *gū* means *speech*.

The basis of the argument in the historical portion of the Arian Witness was the suggested interpretation of the word Asura. If that interpretation can be proved to be wrong, the whole argument must receive a severe, if not an irrecoverable shock. It was the first link in the chain which connected the Indian Arians with events in Western Asia. The present essay is intended to strengthen that link by more detailed evidence from the Rig Veda and the Zend Avesta.

It is only just to Bochart to add that his argument on the identity of the "Hana" of Scripture with the Median "Aia" or Aia, cannot be affected by any failure in the interpretation of

* *Introduction to the Aitareya Brahmaṇa*.

the word Asura. The inherent strength of that argument has been very singularly corroborated by numerous passages in the Zend Avesta. It can *require* no further confirmation. It will always stand on its own independent basis as an indisputable proof of the original home of the Arian Family.

I have said that there has been no demerit to the second or the theological portion of the Arian Witness. Recently however there has been a curious discussion on a question originally mooted in that portion of the book. A Reverend divine preaching to a congregation of educated Hindu gentlemen in Calcutta last year, alluded to certain Vedic texts, cited in that work, on the self sacrifice of "Creation's Lord," for the salvation of the world, and concluded therefrom that no one could be a "true Hindu without being a true Christian." This, though not protested against by the Hindu gentlemen themselves, provoked a newspaper controversy on the part, seemingly, of two classes of Christian thinkers. One party (whether humourously or seriously it is impossible to determine) remarked that the *Jesuits were right then!* The other party thought that it would be contrary to Scripture to hold that any heathen Sastri could have inculcated doctrines which composed the sacred mysteries of the Christian Faith. It is only just and fair that as the Arian Witness had given occasion for that discussion, something should now be said also on the theological portion of the work by way of a *second* Supplementary Essay.

The first argument, however, may be disposed of at once. The *Reductio ad absurdum* by an allusion to the Jesuits was probably meant to operate as an intimidation or a warning. What the Jesuits of Madura had done, I do not profess to know. If, citing Vedic passages, such as are found in the *Arian Witness*, they had endeavoured to make out that Christian principles were not a *strange religion* to India whose most sacred records bore them out, then they were indeed

right. But if they actually *forged* a Veda according to the charge preferred against them, then they *could not be right*, notwithstanding the authentic passages, cited in the *Arian Witness*, from editions of the Vedas by Max Muller in England, Weber in Germany, Haug in Bombay, and by the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. In ignorance of what the Jesuits had actually done and in the presence of such extraordinary passages in the genuine Vedas, no one can be so great a pessimist as to hold as an article of faith that the Jesuits *must have been wrong* at Madura, or that whatever approaches to their reported Missionary policy must involve a *Reductio ad absurdum*.

CALCUTTA,
7 Chowringhee Lane, Easter, 1880 }

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SUPPLEMENTARY ESSAY I.



THE Rigveda Sanhita commences with the suggestion of a most important inquiry, which has however been generally overlooked by the very scholars to whom the world is indebted for the publication of the Vedas. If it were not considered over-weening impertinence on our part, we should say that after the laborious work of editing those bulky volumes, with careful collation of manuscripts and critical consideration of all points, bearing on the same, the world could not expect from the editors themselves a running commentary on all passages, which may appear pregnant with important but unknown facts. We do not therefore intend the slightest disrespect to those great men to whom we owe the gigantic feat of recovering the Indian Vedas from the obscurity in which they had so long reposed. Our only apology for the above remark is that some of them have volunteered their labours as expositors and commentators also, and thereby virtually challenged public criticism.

Hence it must be confessed that Professor Weber is an honourable exception. Though not formally undertaking the inquiry we are now alluding to—his *History of Indian Literature* affords much assistance for arriving at a satisfactory solution of our problems.

Many of his remarks involve the very considerations we are here suggesting. Our only regret is that Professor Weber has not extended his inquiry in further detail.

IN the first Hymn of the Rigveda, after expressing his reverence for Fire as "the foremost minister of Sacrifice," the Hymnist declares that "Agni was an object of reverence with the ancient Rishis, and is so with the moderns too." The questions arising from this pregnant sentence have not received the attention, nor been met with the critical discussion, such as they deserved in the investigation of Arian ancient history. Sáyanácharya has answered those questions in the only way in which a learned Brahmin of his time could have answered them from Indian sources alone. His answer is highly creditable to his Vedic research, considering the age, and the circumstances under which he wrote. He did not and could not have known of outlandish connections with the Veda, nor of foreign facts and events on which his own answers may now throw considerable light. He and his contemporaries were perfectly innocent of the "invaluable information" (as Professor Weber justly calls it) which the Rigveda furnishes on the antiquities of Western Asia.

BUT for learned Scholars, for eminent antiquarians and historians, tamely to accept the answer without calculating its scope, with the light of foreign literature, and the ulterior considerations which it demanded, is strange indeed. Not that those scholars had entertained such

sacred veneration for Sayana's dicta as to hesitate in either questioning or departing from his commentary. In trivial matters, in matters of mere literary taste, in puerile and objectless criticisms of words, phrases and sentences, preferring other possible meanings or syntactical connexions, most foreign scholars have shown but little deference to the Brahmin commentator. But in matters of grave importance, in matters involving facts and events, calculated to shed light on the *pre-emigration history of the Indo-Arian family*, nothing has been attempted in the way of correcting or supplementing the secluded Brahmin's natural errors and shortcomings—perhaps with the single exception of a philological device by which it was suggested that the dog *Saramā* was no other than *Helena* queen of Sparta, and that the lofty stronghold styled “Vilu” was the same as the “Ilion” of Homer !

SAYANA thus answers the questions raised in the 2nd verse of the Rigveda ; “ Bhrigu Angiras and others” were meant by “the ancient Rishis” in the sentence referred to. The answer is indisputably correct in itself, but it involves considerations which cannot be done justice to, without the settlement of several other somewhat intricate problems.

Who were Bhrigu, Angiras, and others ? What is known of their doings, their surroundings, their pedigree and race ? When and where did Fire-worship originally commence, and what was the purport of that worship ?

It is not without extreme diffidence that we have attempted to answer these questions. But we rely on the readers' unbiassed judgment on what may at first sight appear to them as novelties. Of Angiras, we need not say much here, beyond what will necessarily ooze from his connection with Bhrigu, whose personality we shall first deal with.

THIS ancient Rishi is reputed to have been the son of Varuna. He appears with the surname of Váruni, in the Sarvánukrama, as the Author of Hymn IX. 65, and he is said to have ushered the worship of Fire in the world at large. "To him, Matariswa (the god of Wind) presented the Fire which is produced by the concussion of two sticks" (Rigveda I. 60,1). He had received spiritual gifts from Indra which afterwards became proverbial in supplications addressed to that deity (R. v. VII. 3, 9). Bhrigu was joined with Manu and Angiras as models for Fire-worshippers (R. v. VIII. 43, 13). Sacrificers looked up to his example for their own initiation in the performance of the sacred rites and ceremonies (I. 71, 4). He was the acknowledged guide of human devotion, and the authorized director of human morals for countless ages after his death.

His sons and descendants also proved worthy of their parentage, and received the homage of mankind as eminent preceptors of religious dogmas, and as high examples of piety and godliness. To them is posterity indebted for the enjoyment of all its reli-

gious privileges. It was the Bhrigus that had introduced the domestic worship of Agni by establishing and illuminating Fire, "in human houses as a dear treasure for the benefit of men and as an excellent guest and inviter for the benefit of the gods." (I. 58, 6. X. 122, 5). It was the Bhrigus who surrounded Indra with their praises as the sun surrounds the world with his rays. (VIII. 3, 16). To them were pious worshippers indebted for forms of acceptable doxologies by following which others might expect similar blessings (VIII. 6, 18). It was the devout and resplendent Bhrigus who had struck out Fire for the domestic worship of men, to be the guest and common lord of all households, to convey as a father their invocations and supplications to the immortals on high (I. 127, 7, 8)*. It was again the same Bhrigus who had by the strength of the world established Agni on the Navel of the earth—the same Agni who reigns in splendour like Varuna himself (I. 43, 4).

THE sons of Bhrigu not only established Fire and promoted the celebration of sacrificial ceremonies, but also evinced exemplary zeal in the destruction of all disturbers of sacred rites, whether men or beasts. And thus an ardent Hymnist calls upon all worshippers to do likewise, and never by any means to allow *a dog*, to contaminate such ceremonies by even hearing the words of

* This idea amicably corresponds with a passage in Yasna XVI. 69 of the Zendavesta. "The fire, the master over all houses, created by Mazda, the son of Ahura Mazda, praise wo."

prayers, but to destroy the noxious animal after the example of the Bhrigus who had killed the impious Makha, the notorious obstructor of those religious observances.* The Indo-Arians, our primitive fathers, had in fine placed their consciences at the disposal of the Bhrigus and their companions, so that whatever they said and whatever they did became the national law and the national rule of life. "Angiras Atharvan and the Bhrigus were devout worshippers and sacrificers, and we remain in their excellent track" (X. 149, 6).

ALL these facts, myths or ideas, that we have been labouring to lay before our readers may be said to be involved in Sayana's answer, that Bhrigu, Angiras and others were our pristine Rishis, within the meaning of the 2nd Rik. They prove the correctness of that answer beyond the reach of controversy. They show it was not a mere hypothesis which the commentator had risked, but that he had collected facts and traditions with great labour and industry from the Rig-veda itself, which place Bhrigu in a peculiarly eminent position as our hoary ancestor and sage, who gave us our law and supplied us with a light which will never be extinguished. But we shall now refer to a consideration not necessarily or apparently involved in Sayana's answer, and will require a patient investigation.

* R v IX. 101, 13 The Zendavesta thus notices a noxious animal, the dog Madhaka: "The wicked who had defiled themselves with corpses are the most helpful to the dog Madhaka" Vendidad VII 67.

It is scarcely necessary to remind the Indian reader that the concurrent testimony of all Hindu Sastras and all Hindu traditions recognizes in Bhrigu, the father of "Asura-gurus," such as Sukra, Usanā Kavi and others, who are all described as Bhargavas or sons of Bhrigu. We shall here consider the actual breadth of this idea, the extent of its meaning, and its verifiable character—how far it is provable from authorized texts of Sastras, and to what extent it may assist in the correct interpretation of the Rigveda. In the first place then referring to X. 46, 2, we find that the Bhrigus who had originated Fire-worship by the discovery and recovery of Agni, are identified with the "Ausijas," or, in other words, that they were Ausija Bhrigus—or Ausija-Bhargavas. And as Ausija is a patronymic from Usij or Usik, the Bhrigus who occupied the eminent position, we have already described, in the estimation of the Vedic Arians, were no other than descendants of Usij, who must have been a son of Bhrigu, as *his* descendants were identified with the descendants of Bhrigu.

BEFORE proceeding further we must direct the attention of the reader to the reputed pedigree of Bhrigu, and to the position of his father Varuna himself, in the very Sastras, to which we are indebted for the conception of that pedigree. In two texts at least of the Rigveda, Varuna appears under the name of Asura-pracheta or Asura-Viswaveda, as the Creator of the Heavens and the earth, the Forgiver of Sins, the promoter

of righteousness, and the adversary of "Nirriti" (called *Pápa devatá* by the Commentator), the spirit of sin or evil.

IN order to do justice to these two texts of the Rigveda, reference becomes necessary to the Zend Avesta, the intimate relation of which to Vedic literature we shall afterwards demonstrate in special detail. In the 19th Fargard of the Vendidad, Ormus, the supreme principle of good in the Zoroasterian system, thus describes himself: "Ahura-nama Ahmi." "Mazda-nama Ahmi." Harlez translates these sentences thus: "Je m'appelle Ahura le maître" "Je m'appelle Mazda le sage." It is well known that the Zendic *h* stands for the sanscrit *s*, and that Ahura, sancritized, is Asura. The name "Ahura Mazda," which, in Zoroaster's teaching, is the name of the Supreme principle of good, to whom is attributed the creation of the Heavens, means, as Harlez renders it, "le maître, le sage," the *wise or knowing Lord*. And this is actually the meaning of Asura-pracheta or Asura-viswaveda in the texts of the Rigveda. If now we consider the opposite principle of evil or sin, we shall find the same parallel between the Zend Avesta and the Veda. Anro-Mainus, means, the spirit of evil or sin. So does Nirriti (or unrighteousness personified) in the Veda. Anro-Mainus is further described as the "Daevanam Daevo"—the deity of Devas, *i. e.*, (in Zoroasterian Vocabulary) of *evil spirits*. The same is the representation of Nirriti, "Papa-devata," the deity of sin, or Rakshas-devata, the deity of Demons.

Now in the Rigveda I. 24, Varuna is accosted as follows : "King Varuna has made a high road for the sun to go over." "Do thou bind at a distance behind us Nirriti, the unrighteous spirit, and release us from any sin we may have committed. Remaining with us, O thou wise Asura and king ! loosen our sins."

THE other text is the initial Verse of the 8th Mandala, Sukta 42. "The all knowing Asura established the Heavens and fixed the limits of the Earth. He sat as the supreme ruler of all Worlds. These were the works of Varuna."

Is it possible here to suppress the intuitive suggestion that the "Asura-pracheta" and the "Asura Viswa-veda" of the Veda, are only sanscritised names of the same character in the Zend, who, as we have seen, declared himself to be by name "Ahura" (Lord) and "Mazda" (sage)—and that the conception of Nirriti in the Veda is identical with that of Anro-Mainus in the Zend. I have only to add here that Harlez's rendering of Ahura by "Maître" and of Mazda by "Sage" precisely corresponds with the Gujrati rendering of the Desturs, or Zoroastrian doctors of Bombay, for the words Ahura and Mazda respectively. Varuna sustains the character of an "Asura" likewise in II. 27, 10, and 28, 17, and "Asura-prachetas" (Sage Lord) is repeated in IV. 53, 1.

IN another text again of the Rigveda (X. 177, 1.) Asura stands for the Supreme spirit "by whose máyá,

or mysterious influence, wise men obtain a mental vision of the Sun, as if that celestial luminary were actually within their hearts." "Asura" stands also as an appellative for Prajapati or Creation's Lord.

MOREOVER, it is well-known that Mitra and Varuna are constantly linked together in the Rigveda. Varuna appears with Mitra as the "devata" or the party addressed in X. 132, and he is there accosted in the 4th Verso of that Hymn as "Asura". He is again coupled with Mitra in the dual number, and the pair is characterised as "Asurau" in the dual. Now the Zendavesta also couples Ahura and Mithra (Yasna I. 34, III. 48, IV. 39, VI. 36,) and, vice-versa, Mithra and Ahura (*Mithryasht.* 145, *Mihr-Nyayis*, 3,) in all which places Ahura evidently represents the Varuna of the Veda, especially as sometimes the pair is "Ahura-mazda and Mithra" (Yasna I. 35).

THE filiation of Bhrigu from Varuna, thus distinguished by an appellative which, the Veda like the Zendavesta, regarded as supremely divine, was presumably the reason for which the sons of Bhrigu were in Indian tradition held to be Asura-gurus, i. e., preceptors or fathers of Asuras. The signification of Asura as an appellative of Varuna was doubtless that of a divine being. This would appear still clearer from the fact that all the Vedic gods have shared the same title, not excepting even goddesses who were called Asurá in the feminine, as "Asurayai Sarasvatyai" (Rg.veda VII. 96,1). But when the descendants of Bhrigu were call-

ed Assura-gurus, it was doubtless as an honourable human distinction conferred on their sons or disciples, because of their descent from Varuna, "the all knowing Asura."

AND this leads us to enquire into the personality of the sons of Bhrigu, the son of Varuna, the Highest of Asuras. The most prominent person that claims our attention here is Kavi. The name itself is exceedingly remarkable. The universal application of the term in our days to a poet or learned man, is probably owing to the person whom it denoted in the age we are speaking of, *viz.* "Kavir-Bhargava." He appears not only as the author of numerous Hymns in the Rigveda, but as the progenitor of a highly distinguished tribe, which did honor to the epithet of "Asura," accorded to their primitive ancestor Varuna. The popular lexicons themselves have perpetuated his name as an Asura-guru, *i.e.*, father or preceptor of Asuras. His sons enjoy equal celebrity in the Vedas. We have a "Kavya", or son of Kavi, as an author of Vedic Hymns. We have an Usaná, a son of Kavi, also a great writer of Hymns, and not only playing an important part in the drama of the Rigveda, but also honoured in later ages as an Asura-guru of the highest position by all Indian authorities. Of another branch sprung from Bhrigu, we have a Vena, recognized as an Asura in the Veda itself, and himself the father of a new tribe. He seems from his name and the description of his handsome bright appearance to have been the regent of the Planet *Venus*—usually called

“Suk” (Sukra) in Indian records. We have also a Vena, son of Vena, noticed in the Rigveda. We have an Ila, a son of Bhrigu, who wrote (or uttered) a Hymn of the Rigveda. We have a Nema, also an utterer of Vedic Hymns, noted as a son of Bhrigu. We have again a Kava who appears perhaps under another name for the Kavi or Kavya already mentioned. We have an Usij or rather Usik, who was inferentially a son of Bhrigu, because the Bhrigus who had introduced Fire-worship are indentified with the Ausijas, or sons of Usik.

ALL these characters were according to the concurrent testimonies of the Vedas and other Indian Sastras Asura-gurus. But who were the Asuras? This question has been virtually answered in part. All the gods were Asuras. Varuna was the all-knowing Asura, by whom the heavens were established and the boundaries of the Earth measured and fixed. Prajapati, Creation's Lord, was an Asura. The Supreme being was an Asura. Indra was an Asura. The Maruts were Asuras. Twashtri was an Asura. Mitra was an Asura. Rudra was an Asura. Agni was an Asura, Vayu was an Asura. Pushan was an Asura. Savita was an Asura. Parjanya was an Asura. The sacrificial priests were also Asuras. In fine, Deva and Asura were synonymous expressions in a multitude of texts.*

* The Bombay Vedaithayats translate the word Asura as “God” in Rv. I. 24. The original texts in support of these allegations will all be found in the *Asura Witness*.

It may here be asked, do not the Vedas—do not the Sastras—does not the whole nation consider the Asuras as ungodly demons, ghastly giants,—unholy creatures, wallowing in impurities, and delighting in cruelty lust and impiety? This is a very fair question. It is perfectly true that portions of the Rigveda itself concur with the bulk of other Sastras and the unanimous sentiment of the Hindu community in placing Asuras on the same level as other impure spirits—the Yakshas, the Rakshases and the Pisachas. The Rigveda which adores Indra as an Asura also sings his praises as the *destroyer of Asuras*. The same gods who themselves delighted in the appellation of “Asuras,” whose wives were honoured by the same title, inflected in the feminine gender, were afterwards translated to Heaven by encompassing the destruction of Asuras. The same term Asura, which as we have seen stood for gods, goddesses, and priests, is elsewhere found in the sense of *adeva*, which is synonymous with the Zend *Vi-daeva*, or opposed to Daevas (gods). The same Veda which spoke of the Asuras as Celestial beings, supplied its reader also with the Mantras by means of which Devas overcame Asuras. Here we find ourselves in a literary maze from which no one, as far as our knowledge and information extend, has yet made a rational attempt at an escapade. Sayana had laboured to explain away all texts which impart a divine signification to the term. But the Gordian knot has been found too hard for his steel. Such violence to ordinary terms and ordinary rules of interpretation might perhaps answer

well in the case of a few texts as against a multitude of texts to the contrary. Even the orthodox editors of the *Vedarthayatna* has rendered the word differently from Sayana's interpretation in R.v. I. 24.

BUT as far as the Rigveda is concerned, the texts which are condemnatory of Asuras as impure and ungodly, are far less in number than those which recognize the term as applicable to gods and priests. If any subtle device of interpretation had become absolutely necessary for reconciling the two sets of contradictory representations of Asuras, then, as far as regarded the Rigveda, the texts which are condemnatory of Asuras, being but few in number, would have to make way for the more numerous texts which attach a divine character to them. But even then one would have to account for the essential conflict visible, between the Rigveda on the one side, and all other Sastras, with the national sentiment to boot, arrayed on the other side. A patched up reconciliation between the two sets of Rik texts, by violence to the natural signification of one or other of the conflicting sets, must therefore be worse than useless. We require some rule of interpretation which will offer violence to no words or phrases, and at the same time produce harmony between the conflicting texts themselves, and also promote reconciliation between the Rigveda itself, and the other Sastras and the popular sentiment.

WE shall presently consider whether such a happy rule can be available or not. Meanwhile we shall

prosecute our inquiry on other uses of the word "Asura."

WE have seen that the word has on the one hand been applied to the Supremo Being, to the opponent of the evil genius of sin, to the Creator, and to all the gods in rotation, and on the other hand to creatures antagonistic to the gods and opposed to all religious ceremonies and pious acts. And we also find the term applied as an honorific human title. The priests are called Asuras in a good sense. So that the word, as used in the Rigveda, stands for the Supreme Being, the Creator, the opponent of the genius of Sin (Pápa devata), for a title of distinction among ministers of God, and also as an epithet for evil spirits and for all obstructors of religious rites and ceremonies.

THIS presents a fresh difficulty which has to be explained. The term has been used commonly for etherial beings both good and bad, and also for terrestrial beings of opposite characters. Few words in any language can be found applicable in such a variety of diverse and conflicting senses. The gravity of the question involved in the explication of such a remarkable term, found in countless texts in all parts of the Rigveda, appears to have been overlooked by translators and commentators.

Now an escape from all these difficulties, a reconciliation of all the conflicting texts to which we have alluded, and the establishment of harmony be-

tween the Rigveda and other Sastras and the popular sentiment itself, are perfectly feasible, if only we practically remember what we theoretically allow that the Indo-Arians were not the aborigines of India like the savage hill men, but had probably passed through many vicissitudes of fortune, and long remained in intimate relationship with the Persians in other parts of Asia, before they crossed the Indus and settled in the Punjab. From their post-emigration doings, we may easily imagine the nature of their ante-emigration history. Theirs could not have been a life of idleness or indolence. They were far too much elevated above the listlessness of a savage existence, far too imaginative, far too active in their intellectual and physical powers, to have lived like their flocks and herds, doing nothing, and leaving nothing behind for the historian and the poet's occupation.*. Historians perhaps they had none, sculpture perhaps they had considered a dull and unmanly art, but poets and bards they had as numerous as the sands on the Seashore. Poetry can indeed never be fully depended upon for the accuracy of its narratives. Poetry despised the mere reporter's task. Poetry must produce ideas and

* According to Professor Weber, the Sanhita of the Rigveda, or at least its major portion, was composed by our Arian ancestors prior to their emigration to India. It comprises "the store of songs which the Hindus brought with them from their ancient homes." He also says: "The hymns of the Rik contain sufficient evidence of their antiquity in the invaluable information which they furnish regarding the origin and gradual development of two cycles of epic legend, the Persian and the Indian." *History of Indian Literature* p. 36.

images of its own. But it must still depend on the fuel of facts to feed the fire of its imagination, and the smoke of that fire must betray its fuel. Amid the glowing images by which its ideas are illuminated, we can often detect facts, storn facts, however mixed up with assemblages of dazzling descriptions and luminous fictions. The very genesis of an idea will often supply a clue to the facts which produced it.

If then the Indo-Arians and the Perso-Arians (or Iranians) once lived on common ground as cognate families or cousins german, what could be a more natural inference than that the “Asura pracheta” or “Asura-Viswaveda” of the one branch, was but the translation of the Ahura-Mazda of the other branch, and that the word Ahura which the one used in a divine sense, would become a household word in the other branch in the same sense, though in its own way of spelling and pronouncing the term, by the change of *h* into *s*—a change of which numerous indisputable instances are always ready at hand. Witness *hapta* and *sapta*—*ahmi* (Zend) and *asmi*—*hurd* and *surá*—*homa* and *soma*—*Hindu* and *Sindhu*—*Husra*—*va* and *Susra*—*Hulra* and *Sukra*—*kahmai* and *kasmai*—*ahmai* and *asmai*.

This fact itself is a sufficient explanation of the riddle which had puzzled modern critics no less than Sayana himself, and on account of which the most unnatural rules of interpretation had been resorted to. They could not understand how gods could be called

Asuras. And yet they could understand, in fact they knew well, that the Indians had long lived with the Iranians among whom the Supreme Being himself was called the *all knowing Ahura* or Asura. This reflection will perhaps suffice for the comprehension of the divine sense in which the word is used in the Rigveda. But then the opposite question still stares us in the face. Does not this interpretation of the term prove too much? If Asura means god, why then should it be applied to *evil spirits* also? It must be confessed that as far as the Rigveda is concerned, this question is more pertinent than the question of the divine sense of Asura—for here it is used far more frequently in a divine than in a diabolical sense. But in considering this question, we must remember what progress we may have already made in our discussion. We have arrived at the conclusion that the Indo-Arians had at one time mingled with the Iranians, and had, in what we may now call the *Iranian land*, learnt to regard Asura as a sacred term expressive of divinity. And in undertaking to investigate its opposite sense, we must advance a step further and review the *derivation* of the word itself.

THE Zendavesta uses the word in the sense of God and Lord or Master. Whence could it have derived it? To derive it from "*as*" to *be* or "*as*" to *cast* is to burke the question. For Asuras *live*, just as other members of the animated creation also live, and Asuras may *cast a dart* or *drive away* something evil, just as any other person may do the same. But we may fairly remark that the Zoroasterians or Persians were in-

cluded in the Assyrian or Babylonian empire before the capture of Babylon by Cyrus the elder. And it is not a far-fetched theory to suppose that they would, at that time, have naturally adopted many words in the same sense in which they were used in the empire itself. How easily, and how as a matter of course, have we, Indians, adopted terms from our successive rulers, the Mahometans and the English, which are foreign to our own language, and of which our pristine ancestors knew nothing. Could there be anything unnatural—anything extraordinary—anything revolting to common sense in the theory of the adoption by Zoroasterians of words current in the empire to which they were then subject, and within the boundaries of which they lived? In the Assyrian empire “Asur” was a household word used exactly in the sense in which we find it in the *Zendavesta*. It was used in the sense of God, Lord or Master. According to Assyrian records, Assur was a designation for the Supreme God, the king of the Gods, the ordinary gods, and the nobles and princes of the empire. Unless any reason could be shown to the contrary, it would not be an *unnatural* inference that the Zoroasterians had accepted the term Ahura from the Assyrians, and applied it to their supreme divinity with the addition of the attributive “Mazda,” to express their idea of the greatness and omniscience of the Deity. And the Indo-Arians, living side by side with the Persians, might also have accepted the term in the same sense, and (as we have seen in numerous texts of the *Rigveda*) applied it in its most august sense to Varuna, and in its

ordinary sense to all their gods, goddesses, and ministers of sacrificial ceremonies.

Now in investigating the diabolical sense of the term, we must again remember that "Assur" also meant *Assyrian*, and the *Assyrian nation* as the subjects of Assur. And "Ahuri" is in the same way found in the *Zendavesta* to indicate the belongings of Ahura Madza.

THE Persians and Indo-Arians having once lived under the yoke of Assyria (Assur) might have entertained a strong feeling of hatred to the people of Assur. The Assyrian records themselves bear testimony to the cruelties, outrages, and barbarities, boastingly practised by Assyrian kings against their conquered nations. There can be nothing strange in the supposition that the Indo-Arians had bitter recollections of such barbarities. Perhaps some of the hostilities mentioned in the *Vedas* as between gods and Asuras were neither entirely mythical nor allegorical, but traditional reminiscences of actual encounters with Assyrians during their wanderings in Asia and before the Indian immigration. And it is more than probable that such encounters had at times also taken place with the Zoroastrian Ahuri—the followers of Ahura-Mazda and their own "quasi-brethren." For we find in the *Zendavesta* that "the Daovas," by which the leaders of the Indo-Arians were doubtless meant, were looked upon with still greater hatred by the Zoroastrians than the Asuras could have been by the Indians. In his religious and devotional exercises,

the pious Zoroastrian has to say: "I profess myself as a Mazda-yasnian, a follower of Zoroastra, an adversary of the Daevas, a worshipper of Ahura (Yasna 1. 65.) "Thou wert created (O Zarathustra) against the Daevas, devoted to the belief in Ahura" (*Ibid* IX. 43,) "I deny to the Daevas, to those possessed with Daevas, Sorcerers &c.," "I renounce the rules of the Daevas." "I confess myself a follower of Zarathustra, a foe of the Daevas, devoted to the faith of Ahura" (*Ibid* XII. 16, 22, XIV. 7.) So strong indeed was the Iranian feeling of hostility against the Indians that they held the title of one of the principal parts of the Zendavesta (*Vendidad*) to be derived from "*Vi-daeva*," or against the *Daevas*, implying that the work was produced as their great armour against the Daevas, though other parts of the Avesta such as the *Vispered*, the *Yasna*, &c., are also equally hostile to the Daevas.

THE Zoroasterians had a sort of systematic hostility against the Indo-Arians. If a would-be surgeon's skill had to be tested, the trial was to be by *Vivisection*, practised on Daevas, but not on Ahuris. In *Fargard VII.* (94-101). Zoroaster asks—"Creator! when the Mazda-yasnians wish to make themselves physicians, whom shall they first cure, the Daeva-yasnians or the Mazda-yasnians." Then answered Ahura Mazda. "They shall make trial of healing on the Daeva-yasnians before the Mazda-yasnians. If he begins to cut a Daeva-yasnian for the first time, and he dies, if he begins to cut a Daeva-yasnian for the second time and yet he dies, and if he cuts a Daeva-

yasnian a third time and he dies, then is he incapable for ever. The Mazda-yasnians shall not try him afterwards: he shall not cut the Mazda-yasnians, he shall not wound by cutting. If the Mazda-yasnians afterwards try him, if he cuts the Mazda-yasnians, if he wounds them by cutting, then shall he atone for the wound of the wounded (man) with the punishment of the Baodhavasta."

THE Indians it must be acknowledged were more tolerant and more indulgent of the Asuras, as followers of Ahura. Not only, as we have already seen, have they preserved in their sacred records their reverence for the Supreme Deity of the Zoroastrian system, and acknowledged the sanctity of the word "Asura" by applying it to their own gods, goddesses and priests, but they have spoken most respectfully of the Asura-gurus and recognized the merits of many an individual Asura. They have freely acknowledged (in the *Surya-Siddhanta*) that the Science of Astronomy was first revealed by a representative of the Solar divinity to an *Asura* named "Maya." In order to set forth the glory of any pet god, they described him as venerated both by *gods and Asuras*. They thus virtually acknowledged that Asuras formed a part of the Commonwealth of Daeva-yasnianism, and were proud of their votes when any particular object of worship was to be established. They did not despise the co-operation of the Asuras when the Ocean was to be churned, nor did they think it beneath their dignity to outwit their fellow-churners by "the charms of one of

their own females, and through her instrumentality deprive them of the nectar which had been churned.

ALL this shows enmity and hostility indeed, but not that utter detestation which the Avesta professes against Daævas. If the Rigveda calls the Asuras "a-deva" (ungodly), it only echoes the complimentary title of (but too literally) "vi-dæva"—hostile to Dev-as—which the Avesta itself has accorded to the Asuras.

THE Indians have also acknowledged their consanguinity with the Asuras, and not been ashamed to call themselves their juniors. "The Daævas and Asuras were both sons of Prajâpati. The Devas were the younger, the Asuras, the elder."* But as there was mortal enmity between the two, the Devas regarded the Asuras with the same hostile feeling that we often find between *step-brothers*, and actually called them "Bhratrivyas," or quasi-brothers. This word Bhratrivya has become a fossilized evidence of the inveterate enmity once existing between these two branches of the Arian family, and as such, has since got a place in Sanscrit-Lexicons as a Synonyme for *an enemy* !

To the original Zoroasterian principles of *good* and *evil*, the Indians do not seem to have offered any opposition. They had, as we have seen, recognized the one in their "Asura-prachota" and the other in their "Nirriti" or *pâpa-devata*. But probably they

* *Bṛhadaranyaka* pp. 62-69 in the *Biblioth.-Ind.*

shrank back from the extravagant laudation of Zoroaster in which the Iranians indulged, of which the following may be taken for a sampler: "Zarathustra, the lord and master of the whole corporeal world, the Paoiryō-tkaesha, praise we; the most learned of beings, the mightiest of beings, the most shinning of beings, the most majestic of beings, the most praiseworthy of beings, the most worthy of adoration of beings, the most to be satisfied among beings, the most to be praised among beings, who was announced to us as desired, praiseworthy, worthy of adoration for each of the beings which proceeds from the best purity ' *Farvardan-yasht XIII.* 152.

THE Indians appear also to have been scandalized by the homage paid to Vistaspa who, having surrendered his own heart and mind to Zoroaster, attempted, with the usual mushroom-zeal of a new convert, to impose by fire and sword his own plenary faith on all around him: "The Fravashi of Kavi Vistaspa, the pure, praise we; the mighty, whose body is the Manthra, who has mighty weapons, the Ahurian, who with a weapon piercing many, made a broad road for purity: who with a many-piercing weapon announced a broad way for purity—who, as assistance and help, subjected himself to the Zoroastrian Law." (*Farvardin-yasht XIII.* 99.) The Indians recoiled from this "broad way" and prepared themselves to resist "the many-piercing weapon" of Vistaspa.

ZARATHUSTRA (the name being itself an adjective

in the comparative degree, of which the positive would be "Zarathus") appears to be mentioned in the Rik as an Asura Rishi under the name of *Jaruthas*. He is described as a loquacious Demon, fit to be destroyed by Agni, and was afterwards reported as actually consumed by Fire! (R.v. VII. 1, 7 . 9, 6, X. 80, 3.)

AN *odum theologicum* had thus sprung up between the two cognate races. The Indians would not recognize the system of Zoroaster, as it was enforced by Vistaspa. They hurled defiance at him and would on no account submit to his dictum. It was probably Vistaspa whom the Rigveda (I. 122,) calls *Ishtáswa*, and says deridingly, "What can *Ishtaswa*, what can *Ishtarasmi*, do against our vigorous heroes?"

INDIAN commentators say nothing on the personality of either of these rulers. And as *Ishtaswa* was the Sanscrit transliteration of Vistaspa, *Ishtarasmi* was probably a play on the word *Ishtaswa* (*literally*, a *desired horse*), and applied as a satirical epithet for some Indian chief who had deserted to Vistaspa, and who was therefore contemptuously described as the "*desired reins*." The Indians defied both "the desired horse" and the "desired reins" of the Zoroasterians.

BUT notwithstanding this conflict of opinion between the Indians and the Iranians, there were many characters who were held in equal veneration by both parties. This appears most prominently in the case of the vanquisher of their common enemy, celebrated in the Vedas under the name of *Vritra*, and in the Zondavesta

under the title of the *snake-dahaka*. That the Vritra of the Veda corresponded to the *snake-dahaka* of the Avesta, appears from R.v. I. 32, where Vritra is described both as a serpent (Ahi) and is also called "Dasa" Dasa is synonymous with "dahaka" both being derived from "das" or (Zendico) "dah" and signifying *destructive*.*

THIS identity is further manifest from the conqueror being lauded both in the Vedas and the Avesta under the common appellation of the "Destroyer of Vritra" (Vritraghna in Sanscrit, Verethraghna in the Zend.) The common enemy Vritra appears to have been an Assyrian, for according to the Avesta he was plotting the destruction of the Arians in Bawri (Babylon). "To her offered the Azist Dahaka (Sanskritice Ahi Dasa) the destroying serpent, *in the region of Bawri* (Babylon) a hundred male horses &c. Then prayed he her for this favour, "Grant me O good most profitable Ardvisura! that I may make devoid of men all the Kareswas which are seven."

If Vritra, as an *Asura*, belonged to Babylon, the same may be presumed of the Asura Vala, whose lofty fortress on the bank of a large river answers to the lofty citadel of Bel[†] on the Euphrates. The same may also

* Weber identifies the Azi Dahaka in Zend, with Ahi Dasa of the Veda p 36, *History of Indian Literature*.

† *Aban Yasht* 29 — The Zend Azis (for serpent) is Ahi or Ahis in Sanscrit. Generally the Sanscrit *h* is represented by *z* in the Zend, as Zaotira for hotra, Zaota for hota, Zusta for hasta, a/em for aham &c.

‡ Rigveda I 6, 1 ; X. 108 —

be conceived of the Asura Sambara, the son of Kulitara, in a "hundred-gated city,"—curiously corresponding with the "hundred-gated" Babylon, and an Assyrian ally, a son of "Kaliteru." If it be borne in mind that Asur was both an ethnic designation for *the people of Assyria*, and also a religious denominational term signifying the followers of Ahura-mazda, and if it be not forgotten at the same time that the Indo-Arians had long dwelt with the Iranians in places where "Asur" passed in common parlance in both senses, then on the natural supposition of political or theological conflicts between the Indians on the one hand, and the Iranians and Assyrians on the other hand, we may find a sufficient explanation of the hostile and diabolical sense in which the Indians used the term. The *odium theologicum*, and the national antipathy to which belligerent races are often subject, could jointly or severally account for the contradictory facts, already noticed, in the Rigveda, to the satisfaction of all parties.

THAT the Indo-Arians did at one time inhabit the Assyrian empire side by side with the Iranians, is further evident from a passage in the Zondavesta which speaks of an "Eastern and Western India" (*Yasht X.* 27,) the latter extending to Babylonia, as some scholars have supposed. This again may be said to be corroborated by the Assyrian records which give many names of persons and places which clearly appear to be Indian: *e. g.* *Hayanu* chief of *Hindanu*, a city near the Euphrates. *Hayapáda*, a tribe near Samaria, possibly connected

with the Aspo-padha-makhsti of the Zend (Tarvardin yasht 26, 116,) *Harimali* a female name, *Ambarissa* (Sanskrit Ambarisha) a king's name, *Haridspi* (Haridaswa) &c

THE moment you rise with the courage of your convictions, and practically realize the fact of Indian life on Iranian land, in pre-emigration times, while it was subject to the empire of Assyria, all difficulties vanish. You find that Asura was on the one hand a sacred name applied to the supreme Being and other supernatural powers both by Iranians and Assyrians, and on the other hand that it was both an ethnic appellative for the Assyrian nation, and also a denominational epithet for the followers of Ahura-Mazda. The authors of many songs contained in the Rigveda, living in the vicinity, perhaps within the boundaries of the Assyrian empire, might have at times used the term in its divine sense, and at times again as an ethnic or sectarian appellative. In the latter sense they might often affix to the name an odious and a diabolical character, either as against the Assyrians as a nation, or against the intolerant Zoroastrians as a religious sect.

THIS interpretation of the term would harmonize with the different senses in which it is used in the Rigveda, as well as with the dicta of other sastras, and with the national sentiment. Nor is there any valid objection conceivable against this interpretation. Professor H. H. Wilson following Sayana's commentary in his translation of Rigveda I. 24, could not help remarking

against the unnatural interpretation of the word "Asura" as given by the Brahmin scholiast, but he reconciled himself to his interpretation, because it would be indelicate to call Varuna an *Asura*. The Professor could not at that stage of Vedic knowledge have discovered the fact that the application of the word *Asura* to gods and goddesses was the *rule* in the Rigveda, rather than an exceptional reading requiring exceptional rules of interpretation. He had probably also overlooked the fact that, not once or twice only, but far oftener is Varuna himself styled *asura*—and that, as "Asura-pracheta" or "Asura-viswaveda," he received both from Indians and Iranians the homage due to "Creation's Lord," while his Vedic antagonist Nirriti was placed on the same footing as the Anro-Mainus of the Zend.

THE Rigveda represents Varuna not only as an *Asura* himself, but as the father of Bhrigu, the ancestor of all those Bhargavas whom the Indian Sastras represent as Asura-gurus, and some of whom actually appear in the Zendavesta as patriarchs and nobles of the Ahurians. The case of one or two requires some further notice. Kavi, a son of Bhrigu, as we have already seen, was a great character among the Zoroasterians. He was more than that. He was a patriarch that gave the name to the most prominent adherents of Ahura, who were likewise determined opponents of the Daevas. Though honourably mentioned in the Rigveda, he was still called an Asura, and though his name has become a distinguishing epithet for scholars and learned men, yet the patronymic Kāvya, applied to some of his descend-

ants in Vedic literature as Asura-gurus, is not owned as a family epithet by any Indian tribes. In the Zendavesta and other ancient Persian records, however, the patronymic Kavya is owned by most of the leading Zoroastrian families. That name has now come to India with the persecuted Ahurians, and is borne by many noble Parsee families in our days and at our own doors. This is a living evidence of that Vedic fact. The name Cowas-jee or Cavas-jee is well-known to all Indians. It is only a slight distortion of "Kava-Us" of the Veda and Zendavesta.

USANA (whom Hindoo tradition identifies with the Bhargava Sukra, the celebrated Asura-guru) and Usij whose sons, as we have already seen, were identified with the Bhrigus, both derived their names from "Us," another great Zoroasterian patriarch in the Zendavesta. He did not scorn to adopt a title from Kavi, his predecessor, and we find him often designated Kavi Us. Usana and Usij are both recognized in the Rigveda, though Us himself is not found there, unless he was identical with Usana, which is another derivation from the same root (*vas*) to which Us is referable *

From all that has been said we may now fairly conclude that Bhrigu, as a pristine worshipper of Agni, is best represented by those of his sons and descendants who were Asura-gurus—and that the Asura-gurus Kavi and Us and their descendants were the ancient Rishis alluded to in the 2nd verse of the Rigveda.

* Weber identifies Kavya Usanas with Kava Us *History of Indian Literature*, p. 36.

ANGIRAS, the other name given by Sayana in his commentary on the 2nd Rik just referred to, was connected with the Bhrigus in many respects so far as he can be dealt with as a veritable character. He is found elsewhere in a list of ancient Rishis headed by Brihaspati, Atharvan and Bhrigu. An Angir is also mentioned as a pupil of Atharvan.* In the Rigveda, however, Angiras is sometimes identified with Agni, and is so far a mythical character—held at times as the parent and at times as the son of Fire. R.v. I. 1, 6 and 33, 1.

It must be considered as an unprecedently candid acknowledgement on the part of the post-emigration authors of the Rigveda that the Asura patriarchs were anterior to them as Fire-worshippers. The same candour is observed in other Vedic texts according to which the Asuras were the elder brothers of the Devas—both being sons of Prajapati.†

If then we arrive at the conclusion that the descendants of Bhrigu (the reputed son of Varuna) were patriarchs and nobles of the Ahurians or Mazda-yasnians (as they were otherwise called) we are driven to it by the Rigveda itself, and, if we cast a glance at the world outside India, we shall find that the Rigveda teaches lessons which accord with all those foreign records in which the Persians are noted as the inventors of Fire-worship.

* *Mundaka* p. 263, *Bibliotheca Indica*

† *Brihadaranyaka Up.* in *Biblioth Ind* pages 62-65.

THESE considerations must materially affect the interpretation of the Rigveda. We can no longer consider it as a mere jargon of fairy tales, but must place it side by side with other records of Asia, however limited its claims may be to historic authenticity. At present we find translators and commentators passing by numberless proper names in the Vedas, either as mere fictions of fable, or hopelessly obscure designations of unknown personalities. When, however, you find the intimate connexion of the Rigveda with the Zend Avesta, and realize the fact of Indian life on Iranian land, you feel yourself relieved from an intolerable incubus, retarding your search for Truth. The embargo which had prohibited inquiries into Vedic facts out of the limits of India is now removed, and you feel yourself free to investigate the wide extent of the references contained in the Rigveda. It was under the force of that embargo that Professor Wilson had reconciled himself to the unnatural interpretation which Sayana had imposed on the word Asura in R.v. I. 21, because he could not import, from the Zend-avesta, the sense of Ahura Mazda into the Veda, and therefore, bound by the popular sense current in India, he thought "it would be scarcely decorous to call Varuna an Asura." But the moment you are rid of that embargo, you can extend your inquiries and deal with numerous problems, interesting alike to the philosopher, the historian, and the antiquarian. A few examples will suffice here.

I. In Rik VIII. 4, 2, you find the hymnist expressing a jealous feeling against Indra's favourable

disposition towards certain kings, evidently foreign to India, and beseeching him in the names of the sons of Kanva, to come over to them. Hymnists have constantly had occasion to pray that Indra might become *thier own*—exclusively their ruler and governor. From the Rik before us, he appears to have been amusing himself with kings Ruma, Rusama, and Siabaca. No expositor of Vedic hymns appears to have troubled himself about the personality of these kings. But if you are free to consult the Zendavesta, you find among the creations of Ahura Mazda a place called Ranha, which the Huzvarish translation renders “Rum,” or “Arum”—the semitic generally prefixing a redundant *A*. The Assyrian records would lead you to connect “Arum” with Armenia. The capital of Armenia is, again, Erzerum, or the *land of Rum*. These facts taken together might well suggest the idea that the Vedic “Rum” was connected with Armenia, and that a hymnist living in Iranian land might, not unnaturally, be jealous of his own chief’s too intimate intercourse with other regions, not inconveniently distant from himself.

SIABACA (meaning *black*) may be compared with a king with a similar name, mentioned by Herodotus, and be referred to Ethiopia.

As to Rusama it may be difficult to identify him without further inquiry. But he appears to be a foreign character, and there is no reason for taking him for a mere figment of the Hymnist’s imagination.

II. IN R.v. I. 33, 12, there appears a monarch under the name of "Ilibisa" whose fortresses had been captured by India. Commentators rest satisfied with characterizing him as a *certain Asura king*. This is not very consoling to an inquiring mind, but if we be permitted to look abroad, we shall find a similar name, "Iblis," (the *b* and *l* being only transposed) in Arabic and Persian literature, applied to Satan. The etymology of the word remains unsettled, nor has any reason being assigned why such a vocable should be held synonymous with Satan. But it is something to open a door for inquiry.

III. Berosus had assigned to the Assyrian Hercules, viz., the *man-bull*, the name of "Sanda." Scholars have been unable to agree on its derivation. We find in Rik II. 30, 8, that the Asuras were called the disciples, or votaries, of *Sanda*, and, according to all Indian tradition, the Asuras are held to be disciples of "Sanda." Thus the Rigveda, and Indian tradition, are able to decide a point in Assyrian history, left unsettled by Western scholars—one of the meanings of "Sanda" in Sanscrit being a *bull*.*

IV. Free criticisms, relieved of all embargoes and restrictions, may take up innumerable problems for solution, of which the following are but a few samplers. The Rigveda (I. 78, 5,) speaks of the "Rahu-ganas." The Zendavesta gives us a town named Raghu. Query.—Was

* See Rawlinson's Herodotus, Vol. I. p. 514.

there any connection between the two? Cacshi-van (a physician in the Rik) was an Ausija—hence an Asura. Query.—Can the word Cacshi-van (the radicals being considered free from the servile letters) stand for a *Caucasian*, and whether that physician was an Asura in the sense of *Assyrian*, or of a *follower of Ahura-Mazd*? Who was Rama-gastra of the Zend? Was he the same Rama who had leagued with the Asura Vena in Rik X. 93, 14.? Did that “beaming” Asura-gura (Vena) give the Latin name to the evening star with which Sukra is identified?

THE germs of such criticism we already find in Weber. He identifies the Asura Maya of the Surya-Siddhanta with Ptolemy. There is certainly strong evidence for such an identification, since there is a *reading* in that work which declares its hero to have been born a Mlecha at “Romaka” owing to a *Brahmin’s* curse.

WE believe that if the minds of Sanscrit scholars be emancipated from the existing bondage of a servile criticism, most of the kings and rulers, chiefs and people, mentioned in the Vedas, will be found capable of identification, and that much light will thereby be thrown both on the antiquities of Asia, the History of India, and also on the real meaning of the Vedas.

AND perhaps the remarkable assertion of a great scholar will then be found not far beyond the range of probability—that *the Veda belongs to the history of the world and to the history of India.*

SUPPLEMENTARY ESSAY II.



WE now take up the further questions, raised at the commencement of the Rigveda. When and where did Fire-worship originate, and what was the object and purport of that worship? The Veda has told us that the first introducer of Fire-worship was Bhrigu. We have already reviewed his pedigree, and noticed the Fire-worshipping families and tribes of which, according to the concurrent testimony of Indian and Zoroasterian records, he was the progenitor. But the place date and object of that introduction still remain to be considered.

BHRIGU is classed among the ancient (*purva*) Rishis in respect of whom even the author of the first or leading Hymn of the Rigveda was but a "modern" (*nātana*). Is it possible to fix any line of demarkation between "ancient" and "modern" Rishis in the language of the Veda?

THE original institution of Fire-worship and its extension to domestic hearths were, as we have seen, due to Bhrigu, and to such of his descendants as were distinguished by the denominational title of

Asuras, which, as a tribal epithet, included that powerful nation which had received the name from the Ashur of Scripture.

BUT while there is abundance of evidence, both external and internal, ancient and modern, that the "Ahuris," or followers of Ahura-Mazda, were distinguished worshippers of Fire, and that the Zoroasterian law was itself brought from Assyria, there is no evidence whatever to support the enlistment of the Assyrians themselves as a nation in the circle of such worshippers. The testimony of the Rigveda must therefore have referred to the Zoroasterians only, when it pointed to *Bhargava Asuras* as the original promoters of Fire-worship.

Now the Zoroasterians and Indians lived for a long time in Western Asia as members of one great family—as cousins or quasi-brothers ("Bhratrivya" is the Vedic word) before the emigration of the latter to India itself.

AND here the Rigveda recognizes another Rishi, from whom the fourth Veda derives its name, in the list of pristine worshippers of Fire. There is one great peculiarity with reference to this Rishi. He is indisputably held in great veneration both in the Vedas and the Zendavesta. Other characters there are who are ostensibly of great repute both in Indian and Iranian tradition, but scholars are not agreed on their identity. There is the Vritraghna of the Veda, and the Veretia-

ghna of the Zend. For ourselves we have no doubt that the terms meant the same thing and were applied to the same character—the destroyer of the common enemy Vritra. That destroyer was Indra according to the Veda, and perhaps Thraiton according to the Zend, but the conception was identical—and we may say that Indra was lauded in the Avesta under the title of Veretraghna. All scholars are not however consentient here. But there was no dispute about the identity of Atharvan (the Rishi we are now speaking of) notwithstanding the transposition of the *r* and *a* in the Zend. No one has denied the identity of the Atharva of the Veda with the Athrava of the Avesta. He was equally respected by the Indians and Iranians. The former called a whole Veda after his name, an honor which had not fallen to the lot of any other Rishi. In the Avesta he is described as an itinerant preceptor, who went about proclaiming the magnitude of sacrificial rites and the reverence due to Agni. His name in consequence had become proverbial for the highest of human excellencies. The Zoroasterians had an unbounded veneration for a peculiar species of canine animals, and when they were in want of models for the expression of that veneration, they could find it only in Athrava. “The dog eats what is offered him like an Athrava. He is contented like Athrava. He is patient like an Athrava. He needs a little bread like an Athrava.”*

* Vendidad XIII. 126—129.—In any other community such a description of a dog would be no compliment to the saint with whom the animal

Not only was Athrava the highest model of excellence, but offences against him were also held as standard measures of heinous sins. A person killing a blood-hound is punished, *ipso facto*, by a miserable and horrible death, and he who gives bad food to a blood-hound, is like a person who commits an offence as against a pure man with all the marks of an Athrava.

ATHRAVA as we have said was an itinerant preceptor or preacher. His high character for what was right, and his impatience of evil, had produced many enemies in men who were opposed to religious rites, and whose misdeeds were in danger of detection and exposure by the wandering teacher. "Haoma has diminished the rule of Keresani who had arisen eager after rule—who spoke "Not hereafter shall an Athrava, a teacher, wander at will through my regions."

was compared—but rather a burlesque of him. But the Zoroasterians had a veneration for the dog Vanhapatra which could only be compared with that of the Egyptians for Anubis. The chapter in which the above laudation of the dog occurs opens with the description of Vanhapatra "Which is the creature created by Spenta-Mainus among the creatures which Spenta-Mainus has created. Which every morning at the rising of the sun comes forth as a thousand-slayer of Anro-Mainus. Then answered Ahura Mazda; The dog with the prickly back and woolly muzzle, Vanhapatra upon whom evil-speaking men impose the name Dujaka. This is the creature created by Spenta-Mainus among the creatures which Spenta-Mainus has created, which every morning at the rising of the sun comes forth as a thousand slayer of Anro-Mainus." The Anro-Mainus was the Evil spirit, and Vanhapatra is represented as a more successful combatant against him than Ahura-mazd himself.

BUT all godly persons hailed the coming of Athrava and appreciated the blessed effects of his occasional visits: "The coming of the Athravas praise we, who come hitherto from afar desiring purity for the regions." (*Yasna* XII. 34, 35.) He had also faithful disciples who sometimes went about enforcing his doctrine and exhibiting its salutary effects by their conduct, and conversation. They were known as *Athravas*, and met everywhere with kind and hospitable receptions. The hospitality which these good men received, produced, it seems, many swindlers—pseudo-Atharvas, who levied black mail under false pretences. The *Zendavesta* therefore frequently and repeatedly warned men against such false teachers: "For many men—thus spoke Ahura Mazda—O pure Zarathustra, wear a *Paiti-dána* without being girded according to the law. Falsely do they call themselves Athravas. Do not call such a man an Athrava, (so spake Ahura Mazda) O pure Zarathustra.

"THEY carry a stick for slaying the vermin without being girded according to the law. Falsely does such a man call himself an Athrava, thus spake Ahura Mazda, O pure Zarathustra.

"THEY carry a tree (the *Beresma*) without being girded according to the law. Falsely does such a one call himself Athrava. Do not call such a one an Athrava, thus spake Ahura Mazda, O pure Zarathustra.

"HE who lies the whole night without praising or without hearing: without reciting, without working,

without learning, without teaching, desiring to win the soul. He calls himself falsely an Athrava. Do not &c.

"CALL him an Athrava—thus spake Ahura Mazda—O pure Zarathustra, who the whole night through asks the pure understanding—which purifies from sins, which makes (the heart) large and affords rewards at the bridge *chinavat*, which makes us to reach the place, the purity, and the goodness of Paradise."

SUCH was the reputation of Atharva among the Zoroasterians. Among the Indians, again, he was not only classed with Bhrigu as a hoary saint who had contributed to the institution of *pyro-cultus* and of sacrificial ceremonies, but was honoured as a "Prajapati," the eldest son of Brahmá, from whom he received the knowledge of the mysteries of theology, which he on his part communicated to Angir.* A whole Veda was also called after Atharva.

ANGIR was different from Angiras, for Angir was the preceptor of Satyavaha, whose pupil was Angiras. But Angiras was evidently far more distinguished than his preceptor, having himself been styled as a genitor of Fire, as *Fire* itself, and also the *first from Fire*.

BUT whatever the personality of Angiras may have been, a large class of Rishis, the Angirasas, are

* *Mundakopaniṣad* of the *Atharvaveda* pp 262-263 in the Biblioth. Ind. Angi, as different from Angiras, is a name only found here. It is otherwise unknown in Indian literature. ~~Can it be the same as "Angus"?~~

called after him, and as far as he was a veritable character, he was an ancient Rishi classed with Bhrigu and Atharva—the initiator of Fire-worship. From the connections of Atharvan and the Bhrigus with the Zoroasterians, the introduction of pyro-cultus must be dated in pre-emigration times, and therefore on Iranian land.

THIS view of the time and place of the commencement of Fire-worship is further confirmed by the legend in the *Satapatha* on Vishnu's leading the people with the *sacred Fire* from west to east, and by the concurrent tradition of all other nations. It harmonizes also with the fact of the gradual decadence of the institution in India, where it could not take anything like a deep root after its transplantation. That worship on Indian soil is found in these days only among the Parsees, who never had any other form of devotional exercises.

THE emigration to India from the West of Asia appears to have been reckoned by the Indo-Arians as the greatest event in their history, and a new epoch in their chronology. We may therefore declare it to be the *line* which separated the “moderns” from the “ancients” in their annals.

THE views of our primitive ancestors on Fireworship will appear sufficiently clear from the many texts we had occasion to cite or refer to in our former Essay. The Bhrigus, as we have seen, were so highly honoured, *because* they had established and illuminated Fire in houses “as

a dear guest and inviter of the gods who could as a father convey on high the invocations and supplications of the household to the immortals above." This was the consentient idea of the Veda and the Zendavesta, and this was all that was meant by the *Fire-worship* of the ancients. Fire was the instrumental medium by which offerings and oblations of devout worshippers were communicated to heaven. It was because of this ministering service that Agni was honoured as the "son" (*Jahu*) of *Power* in the Rik, and the *son of Ahura* in the Avesta. It was also for this that Fire was identified with Sacrifice, and honoured as the "navel of the world."* But there was no such deification as might amount to *pyrolatry*.

THE next question in order is the *object* of Fire-worship. Why was the igneous element so highly prized? The question has been partially answered in the preceding paragraph. The full reply is now given in the words of the very first Rik. "Agni was the foremost minister and the illustrious invoker of Sacrifice—the greatest repository of Wealth." The first two epithets suggest theological, the last scientific considerations. As *foremost minister and invoking priest*, Agni sustains a religious character, and is related to us in our spiritual concerns. As the *greatest repository of wealth*, Agni challenges scientific considerations of its fitness to promote earthly interests, and contri-

* Sacrifice and Fire were each called "the Navel of the World" R.v. I. 69, 2 and 164, 35

bute to the multiplication of our worldly enjoyments.

THE latter point has been sufficiently discussed by poets and philosophers, and improved upon by scientists. Our Railways and factory mills afford indisputable evidence on that score. The dictum of the Rik needs no more witnesses in that respect, and we may well spare the reader a prosy dissertation on the subject of "Prometheus Vincit." But the theological question requires further elucidation.

THE object of Fire-worship was the maintenance of Sacrifice. It was not *pyrolatry*. It was because of the high estimation in which the ceremony of Sacrifice was held that Agni was so much honoured—so much valued—so much adored. Such was the feeling of Iranians and Indians. Such was also the persuasion of the Greeks and Romans; especially the latter who had an order of vestal virgins for the maintenance of the "eternumque ignem" which Æneas had brought from Troy. The sacred fire, the sacred hearth was esteemed as the greatest treasure of the household, because the pious offerings of its members were thereby supposed to be conveyed to the regions above—and there accepted as a sweet savour—because it was a link of union between the earthly and the Heavenly. The sacred Fire was therefore religiously kept and maintained *as it was brought by Vishnu from the West to the East*. Those who neglected it were stigmatized as *anagnic*, or destitute of the holy Fire, and pronounced disqualified for

the celebration of sacrificial ceremonies, while those who maintained it were honoured as *sâgnic* Brahmins, and held in great request for the due performance of the Ritual.

THE question we are discussing resolves itself therefore into the question of the estimation in which Sacrifice was held in the Vedas, both in theory and practice—in doctrine and ritual. We shall accordingly have to consider their dogmatic teaching as well as their ceremonial observances in connection with this subject. But before doing so, we feel it right to review their ideas of Divinity—their doctrine on the existence of God—the very foundation of theology and religion.

IN all communities theology commences with cosmogony. It is on the dependance of the creature on his Creator that the religious sentiment in human nature is founded. There can be no loyalty without a recognized ruling power, nor can there be any religion in the absence of an acknowledged supernatural Power as Creator of the world. And it is from the *seen* that ideas of the *unseen* are derived. What the Indian Nyaya says is most true. The *anumana* or inference must have some *pratyaksha* or perception for its basis. And this refers to things intellectual as well as things physical. External observation and internal sensation may each justify an inference or conclusion. The visible universe leads to the conviction of an invisible Cause of all things. The complicated and curiously subtle adaptations we notice all around—their aptitude for certain ends to which they

are directly tending, force the conviction on the mind that there must be a Creator who made all these things, and adapted them to their specific ends. This is the commencement of Theology. The human mind at once detects in the visible world and its adaptation of means to ends, the finger of an invisible but all intelligent and beneficent Creator—whom it invests with infinite goodness power and wisdom—that is to say with all the goodness power and wisdom which the mind itself can conceive.

How and with what materials the Deity has created the world is a question which the mind in its native simplicity, untainted by the subtleties of a corrupt philosophy, does not stop to inquire. It may in a rude and uncultivated state mistake something, itself a creature, astoundingly striking to the eye or the ear,—such as the sun or the moon—thunder or lightning—to be the creator of the world, but it never thinks of launching into doubts and difficulties on the subject unless entangled into the mazes of scepticism—into speculations which are beyond its own depth, and are only the suggestions of human vanity and conceit.

We find accordingly that in pre-emigration times when the Indians and Iranians dwelt in Central or Western Asia, their ideas of Deity were clear and decided, independent of philosophic speculation, and free from casuistic doubtfulness. They did not indeed understand the true nature of original creation,—of the calling anything into being out of nothing—but

neither did they speculatively hold that *nothing could be produced out of nothing*. That question did not strike them at all. They did not discuss it—but they confidently declared that the heavens and earth were established by “Ahura-Mazda” (in Iranian language) or “Asura-viswaveda” (to use the vocabulary of the Indo-Arians.) Both branches were satisfied that the structure of the Universe was the work of God, whatever its material might have been.

THAT there was one Creator of all things—who in the beginning called the universe into being out of nothing—and that all his works were originally “good,” was an idea which was not obvious to the human mind. The clear statement of Moses (Gen. I. 1,) was due to Divine Revelation—as Milton has well sung :

“ That on the secret top,
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire,
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the Heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos.”

THE Arians had however somehow obtained glimpses of the original creation of unmixed good. “The first and best of regions and places have I created, (said Ahura-Mazda) I who am Ahura-Mazda—the Airyana-vaeja of the good creation.” And the Indian tradition of the Satya-yuga coincides with the classical description of the *golden age*.

THE Zendavesta supposed the existence of an es-

sential Evil spirit as coeval with the creation, and spoiling the good acts of Ahura from the beginning.

THE Indo Arians, however, while they were at one with the Iranians on the doctrine of the establishment of the Heavens and Earth as "the works of Varuna, the all knowing Asura" (the Ahura-Mazda of the Zend,) and while they also recognized in their Nirriti, a representative of Angro-Mainus, did not attribute to their "pápa devatá" any independent creative agency, such as the Avesta ascribed to its Evil principle.

Twice has the Rigveda clearly attributed the establishment of the heavens and earth to Varuna as the Indian Ahura-Mazda.* A similar Creative agency, but far more characteristic in some important details, is also ascribed to Viswa-karmá, or *author of the Universe*. "The producer of light, steady in mind (first) created water, then these two (Heaven and Earth) moving in it. *** That which transcends heaven, which transcends this earth, which transcends the Devas and Asuras—what was that embryo which the waters first held and wherein all the Devas were collected together—the same which was deposited in the Navel of the Unborn as one (only) in which all the worlds remained."†

* The two texts of the R k in which Varuna was so described are, I 24 and VIII 42, 1

† R v X 82 1, 3 5 6 This appears as one of the most ancient Hymns of the Rigveda. It speaks of "Devas AND Asuras," as two distinct representative bodies—the one Indian and the other Iranian.

DOGOMATIC texts like these give scarcely any countenance to polytheism and may be held to be declaratory of monotheism with sufficient clearness. The Devas mentioned in them are not only paired with Asuras as creatures of the One Unborn, but they are also elsewhere described as quondam mortals, eventually promoted to Heaven by virtue of the sacrifice. The Creator (call him Ahura-Mazda or Asura Pracheta as you please) who formed the heavens and the earth and called them into existence "out of chaos," was himself distinct from Devas and Asuras. He was not one of either. Neither is the Divine architect, the Viswakarma in the verses last cited, described as one among the Devas and Asuras, who were collectively contained in the embryo deposited in the Navel of the "UNBORN." Thus while there were gods and asuras who were produced from a common embryo, there was One unborn and uncreated Being, transcending them all. So far therefore the Veda cannot be charged with polytheism, —the *created* celestials being only like Angels or Saints of the Christian theology.

SPECULATIVE mantras, whether leaning towards or against Theism, are not numerous in the Rigveda. That bold philosophy, which lands its votaries in either atheism or nihilism, had not much infected the Indian mind during the Vedic period. Men intuitively and

There is no reason for the supposition that the gods were called "Asuras" before they were called "devas." The former naturally meant the chiefs of the Irianians only, though sometimes applied to Devas also.

spontaneously recognized in the creation around them the hand of its Creator, and evinced the feeling which had animated the Hebrew king when he burst out into the exclamation:—"The Heavens declare the glory of God and the Firmament sheweth his handy work." Reflection or contemplation only strengthened that feeling. And even if difficulties distracted their minds they knew where to look for their solution: "He who is our Father and generator, who as Disposer knows all sites and worlds the one assigner of names to the gods—to him have other worlds recourse as the solution and end of questions and (doubts)"*

WEAK and perverse speculations tending to Atheism did also exist to a limited extent. One notable instance is found in R.v. 129. After a graphic description of the chaos which immediately preceded the formation of the existing world—a description which mainly corresponded with that of Moses, the writer appears to have been bewildered by his own conceptions. His imagination had taken a flight too high for his intellect. He acknowledged the presence of the very things which the Hebrew cosmogonist spoke of authoritatively—*waters, darkness and productive energy* above—reminding us of the spirit of God "brooding on the vast abyss." The philosopher then appeared to tamper with the honest simplicity of that internal witness in human nature which involuntarily deduces an intelligent efficient cause where it finds subtle

adaptations to certain important ends. He allowed the existence of "That One" who *breathed calmly*—of a *Supervisor in the highest heaven* and yet doubted "whence has sprung this creation"—or whether that Supervisor himself "knows it or does not know." The magnitude of the universe doubtless bewildered the philosopher's mind, the moment he had abandoned his internal guide, and aspired after a lofty wisdom of his own, but the fact is only another justification of the adage *the world by wisdom knew not God*. In such cases *ignorance is bliss and it becomes folly to be wise*.

WISDOM does certainly sometimes ignore or betray the better part of human nature, more perilously than the folly of ignorance. To the untutored hillsmen, take the Kol or Santal for example, the Sun appears at the same time the greatest emblem both of power and vitality. He accordingly looks upon him as the Supreme of all celestial beings, and "Sing" or "Chando" (the sun) is his only word for God, as it is also indicative of the highest of his heavenly conceptions. If the scientist on disabusing his mind on Astronomy tells him also of a Higher Being of whose perfections the sun is only a created witness, he may enlarge the mind of the savage at the same time that he improves his vocabulary. But if the scientist, not satisfied with the communication of observed facts, turns an amateur in philosophy, and tells the savage, not only that the sun is a material inanimate substance, but also that there is no other Higher animated essence as its creator, the lecture is not likely to raise him at all in the scale of humanity,

while it might run many a risk of brutalizing the man a great deal more, than untutored human nature *could* have allowed.

It is however satisfactory to reflect that Vedic writers are not generally of this sceptical stamp. We have seen that the most ancient Rishis who spoke of the Supreme Being under the Sanscritized title of Ormus were decided theists.

THEY identified Ahura-mazda, (*i. e.* *Asura-pracheta*) with Varuna, who appears to have been endowed with the highest of divino attributes. In the sixteenth hymn of the 4th book of the Atharva-veda, his power and omniscience are thus celebrated. "The great One who rules over these worlds beholds as if he were close at hand." The other verses are thus rendered metrically by Dr. Muir :

"Wherever two together plot, and deem they are alone,
King Varuna is there, a third, and all their schemes are known,
The earth is his, to whom belong those vast and boundless skies ;
Both seas within him rest, and yet in that small pool he lies,
His spies descending from the skies glide all the world around,
Their thousand eyes all scanning, sweep to earth's remotest bound,
Whate'er exists in heaven and earth, whate'er beyond the skies,
Before the eyes of Varuna the king unfolded lies."

We shall now refer to a sample of speculative theism as opposed to scepticism and atheism. In Rik I. 164, 6, the writer, seemingly conversant with the tactics of scepticism, addresses its champions a

question, in a mood of good humour, which only imparted a sharper edge to the question itself. "Not knowing I put a question here to the learned—I, the ignorant to those that know. He who supports these six worlds is he not ONE in the form on an Unborn person?" The most powerful assertions are sometimes put forth in the form of questions. It was the method which Socrates followed, and got the desired affirmations from the lips of the adversary himself. It was a successful appeal from a vain intellect to the moral tribunal sitting by its own side. The lesson here taught is that One there *is*, and always must be, whose power upholds all things—under whatsoever names the things themselves might be called, and in whatsoever groups they might be classified. Theology does not interfere with the philosopher's or scientist's classifications of things—it only demands, what the Veda here sets forth by an interrogation, and which Moses taught still more clearly and authoritatively, in one simple sentence: "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth."

NOTWITHSTANDING a few sceptical passages, the tone of the Rigveda is decidedly theistic, with only one short-coming, which is common to all non-Christian writers—the short-coming as regarded the true idea of the creation of all things, without and independent of pre-existing materials. In all other respects it is decidedly theistic,—superior even to the Zendavesta, which acknowledges in unmistakable language a duality of eternal principles, in its Ormus and Ahriman, as independent creators of good and evil respectively.

The Veda, while upholding the existence of an Ahriman or Pápa devatá in its "Niritti," does not say that it was an uncreate eternal substance.

OF polytheism we cannot confidently acquit the Veda. But in justice we must urge two considerations in its favour on the reader's attention. (1).—It declares all "devas" to have been originally mortals on the earth like men, but subsequently translated to heaven, by the merits of Sacrifice. They were the primitive leaders and rulers of the Indo-Arian family, distinct from the "One Unborn." Many of the prayers and doxologies addressed to them were in the form of petition or eulogy due to protectors and heroes. "The gods were formerly just like men. They desired to overcome want, misery, death, and to go to the divine assembly. They saw, took and sacrificed with this *Chaturvinsati-ratra*, and in consequence overcame want, misery, death, and reached the divine assembly." *

INDRA himself was described as a *man*—and *the best of men*. "I again call our MAN, to come from the site of our ancient home to a multitude of sacrificers, whom, that is to say, thee O Indra! I used formerly to call our father." †

"THE gods performed a sacrifice, by means of sacrifice. These were the first religious acts. They

* Taitt Sanhita cited in Dr. Muir's Texts.

† R v. I. 13 9.

having become) great beings, went to heaven, where the ancient divine Sadhyas live.”*

SUCH ideas are found in numberless texts of the Vedas, and if these ideas be allowed to govern our interpretation of prayers or doxologies, a great deal may be explained away as the language of petitions or panegyrics, addressed to eminent heroes chiefs or rulers—or as odes which poets and bards often address to the living and the dead. It is impossible to doubt that many hymns are of this class, and many others may be explained in the manner suggested.

(2).—AND it must also be remembered that the Vedas dogmatically declare that the inferior gods are but so many varying names or epithets of the One Supreme Being. “They call (Him) Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni. He is again identical with the excellent-winged heavenly Bird. The sages name the One Being in manifold ways. They designate him Agni Yama, Mátariswá.”† These considerations would go far to palliate the charge of polytheism against the Vedas, if not altogether to disprove them.

THE device of “Henotheism,” as distinct from the above two considerations, by which an eminent professor has in a series of Lectures recently delivered in the Chapter House, Westminster Abbey, attempted to ac-

* R.v. I. 164, 50.

† R v. I 161, 46.

quit the Vedas of polytheism, does not however appear calculated to answer that purpose. The learned lecturer distinguishes Henotheism from polytheism by the plea of worship being offered to different gods *singly, one by one*, and not at once to all of them collectively, and that while any one god is worshipped, he is for the time the *all in all* of the devout worshipper. We doubt how this plea can be admissible with the simultaneous worship of two in the dual, as “Mitrávarunau,” or many in one group in the plural as “Viswe-devas.” If the *two* or the *many* in these instances may be conceived as collective units, then the Vedic explanation of One Supreme Being, variously named or described, would itself stand good, and preclude the necessity of a new high sounding Greek compound. And in such a case the old fashioned *monotheism* might plead in bar against its rival “Henotheism.” But if separate independent gods be allowed to be worshipped in alternate successions, then the pretensions of “Henotheism” to a place in lexicons, as distinct from “Polytheism” and monotheism, would simply resemble the claims of an invention for *splitting hairs* to a site in the Registration of patents.

AND as to an acquittal from a charge of polytheism, the plea of Henotheism could procure the Vedas no better relief than a plea of “Henogamy,” *i. e.*, successive resorts to a multitude of *single mahals*, could avert a judicial conviction of Bigamy or polygamy against the common husband of a plurality of contemporary wives, notwithstanding ample proof that the denizen

of each mahal, when resorted to, was "for the time being" addressed with all the endearing expressions that could be claimed by a sole wife. *

BUT we must now revert to the Vedic view of *Sacrifice*, both in theory and practice. Actual ceremonies are better tests of religious persuasions, than the torturing speculations we have just been reviewing. Speculations can only be indulged in by a few forward intellects, ceremonies can be practised by all under the guidance of priests. The virtues which the Vedas ascribed to the due celebration of sacrifices are beyond all conception, and the practices to which such ideas had given rise are also singular beyond expression. Celebrations of sacrifice were believed to result in the fulfilment of all that the sacrificers desired. There were the regular sacrifices which were celebrated at stated times and seasons, and there were occasional sacrifices contingent on events and engagements. If a journey had to be undertaken, it must be preceded by Sacrifices; when a battle was to be fought, the attempt must be made by sacrifice. When Indra had to march against *Vritra*, he first ran to the *soma offering* "like a cow to her calf." Sacrifice accomplished all desires and aspirations, and therefore must be resorted to in all enterprises.

* "Thus is the peculiar character of the ancient Vedic religion which I have tried to characterize as *Henotheism* or *Kathenotheism*, a successive belief in single supreme gods, in order to keep it distinct from that phase of religious thought which we commonly call polytheism. * * In the Veda one God after another is invoked. For the time being all that can be said of a divine being is ascribed to him." *Max Muller's Hibbert Lectures* p 271.

THE high estimation in which the rite of Sacrifice is held in the Vedas will appear (1) from the date and authorship assigned for its institution, (2) the great virtues attributed to its performance, both for spiritual and temporal purposes, (3) the benefits it is said to have conferred on the gods themselves. We shall briefly review it under these different aspects

(1). THE authorship of the institution is attributed to "Creation's Lord" himself, and its date is reckoned as coeval with the creation. "Creation's Lord instituted the Sacrifice." "He uttered the Nivid, all things were created after it."* In the post-diluvian world the first act of the surviving patriarch, whom the Indo-Arians called "Manu" (a name not very dissimilar to the Semitic "Nu") was a sacrificial offering. This latter tradition is confirmed as well by the Bible as also by the account found in the Assyrian Inscriptions. It will not be regarded as an extreme act of credulity if we declare that much consideration is due to the concurrence of so many curious traditions. With reference to the legend of the institution of sacrifice being coeval with the creation, we can only interpret the writer's meaning in the sense of that institution having existed from time *immemorial*. The Vedas know of no time which could be reckoned as its *beginning*.

(2). WITH reference to the great virtues attributed to the celebration of sacrifices, it was considered as the

* *Taittiriya Samhita* Vol. I, 204, *Ataraya Br.* p. 48.

patent remedy for all evils—the panacea for all distempers. Even the briny Ocean and the dust of the earth distil sweets for the regular performer of the sacrificial ritual. The world was called into being by virtue of sacrifice, and is still upheld by its force, being indeed its “navel.” In it lay all strength against enemies. The Zendavesta too concurred with the Vedas here. The evil spirit had asked Zarathustra: “By whose word will thou smite, by whose word will thou annihilate, by what well-made arms smite my creatures.” Zarathustra answered boldly—“Mortar, Cup, Haoma,* and the words which Ahura-Mazda has spoken—these are my best weapons.”

Nor was the virtue of sacrifice less conspicuous from a spiritual point of view. It was the great means of escape from the pernicious effects of sin. “Give us O Indra multitudes of good horses with which we may offer our oblations and thereby escape all sins.” “Do thou lead us safe through all sins by the way of Sacrifice.” † “O Soma (the sacrificial liquor) deliver us first from evils by getting us over our sins, and as a person conversant with roads shows the way to the inquiring passenger, so do thou, being versed in the way of Sacrifice, save us by teaching the right path.” “Thou (O sacrificial Soma) who knowest all things make us to pass over sin, as a navigator ferries men over the sea.” ‡

* Those were the implements of Sacrifice both with Iranians and Indians.

† R v X 113, 10, and 133, 6

‡ R v IX 70, 9, 10.

VARUNA, whose name appears the same as the Greek word for Heaven, and who, as we have seen, was regarded as the supreme Being under the title of "Asura-prachetas," is thus invoked for such knowledge as may make us wise unto salvation: "O illustrious Varuna, do thou quicken our understanding, while we are practising this ceremony, that we may embark on the good ferrying boat by which we may escape all sins." * On this passage the Aitareya Brahmana of the Rik says: "Sacrifice is the good ferrying boat. The black skin is the good ferrying boat. The word is the good ferrying boat. Having embarked on the word, one crosses over to the Heavenly world."†

THE "Black Skin" appears to have been the layer on which the sacrificial victim was slain. And there is a story in the Satapatha (p. 8) that as "Sacrifice was retreating in a black form—the gods tore off its skin and took it."

THE "Word" doubtless meant the Vedic formula for the celebration of sacrifices. "The three-fold knowledge was the Sacrifice." (*Satapatha*). But there was an actual sacrificial hymn which was called "plava" or *raft*. "He who dips (bathes) in the sea without a *plava*, (without the sacrificial hymn so called) never gets out of it. Where there is a *plava*, it leads to the attainment of the celestial world." ‡

* R v VII. 42, 3.

† Aitareya B p. 10.

‡ *Tanda Maha Brahmana* p 293.

SACRIFICE offered according to the true way,—the right path—has been held in the Rik, Yajus, and Sáman to be the good ferrying boat or raft by which we may escape from sin. It was expressly declared to be the authorized means both for remission and annulment of sin. “The animal he offers to the *Agnishoma* is his own ransom.” *

THE following formula gives the words which were uttered by the sacrificer as he offered each limb to the Fire on slaughtering and cutting up the victim. †

“(O THOU animal limb now being consigned to the Fire.) Thou art the annulment of sins committed by the Devas. Thou art the annulment of sins committed by the (departed) fathers. Thou art the annulment of sins committed by men. Thou art the annulment of sins committed by ourselves. Whatever sins we have committed by day or by night, thou art the annulment thereof. Whatever sins we have committed, sleeping or awake, thou art the annulment thereof. Whatever sins we have committed, knowing or unknowing, thou art the annulment thereof. Thou art the annulment of sin—of sin.”

BUT our ancestors seemed to have understood, or at least suspected, that “it is not possible that the

* *Taittiriya Samhita*, Vol. 1, p. 369

† *Tandya Maha Brahmana* p 55

blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." The conception of the principles which under-lay the institution of the ceremony had been perhaps well high forgotten. The ritual was performed as an *opus operatum*. Its true meaning had fallen into oblivion. They therefore called it a *maya*, or mystery. Thus: "O Death! the thousand myriads of thy bands for the destruction of mortals, we annul them all by the "maya" or mysterious power of sacrifice." *

(3). THEY had the same conception of this mysterious power in the case of the Devas who were "originally mortals"—who were "in the beginning like men," but had been translated to Heaven by the virtue of sacrifice." Indra himself was no better at first. He was "OUR MAN"—and as such the "best of men." But like other gods—though more excellently than any other—he had performed numberless sacrifices, and thereby promoted to Heaven, free from "want misery and death." This was the case with all "the gods." The Vedas constantly repeat the adage—"The gods went to heaven by means of Sacrifice. By Sacrifice they overcame Asuras. By Sacrifice enemies are turned into friends. By Sacrifice everything is established, therefore they say Sacrifice is the most excellent." †

AGAIN: "By this sacrificial hymn the gods had overcome the Asuras. By the same does the sacrificer,

* *Taittīyīya Aranyaka* p. 913.

† *Taittī Brahmana* p. 891

whoever he be, still overcomes the most wicked enemy (sin).” “

AND it has been expressly declared that as sacrifice was the way by which the devas got to Heaven, the same is still the way open for mankind. “Whoever desires the felicity of heaven, let him perform sacrifices in the right way.” And such performances were reckoned as the first acts of religion—the first and primitive “dharma.” “The devas performed a sacrifice by means of a sacrifice. Those were the first acts of religion. They became glorified and attained to Heaven, where the pristine-sādhyas live.” †

BUT the most striking idea in the Vedas is the self-sacrifice of “Prajapati,” the Lord or supporter of the Creation, the “Purusha begotten before the (world),” the Visva-karma, the author of the Universe.” The idea is found in all the three great Vedas—Rik, Yajus and Sáman—in Sanhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads. The Divine Purusha who gave himself up as a sacrifice for the Devas, *i.e. emancipated mortals*, had, it is said, desired and got a mortal body *fit for sacrifice*, and himself became *half mortal and half immortal*. It is added that he made sacrifice a reflection or figure of himself—that the *equine* body was found fit for sacrifice, and that whenever a horse-offering (*Asva-medha*) was solemnized, it became no other than an offering of Himself.

* *Tandya Maha Brahmana*, Vol I, p. 401.

† R v. I. 161,50.

THE above facts and concepts, however mysterious, are so important both from a historical and theological point of view, that we must specifically produce further evidence for their existence in all the Vedas before we make any comments thereon, or venture to expound them either.

DE . We shall now cite texts on the well-known sacrifice of Purusha, the ideal of which is thus depicted in the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* pp. 331-333.

“ WHEN the Devas celebrated a Sacrifice with Purusha as their oblation, the spring was its butter, summer its fuel, and autumn its after-oblation. When the Devas, celebrating the sacrifice, bound Purusha as the victim, they immolated him, the sacrifice, on the grass—even him, the Purusha, begotten in (or from) the beginning. With Him as their offering, the gods Sadhyas, and Rishis also sacrificed.”

THIS is only a repetition of what is contained in Rik X. 90. As parallel passages in the Rik, we shall first refer to Rik X. 81, 1. “That father of ours* (Viswakarma, the author of the Universe) who as a sacerdotal minister sacrificed all the worlds to Himself and then sat in the Fire, he, desiring glory, entered, having first enveloped the other worlds, in Fire.”

* The author of X 81, 1, is a Rishi, named Viswakarma, son of Viswakarma, “the author of the Universe.” He refers here to his father “the author of the Universe.”

ON this verse Sáyana cites the following extract from the Nirukta of Yaska: "It is said that Viswakarmá (the author of the Universe) had in a Universal Sacrifice offered all creatures, and then eventually offered Himself also."

THE *Vajasaneya Samhita* confirms the same legends, only prefacing the act of the Divine self-sacrificer with the words, "Let me offer myself in all creatures and all creatures in myself" *

THE *Tandya Maha Brahmana* says: "Prajapati (Creation's Lord) gave himself up as a Sacrifice to (or for) the Devas [who were originally mortals like men.] The *Satapatha* confirms the same by saying, "To (or for) them Creation's Lord gave himself up."

WE must here cite a passage from the *Brihadaranyaka* in which *Prajapati* (Creation's Lord) is said to have desired to offer a sacrifice with a great offering, and then wished to have a body fit for sacrifice (*Medhya*). "He (Creation's Lord) desired to offer a great Sacrifice. He desired, May I have a body competent for Sacrifice (*Medhyam*), and may I become embodied by it. Then there became a horse which prospering proved fit for Sacrifice." The commentator here adds: "The Lord of the Creation is himself here clearly eulogized under the name of "Aswa" (horse) which means prospered." Hence the sacrificial virtue of an Aswamedha (Horse

* *Satapatha* 13, 7 1 .

offering) : Priests solemnize the sacrifice as an offering of Prajapati himself or the universal godhead. Again it becomes an only Devata, even Death. Then eventually it conquers Death, nor can Death get to it again." *

THE *Satapatha* also says with reference to the same "Creation's Lord," "that half of himself was mortal and half immortal." The mortal was the body fit for sacrifice and liable to death, and the immortal was the imperishable spirit.

To the preceding citations we must add that, according to the *Satapatha*, after Prajapati "had given himself up to (or for) them, he made a reflection, figure, or image (pratimā) of himself, which is Sacrifice. Therefore they say Creation's Lord is Sacrifice, for He made it an image (or figure) of himself." (*Satapatha*) p. 836.

THE *Tandya Maha Brahmana* probably refers to the same when after declaring that "Sacrifice does indeed save us, but (the ceremony) is its shadow or reflection." Prajapati is elsewhere spoken of as "Atmadā" (*giver of self*)—*whose shadow, whose death is immortality.*" (R.v. X 121, 2.

SUCH was the theory and such the practice of "the original rites of Religion," as observed by our primitive ancestors. But an important modification

* *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad* pp 51-60.

was afterwards made by their descendants. It appears that the doctrine of the self-sacrifice of the divine Purusha, "begotten in the beginning," had in course of time been perverted to the extent of threatening the introduction of human sacrifices under the garb of religion. To avert this imminent danger, the Rishis began to reduce the type of their sacrificial victims from the larger to the smaller species of animals—from horses and oxen to lambs and kids. And they eventually extended this process of reduction to the offering of vegetables and fruits also. *

NOTWITHSTANDING the large extent of relief thus given to the equine, the bovine, and the bleating species, the idea of the efficacy of Sacrifice as a figure of the self-offering of Prajapati still continued in some measure to animate the Indian mind until the age of Buddhism.

IN that age the fabric of Vedic religion received a tremendous shock. The fundamental principles, underlying the system of sacrifices, had been gradually falling into oblivion. While the ceremony was kept up in the usual form, its typical signification was almost forgotten. It therefore appeared to most people an unmeaning ceremonial, consisting of bloody sacrifices with the wanton destruction of animal life. These ideas, often ventilated in society, eventually produced a complete revolution in the Hindu mind. Bold theories were propounded subversive of the very fundamentals

* Aitareya Brahmana p. 31.

of Religion and piety. The respect due to antiquity was recklessly repudiated, and the fondest traditions of our primitive ancestors were indiscriminately set aside. Under a plea of self-denial and Renunciation, some of the tenderest affections of human nature were classed among the frailties and weaknesses to which that nature was subject. Even the act of deserting a wife when she had just become a mother, and at the very moment when she could claim the most assiduous attention from her husband, was lauded as a great intellectual triumph in the founder of Buddhism. Sakya was doubtless a character of wonderful intellectual eminence. He exhibited an unprecedented mastery over the very passions by which men are everywhere led astray. Such self-restraint cannot be eulogized in too strong terms. But it can never be forgotten that it over-shot its point. The harmony of moral virtues—the balance of opposite emotions was disturbed. Such conduct could not be declared a sample of human nature in its perfection. The moral symmetry which might be expected in a model of perfection was wanting. While one class of virtues was exhibited in gigantic forms, others, equally necessary for the perfection of human nature, were entirely excluded.

BUT notwithstanding this monstrous mental Revolution, which infected even intellects that remained loyal to Brahminism, the primitive idea of the efficacy of Sacrifice was not absolutely banished from the country. There were numberless traitors in both camps.

There were philosophers who called themselves Brahmins but openly or covertly followed the lines of Sakya Sinha. But they still allowed the validity of ceremonies in the case of the "ignorant." Even sages, denying or doubting the existence of an all-intelligent Author of the Universe, bowed to the primitive maxim, "He who desired heaven must perform Sacrifices." They only claimed for their own selves and disciples a transcendental illumination of the mind which placed them beyond the range of rites and ceremonies, and of all codes of duty whatsoever. They affected to be above all bonds of obligation to God or man—whether moral or religious, but they did not detract from the original doctrine of the efficacy of the sacrificial ceremonial, as "a boat (in the case of those who *required* it) for ferrying over the ocean of sin."

IN reviewing the above summary of the original "rites of religion," as disclosed in the Vedas, it is impossible to ignore their close proximity to some of the mysteries of Christian faith. "The first acts of Religion" consisted in the offering of Sacrifice. This is curiously coincident with the Biblical account of Abel's offering in the Ante-Diluvian world. Noah's offering in the Post-Diluvian world equally corresponds to the *páka* offering of Manu, the surviving man after the Flood in Vedic legends. In the whole description of the patriarchal dispensation, the Veda seems to follow the lines of the Bible—the only difference being in the greater clearness and the still greater firmness

and certainty of decision with which monotheism is upheld in the Jewish Scriptures. Almost in all other respects, the Vedas represent with equal clearness the ideals of the patriarchal dispensation in the ages of Noah, of Abraham, of Melchisedec, of Job and of other similar characters noticed in the Bible—when religious devotion was manifested by sacrifices and offerings as types of the Divine Saviour, “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Indeed they indicate a state of religious thought still closer to the Christian ideal in its maturity. The Vedic writers say distinctly that the *Lord of the Creation, himself a Purusha begotten in the beginning (or before the worlds) offered himself a sacrifice for the Devas*, who by birth were mortals like men but were translated to heaven “by the path of sacrifice.” They add that the same Lord of the Creation was “half mortal and half immortal.” This is a still nearer approach to the ideal of our *Immanuel*. Then they say that the Author of the Universe sacrificed all creatures to Himself and eventually sacrificed himself for them. The meaning of this is doubtless obscure, but it conversely fits in the apostolical idea that “if Christ died for all, then were all dead.” No one can require emancipation unless he were already in servitude. No one can need a deliverer unless he were already in bondage. No one can call for a redeemer unless he were already sold. “To sacrifice,” includes even in Sanscrit the presentation of a victim for that purpose—whether actually slaughtered or not. And victims according to Vedic

ideas may be "redeemed." The verb "niskrinati," which bears that signification, constantly occurs in those writings. When therefore the Author of the Universe is said to have "first sacrificed all creatures to himself and in the end sacrificed Himself also," we may take the first for the sentence of condemnation on all creatures for sin, and the second as a self-offering of the divine sacrificer—for their redemption—Himself the just and the justifier of sinners. This is the only sense we can fairly attach to the passage, itself a commentary of a still more obscure sentence of Rik X. 81, 6.

VEDIC writers tell us again that as sacrifice itself is accomplished by Agni and Arka (terrestrial fire) they reign at the time as "one divinity, which is death," the completer of sacrifice. The same divinity then conquers Death, and Death cannot again get at its victim. Death is defeated by death, and becomes itself the immortal self of the Victim.

SUCH language reminds us of Him who partook of flesh and blood, "that through Death he might destroy him who had the power of death"—who really "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." Heb. II. 14, 2 Tim. I. 10.

SACRIFICE as a practical religious rite has been declared in texts already cited, an image or reflection of Creation's Lord, the Divine self-Sacrificer. As such it becomes in the language of the Veda "the annul-

ment of all sin." The Vedic writers therefore exult with the triumphant exclamation—"O death! as to thy thousand myriads of bands by which mortals are destroyed, we annul them all by the mysterious power (*maya*) of sacrifice."

Here then we have a teaching the rudiments of which are scarcely different from the rudiments of Christianity, and which can receive its accomplishment from Christianity alone. But the rudiments were never set together to form a practical system in the Veda itself. They remained as scattered fragments indicative of some primeval Revelation, traditions of which had reached the ears of our ancestors, and which they revered as a sacred "Sruti." Those fragments were some of them among the very *arcana* of Gospel Truth, and their embodiment can only be regulated by that Truth. Well then could an eminent man of God say last year at a large assemblage of native gentlemen, "No one can be a true Hindu without being a true Christian."

This may appear a strange saying to some and a hard saying to others, but to the Christian and to the lover of Truth it cannot be an unwelcome saying. Neither the Christian nor the Hindu can repine at this view of the fundamental teaching of the Vedas, because it has a tendency to bridge over the gulph which has so long precluded the possibility of union between men of the West and East, without violence to their respective principles of Religion.

The Christian with the wide sympathy of the Gospel which incites him to invite all nations to the faith of Christ can only rejoice that the Jesus of the Gospel responds to the self-sacrificing Prajapati of the Vedas, and that his chief work will be to exhibit before his neighbours and fellow-subjects, the true Ark of salvation—that true *boat of sacrifice by which we may escape all sin*. He will only have to present, for the faith of Hindus—the true Purusha “begotten before the worlds,” mortal and yet immortal, human and yet divine, *whose shadow, whose death, is immortality itself*.

THE tolerant Hindu on the other hand, who has in so many departments of knowledge shown his aptitude for the ready reception of Truth, introduced from the West, especially where its rudiments are cognizable in the ancient systems of his own country—who can recognize in the *Principia* the perfect development of the elementary conception of “*ākārshana*” in the *Siddhanta Siromani*, and who can look proudly on Newton carrying out the principles of Bhaskaracharya, cannot find any difficulty, any national humiliation, in acknowledging the historical “Jesus” of the New Testament to correspond to the ideal “Prajapati” of the Veda, and to strengthen the corner stone of the Vedic system, however corrupted by the impure accretions of ages, and disfigured by the rubbish of ignorance and caste-craft.

It is remarkable that while the elementary doctrines are so much alike, there is no rival hierarchy in India,

to declare for the ideal of the Vedic Prajapati. The doctrine of a self-sacrificing Saviour, who by death overcame Death, appears to have vanished from the Sastra without a representative succession. Although we have millions of gods in the Hindu Pantheon, yet we have none who professes to be a substitute or successor of Him who offered Himself a sacrifice for emancipated mortals, and left the institution of sacrifice as a "figure" of Himself. That doctrine has long become obsolete. The position of Prajapati, himself the priest and himself the victim, no member of that Pantheon has dared to occupy. His throne is vacant, and His crown without an owner. No one now can claim that throne and that crown in the hearts of Hindus, true to the original teaching of the Vedas, so forcibly as the historical Jesus, who in name and character closely resembles our primitive "Prajapati." For it must be remembered that the word "pati" has in the Vedas the same literal signification as "pata" (preserver or saviour) and stands, not only for *Lord*, but also for *saviour*, which is the very signification of "Jesus."

I HAVE known good Christian people stand aghast at all these ideas. I do not wonder at it. Even in apostolic times, Peter was impeached for consorting with "men uncircumcised," and much evidence had to be adduced before the brethren could hold their peace and glorify God, saying, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

So LONG had Hindus been classed with inveterate idolators and Gentiles that one may well be amazed at

finding the germs of Christian mysteries in the *heathen* Vedas. But you *cannot kick against the pricks*, you cannot deny stern facts, you cannot shut your eyes to plain actualities in the face of such passages, and if you indiscriminately cry against the whole gentile world of which you yourselves form component parts, you may be answered like the Jewish prophet who had complained against his own people. 1. Kings xix, 18.

EXTREME optimism may be bad, but extreme pessimism must be worse. No one can, no one ought, to repine at the evidence, *de facto*, of greater—far greater—essentially greater light having been vouchsafed by Providence, somehow, to certain Indian Rishis than we had, *a priori*, reasons for expecting. The distinguished man who bore the name of “king of righteousness”—who has been honoured as a type of Christ, to whom Abraham himself had paid tythes, was himself but a *Gentile*.

As to those gentlemen whose transcendental notions will not brook submission to the dicta of a primeval or any Revelation, who would freely magnify what is good in Hinduism if it could only be done by extending and exalting the range of human Reason—who would not allow that primitive Hinduism ever taught prayers to God for averting moral evil or for remission of sin *—who would either explain away all ideas of a divine sacrifice or treat them as legends beneath con-

* See Max Muller's *Hibbe's Lectures* p 204

sideration—to such persons I could only say that they sin against their own canons of historical Research and of the range of human Reason. All scholars are agreed that in the earliest of Hindu times, Varuna was reckoned as the Supreme God, and that Indra afterwards supplanted him. Now it was during Varuna's reign and in prayers addressed to Varuna that we find petitions such as the following :—*viz.*,

“O KING VARUNA! thou who hast hundreds of thousands of remedies for human bondage, have mercy on us. Bind at a distance behind us the genius of Sin and pardon offences already committed. O most wise Asura! we pray unto thee with prostrations, sacrifices, and oblations, that thy wrath may be assuaged! Remaining with us remit unto us sins already perpetrated.”

HERE ~~we~~ have Ahura-mazda (for the *most Wise Asura* is only the Sanscrit form of the Zoroasterian Ormus) accosted under the name of Varuna for the expulsion of the Spirit of unrighteousness and for remission of sin. The prayers betoken the very earliest period of Vedic antiquity when the Indians were full of Zoroastorian ideas imbibed during their sojourn in Western Asia, side by side with the Iranians—and yet those whose principles could not allow such development of religion at so early an age can make up their minds to belie all history and tradition against their own rulings!

THOSE who have often expressed wonder at the early progress of rational thought in the Vedas, and

endeavoured to wean Western intellects from "Jewish fables," are bound to give a better account of the Vedic descriptions of Sacrifice, as a remedy for sin, than representing them as mere "legends," and thus at their own pleasure alternately complimenting Brahminical thought and decrying Brahminical fables. Such shifts indicate neither historical research, nor philosophy, nor logic or ethics either, but a purile vacillating fitfulness on which no reliance can be placed.

To European industry under the patronage of her Empress, India is indebted for the recovery of her Vedas. To European research she owes a flood of light thrown on her history and philosophy. But if that research be now chained by arbitrary rules for discarding or explaining away whatever savours of "Jewish fables," or the old fashioned traditions and principles of revealed religion, at once the pride and comfort of civilized Christendom, then such servile research can never be promotive of Truth or conduce to the improvement of humanity.

THE learned editor of the Rigveda Sanhita self had acknowledged in one of his earlier works "monotheism that preceded the polytheism of the Veda, and even in the invocations of their innumerable gods the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the mist of an idolatrous phraseology like the blue sky that is hidden by passing clouds." The conception was most true, and if properly improved it might have led to substantial results. Instead of

the faded form in which after more than a quarter of a century's incubation it appears in the *Hibbert Lectures* of 1879, it might have strikingly verified another of the accomplished Professor's conceptions that *the Veda belongs to the history of the world and of India*. The *Rig-veda* does appear to have arisen in a state of Society where monotheism may be said to have prevailed. We have shown how the Indo-Arians had received the idea of one God from the Zendic Ahura Mazda, and Sanscritizing his epithet by "Asura-Pracheta," had invested Ilim, under the name of Varuna (*Ouranos* or Celestial) with the attributes of Creator and of forgiver and destroyer of sin (R v. 1. 21). We have seen also that our ancestors while they accepted Ahura-Mazd, and found a substitute for Angro Mainus or Ahriman, in their Niriti or genius of unrighteousness, did not declare the latter an uncreated or eternal being. That was certainly a system of monotheism. Zoroaster acknowledged two principles, and as the evil principle, who was always spoiling the creations of the Good principle, and leading men into sin was represented as a serpent, our attention is naturally drawn to the scriptural account of the Fall, and the very name *Asura*, which, as has been said before, was the same as the Assyrian *Assur*, and the latter again taken from "Ashur" of the Bible, the monotheism, in Dr. Max Muller's conception, of the Ancient Arians, was probably of the same mould as the monotheism of "that shepherd" who was divinely inspired "on the secret top of Oreb or of Sinai."

CH a result might have been arrived at by care-
 esearch with a single eye directed to the
 of the truth. *No other result could verify such*
ception. Where is the monotheism, other than that
loses, "the remembrance" of whose God, at once One
Infinite, could have broken "through the mist of the
latrous phraseology of the Vedas" ? The learned
 Doctor's conception of a pristine monotheism has
 only been sublimated into an empty idea in the *Ribbert*
Lectures. "The ancient Aryans felt from the begin-
 ning, ay, it may be more in the beginning than after-
 wards, the presence of a *beyond*, of an *infinite*, of a
divine." Is this all the result of the previous con-
 ception ? It may mean *pantheism*—it may stand for
 "Henotheism,"—it may be consistent with polytheism
 no less than monotheism.

To AN unbiassed investigator, to a serious inquirer
 who cares for facts, not frothy declamations, in whi
 words are made to *conceal* instead of *indicati*
 thoughts and ideas, it will not be difficult to find h
 the Vedas confirm and illustrate Scripture traditio
 and Scripture facts, and how Christianity fills up the
 vacuum—a most important vacuum—in the Vedic ac-
 count of sacrifices, by exhibiting the true Prajapati—
 the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the World.*

THE END.

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