

that stimulates scientific ardor to victory. So the uncomprehended monuments of remote ages are closed lips quivering with secrets whence all living thought awaits the solution of its problems. The law that "nothing is lost" becomes an inspiration. A nation, a religion, a civilization which has run its course and died in its due time, because it had no more to do or say but to be the soil of new, higher growth, has a nobler second-life of uses before unsuspected; because the time has come for that help to universal man which it held in reserve that latest generations may learn, to their admonition, what they had failed to allow it. The Arab in his tent under the Babel-mound muses in awe on the genii and the giants that dwelt on earth and raised the heaven-scaling pile. But what is his dream to the magnificent piles which science has evoked from this rubbish of ages, covered with records that correct our religious traditions, — their very decipherment a miracle of toil, and an epic triumph of thought!

Say what our self-complacent Sum of all ages may, the education of the human race does *not* detach it from its infancy. The larger its culture, the surer its track leads to the hidden springs of origin, — to those first lessons which contain guarantees of its best. After dark ages of despotism, superstition, suppression are past, comes wider diffusion than ever of the thirst to read the buried history of man. What universal interest in the runes and hieroglyphs, in the languages of forgotten tribes, in survivals of earliest life, in the real age and structure of the Bibles of races and the origins of beliefs, — in the disentanglement of Troy, of Cyprus, of Mycenæ! It is not simply parallel to the passionate press of physical science towards primitive forms of life; that first impression of universal law is intensified by this morning in the history of *mind*; this first mountain-top in the wilderness of man's exodus from the dark, — inextinguishable torch-bearer even there; this



flash of magnesium light on the secrets of human history; Aladdin's castle, realm of dwarfs and volcanic laboratory illumined at the touch of a culture to whose perfection the whole past has wrought as one man. The dust-garments unrolled, the figured fragments rise as ideograph and cuneiform; they break their long silence with far-off poetic report of man's dealing with fate and freedom, that shall live when the lenses and reagents that now construct our physical science shall have given place to new; just as the pen, itself more potent than the sword of past ages, has here given way as revealer of knowledge to the mightier spade.

In these resurrections that attest the conservation of historical forces, that human energy which has broken the spells of Nature is not so wonderful or startling as the apparently human sympathy of Nature's responses to its call. The hint is always forthcoming to further them; the witchhazel bends in the explorer's hand above the element he needs. Key leads on to key, till the subtlest combination-lock yields, and the magic of science proves far more at home in the field of interpretation than did the old claim of miracle to eminent domain over all secrets and all obstacles. The true Sphinx's lips are ever half open; her eyes expect discovery; for her secret is nothing else than the seeker himself.

The story of a vast civilization, which has since been not extravagantly called the key of human history, recorded with a careful divination, it might almost seem, of its future uses, on the palaces and rocks of Mesopotamia, and even on the gigantic-winged creatures that guarded them, in a mosaic setting of terra-cotta and alabaster, lay buried under the dust of two thousand years. The complicated letters of the record, though combined out of a single elementary form, the wedge, as Babylon out of her tiers of brick, had so perished from memory that this mere



wedge-mark of the chisel in the damp clay was imagined to be an arrow-head, holding some subtle meaning, — a national emblem, or even a symbol of the Christian Trinity! At the opening of the present century, Babylon and Nineveh were still "heaps;" here and there a fragment gave hints to thoughtful travellers, — Niebuhr, De Sacy, and others, — that these lines must read from left to right; that the single wedge meant division of words; that the series most frequently occurring was probably of the same meaning with a haughty formula of self-assertion already familiar in the records of Sassanian kings. "King of Kings" as a heading was the earliest of conjectures by Grotefend. Note, it was the phraseology of *personal will and worship* that first leaped into significance before the explorers of these monuments raised by the same all-mastering element of religion in the beginning of its career.

The royal inscriptions of Persepolis were in fact the starting point of discovery; letter by letter the holy name of Ahuramazda was spelled out, and the path of discovery opened with the alphabet of Persian cuneiform. When Grotefend read, at Göttingen, in 1802, the earliest academic essay on this form of writing, on the same occasion with Heyne's description of the first discovery in hieroglyphics,¹ the Zend scholarship of Lassen was opportunely at hand to correct those first results. First came the dim suspicion of Rich, 1820, that the huge mounds which he saw from the shores of Bagdad were the ruins of Nineveh. Then Botta struck the spade into Khorsabad hills, and, behold! a palace burst into view, with its royal legend in arrow-head type, "Sargon, the mighty King of Assyria's land." Then, at the touch of Layard, afterwards of Loftus, the ancient Calah rose from the oldest of Assyrian tombs, from the giant heaps of Nimrud; and then Nineveh her-

¹ Mahaffy: *Prolegomena to Ancient History*, p. 175 et seq.



self, palace after palace, with the record of her kings Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, Asshur-bani-pal, — the art and science and religion of races, doubling the realm of history and reconstructing it by their resurrection. Then came the French to fix the site of Babylon, to open up the great Bel-Temple of Birs-Nimrud and the matchless glories of Nebuchadnezzar's art, and restore in full figure the old palaces of the ancient kings. Rawlinson, Lenormant, Smith, and the interpreters followed; and the mightiest achievement of modern discovery, the decipherment of the cuneiform, was made possible by these inexhaustible materials which have been busying the ardent brains of thousands of scholars throughout the civilized world for the last thirty years. It is no part of my present task to follow the track of these preliminary explorations. It is the significance of the cuneiform, past and to come, as a factor in universal religion, as we have explained that term, which confines our present attention.

In half a century the trilingual Behistun inscription, transcribed and translated by Rawlinson, aided by the rocks of Susa and Van, was serving a purpose as important as that rendered in Egyptian studies by the Rosetta stone. Grotefend had divined that the second and third columns were translations of the first, or Persian: the second, that of the non-Aryan Medes, had been referred by Westergaard and Norris, and more fully by Oppert, to the Turanian family of languages;¹ and Layard and Botta had given data for showing the third to be Assyrian. The phonetics of these two had been found, not to be alphabetic like the Persian, but syllabic, and to be mixed in a confusing way with ideographs or pure picture-signs; and the complication was further increased by Rawlinson's discovery that the same signs

¹ Altaic, according to Oppert, or Casdo-Seythic, belonging to the non-Aryan portion of the population of Media. Oppert: *Le Peuple et Langue des Medes* (1879), pp. 7, 8.



were not only used, now in the one way, and now in the other, but that they had ever varying phonetic values.¹ Then this difficulty was in part removed by the appearance of numerous versions of the same proper names and ideas on different tablets;² and still further by the discovery of lists of syllabaries from the wonderful library of King Asshur-bani-pal, seventh century before Christ, opened up by Layard in the Nineveh palace in 1850. George Smith's account of his prodigious labors in gathering into connected form the Chaldean literature on these tablets of Nineveh, is wonderfully suggestive of the sympathy of Nature with the aspirations of the human mind. Asshur-bani-pal, the old world-conqueror, is moved to gather carefully, to arrange and entitle the records of a past civilization on library shelves. What cares Nature for his pains? Dust gathers over him and his palaces. Nineveh is a buried dream. No miracle preserves these old bits of clay, or their forgotten characters marked with chisels three thousand years ago. Geological and chemical laws cared no more for them than for the sweepings of his stables. They had gone their way well on towards the dissolution that awaits all forms, when, lo! the mind of man remembers them, and comes back to claim its own. The restorers are not daunted, for the light and liberty that prove humanity the sovereign of Nature, the crown of her laws and ends, inspire them; and out of the very shreds and patches of ruin, the old race, its genius, its functions, its bearing on most religions as their cradle and teacher are all revealed, passing into school books and common speech. Here were at least ten thousand clay tablets, — the collated law, grammar, history, science, lexicography, mythology of fifteen hundred years, preserved for twenty centuries more, to solve these hard

¹ Hincks: *The Polyphony of the Assyrio-Babylonian Cuneiform*.

² Schrader: *Keilschriften und Gesch.*, p. 41.



problems of interpretation: fragments broken by fire and by falling ruins, and by searchers for treasure, into bits innumerable, mutilated, scattered, infiltrated with water, choked with crystals; yet waiting their hour, in the course of historic evolution, to reconstruct piecemeal a buried world of literature and religion, and to serve modern liberty of thought by bringing the supernaturalist's Bible of Christianity into the natural chain of historic cause and effect. How those Assyrian world-masters worked in their proud self-assertion to ends they did not know, when they strove so patiently to preserve their work by fixing the tablets into walls with the written side turned inward; by repeating the inscription on an outer coating of the tablet;¹ by accumulating copies; by grammatical and verbal lists to assist the reading of forms of speech even then becoming extinct; by versions of important documents in all the principal languages of the empire; by penalties invoked at the close of every record on any future destroyer or alterer of their purport, first makers of an infallible Bible text; by the permanent nature of the wedge marks, still legible, after the wear of ages, by the shadows they cast,²—"Non omnino moriamur"! That vast library was no word of Jahvistic Bible revelation in the Hebrew tongue. "Palace of Asshur-bani-pal, king of the world, to whom Nebo and Tasmit [god and goddess of science] have given ears to hear and eyes to see the virtues." No miracle has protected these frail tablets of clay, symbols of mortality; every natural law of decay has done with them after its kind; yet enough remains when at last the patient restorers of Babel have come to her "heaps," to refute the tale of Jahveh's curse, and to make the dead dust a living soul. The palpable encroachment of desert and flood upon a narrow strip of

¹ Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, i. p. 68.

² Loftus: *Chaldea and Susiana*, p. 190.

cultured plain could easily suggest to Isaiah the way in which Babylon might become "heaps;" but what prophet had predicted this her resurrection?

Then came the fruitful competitions of interpreters, — Lassen, Burnouf, Rawlinson, Hincks,¹ — and the splendid track of verification which has established the substantial correctness of their method.² The Semitic character of the Assyrian records, and the true pronunciation of divine names, was apparent from the syllabaries; the names of kings were more or less verified by Hebrew and other writings. A far greater amount of resource than had sufficed for Egyptological studies came rapidly to hand. In 1857 Rawlinson, Hincks, Talbot, and Oppert made four independent versions of seven hundred lines;³ and they were so similar to each other that the validity of the general method was beyond dispute.⁴ However dubious

¹ Grotefend's discovery of the names of three kings and a Persepolis alphabet in 1802 was so far in advance of a time when Tychsen and Münster and others failed to decipher these monuments, that it was thirty-two years before these discoveries "could be resolved or tested." Mohl's *Vingt-sept ans d'histoire des études orientales*, i. 547.

The first researches which threw real light on the cuneiform inscriptions were not those of Layard and Rawlinson, but those of Schultz, copies of the Van inscriptions, whose papers were saved by Mohl, and urged upon the French government in a valuable report, 1840. Grotefend had proved that the Persepolis tablets contained a language of vowels and consonants, making names and titles of Darius and Xerxes; and then, 1836, came Burnouf's and Lassen's memoirs on Niebuhr's and Schultz's copies. Rawlinson had but one letter to discover. (Müller's Preface to Mohl's *Vingt-sept ans d'histoire des études orientales*, p. xi.). Mohl stirred up students and explorers, — Botta and others, — to study the three cuneiform alphabets, and also Colonel Rawlinson, who possessed the one copy of the Behistun trilingual (xxiv.). But Rawlinson held back. Then Flandin and Coste published their inscriptions, 1844. Botta's immense spoils of Khorsabad were sent to Paris, 1845. Then Layard's work, stimulated by Botta's, began, 1846. Rawlinson's translation of the Behistun appeared in 1847. When Rawlinson sent the copies to London, Norris, the Secretary of the London Society, "could detect the faults of writing in the copies with the same certainty that a Latinist could correct the faults of a Latin inscription" (xxviii.). Layard prosecuted his magnificent researches at Koyunjik, published 1851; then at Babylon.

"Cuneiform writing had probably been invented at Babylon, transported thence to Nineveh, and applied to the Assyrian tongue; then later carried to Ecbatana, and applied to the Median tongue; and finally adapted to the Persian at Persepolis." Mohl's *Vingt-sept ans d'histoire des études orientales*, i. p. 173. It gradually became simplified, till at Persepolis it was alphabetical.

² Ménant: *Éléments d'épigraphie assyrienne*.

³ *Report of Oriental International Congress*, 1873, Tom. ii. p. 126.

⁴ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, June, 1874.



many passages are still confessed to remain, every day reveals some new and positive feature of Assyrian and Babylonian history; the original texts are translated for the common reader in Europe and America, and their testimony is transforming the Bible into secular teaching even for Sunday-schools.¹

The early death of George Smith left his translation of the Babylonian Genesis-legend and mythical epopee a mere collection of fragments, pieced together with unverified conjectures; but fresh copies and surer readings are fast supplying what was wanting in this and other records; the indefatigable industry of Ménant, and the productive genius of François Lenormant, are seconded by the numerous collaborateurs of the Society of Biblical Archæology. Oppert, Schrader, Ménant, and Sayce are bringing Assyrian grammar into the line of exact science; and as the many tracks of a great inquiry are sure to converge in some adequate mind, so in the interpretation of cuneiform literature, the first creative day has come to its fulness in Eberhard Schrader.² The confession by this eminent Assyriologist of the many sources of error to which cuneiform decipherment is still subject, gives great value to his positive claims in behalf of its results.³ Two extremely important conclusions may be considered assured by his careful studies. The first is the presence in the Assyrian column of the inscriptions, of a third form of Semitic speech besides those already known as the Western and Southern forms. The second is the fact that the number of passages in these inscriptions in any material manner confirmatory of the Biblical records is very small indeed, in view of the vast amount of material

¹ The English version, as given in the *Records of the Past*, is recognized as on the whole being the most literal and having least openings for inevitable diversities and readings. Delattre: *Inscriptions Historiques de Ninive et de Babylone*, p. 56.

² *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xxiii., xxvii.

³ Schrader: *Keilinsch. und Gesch.*, 1878.



now opened; while the unreliableness of the Books of Kings and Chronicles, especially in matters of chronology, is indicated by contradictions almost equal in number to the confirmations. This scholar admirably says: "A thousand times better that a manifest incongruity between the Bible and the inscriptions should be admitted, than that it should be forcibly concealed either by twisting the Bible or breaking down the monumental records."¹

That what was previously known from the Bible and other sources of the geography of Palestine, as well as that of the neighboring countries, even to Arabia and Egypt, should receive ample confirmation from the inscriptions, is no more than was to have been expected.² Other matters of conspicuous interest, such as the subjection of Israel to Assyria, hardly needed such confirmation. On the other hand, the few references in these inscriptions to the relations between Hebrew and Assyrian kings contain many probably irreconcilable differences from the Bible story. The Assyrian chronology, as contained in the "eponymous lists,"—of which there are many independent and parallel forms, and which are not only in agreement with each other, but absolutely confirmed by a very credible witness, the so-called Canon of Ptolemy,—for the space of two hundred and twenty-eight years, is in so strong opposition to the Bible that harmonists have been driven to the desperate expedients of doubling names in the lists, and imagining breaks extending over nearly fifty years, at the very epoch when such a violent proceeding was least permissible.³ For, unfortunately, the chief differences between the Biblical and the cuneiform annals come precisely where the latter are most thoroughly fortified by the above-mentioned Canon; namely, in the times

¹ Schrader: *Keilinsch. und Gesch.*, p. 95.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 90.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 300-304.



of Sargon and Sennacherib, where the variance amounts to thirteen years.¹ Hebrew kings² whom the inscriptions show to have belonged to the time of Tiglath-pileser (745-727 B.C.), are placed by the Bible previous to his reign, and made contemporary with an Assyrian king Phul, whose name is not to be found on the monuments, and is irreconcilable with the "eponymous lists," leading to the most arbitrary constructions of the history of Nineveh by distinguished Assyriologists.³ To complicate the difficulties, the Book of Chronicles ascribes to Phul what belongs to Tiglath-pileser.⁴ There are obstacles in the way of identifying the cuneiform *Ahabbu* with the Hebrew Ahab.⁵ Equally illustrative is the attempt to identify the *Belshazzar* of Daniel with the *Nabonidus* of the cuneiform and of history, recorded as the king of Babylon at the time of its capture by Cyrus. This has been done by supposing that Nabonidus had a son named Belshazzar, who, "as he seems to be commander-in-chief of the army[?], probably had greater influence than his father, and so was represented as king." Though no such name as Belshazzar is to be found in the tablet, "it is evidently he who is meant by the king's son with the army in Accad."⁶ Yet the allusion to the king's son, and to other officers and soldiers, is of the most incidental character.

¹ Schrader: *Keilinsch. und Gesch.*, p. 344.

² Menahem and Pekah. So Azariah and Ahaz.

³ Schrader: *Keilinsch. und Gesch.*, p. 347. Also Delattre: *Inscriptions Historiques*, pp. 64, 69.

⁴ Schrader: *Keilinsch. und Gesch.*, p. 437, 441.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 356-371.

⁶ The differences in translations are most obvious in the readings of ideogrammes which represent proper names, and may have one or another force. Thus the same God is rendered by Rawlinson *Yul*; by Ménant, *Bil*; and by Sayce and Schrader, *Rimmon*. *Iudubar* is a name given by Smith, provisionally, for a Sun-hero whose real name has not yet been learned. But there is equal difference about the meaning of the names of metals found in the inscriptions, which is natural enough, since the same is true of the metals and precious stones mentioned in the Bible and on the Egyptian monuments. So with wild beasts in the records of royal hunts, in which different translators render the same word by buffaloes, elephants, and emir, rhinoceros, and wild boars. See various translations of Tiglath-pileser I. Also Delattre: *Inscriptions Historiques*, pp. 38, 60.

What would be of most importance for the Bible apologists is some confirmation, direct or indirect, of the miraculous dealings with which the thread of Old Testament history is so thickly hung; but of this there is not a shadow. The frantic endeavors of the harmonists to make out of the few natural points of connection between the Old Testament and the Babylonian and Assyrian records what they call "confirmations of the Sacred Scriptures," consist in forcing the parallelism by wild conjectures in order to deduce a wholly unwarranted conclusion; namely, that the record of the Bible, especially the Genesis story, is historically true. It is further necessary to assume, with Rawlinson and Geikie, that the Hebrew only has the original revelation, which the Chaldee has perverted. The confusion here is palpable; the agreement, were it one and much greater, would only prove the antiquity of the myth among Semitic and probably other nations, but by no means afford additional argument in favor of a historic basis, especially against the researches of science. Yet this is the current logic of the harmonizing apologists.

A still more perilous crack in the system is the persistent forgetfulness or repudiation of the fact that the superiority of the Hebrew Bible over every other Scripture of the world, which is the objective point of their studies, cannot be proved by the imperfections of the world Scriptures as known to us at present. Thus Geikie, in his exaltation of the Bible above the inscriptions of Egypt and Babylon, because it was concerned "with the cry of the oppressed peoples" and the divine moral law while they were busy with the self-glorification of cruel kings, though true to a considerable extent, omits to recognize that the literature, religious and secular, of the ancient world has been mainly destroyed by Christian fanaticism and neglect, except such references and quotations in writers like



Eusebius and Porphyry and others for polemic purposes, as serve but to assure us of their vast dimensions and to us unsearchable contents.

The ethnic genealogy of Genesis gets no new indorsement, and the names which have puzzled ethnologists in its Noachic lines are as dark as ever. The monuments have nothing to say of Cushites or Hamites, whose very names were, it would now seem, unknown in the lands of Nimrod and of Mizraim, and were obviously chosen for geographical convenience, or to convey those temporary tribal antipathies upon which Hebrew ethnology was so largely erected. Nimrod is unknown to the monuments, spite of the theory that he is to be found in the mythic Merodach, and of George Rawlinson's insistence, upon Biblical authority, on his historical character, and Smith's pointless conjecture that he is the same with the Izdubar of the Chaldean epic, because he was a "mighty hunter" (as were all the Assyrian kings) and is located in Erech, one of "Nimrod's cities."¹ The best authorities have drawn from the tablets a mythical solution of the name, as that of the Babylonian god Merodach, conceived as an epic hero,² of whose title Nimrod is the Hebraized form.

Again, the Chaldeans,—that intangible people, whose haziness is well illustrated by the fact that they are mentioned in the Bible sometimes as colonists,³ sometimes as priests and official soothsayers,⁴ and sometimes as a conquering tribe from the North,⁵—are equally unknown to the monuments till the ninth century before Christ. Within a century they became masters of Babylon,—great conquerors, laying the foundation for the over-

¹ Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, i. 118. Smith's *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 166.

² Lenormant: *Le Déluge*, p. 10. Grivel (*Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.* Vol. iii., part i. p. 140). Sayce (*Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.* Vol. ii., part i. p. 1).

³ Genesis xi. 31: xv. 7.

⁴ Daniel ii. iv. 7; v. 7-11.

⁵ Jeremiah x. 22. Habakkuk 1-6.

throw of Assyria by aid of the Medes.¹ One thinks them Egyptians, who brought arts and letters to the Babylonian Semites; another makes them Cushites, who retained in their language the science and literature of Semitic races, with the specialty of a learned class;² another believes them Aryans.³ But the cuneiform tablets seem to settle the question by describing the Chaldeans as a tribe of Accadians, with which race they were probably synonymous from the beginning; in classical and Biblical antiquity figuring as a learned and priestly class.⁴ But who were the Accadians? This leads us to the most interesting historical results of cuneiform studies.

It seems to be from the lack of other definite sources of information that most modern scholars accept the very uncertain authority of Berosus, the Babylonian historian of Alexander's time, as to the succession of dynasties which succeeded his monstrous epoch of prehistoric kings, four hundred thousand years in duration, — his Elamite or Median dynasty, beginning twenty-two hundred years before Christ, being one of the most recent. The Greek legends of Nin and Semiramis have still less interest.

The primitive civilization of the Mesopotamian basin was not Semitic, but Turanian or Ugro-Finnic. This is now recognized by the best scholars, — by Oppert, Sayce, Lenormant, and Schrader.⁵ A race, whose language is agglutinative, allied to the Finnic, Tartar, Etruscan, it may be, — at all events to the Mongolian family, — brought the earliest cuneiform writing to this region,⁶ composed its earliest annals, developed a system of magic out of which

¹ Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic* (Eng. ed.), pp. 339, 340.

² Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. chap. iii. Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, — Article "Chaldeans."

³ Reuan: *Semitique Language*, i. 67.

⁴ Lenormant: *Essai . . . des Fragments Cosmogoniques de Berosus*, pp. 52-53.

⁵ Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, i. 55; Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic* (Eng. ed.), p. 352; Schrader (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xxix. 49).

⁶ Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 359.



came the ascendancy of the Chaldees, and laid the foundations of its mythology.¹ The Accadians seem to have descended from Elam, bringing with them the picture-writing from which the cuneiform was developed. Not Semitic, as the Genesis table represents them, the Elamite tribes spoke Turanian dialects, and derived the name Elam from the Accadian *Numma* (Highlands), translated into Semitic. They were from earliest times continually invading Babylonia, where they established dynasties, — 2280–1270 B.C. Even down to the sixth century there were wars between the two nations. From these tribes came the astronomy of the Semites, who located the zenith over Elam. Assyrian art also came from them.

On this race, who call themselves mountaineers (*Accadai*), arose that largely Semitic-Assyrian civilization, localized more especially in Nineveh, and known to us already through its connection with the Hebrews and the more or less mythical traditions of the Greeks. Whether the Turanian-Accadians were preceded by a "Cephenian" race of Hamitic affinities, from Egypt or elsewhere, spread all over Eastern Asia, and designated in the Bible as Cushites; and whether, as Lenormant supposes, these Cushites of Ethiopia, in its widest extent, placed in Genesis among the children of Ham, were really the oldest branch of the Semitic family, and thus serve to explain the origin of that Semitic influence in Babylonia which speedily supplanted the Turanian exotics; or whether a still earlier black race was found in the country by these Hamitic Semites, by coalescence with which they lost many Semitic traits, but preserved and transmitted Semitic speech,² — are questions of conjecture on which the monuments as yet throw no adequate light. The admixture of Semite and Mongol is, however, distinctly marked in the

¹ Sayce in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, — "Babylonia."

² Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 343, 345.



monumental records, even in the Babylonian sculptures, which are believed by Hamy to show these two ethnic types. Recent Etruscan researches have revealed a type similar to that which is here believed to be Mongolian, lending plausibility to Taylor's theory of the Mongolian origin of the Etruscans.

Cuneiform script proved as susceptible of modification to meet the requirements of Western Asiatic civilization as the Semitic alphabet has to serve the same purpose for European. Its ingeniously varied combinations represented the sounds of the most differing tongues, — of Turanian languages like the Susian, Median, and Chaldean; of Semitic, like the Assyrian; of Indo-European, like the Armenian and the Persian. Like the Chinese, which has been of equal competency for the East of Asia, it was originally composed of ideographic or picture signs, as is proved by an inscription of this kind at Susa, and by the possibility of tracing the process of development, through phases similar to those of Egyptian and Chinese systems, from the pure picture-sign to the largely phonetic.¹

Not less remarkable has been the expansive force of this Mongoloid family, as represented in the East of Asia by the wide extension of the Chinese and of their civilization, and in the West by the immense deposit of tribes speaking dialects of the Altaic or Turanian type, covering ancient Elam,² Chaldea,³ Parthia,⁴ and Media;⁵ and if the "Scythians" of Justin were of the same family, as he believed and as is probable enough, holding possession of the most of Asia for fifteen hundred years.

These analogies are of very great interest in the study

¹ Lenormant: *Manual of Ancient History of the East*, i. 434.

² This is shown by the Susian inscriptions.

³ Accad or Sumir.

⁴ Ctesias says the Parthians were Scythians.

⁵ This has been fully shown by Oppert.



of a family of nations which has played a much larger part in the history of human progress than was even suspected till within the last quarter of a century. But this is not all. The fact that the two great systems of writing in which the chief civilizations of Eastern and Western Asia have found their record,—the Chinese ideographic and the Babylonian cuneiform,—were Turanian achievements, is of even more striking significance. From that ethnic family, which has been regarded as the most materialistic and most devoted to transient and trivial matters, has proceeded a twofold immortality. The ideograph has been developed into the enduring literary medium of a vast living civilization; the cuneiform has been the equally enduring monumental record of a departed one. The ideograph has been the ever-changing ideal of a thoroughly concrete and seemingly unprogressive family; the cuneiform speedily crystallized into a changeless expression of the most ardent and passionate of races, the herald of progress in the Oriental world. One only almost reached the alphabetic stage of writing; but both show that ethics, science, literature, mythology, and religion could seize a comparatively rudimentary form of the art, and fill its child-like picture-moulds with their universal meanings; that intuition and faith found expression in these, long before the slow processes of analytic study out of which creeds and alphabets alike proceed. Both are wonders of the constructive power of mind in early civilization; striking instances of its evolutionary movement, which can be traced back in each to the primitive picture-sign, the language of creative imagination in its germ. They thus bear witness to the continuity of ideal purpose down the course of history. All alphabetic signs, the perfected organ of human speech, were gradually shaped from materials analogous to the picture-sign of these Mongoloid races, who, without aid from Aryan or Semitic,



have brought the picture-sign up to a high point of development, giving it great capability of expression, as well as adaptability to the needs of different races. The Chinese found it competent to express more and more of their concrete detail-experience by an endless intricacy of strokes and figures. The Assyrians and Persians found it equally capable of ideal uses, conveyed successfully through endless combinations of a single constructive element, the graphic wedge. Through the strictness of its laws of structure, as positive in their use of the Chinese pencil stroke and the Babylonian wedge as the laws of architecture in their use of arch and buttress and scroll, came the possibility of a change of material from mere images into phonetic and syllabic signs, at the demand of sound for free representation as script; and the more perfect analysis of sound evolves from these the alphabet as the prime organ of human culture. From the Chinese signs have come several transitory alphabets of Asia, as well as the more permanent alphabet of Japan. And it seems probable, from recent researches as well as from the myth which traces letters to Babylon, that the Phœnician letters, whence the archaic Greek, and through them the present European, were derived from cuneiform originals.¹ Deecke, aided by Schrader and others, has traced them to modified forms of Assyrian cursive, in the ninth century before Christ, and undertakes to show the original names of many of the Hebrew letters in the Assyrian language.²

Cuneiform writing, then, carried the monumental literature of three great linguistic families, — the Turanian, the Semitic, the Aryan; the first represented by the Accadians,

¹ *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xxxi. 102-116. In the same, xl. 75-97 Wütkke, who derives them from simple strokes instead of pre-existing signs, allows that they must have come originally from Babylon. Renan also traces them to Babylon, though not to the cuneiform (*Langues Semitiques*, i. p. 113). Lenormant's theory of Egyptian origin from hieratic signs does not seem to be well sustained.

² The researches of scholars into the Cypriote inscriptions in Greek have suggested the derivation of the Greek characters from the cuneiform.



the second by the Assyrians, the third by the Persians. It concentrated, on the western rim of the Iranian plateau, those diversities of culture by which Iran was distinguished from the simpler uniformities of the far East, and which form the transition to still richer unities of civilization. As these three races, in succession, adopted this form of writing, an increasing force of combination was manifested in it; the ideographic outlines became more artistic; the rectilinear strokes were changed to something like curves. From the oldest Chaldean type, through Assyrian and Median to latest Persian, it reached successively the three great stages of writing, — ideographic, syllabic, alphabetic. It was the inseparable companion of the Iranian mind, and the symbol of its comprehensiveness.

The immense fecundity of the Chinese in secular, and of the Mongols of Central Asia in religious literature, which has been pointed out in a previous volume of this work,¹ prepares us to expect from the kindred race of Accadians, who invented letters and recorded thought in primitive Mesopotamia, evidences of similar mental activity. And as the basis of those civilizations was a developed fetichism, expressed in systems of divination, so we shall not be surprised to find that the earliest cuneiform reports this kind of product on an extended scale. The library of Asshur-bani-pal furnishes fragments of a vast Accadian work on Magic, of no less than two hundred tablets, which "was for Chaldea what the Atharva-Veda was for India." And here, at the beginning of Iranian life, is foreshadowed the grand feature of its maturer consciousness, in the inevitable Dualism of the fetichistic stage of human progress. The moral problem thus early stands as a division of heaven and earth between elementary powers of good and evil, surrounded by which man maintains his liberty and asserts his personality by runic

¹ The Author's *China*, part ii. chap. iv.



spells, talismans, amulets, imprecations, phylacteries, incantations, and sacred names and formulas repeated *ad nauseam*, "boundary which the gods cannot pass,"¹—at whose bidding diseases and bewitchments come and go, while spirits follow the will of each possessor of their secret law. As in later Persian belief the struggle of good with evil is symbolized by the relations of Light and Darkness, so here, though in a less consciously symbolic and ethical form, light and darkness are antagonists; here also the Dualism takes the form of a positive battle. The war of the seven rebellious *Maskim*, cosmic elementary spirits from the abyss, against the life of the heavens and the earth, against gods and men, whose ravages the spirit of Fire by aid of a divine messenger restrains, seems almost a prelude to the later wars of Ormuzd and Ahriman.² Accadian hymns to the protecting deity in Fire are, as translated in Lenormant and Smith, scarcely inferior to those of the Avesta:—

"Fire, supreme chief rising high in the land! Hero, son of ocean,
rising high!
Fire, with thy pure and brilliant flame, Thou bringest light into the
dwellings of darkness!
Thou decidest the fate of everything which has a name. May the
works of the man, his son, shine in purity!
May he be high as heaven, holy and pure as the earth!
Thou who chapest the wicked *Maskim*, who strikest terror into the
wicked heart,
Destroyer of enemies, terrible weapon which chapest the plague, fer-
tile, brilliant,
May the rivers and the countries rest with thee! Expel evil from my
body."
"God of the house, protector of the family!"³
"May the sunrise dissipate darkness, and the evil spirit depart into
the desert!"³

¹ Inscription quoted by Lenormant in *Chaldean Magic*, p. 44.

² Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 18. Smith: *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 398.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 184-186.



"Thou who curest my face, direct my hand, Light of the Universe,
Thou who causest lies to disappear, and dissipatest evil powers, at the
raising of my hand, come at the calls!"¹
"Illuminator of darkness, opener of the countenance (of sorrow),
Setter up of the fallen, supporter of the sick!
Unto thy light look the great gods, and the spirits of earth all bow
before thy face."²

The moral bearings of Accadian Dualism are not less striking in so superstitious a fetichism as this. Smith thus translates a penitential psalm:—

"O my Lord, my transgression is great: many my sins.
O my goddess, my transgression is great: many my sins. The trans-
gression that I committed I knew not.
The forbidden thing did I eat. My Lord in his wrath has punished
me,
I lay on the ground, and no man took me by the hand.
I cried aloud, none would hear me. To my God I referred my dis-
tress, my prayers addressed.
O my God, seven times seven are my transgressions."³

Like the later Zoroastrians, the Accadians derived good and evil from one source, *Mul-ge*, though not by conscious abstraction, but rather by inability to analyze the moral sense and the cosmic elements. Curiously enough, *Zroan*, the name given to the later constructed Unity, has been found in Berosus as mythic personification of the old Turanian race, whose *Mul-ge* certainly prefigures his function in the later faith.⁴ The Fravashi, ideal guardian or higher soul assigned to every one in the Avesta, has his prototype for the Accadian faith in a similar guardian, who, however, shares in the infirmities of his follower.⁵

The evil spirits of the Accadians, like the Hebrew, dwelt in the air and desert, and took possession of the body and

¹ Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 179, 183.

² Sayce's edition of Smith's *Early Babylonia*, p. 24.

³ Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 53, 123, 205.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 182.



mind of man in the form of disease. The future world, as described in Accadian hymns, was similar to the Hebrew *Sheol*; its imprisoned shades dwelt in darkness and dust, with scarce a sign of feeling, yet somehow survived death with a kind of consciousness, and were even sometimes taken up into the company of the gods.

The instinctive anticipation on this lower stage, of principles in which more advanced culture has found high religious meaning, is not illustrated by the dualism of elementary powers alone. The Accadians had a mystical scale of numbers, and saw a secret virtue in holy names. Thus Seven is the number of spirits of evil (*Maskim*). But the fear and the hope rise, even through the superstitions, to trust in the personal will of all-pervading protective being. The Supreme Name, "the secret of Hea," which he teaches to his son, the mediating god, is called "The Number;" and by this hidden law of the world all forces are ordained and ruled. Jewish reverence for an ineffable Name in Cabala and Talmud goes back, says Lenormant, to the magic of the Chaldean Accadians.¹ In the popular songs and agricultural maxims everything has its own fortunate number. Here are the earliest "teraphim," or little figures of gods and animals, believed to carry the mystic potency involved in their creation, and set up in the thresholds and near the bed² as protection, foreshadowing the idolized types and images of more cultured religions. The divining-rod of the Accadian magician anticipates the miraculous staff of Moses, which subjugates those of the Egyptian conjurers;³ and his arrows, those which the Hebrew prophet casts for similar purposes.⁴ We do not here enter into the consideration of the amazing fact that the main portion of that remark-

¹ Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 44.

² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³ 2 Kings, xiii. 14-19.

⁴ Sayce's *Lecture on Babylonian Literature before the Royal Institute*, in London, 1878.



able Assyrian literature, gathered into the royal library of Nineveh, — with its great Bibles of hymns and prayers, of magic, of astronomy, agriculture, mythology; above all, with its wonderful epos containing those primeval stories of Solar Labors, of Titan Wars, of a Flood, and of the Descent of a God to the Dead, on which so much of Hebrew and Greek mythology was probably built, — was translated by the Semites out of this old Accadian tongue. I wish to note a more important historical relation in this earliest Turanian phase of the development of Iran.

Even here we find that intense direction of the religious nature towards persons, as distinguished from principles and laws, which is characteristic of that whole development. Its primitive magic is absorbed in personal wills, good and evil, to be loved, feared, or propitiated: it is one endless conversation with a superhuman world of positive aims, purposes, motives. And it has been noticed by Lenormant¹ that Accadian magic differs from Egyptian in the absence of that identification of the dead with deity, which gave the risen spirit the name of Osiris in Egypt, and even raised the animal world into more than a symbol of eternal things. Of this pantheistic loss of the person in the idea, not a trace exists in Accadian thought. Nor do sacred names, formulas, truths, possess the power, as in Hindu and Egyptian piety, to constrain the superhuman world. The Accadian priest bowed before a superior personality, appealing to this in prayer, and conquering evil by the intercession of other persons, such as Merodach of the older hymns. The sovereign Name itself is not so much a more or less abstract form of power, like the Egyptian names of deity, as a positive living Will. Personal mediatorship begins in the old Chaldean tablets. Silik-mulu-khi,² who cures diseases, drives out demons, and raises the dead,

¹ *Chaldean Magic*, chap. vi.

² Hymns in Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 64, 190, 192, 207.



by knowledge given him as the commissioned son of Hea, — “giving and saving life,” “merciful king of heaven and earth,” — strikingly resembles the mediatorial saviours of Zoroastrianism and Christianity. Silik-mulu-khi never reached the abstract form of the Christ of the Church, was not an idea, a mystic presence, an all-conquering Name, a process of history, — but remained a person only, endowed with beneficent functions, but absorbing an analogous veneration:

“Lord, thou art sublime. What transitory being is equal to thee?
Among gods, the rewarder; among gods, the hero.
To thee are heaven and earth: to thee are death and life.”

He is so evidently regarded as a personage in real life, that the bibliolater identifies him with Nimrod, and the scholar with Merodach. The idea of a mediator, the natural result of a worship of deity as personal will, is traceable, like other Semitic beliefs, to a Turanian antiquity. In its substance, it is precisely what we find it in the relation of the Accadian through Silik-mulu-khi to Hea; namely, that of one individual to a higher individual, facilitated by a third. Transformed, as in Christianity, into a mystic esoteric idea of unity, drawing the mind away from concrete wills to supreme ideas and principles, it loses its essential meaning; and were the change but consistently and completely made, would lose its historic and personal basis altogether, and cease to claim any, or even to admit its possibility. Of this there is no hint in Accadian conceptions; nor even of that interchangeableness of divine names which we find in the Veda dimly foreshadowing the unity of all gods in the impersonal Brahm. Here, on the contrary, every god stands in his own distinct individuality, — spirits without number, inhabiting natural forms, or using natural powers, but not traced back to one principle or grand generalization of the di-



vine. A personal guardian invisibly attends every one, and personal demons possess body and mind. A supreme triad — Anu, Hea, Mul-ge — respectively rule Heaven, Earth, and the Underworld; from the last of whom both good and evil spirits proceed. Even in the dark deeps of Sheól there dwells a living helper, Nin-dar, slayer of monsters and pests. Finnic magic, as described in the Kalevala, shows a similar triad of personal rulers, a similar dualistic struggle of good and evil powers, with similar exorcisms and spells for expulsion of demons, mainly through gods of light. The religions of these kindred races agree also in placing that kind of metal in which each was specially wont to work under a special god. Similar affinities have been sought in another race believed to have been of Turanian type, the Etruscans; and the evidence, both as regards personal names and religious beliefs, is very striking.¹ The solar origin of the Accadian deities and legends becomes more obvious the more they are traced to their elements, revolving around the movement of the sun through his visible and invisible paths, of the upper and under worlds, of day and night, and through the zodiacal signs, of which these Turanian astronomers seem to have been the framers.²

The records of this primeval civilization, which was flourishing in Chaldea at least forty centuries ago, and perhaps a thousand years earlier than that, have been carefully preserved. If the Semitic Assyrians who supplanted the "Accad and Sumir" had done nothing else but translate their contents from the older language and cuneiform type to which they were committed into their own current writing and tongue, not only preserving the originals, but providing for their study the appliances of lexicon

¹ Isaac Taylor in *Report of Oriental International Congress*, 1874 (Trübner).

² Hymns as translated in Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*; and the legends as described by Sayce: *Lecture on Babylonian Literature* before the Royal Institute in London, 1878.

and grammar, and all with a scrupulous historic affection amounting to a filial piety like that of the Chinese in these matters,—they would have entitled themselves to the lasting gratitude of mankind, and can never be charged with having lived to little purpose. And this they have thoroughly done.

The records of the old Accadian kings, from Lig-Bagas of Ur down, are jejune,—mere items of temple and tower-building, their names now given in Semitic, now in Turanian.¹ But their literature was preserved in libraries, located in the numerous cities of Babylonia;² and from these the Semitic Assyrians not only brought the great works of poetry, mythology, science, and magic which they translated and studied so carefully, but also probably derived their own system of free public libraries, like those of Sargon and Asshur-bani-pal, into the inner working of which we can look to-day with astonishment that there is nothing new under the sun. The literary capacity of these old Turanians is perhaps the most remarkable fact in history. The oldest of epics, to which the name of Izdubar has been provisionally given, is an elaborated product of Accadian genius, forty centuries old, and shows how early the poetic faculty of man found inspiration in the great lights of heaven.³ This marvellous epic, with its twelve great legends based on the twelve zodiacal signs, turning their Accadian names into dramatic personifications, and the process of the Sun through their successive mansions into labors of a mythic hero, which are curiously paralleled or repeated in the Semitic and Aryan forms of the Hercules myth, interweaving also the lunar phases in a form which is the prototype of that wide-spread cycle of myths wherein a dying god is

¹ Smith: *Early History of Babylon. Records of the Past*, vol. iii.

² Smith: *Ancient History of Babylon* (Sayce's ed.), p. 19.

³ See account of this epic in Sayce's *Babylonian Literature*; and the poem in Smith's *Assyrian Discoveries* (Sayce's ed.).



mourned by the spirit of love in Nature, and sought by her in the Underworld, — this marvellous epic is worthy to be called the cradle of mythologies, even from what we already know of its contents. Another cycle of Accadian legends shows the perception of cosmical order and law as wrung from chaos by personal Will. The wars of gods against Titans in Greek cosmogony are prefigured in those of Bel and Aku and Merodach against the destructive forces of Nature, and the crude abortions—half beasts, half men—of chaos. How monsters of blind aimless types and demons of the dark were conquered by the sabre of Merodach (lightning); how Tiamat, the abyss-mother of this abnormal progeny, was cloven and cast with her brood into the Underworld; how the storm-Titans fought in vain against the heavenly constructive lights,— was a favorite theme of Accadian imagination a thousand years before Hesiod wrote or Homer sung. This progress by the strife of orderly will against blind force is the key-note of Western thought, struck so long ago on the shores of the Persian Gulf, to attune the soul of man with the signs of heaven. This is what the Sun meant to those first watchers of his triumphant march through cloud and storm and night. So the attempt of the seven storm-spirits to destroy the Moon-god was probably the poetic version of an eclipse.¹ The waning and waxing Moon is a queen of heaven descending through the chambers of the death-realm, putting off her garments of glory one by one, and then, divinely delivered, resuming them as she rises again upon a sorrowing and pining world.² But long before the epic of Izdubar concentrated the faith of the Accadians, they had uttered their penitence, praise, and prayer to the gods of the heavenly bodies and the elemental powers

¹ *Records of the Past*, vol. v. (Fox Talbot's translation).

² *Descent of Ishtar*; Schrader's translation. Also *Records of the Past*, vol. i. (Fox Talbot's translation).



in hymns and liturgies, the fragments of which surprise us by their resemblance, in many respects, to the Hindu Veda and the Hebrew Psalms. The objects of worship are different; but the ascription of personal feeling and will is quite as vivid and real as anything even in the latter, and the mastery of Nature by these indwelling powers impregnates elements and forms with a sympathy as intense as that which they yield to Indra or Jehovah. "The will of Silik-mulu-khi rules the heavens and earth like a sword." "He commands the flower, and it ripens; the sea, and it is calm." The "hero Fire clothes space like a garment, presses up the hills and kindles the darkness." "The overwhelming fear of Anu girds his path in the sky." "Day is thy servant, O Istar, and heaven thy canopy." The transgressor, confessing his sins in the dust, and crying without help from man, "addresses his prayer to his god." "The sin thy servant has sinned, bring back to blessedness: let the wind carry away his transgression. May thy heart, like the heart of the mother of the setting day, to its place return!" These hymns must have been accumulating for centuries.

The most characteristic thing about Accadian civilization is the passion for literature. In its old deluge myth, as reported by the Greeks from Berosus,¹ the Chaldean Noah (Xisuthrus) is bidden to bury the sacred writings at Sippara, his native city, before the flood comes; and there, after he has been taken up to heaven, his followers return to recover them. Oannes, the fish-god from the sea-coast, to whom these primitive Chaldeans ascribe their culture, is expressly said to have brought them letters. Like the Chinese, they invent a historic system of writing,—to the West of Asia what that of China was to the East. Peaceable and industrious, they meditated on the world, and

¹ Abydenus and Alexander Polyhistor; Lenormant: *Le déluge et l'empire Babylonien*, p. 8.



turned the results of patient observation to legend, science, and song of praise. Their science, as yet in the elementary stage in many respects, was at least inspired by the search for causes, by the sense of continuity and development in Nature; and this far more than with the Semitic races, who inherited their culture, and used it mainly in the interest of supernaturalism and national exclusiveness. They not only worshipped the great elemental wholes,—the heaven, the earth, the sea,—but wrought with marvellous energy at the foundations of all future astronomy, agriculture, and commerce. It was certainly Accadian observation which began and continued the great astronomical work of Sargon's library in seventy-two books, inscribed in the name of Bel-Merodach as god of the starry heavens, intermediate between the upper sphere and the earth. Largely magical and astrological, it contained notices of comets, conjunctions, eclipses, lunar and planetary phases, cyclic returns, and even, as some suppose, of spots on the sun. The Accadians were the inventors of our twelve zodiacal signs, with their very names, and of our great divisions of time into the year of twelve months and three hundred and sixty days, and our week of seven days, which they named after sun, moon, and planets, and separated by sabbaths or rest-days, religiously set apart by statute. They named the Milky Way the "long path," and it has been affirmed by decipherers that they made celestial charts, and drew lines corresponding to equator and ecliptic, dividing them into degrees; and Layard found a magnifying lens at Nineveh, on whose historical relations conjecture may well be rife.¹ Fragments of agricultural works point us to them as the industrious founders of the vast system of irrigation and production of which the wealth of Babylonia was the result. We have their *Fasti*; their lists of classified animals and plants, their

¹ This is carefully summarized from Sayce's *Babylonian Literature*.



geographical statistics and lists; their labor songs and maxims, their farmer's calendar, their system of ownership in lands and harvests, and records of their sales and-wills and loans. The far-reaching commercial life of Babylon and Nineveh, by land and sea, must have sprung from this older civilization of industry and culture. They had an architecture of their own, and wrought in textile fabrics and in stone. Their laws guarded the right of inheritance, of private "sanctuary," secured married women's property, gave the mother the highest place in the family,¹ punishing rejection of her more severely than the same sin against the father, though distinguishing against the female in cases of infidelity. They fine cruelty towards slaves, though very inadequately.² They strictly unite Church and State; the statutes of the land are the commandments of Hea, to which the king must conform in their traditional rights, or the nation perishes; judges are placed under oaths and penalties; brothers exhorted to mutual love and generous dealing in the name of the law, and in the temples of the gods;³ and documents of loans, contracts, transfers, and debts are preserved on papyrus leaves as well as on stone. Here is a long advance on patriarchal institutions. The free world of the West begins to appear, singularly enough, in a Turanian race. Well might this historic race dwell on the mastery of chaos in their songs to creative gods of cosmic order and enlightened will. On their firm foundation the religions and cultures of the world were built, and every hour reveals some new root of civilization pushing through this till recently unimagined soil. The far-famed learning, the parent-religion of Babylon, the mysterious gift of the Chaldean in all that the ancient world held worthy of awe

¹ E. Thomas (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, xi. p. 1, new series).

² *Records of the Past*, vol. iii.

³ *Ibid.*, vols. v. vii. (Sayce and Smith).



and wonder, has found at last its historic conditions; and, like all that man most venerates, testifies, with all the Semite's prestige of miracle in its train, to the natural law of evolution, to the truth that all seeming beginnings point beyond themselves.

The Assyrians who transmitted this Turanian wisdom illustrate the same laws. Their respectful heed to it, and their patient care for its preservation by grammatical researches, syllabaries, lists of corresponding words, was a recognition of universal relations, an escape from race-prejudice, surprising at so early a period. It seems to lay the corner-stone of a cosmopolitanism which has since conditioned the progress of civilization. In various forms we shall continue to find this force of combination the special gift of Iran to history. We note it here on the outermost edge of that region geographically, and at its remotest epoch historically, as transition of the human mind to conscious progress. It is here that races successively open their sympathy, — first the Turanian, then the Semitic, and then the Aryan, — a movement, it will be recognized, of immense interest in the social history of mankind. Only the wealth of modern archæological science has revealed what unimagined continuity of social evolution through the sympathy of races, inspired this remote antiquity, — a chaos, it had been believed, of superstition and war. As the heart of Asshur opened to receive the gift of Turan, so the Mede and the Persian afterwards welcomed that of conquered Nineveh and Babylon; until the aristocratic exclusiveness of the Greek in culture and of the Hebrew in religion was confronted by that oceanic tide of nations, that ill-compacted but swarming empire of a thousand tribes, that movable Babylon, gathered around a Cyrus or a Xerxes, to teach the one race a larger synthesis of humanity, and to prepare for the other a historic indebtedness which should in

after times sap that claim of special inspiration which its intense self-confidence had imposed on the civilized world.¹

Even so conservative a scholar as George Smith was at length led, by his Assyrian studies, to accept the conclusion that "antiquity borrowed far more from the valley of the Euphrates than from that of the Nile," and that "Chaldea, rather than Egypt, is the home of European civilization."² It is not less true, as we shall see, that the Hebrew religion and records were inherited products, in very large degree, of the same soil; and that Euphrates, not Jordan, is the deepest source of Jewish and Christian tradition. Renan, who has comprehended very imperfectly the value of cuneiform studies, while allowing that "before the entrance of Indo-European and Semitic nations on the field of history, there were very ancient civilizations, to which we are indebted for elements of industry and a long experience of material life," adds that "all this fades before such facts as the mission of Moses," etc. (1) What part has been played by these older races in directing the religious life of the Jewish and Christian world will be a question for our present inquiry.

It is difficult as yet to determine how large a portion of Assyrian culture was derived from Accadian sources. The development was certainly continuous, and, even without the light thrown on it by cuneiform studies, is clearly traceable to the sea-coast at the mouth of the Euphrates. It is here that all ancient tradition places the earliest social, industrial, intellectual life of Western Asia. Hither, as

¹ The Assyrian kings have left the record of their collecting, copying, and preserving of the old tablets from Babylon and its numerous sister seats of learning, of their careful arrangement of them in libraries in great Assyrian cities under minute care, and of the steady growth of these libraries from the end of the ninth to the middle of the seventh century before Christ. (Sayce's *Smith: Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 278)

² *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 451.



Berosus reports from Babylonian records, came the mythic civilizers, — Oannes and his Annedoti, half fish, half man, — at repeated intervals, to teach rude men the arts of life. Whether these mystic seven represent so many sacred books of an early priesthood, or whether their amphibious type points to "Cushite navigators" bringing Egyptian culture, or whether they are but mythic expressions for the principal Accadian gods, Anu and Hea, out of whose names most of their individual titles appear to be formed, as well as their general appellation (*Annedoti*),¹ or possibly for the Accadian Hea-khan, "Hea, the fish,"² — they are at least natural types of social origin for a race dwelling in the constant presence of oceanic life. The myth belongs to the great cycle, of which Dagon and Derketo, Jonah, etc., are forms. The same causes peopled the Chaldean chaos with sea-monsters, under the sway of Tiamat, "the watery abyss," whence the gods also rise and create. In the mythologies of Asia generally, "ocean" means the atmospheric deep, — space mingling with sea, for the mind as it does for the eye.³ In the Chaldean we first hear the roar of the actual ocean, not as mere infinite space, but as productive living power. There was a fine presentiment of scientific truth in the old cosmogonies that made the sea the parent of all things. It is here, on the shore of the Persian Gulf, that Bel-Merodach, the Semitic god of civilization, had his strife with the sea, as primal chaotic element, cleaving her in two, and then making the cosmic order from his own divided brain. Similar forms of pantheistic evolution, in India and Greece, produce Brahma from a dismembered Prajâpati, and Athene from the split brain of Zeus; and from the dismemberment of a primal giant Ymir comes the Norse

¹ Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 201-203.

² Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis* (Sayce's edition), p. 325.

³ Eckstein on Cosmogony of Sanchoniathon (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, xiv, xv, fifth series).

universe. So strong was their sense of contrast between orderly law and blind caprice, that the bridge from one to the other seemed to the worshippers of Nature to require a tragedy of self-evolution. Its connection in Chaldean cosmogony with the sea marks, as we shall see hereafter, a very primitive form of this recognition of necessary law. Here too were the earliest sanctuaries and sacerdotal colleges, schools of astrology and mathematics.¹ Here was Ur, reputed home of the Hebrews, most Turanian of Chaldean cities; here Surippak, place of books; here Erech, seat of priestly culture; here the ancestral land of the Phoenicians, sea-lovers and merchants of the ancient world, whose primitive world-plasm was the water, and whose gods, like the Chaldean, were fish-men. Here the oldest Semites mingled with earlier settlers of that great Scythic race (Turanian), of which Justin says that in early times they covered all known regions of Asia.² Here Bâb-ilu (gate of the god) became the Semitic name of an old Accadian city, Kâ-Dingira (same meaning), while the kings of Chaldea proper had still Turanian names.³ At last "Asshur went forth and builded Nineveh,"⁴—the god of the nation being put for the nation, and the name of the nation then used, Hebrewwise, as a personal name. And so the two cities, Semite and Semito-Turanian, grow side by side for centuries of rivalry, till the beginning of the eighth century before Christ saw the power of Babylon broken by the great Sargonide dynasty of Nineveh, which ruled as one the two greatest empires of the East. The closing period of the Assyrian empire, from Tiglath-pileser to Asshur-bani-pal, concentrated the fruits of a civilization of fifteen centuries; till, enfeebled by luxury, and harassed by Scythian hordes, it yielded to the hardy mountaineers of Cyaxares the Mede and his

¹ Lenormant: *Fragm. Cosmog.*, p. 220.

³ Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 326.

² Justin: *Historia*, ii. 3.

⁴ Genesis, x. 11.



Babylonian allies. Then Babylon rose again to the zenith, and Nebuchadnezzar made her the heir in full of all past ages.

In the light of recent researches, the statement of Oppert that the two elements of Chaldeo-Assyrian civilization were too closely interwoven to be distinguished, either in respect of language, manners, or worship, appears extreme. But in the most important features of what we may call the Iranian type of historic influence, there were certainly striking resemblances between these two races. To the nerve of Turanian industry corresponded that of Assyrian passion for military success. Alike in Babylon and Nineveh the records of monarchs are one continued boast of devotion to their ideals, whether of overthrowing kingdoms or of erecting shrines. In both the *ziggurat* shoots upward its seven stages, bearing witness to the superstitions of an audacity that must surely have called down the wrath of a jealous God. That Turanian thirst for universal dominion under a single head, which appears alike in the spread of these tribes over Western Asia to build up a vast industrial empire on the Persian Gulf, in the ever-advancing expansion of the Chinese emperor-worshippers to the opposite shore of the continent, and in the shorter-lived conquests of a Tamerlane or a Genghis-Khan, has its analogue in the boundless ambition of Semito-Assyrian kings. In Asshur-bani-pal or Tiglath-pileser, scourger of nations, king of kings, lord of the universe, one with heaven's host, earthly image of a Semitic Asshur or Jahveh, the personal will stands in its pure exclusiveness as absolute human godhood, burning with a nervous fire that consumes all flesh. It is the worship of such exclusive authority that impresses us in the politico-religious life of Assyria, Judea, Arabia, and the world-coveting and world-mastering faiths that sprang from these Semitic centres; and it was inherited, in less extreme form, by the Persian and his



Shāhān-shāh. In all these the nations follow, as the million ripples their tidal-wave, some omnipotent king or messiah, over whom visibly or invisibly hovers his archetypal self, the winged man, whether as Ormuzd, Asshur, or Jahveh, or the Christian Creator and Judge. Thus appears, in its instinctive might, the all-productive worship of will-power, of which modern religions have been the successive waves. The same tribal exigencies in these Semitic empires created Il and Bel, and Asshur and Jahveh, and Arabian Allah.

The gods of Assyria are the older gods of Chaldea, with the conspicuous exception of Asshur,¹ who, as special supreme tribal deity, takes the place before occupied by Bel.² The kings recognize his constant, present will, and rule by his dictating word, intensely sympathizing with his passionate and jealous nature, dedicating to him their conquests and monuments, palaces and temples and public works, in gratitude and joy, and calling themselves, in pride or in loving dependence, by his name.³ No sense of personal relation with deity can be more intensely real, and none has ever inspired greater enthusiasm in conquest and in work. So real and human is Asshur, that Rawlinson thinks he must have been a deified man, a positive "son of Shem" (!)⁴ A degree of similar communion is made possible in the case of inferior gods by the energy of volition of which they are all types of one kind or another. The monumental symbol of Belus is the horned cap of Hea, the god of wisdom, the serpent; of Sin, the crescent or new moon; of Shamas, the

¹ According to Sayce, Asshur means the water-border (of the Tigris). According to Kiepert, *althurā*, in Darius's inscriptions, means "good or just;" originally "even, smooth." *Lehrbuch der alten Geogr.*, p. 159.

² Berosus in Dubois' *Assyria and Chaldea*, pp. 56, 57.

³ Not less than thirty-one of the thirty-nine names of Assyrian kings contain the name or designation of a god, thirteen of these contain the element Asshur: as *Asshur-bil-nisi-si*, "Asshur (is) the lord of his people;" *Asshur-bani-pal*, "Asshur is protector of the child;" and *Buzur-Asshur*, "a stronghold (is) Asshur." Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 248-249.

⁴ Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 3.



four-rayed orb, or creative sun; of Vul, the thunderbolt; of Ninip, the winged guardian man-bull at the gate, and the herculean strangler of lions; of Nergal, war-king, the man-lion; of Nebo, god of learning, the sunrise (?), or the wedge, and on his statues was written "The preserver of those who hear him and bless his name."¹ Merodach is the redeeming god, ever at hand to save and restore,—the Krishna, the Buddha, the Christ, of the Assyrian. The angry gods, especially Anu, stand ready to avenge themselves, to break in with flood and fire and pestilence.² These gods of human will are coupled, human-wise, with goddesses. The Persian's symbol of Ormuzd, a winged warrior, with bow and lifted hand, enclosed in the world-circle, was transmitted to him from the Asshur of the Ninevite kings. Their symbol of growth also, the Tree with the candelabra-branches, or ending upward in the pine-cone or vegetable flame, has descended, by the same right of human significance, in Persian fir-cone and Hebrew burning bush and tree of life. How these gods of the will battle with monsters on the monumental walls,—strange, half-human creatures, fit survivals of the Chaldean chaos, but all terribly alive and instinct with evil purpose! The kings are all Nimrods, and boast their trophies in hunting. They are flames of wrath, besoms of destruction; desolators of nations, forever on the raid. When we think of Assyrian art, we think of a splendid vitality, animal and human, and an intense will; of comparative contempt for mere scenery; of crude and grudging treatment of lower forms of Nature; of every quality that goes with personal force,—strength, grandeur, motive power, ideal purpose, dramatic sympathy with all vigorous life, earnest religious abandon. Everywhere these figures spring to incarnate

¹ Ménant: *Annales des Rois d'Assyrie*, p. 123.

² George Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, the legend of Dibbara, pp. 125-129; the sin of Zu, pp. 115-124.



life; the very cornices are crowned with animals, the scroll-patterns are tree-shoots and winged bulls. In the treatment of living energy, Nimrud and Koyunjik bear away the palm from Greece herself, and show little inferiority in technical science. The horse and his rider thundering to battle with level spear; the resistless king, of one body and soul with his rushing steeds, launching arrows like thunderbolts on the foes of his god; the creatures with outspread wings and eagle eyes that guard the sacred tree;¹ the firm advance and lifted hands of lower gods adoring Asshur; the dying agony of the wounded lion;² the horses dropping slowly with failing knees; the terror of the wild ass, speared, and torn by hounds;³ the oxen moving towards each other with human feeling in every limb;⁴ the guardian bulls, with open jaws and terrible talons,—everything in this art is alive with invincible passion, with triumph or tenderness, aspiration or pain. I cannot but think the exquisite lines of Rossetti, on the Bull-god from Nineveh, have in them more of beauty than of truth:—

“Those heavy wings spread high
So sure of flight, which do not fly;
That set gaze, never on the sky;
Those scripted flanks it cannot see;
Its crown, a brow-contracting load;
Its planted feet that trust the sod: . . .
O Nineveh! was this thy God,—
Thine also, mighty Nineveh?”

In Assyrian art, derived mainly from Babylon, begins the full arch, the column, the arcade, the aqueduct, the tunnel, all forms that inaugurate movement and growth; immense motive force of transportation by pulley, lever, roller, and by human multitudes, working as one man,—

¹ Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, i. 366.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 356-357.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 357.



all delicate forms of working art—designs of metal, as well as grand sculpture in stone. It is an art that presses onward and upward, a steady advance; as the kings grow in ability to the last, so their latest palaces are their best, their last age the golden. The Assyrian *ziggurat* spanned the whole of being,—an observatory and a tomb; a tower ascending to heaven, a monument resting on the dead; it watched the stars above, the graves beneath; that of Babylon held the tomb of Belus, and kings were buried there as gods. Egypt has been supposed to be the parent of Assyrian art, because many symbols are common to the two countries,—the crux, the lotus, the goddess on a lion, the scarabæus, the sphinx;¹ but the spirit in the two styles differs as a flame of fire from a pyramid of stone. So intense is this creative fire, this instant will, that it consumes itself in its burning. Longing for the immortal, it seizes on the most transient materials. With plenty of stone at command, Assyrian architecture followed the traditions of Babylon, and used, to a great extent, sun-dried brick. Its palaces rapidly decayed. The impulsive rulers incessantly dismantled their own work,—each sacrificed that of his predecessor to the ambition of building more grandly, or else to anticipate the swift fate that approached it.² As if the mere doing was enough, they set their gigantic structures on mounds of earth, which gave way under their weight. We have here the grandest testimony to that filiation of races, that continuity of historic growth, which is the inspiration of modern science, and has dispelled the superstitions of special, positive religions. Crete, Cyprus, and Sicily, Mycenæ and Ilion and Corinth, the isles of the Aegean and the shores of Asia Minor every day reveal new evidences that the art as well as the mythology of the classic world was

¹ Layard; *Nineveh and its Remains*, ii. 170, 174.

² Rawlinson; *Ancient Monarchies*, i. 336.



to a large degree an evolution of Assyrian ages. The old Cabiri of Samothrace, the Sphinx, the horned Venus of the recent excavations in Greece, the finely carved cylinders and castings of amulets and seals may be traced across the Ionian Sea to these cradles of thought and work.

What a comment it is on the passionate self-will embodied in king-worship that so little has come down to us of domestic architecture or popular amusement! The people are there on the monuments; they are bringing tributes, drawing colossal bulls to the temples, hurled from the battlements of a besieged city, or shot down by royal arrows: in various ways they are carrying out the instant will of their kings. But hardly more truly so than in the long ages of modern civilization that have succeeded the monarchies of Asia. We must not suppose them ciphers. They do not show the merely conventional uniformity of the Egyptian masses; but more of individual life is represented, as of those who shared the spirit of achievement that leads or drives them on,—and this, though the feelings of family affection are not expressed as in Egypt. The main themes of the inscriptions are campaigns and trophies; but all the products of the Orient are figured there, and prove a stirring world of industry and trade. Hammurabi, Tiglath-pileser, and Sennacherib boast great works of irrigation, “for the good of the people,” helps to their agriculture. Assyrian productive labor must have followed in the Chaldean track. When Sargon says he has cleared forests, opened canals, dug wells, and spread fertility,¹ the claim involves labor of the masses for their own advantage as well as for his glory. The people of Nineveh in the seventh century before Christ traded from India in the East to Tartessus in the West.² Records are extant of private contracts, and even of private banking

¹ Ménant: *Annales des Rois d'Assyrie*, p. 100.

² See Sayce: *Babylonian Literature*, p. 57.



houses.¹ The library of Asshur-bani-pal alone contained a greater amount of writing than all the monuments of Egypt, says Layard.² However this may be, it must have employed thousands of scribes, whose art of preserving records was itself a mark of popular civilization and established industrial culture. So were the provisions we find made for security of contracts and their registration.³ That kings and people were mere voluptuaries is a Hebrew slander, utterly without evidence. A nation that maintained for nearly ten centuries a constantly advancing life of literary, military, and industrial power may be said to have burnt itself out in the fire of its own aspirations, but is surely no subject for our commonplaces on the fall of empires through luxury or depravity. Empires perish when destructive external forces are too strong for their inward force of self-preservation. It was the invasion of Assyria by Scythian hordes in the sixth century that gave her the decisive blow; which was only followed up by Cyaxares and his Medes. There was somewhat beyond the Semite in Assyrian culture, especially industrial culture. No other people of this race, — Hebrew, Arab, Canaanite, — showed such gifts; even the Phœnicians and their African colonies were carriers of products, rather than creators. In fact, what we see in this civilization is the wonderful fusion of an older Turanian mental industry and material constructiveness, shown in the buildings at Babylon, with Semitic passion and will. Both ideal and concrete elements were already provided in Chaldean forms; and to these were now supplied the nerve-conductors that could bring the one to bear on the other in a magnificent outburst of personal Will, lasting nearly a millennium, and taking tribute from hosts of kings.

¹ George Smith: *Babylonian Literature*, p. 51.

² *Discoveries among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 347.

³ Lenormant: *Ancient History of the East*, i. 424.



Nor is this national persistence explicable from the Semitic side. The Semite is unfitted for success in political construction. Arbitrary, capricious, impulsive, he is incapable of giving substantial existence to the State, of instituting law as independent of instant overruling wills. Semitic Assyria herself had this imperfection. The empire of the Sargonides was a "mere congeries" of States, so loosely joined that revolt was incessant, and the main business of the kings was punishing their subjects for refusing tribute, conquering rivals, deporting multitudes, extirpating rebellious dynasties. Shalmaneser made thirty-one expeditions for these and similar objects in as many years. Subject States for the most part retained their local institutions and gods. Centralization, except such as could be effected by royal governors, with ill-defined powers, was beyond these children of passionate desire. What military prowess and wild enthusiasm could do, Semitism accomplished; but other elements, more suited to culture and combination, were required to supplement and counterbalance them,— and these were probably of Turanian origin. Tiglath-pileser boasts that he brought forty-two countries, from the rising to the setting sun, under one government and one religion. The trade, science, art, literature, industry, that drew all interests of nations to centre in Nineveh and Babylon, was rooted in forces older than the Semitic conqueror, and destined to outlast him.

The Assyrian kings absorbed all personalities, suffered no humble emotions or popular expressions on the great monuments of their reigns, were gods on earth, whose physiognomy changed not from age to age, and whose immortality permitted no record of their crimes or defeats. Their "reigns were glorified by official scribes in formulas of great ambiguity, doubtless largely of mythic construction and accepted fiction;" but they were not mere



scourges of mankind. Sennacherib calls himself "one who keeps his oath, guardian of the laws, follower of justice;" glories in opening springs for the people to own, and making aqueducts and water-wheels, and streets splendid as the sun.¹ Sargon's palace, built in the eighth century before Christ, must have been the finest piece of architecture then existing. Asshur-nazir-pal, in the previous century, inscribed upon his, the noblest work of the kind by far then achieved, the prayer, "May this my seat of power endure forever."² They are great, heroic hunters, destroying on a vast scale the wild beasts that in their times encroached on the security of the land and its labors; and they boast of this as they do of victories over empires. Asshur-bani-pal is "strengtheners of the people," and "wars against oppressors." Esarhaddon gathers "the people on lofty seats, and feasts them with the gods."³ Even Tiglath-pileser I. "has mercy on those who submit," and boasts of "improving the condition of his subjects, and obtaining for them security and plenty."⁴ At home there seem to have been few or no revolutions; of popular ones not one is mentioned. Sargon not only allows the towns to follow their ancient ways,⁵ but even rectifies the institutions which they did not like, and encourages their priests to free discussion.⁶ Asshur-bani-pal engraves his moral obligations on tablets, and erects them in his palace for public inspection: —

"If the king in his punishments violates the laws and statutes of the land, the people perish; his fate changes, and another takes his place. In place of unjust kings and judges, the Judge of heaven and earth shall appoint just ones. If the judges take bribes, or officers

¹ *Records of the Past* (Inscription of Sennach.), i. 31, 32.

² Ménaud: *Les Annales des Rois d'Assyrie*, p. 93.

³ *Records of the Past*, iii. 122-23.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ix. 15; vii. 49, 54.

⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 15, 17, 18, 22.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vii. 122.



extort tribute, the land shall go to its enemies. Whether Ruler or Priest or General (he be), whoever is guardian of the Temple, shall revere the shrines of the great gods."¹

It adds to the interest of these remarkable affirmations that they were copied by the Assyrians from an old Babylonian text. In their substance they probably belong to the early Accadian civilization,² and illustrate the high point it had reached in the science of government. This last of the great Assyrian rulers confesses that none of his predecessors had regarded these ancient edicts of the Higher Law.

Here, as elsewhere, the strength of the Semite was in his religious earnestness. His passions are the voices of gods. Ishtar says to Esarhaddon, "An unsparing deity am I." "By her high command" he "plants his standards."³ Insurgents are rebels against the great gods, who visit them with the sword of their anger.⁴ Hear what these world-masters say. "I brought the judgment of Asshur my god on evil men."⁵ "I did for the gods what they willed. . . . I prayed them that I might conquer my enemies; they heard and came to my aid. My great bow that Asshur gave me I took." "I called upon Asshur for life, children, victory, and I put my faith in him."⁶ These kings are ministers of jealous gods, sent to extirpate heretics, to restore the true worship.⁷ Tiglath-pileser enumerates the whole Assyrian Olympus, and ascribes all the glory of his conquests to each and every god at the beginning of his record. They glory in his victories. Sin delays the sunrise to destroy the foes of Asshur-bani-pal.⁸ In return, the conquerors feast their divine masters in palaces, filled with trophies and dedicated to

¹ *Records of the Past*, vii. 119-122.

² *Ibid.*, p. 105.

³ *Ibid.*, i. 50 (Inscrip. of Sennach.).

⁴ *Ibid.*, vii. 55 and 11, 12 (Inscrip. of Sargon); vii. 77 (Inscrip. of Sennach.).

⁵ *Ibid.*, iii. 41.

⁶ *Ibid.*, iii. 104.

⁷ *Ibid.*, iii. 123 (Inscrip. of Esarhad.).

⁸ *Ibid.*, ix. 50.



their service through all generations to come.¹ The resemblance of this Assyrio-Babylonian piety to the Hebrew is obvious. Nebuchadnezzar sings of Merodach as the Psalmist of his Jahveh: —

“When the Lord Merodach made me, he placed my germ in my mother’s womb, and being conceived, I was brought forth. I, thy worshipper, am the work of thy hand; and the empire over multitudes hast thou assigned me, according to thy favor, accorded unto all. May thy majesty be exalted! may it endure in thy worship! In my heart may it continue, and the life which is devoted unto thee!”²

“O God Merodach, says Nēriglissar [sixth century before Christ], Light of the Gods, Father, even for thy high unchanging glory a house have I builded! May its fulness increase! may it acquire treasures! may its tributes multiply from the kings of all nations from the East to the West! May they come up into it forever!”³

Nabonidus prays that the fear of his god (the Moon) may prolong his life; and for his son, that “the great lord may fix his awe in his heart that he may never fall into iniquity, and that his glory may endure.”⁴

On the “black obelisk” of Shalmaneser, Bel is “Father of the gods and the Creator;” Ishtar, “the Perfector of Heroism;” Nebo, the “Father on high.”⁵

Schrader has translated several fragments which show the depth of this Assyrian piety, in the sense of divine help and of retributory law: —

“He who fears not his God, shall like a reed be broken.
He who honors not Istar, his strength shall wither.
He fades as the light of a star is withdrawn;
Like waters of the night he vanishes.”

“Who will teach me thy high command?
Who will do the like with thee?
Among the gods thy brothers, thou hast no equal.”

¹ *Records of the Past*, iii. 123, 124.

² *Ibid.*, v. 142.

³ *Ibid.*, v. 113-115.

⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 148.

⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 29.



"Ilu, my maker, take hold of my arms!
Guide the breath of my mouth, guide my hands,
O Lord of Light!"
"O Sun, at thy command, his sins are atoned for,
His transgressions are abolished."¹

A prayer for the soul of a dying person is translated by Talbot, —

"Like a bird may it fly to a lofty place!
To the holy hands of its God may it ascend!"

and another: —

"The man who is departing in glory, may his soul shine radiant as brass!"
"Bind the sick man to heaven, for from earth he is being torn away.
Of the brave man who was so strong, his strength is departed.
May the Sun, greatest of gods, receive his soul into his holy hands."²

Asshur-bani-pal prays to Ishtar to aid him against an invading king of Elam, addressing her as queen of queens and queen of gods, and imploring her presence on the field of battle to turn the tide in his favor. She replies, "Fear not; according to thy prayer, thy eyes shall see judgment." And "in the vision of a seer she speaks to him as a mother to a child."³

The king prayed directly to his gods, without intermediation of priest, and consecrated his kingdom to their service; yet had faith in the dreams of seers, at least when they predicted him victory over his foes.⁴ Asshur-bani-pal pays special court to Ishtar, queen of the gods, terrible in battle, who appears to his seer after his own invocation of her, with halo and bow, and like a mother in travail to bring him forth.⁵

¹ Schrader: *Höllenfahrt der Istar*, pp. 88, 96, 97, 105.

² *Records of the Past*, III, 134, 135.

³ *Ibid.*, vii, 67, 68.

⁴ *Ibid.* (Asshur-bani-pal), i, 77; ix, 52, 59.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ix, 52.



This religion survives death. The spiritual part of man (*utukku*) dwells in a dreary underworld, yet is sometimes said to be raised to the heaven of the gods, as are the heroes of the epic of Izdubar. Certain passages in a hymn concerning feasts, blessings, and rest from care, supposed by Lenormant and others to refer to a future life, are believed by Schrader to describe the future prosperity of Assyria.¹ But there is no question that the conception of death carried with it the meaning of utter helplessness and gloom. It is that which we find in the Phœnician tombs and the Hebrew scriptures,—the underworld, or Sheôl. The grave leads to darkness, to the house men enter, but cannot depart from; the road men go, but cannot return; abode of famine, where earth is their food, where ghosts flutter like birds, and dust lies undisturbed on the threshold.² There an angry goddess punishes the intruder from the realms of day, even though a queen of heaven. Even in these abysses there is a fountain of life, of which Ishtar drinks and is released. For she is the goddess of love, who has descended there because "the son of life" has died, and for Nature's sake must be recovered that all things perish not. But whether all inconspicuous persons passed at death into this doleful Hades, and whether, as the epic would imply, heaven was the reward only of the great, of rulers, divines, or conquerors, is matter of doubt. Heaven is divided into spheres, which testifies to personal interest in the here-after. The ghost can be brought back to earth, to speak and teach.³ There are passages in which the idea of death brings even poetic sentiment. It enfolds Heabani "like a garment." When the "righteous man" dies, "may he rise on high, with garments silver white, ascending to the

¹ *Records of the Past*, vii. 133, 134. Lenormant: *La Divination*, p. 153.

² *Descent of Ishtar. Records of the Past*, i. 145. Lenormant: *Origines d. Hist.*, pp. 174, 175.

³ Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 167.



Sun, greatest of gods!"¹ But so far as now appears, there is no distinction of good and evil, no law of retribution taking effect on all men after death;² and there is no hint that the common fate of a gloomy sheôl was in any sense a doom, or even a consequence of sin. Like the lament of Job, that he must depart "to the land of darkness and death-shade, where no order is, and the light itself is night,"³ these Accadian images probably paint the instinctive shrinking of man from the sense of his mortality. The vivid picture of the descent of Ishtar through the seven gates, of temple, images, and altars, and a judge on his golden throne,⁴ of her gradual disrobing and reinvestment, is doubtless, as has already been said, explicable rather from astronomy than from popular belief.

The extreme interest of the Mongolian race in the tomb as a centre of religious rites and family tributes, causes us to feel no surprise at the immense number of these receptacles on the soil of Chaldea, reminding the traveller of ancient Etruria or modern China. Here are collected all things believed desirable for the departed, — vessels of bronze and clay, images, cylinders (for writing), and articles of food. It is one of those inconsistencies which mark all crude belief about the dead, that these solid substances should have been supposed available for such mere shadowy ghosts as they were imagined to be. These objects correspond to the papyrus and cylinders on which the people of Egypt wrote their private sympathies and histories, but more obscurely. But while there is so much in Chaldea to testify to popular belief in the reality of a future life, nothing as yet has come from Assyria to tell us what was to befall the souls of the generations as they passed away. Their place of the dead was as dim and

¹ *Records of the Past*, iii. 135.

² Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 166. Smith (*Assyrian Discoveries*, 221) says that Sheôl was destined for the wicked; but on what authority?

³ Job x. 20-22.

⁴ *Records of the Past*, i. 151.



shadowy as the Hebrew Sheôl. Was the glory of the nation and the immortality of the royal will so absorbing that, as with the Hebrew, no ethical sanction or spiritual motive was sought in the future life, and the mind of the people did not rest in its associations? That instinct, or intuition of continuity, on which the belief in immortality is based, with the Semitic nations secured expression in a profound interest in visible destinies on earth. And this is as abundantly shown in the abounding life on the Assyrian monuments, as the interest of the Chaldean in the future life is evidenced in his passion for tombs. The one class represents the Mongolian, the other the Semitic, mind.

The royal monuments, Assyrian or Accadian, are not a mere dull record of wars and buildings; this flame of conquest rises into poetic feeling, and into the frenzy of barbarian passions, which remind us of the wars of the Hebrews in the days of the Judges and the Kings. These royal conquerors "scale the mountain peaks, the misty heights where no bird can pass;" they "rush like eagles, in one day, upon the strongholds of their foes."¹ They love rough, dangerous places, leap the cliffs like wild goats, and drink the coldest spring-water from the rock.² They "scatter corpses like chaff; thrash the land like an ox."³ Their "faultless horses step, yoked to their chariots, through pools of blood, and the wheels are clogged with the slain," while "the heads of soldiers are stuffed in baskets," like scalps on the raids of savages.⁴ They "thunder like the god of the air;" they "cast down rings and bracelets like the fall of rain;"⁵ and the hearts of kings grow "feeble as children; they trample their own soldiers under foot, and flee like scared birds."⁶

¹ *Records of the Past*, i. 15.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 88, 94.

³ *Ibid.*, i. 51.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 42, 43.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i. 51, 52.

⁶ *Ibid.*, i. 53.



Asshur-bani-pal celebrated "the harvest-feast when the gods seated him on the throne of his fathers, when Vul poured down his rain, Hea feasted his people, the seed bore fivefold, the cattle multiplied, and famine was at an end."¹

In the myth of the seven storm spirits, who, compounded of beasts and tempests, and moving in meteors, plot secretly against the Sun and Moon, the vexed gods, after watching them vigilantly, resist their assaults, when, rushing like the hurricane, they fall like firebrands on the earth.² This prototype of the Greek war of gods and Titans shows how the passionate genius of these world-stormers invested eclipses and lightnings with its own human ideals of battle for dominion over the world.

So in the Accadian poem of the Descent of Ishtar, goddess of love and daughter of the Moon,³ the sympathy of Nature with an ideal human purpose is signified by the refusal of the earth to bear fruit, or the beasts to bring forth young, or the gods to find comfort who preside over the change of seasons, till through their interference the wandering soul (or son) of life and growth is released from the bolts and bonds of the death-world. It is not wrath that dooms her to such descent, but her grief for life cut off in its prime, which stirs her to the sacrifice; and which we can only interpret by the resurrection of all things in Nature at her return, proving that the universe was secure, and that life and light were the lords of darkness and death. Her seven royal forms of beauty, stripped from her body one by one by the inexorable law of the underworld, are one by one restored; and the death of the Oriental Adonis, or youth of Nature, is changed by love stronger than death or hell into resurrection.

¹ *Records of the Past*, i. 61.

² *Ibid.*, v. 164-166.

³ Schrader in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* (Augsburg), June 19, 1874.



Our review of Chaldeo-Assyrian civilization has shown its remarkable contrast in respect of mental type with those of the Hindus and the Chinese. It is not *cerebral* like the one, nor *muscular* like the other; but is represented by the *nervous* force, in that ethnic symbolism in which we have found the best expression of Oriental qualities. In other words, it recognizes both ideas and things, both inward and outward relations; subject and object; bringing the two sides together in mutual dependence, as efficient cause and instant result. Hindu *thought* clings to abstractions; Chinese *work* plunges through concrete details, and is held there. Iranian nerve, which we here begin to apprehend, mediates between the two forms of activity, the two worlds of thought and things, by a flash of living sympathy, by open and direct *rapproch*. This is the condition of human progress. The Iranian mind, in its general sense, is thus the connecting bond, or transition, between the Oriental and Occidental worlds; and is traceable as such through all the phases of civilization, for the last two thousand years.

Note the substance of these cuneiform records of Chaldeo-Assyrian history. It is not contemplative; nothing like meditation or philosophic construction, scarcely any form of continuous intellectual development, appears in it. Nor is it realistic and positive, in the sense of dwelling on details or elaborating uses of things; of working for the pure love of work. It does not lose sight of the principle of causation, and that personal energy which is the ideal of causation, for mere interest in sequences and trains of palpable phenomena.

It is at once ideal and actual; the nerve which is neither mind alone, nor matter alone, but the passage of one into the other; the energy of impulse, — unconscious of self, unconscious of the results of action; conscious only of purpose, of rushing powers, of the inspiration of creative act,



of the victory of an all-absorbing aim. So earnest is this directness of impulse, that it constitutes the base of a religion, — a religion of marvellous historic power, which has been essentially the main factor of European faith hitherto. For what is the natural religious form of such a mental type? Not the worship of principles, not the worship of possessions; but the worship of personal Will. Its ideal is the conquering king, the royal god; the reduction of the whole world to the footstool of One, whose representative is the inspired chief or leader, the Master to whom every knee shall bend. What we shall find of most historic value in the study of these religious faiths which have been adopted by the West from the wonderful Semitic race, through the modifying influence of the Aryan to which properly the West belongs, is their common centre in the worship of personalities of one form or another. And of this religious development the earlier stages are palpable in the Chaldeo-Assyrian absorption in *will-power*. It is concrete will that first incarnates the worship of the Person. Then it passes on into forms of religious absolutism, — into monarchical exclusive gods of infinite power, and saviours whose undivided authority is veiled in spiritual conceptions and humanities, but whose churches dominate ages and races with barbarous tyrannies in the name of God, as absolute owner of mankind.

The principle is ever one and the same. It is in a Person that the religious sentiment is centred here, — just as in India it was in an idea; just as in China it was in an organization, secular and political. This also is a single phase of evolution; and future ages must see the personal element lose its exclusive sway over the mind of man, just as the merely abstract and the merely concrete have been already passed, and become merged in a completer form of the Ideal. For as mind aspired beyond its mere brain, or its mere muscle, so beyond its mere nerve which



binds them it evolves the harmonious form of integral man.

Our Assyrio-Chaldean study opens that intermediate Iranian phase of world-development which has now been stated. The question may well be asked, Why should it begin in Iran? The answer is, That although Iran is a geographical rather than an ethnic designation, yet the word, as I think, may fairly stand for a *function* as well, to which undoubtedly its geographical relations have largely contributed. This function, the reality of which must be shown in our proposed study of the races which have arisen within its limits, may here be very briefly stated, upon the strength of what the reader of these volumes may be supposed to know.

It was inevitable that when the isolation of races began to diminish on the open plateau of Iran, and centres of civilization were formed at the mouths of its great rivers, like the Mesopotamian, the friction of elements, the opportunities of commerce, the conflict of interests and faiths should awaken the sense of personal power and the aspiration to recognize and attain it. The wills of men became their master faculty. On the Turanian basis of material civilization arose the Semitic passion and exclusiveness; and in both, as later in the other races which swept in tides over the high plains and down the river bottoms, the desire of world-sway became far more intense than was possible either in China or Hindustan. In the conflict of strong passions thus stimulated, the power of will inevitably becomes the religious and moral ideal. The Chaldeo-Assyrian civilization is mainly characterized by the demand for some realization of this ideal, by masses who could not achieve it freely for themselves. It thus represents a very early phase in the growth of the religion of personal government. Not the *sense* of will-force, but the demand for it, was what produced those terrible kings



and their absolute sway. These great accumulations of human elements have no inward sense of unity, nor respect for law, except so far as it is embodied in the royal person and will. If the king dies, all are in revolt; the unorganized atoms are continually breaking away even in his lifetime. Always the sin charged on subject kings as *casus-belli* is that they have dared to refuse tribute, to deny allegiance. Here was forming, against all natural reluctance, by superior force of constructive will-power, the tremendous idea of the divine right of kings. And this was the foretype and crude primary condition of the corresponding force which created modern religions; nor can their relations to universal religion be understood without going back to the special line of human tendency of which they are the fulfilment. So we shall devote a chapter to the earliest form in which this power was exercised,—the influence of Babylon on Hebrew religion.



CSL

VI.

THE HEBREW AND THE CHALDEAN.



THE HEBREW AND THE CHALDEAN.

BABYLON has been called the "key of universal history." A claim so exclusive can of course have only a limited truth. The science of historical construction in our age finds a significance which cannot be measured in every human aspiration, and traces every individual current into the majestic tide of progress, to which it contributes some needed impulse. Nor can any moral instinct or principle of conduct be tracked to its human beginning in any one age, or locality, or person. Not only is it impossible to explore the origin of fetichism, polytheism, monotheism, pantheism, or the belief in incarnation or development, but not one of them can be explained or interpreted by any special set of influences, personal or institutional. Every effect was somehow contained in its cause; and to neglect the foregleams, the prophetic intimations, the unconscious or self-conscious tendencies which prove natural attractions to be slowly shaping the mind of man, is to forget that the whole human cosmos is implicated in every stage and step of human growth.

Yet it is true that there are crucial epochs, places, movements in history; nucleating points, nerve-ganglia as it were, where the collision and concentration of tendencies bring forth vast results for all time, and radiate light alike on past and future progress. Wonder and gratitude have successively transformed these centres into exclusive divine inlets, from whose supernatural gifts the whole world has its meaning and value. The progress of universal religion consists in finding that these in their turn are



sacrifice, though it may be early to accept this as historically certain. But is not the dogma of the Christian Church founded upon forms of both these atonements; and has not every religious war which that Church has waged against heretics been for the maintenance of these beliefs, and prosecuted with barbarities justified by the will of the Deity, as were the corresponding vicarious atonements to Jahveh or to Bel?

The Assyrian conquerors represent the ardent youth of this impulse to enthrone omnipotent will.

As yet there is no scientific sense of truth, no organized law of equity, no balance of powers controlling personal desire, to check it. And out of this consciousness of individual will, and its earliest religious form as allegiance to exclusive personalities, grew all the great Semitic faiths, mastering similar tendencies in the less intense Aryan, so as to have established themselves as recognized lords of revelation, creators of the religions of civilization; until the Aryan reaction in modern times has come to supplant the worship of all gods in the image — divine or human — of personal will, by immutable laws of the universe, and by developed intuitions of humanity.

And with these come the saving checks to this deeply-rooted anthropomorphic ideal, which assure the liberty of every individual to think, to doubt, to aspire, and to bring his personal will into obedient conformity with natural laws.

How far the Chaldeo-Assyrian, or rather Babylonian, world gives the key to universal history can only appear after tracing those later phases of its influence which open with the conquests of Cyrus, to the Jewish captivity, and ripen in the union of Eastern and Western civilizations through the conquests of Alexander of Macedon. But the period of the cuneiform records, already reviewed,



indicates it as the source of much that has long passed for isolated and special revelation to the Hebrew, or original invention by other races, Semitic or Aryan.

The ancestral land of Semitism, Northern as well as Southern, was probably Arabia. Canaan and Phœnicia were its sister provinces of great antiquity, but Babylon was its earliest school. Its gods, legends, and traditions, especially those of the Northern family, point in this direction, at least for their clearest expression. Its planetary worship, its sun-gods and moon-gods, and their close association with the sexual instincts, shown in androgynous deities, in goddesses riding on lions or oxen, and in the virile productivity of the bull; its terrible passion-gods of fire, the bloody rites of Moab and Ammon, the sacrifice of children to the Baals and Molochs, of virginity to the Astartes (Ishtars) and Beltises; its self-consuming frenzy of undisciplined desires, vibrating between sensual impulse and ascetic self-mutilation, — found typical developments in an Assyrio-Chaldean form as tendencies more or less universal in the whole family, but imperfectly organized in the West, and by tribes less influenced than the Eastern Semites by Turanian industry and culture. They are, however, associated with the seven Cabiri, everywhere the expressions of agriculture and other toil, with renovation through the fires of energy. They were all expressions of that absolutism of will, that worship of all-mastering personal purpose, whose god in Assyria was military omnipotence, whose passion for self-gratification an all-consuming flame. Yet another and still older form of the same ideal was the thirst to seize new worlds of physical resources beyond the sea, embodied in the fish-gods of the Chaldean and Phœnician coasts, the adoration of oceanic productivity, and in the commercial ambition of Babylon and Tyre. These gods of Nature's productivity, instinct with life, with all vital relations and powers, had in all those cults similar

names and toils. The wanderings of Baal-Melkarth, Tyrian god of cities, were the prototype of the Greek Herakles, and closely associated with the mythic history of this grand embodiment of heroic will, who carries us back also not only to the sun-gods of Asia Minor,¹ but beyond these to Assyrian customs and beliefs.² In all the Greek heroic wanderings and labors, east and west, there is everywhere a strong Semitic element in the ardor which thus followed the victorious march of the Sun through the heavens, picturing his hourly struggles with monsters harmful to man, till he reaches his martyrdom of fire in the glowing west, burning himself in his own flames, to rise again on the morrow. The whole conception of the myth is Semitic. It is characterized, like those of the Lydian Sardon, the Assyrian Sardanapalus, the Hebrew Samson, and the Phœnician Dido, by the thoroughly Semitic idea of a tragic death of the god or hero through his association with the other sex. The service of Omphale in feminine dress and the fatal tunic of Dejanira, which bring the doom of Herakles, the fall of Epimetheus through the box of Pandora, are foreshadowed by earlier Assyrian, Phœnician, and other myths of divine men who fell under the dominion of women, or assumed their garb and habits, to their own ruin.³ In the Assyrian festival of the Sakæ, a slave was made to play the king, allowed the freedom of the harem, dressed in women's garments, and finally put to death. The myth of Dionysus, as well as that of Herakles, goes back to Chaldeo-Assyrian Semitism, where Dian-nisi is the Sun in his whole life, death, and resurrection, interpreted by the extremes of human pas-

¹ Especially the Lydian Sardon.

² Movers: *Die Phönizier*, i. 458. Oppert: *Études Assyriennes*, p. 181. Maury: *Histoire des Religions de la Grèce*, iii. 152, 240. Hartung: *Die Religion und Mythologie der Griechen*, iv. 202, 203. Schwenek: *Mythologie der Semiten*, pp. 277-318. Duncker: *Gesch. Allerth.*, i. 754.

³ Hartung: *Die Religion und Mythologie der Griechen*, iv. 202-204. As Ninus and Semiramis, Sardanapalus and his harem.



sion, by orgies of grief and joy. The women whom Ezekiel¹ describes as weeping for Tammuz at Jerusalem were,—in part at least,—drawn from his Babylonian experience. Tam-zi, “the sun of life,” or “morning sun,” beloved by Ishtar (Ashtôreth), queen of heaven, is Dian-nisi in his radiant youth. He passes into night of the day or of the year, and the earth pines and fails for grief. Ishtar, who is reproached as the wanton cause of his death,² descends to the underworld, probably to seek him, though this reason is not given, and finds there the water of immortality. This idea of immortality is forever associated with these lessons of the dying year.³ But this worship of Tammuz (the Syrian Adonis) in fact goes back in Canaan or Syria, as well as in all western Asia, to the old Byblos cult, primitive beyond all discovery,—type of summer bloom, as parched and torn to death by the wild boar of drought, as of so many like forms, representing the religious agonies and ecstasies of ancient worship. Adonis had been consigned by Aphrodite, his divine mistress, who corresponds to Ishtar, to the care of Persephone in the underworld, part of which fate was remitted by Zeus, but nothing could forefend the cruel death to come. So Demeter, Earth-mother of the Greeks, treats her beautiful Kore (the spring-time) in like manner, and then descends to hades in search of her, while the world mourns. This widespread myth of the *dying god* for whom Nature pines, and the Mænad howls and tears her hair, and Love descends to death to win him back is, in this special form at least, of Semitic origin, a gift of Assyrio-Chaldean Dian-nisi,—prototype, or rather germ-notion, of redemption through death and resurrection of the just man, as a basis of theological creeds. Equally Semitic is the tendency of

¹ Ezek. viii. 14.

² See Assyrian Texts (*Records of the Past*, i. 141).

³ Sayce (*Biblical Archaeology*, iii. p. 168).



this tragic fatality to take the form of suicide, — the natural reaction and irony of uncontrollable will. The illustration is to be seen in most of the myths already specified, where that inevitable fall comes through some fatal mastery in what is one's own, which outward forces alone could not effect. Just as the frenzy of passion is represented as driving to self-mutilation the rage of Mænads in their Bacchic rites,¹ so these gods and heroes of Semitic mythology, whether Assyrian, Hebrew, Phœnician, or Greek, build their own funeral pyres, or pull down temples on their own heads, or burn themselves under their own treasures, or cut off their own heads, like their prototype Bel-Merodach of Babylon. Even the best must be sacrificed, because life was the gift and power of God himself and man's highest possession, and the greatest must give the life of his dearest ones and his own. These are the terrible fires of Semitic faith, the first fountains of its bloody atonements, and its sacrifices of the "first-born" and the "only-begotten" to omnipotent will; frenzied dualism of the productive and destructive passions, which resulted in the Dualism of its more refined and spiritual religions. The sun is its symbol, — the sun, not as centre and source and static lawgiver of the universe, but as active, instant mastery; as tremendous energy of determination, intensity of desire, and exclusiveness of claim. This is Assyria, this is Semitized Babylon.

The Phœnician cosmogony is also a grand play of imagination with successive personalities, male and female. In the Babylonian and Phœnician cosmogonies alike,² the shaping power of the cosmos is *desire* acting on a pre-existing subject mass; in the Hebrew, the idea of *purpose* in the brooding "Breath" (*rûach*) is equally personal. Their chaos, preceding creation, is itself alive with pro-

¹ These are originally Semitic.

² Berossus and Sanchoniathon.



digious half-shaped forms struggling for power, and the constructive creator must put them under by superior will. Not like the Hindu world-maker, by pure thought, nor like the Chinese, by pure work, does the Semite bring things to being; but by commandment of will, by the very passion of *life*,—the giving forth of it in its wholeness, whether by word of Elôhim or by suicide of Bel. So did he put his soul *into* the senses, his impulses into unbridled master-ships, his ideals into the all-consuming cosmic fires. And the impetus of this towering and aggressive will, self-abandoned to deified passions, has made him a controlling factor in the religious history of the last two thousand years. And of this historic power Babylon is the opening key. Let us note how far Hebrew religion was traceable to Chaldeo-Assyrian influences.

Ur, the traditional home of the Abrahamite family, now identified with Mugheir, was an important city of the Chaldees (possibly *Surippak*, the centre of Accadian literature), and is represented on the tablets as the most Turanian of the twenty cities of the Euphrates valley.¹ And still further back, the ancestors of Abraham are connected with Arphaxad, the "neighborhood of the Chaldeans."² This filiation of the Hebrews with the Chaldeans is confirmed by the close relation of their earliest customs with those recorded in Accadian inscriptions,—such as divination by clouds,³ by trees, as exemplified in the burning bush;⁴ by dreams of seers, by evocation of the dead, the very name of familiar spirits (*ôbbôth*) being Accadian;⁵ by the serpent, a Turanian type of wisdom and power. The worship of the heavenly host on Hebrew high places allies itself to the ziggurats (high towers) of the Chaldean cities; the planetary number

¹ Sayce's Smith: *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 318. Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 339.

² Genesis, x.

³ Leviticus, xix. 26; Deuteronomy, xviii. 10; 2 Kings, xxi. 6; Isaiah, ii. 6; Micah, v. 11.

⁴ Lenormant: *Divination*, etc., p. 86.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 162.



seven, made sacred by the Hebrews in their creative week before they conceived of connecting it with Jahveh's rest,¹ is Assyrian. The prophylactic images of gods (*terâphim*), of which the Urim and Thummin were probably forms, had their prototypes in Accadian magic.² So witchcraft and sorcery; and so demonic possession, exorcisms, the Sabbath, and the cherubim, which are simply the winged human-headed bull of the Chaldean sculptures.³

Previous to these Assyrian relations, however, must be recognized the Canaanite origin of much in Hebrew tradition and life. The name El, for example, as a general appellation of God, was a part of their Canaanite heritage. Phœnician mythology, as we have it in the fragments of Sanchoniathon, has so many points of closest resemblance to the Genesis-legend that the common origin of these traits in Canaanite tribal association is unmistakable. These fragments seem to concern only the older and native Phœnician traditions,—that is the Canaanite. We note not only the striking similarity in the story of creation, but the common stories of giant-races and their wars, the enmity of brothers, and other analogies, among which not the least striking is the common name of the "Most High God" (*Él-'elyôn*).⁴ "Jehovah," says Robertson Smith, "was never a Canaanite God, and the roots of the popular religion were in the acknowledgment of Jehovah as Israel's God, and of the duty of national service to Him, which is equally the basis of Mosaic orthodoxy." But here it seems to me is a confusion between the original germ and the powerful development it received from the national spirit.⁵

There can hardly be a doubt that Jahveh was originally one of those sun-gods in whom all Semitic worship was

¹ Kuenen: *Religion of Israel*, i. pp. 236-264.

² Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, p. 45.

³ Lenormant: *Fragm. Cosmog.*, p. 78.

⁴ Cory: *Ancient Fragm.* (Hodges), pp. 1-22.

⁵ *Lectures on the Old Testament*, pp. 231, 423, note.



went to centre. Leader of the stars, Jahveh of hosts, institutor of the sacred planetary number in rites and traditions, a "consuming fire," a flame that none could look upon and live, — he cannot be separated from that very numerous class of local deities of whom Melchizedek, El, Baal, and Moloch were the general Canaanite representatives.

These names were not distinctively personal, but meant merely lord or king, — a mighty one. There was found nothing incongruous in combining his worship with theirs. Elôhim, one of their generic names, "the mighty ones," was adopted in the early national legends, and retained in their later elaborations as the class-name to express the personality of Jahveh; and Jahveh-Elôhim was in common use.¹ All these gods were worshipped alike on the high-places (*bâmôth*),² and a tree, symbol of Asherah, was placed beside their altars. The Jahvites worshipped before upright stones and columns (*matstsébbôth*), and also images of the sun (*chammânîm*).³ Solomon's Jahvism built tabernacles to Milcom, Chemosh, Astarte. In both kingdoms of Israel and Judah,⁴ as well as through the earlier periods of the Judges, this intermixture of rites was common among the Jahvites;⁵ and in the days of elaborated priestly rule it was strenuously prohibited by law.⁶ Hosea tells us that Ephraim was given over to the Baal calf-worship;⁷ and especially ascribes this anti-national conduct to the influence of Assyria.⁸ It all resulted in Ezekiel's tremendous indictment of the idolatry of Jerusalem, as late as the exile! It is to Jahveh that Jephthah vows to sacrifice his daughter.⁹ It is at Jahveh's command that David hangs up the sons of Saul,¹⁰ and Samuel

¹ Exodus, iii. 15.

² Kuenen, i. 24.

³ Kuenen: *Religion of Israel*, i. 302, 303; 350-355; 80, 81.

⁴ Leviticus, xviii. 21.

⁵ Hosea, vii. 17; xii. 1.

² 1 Samuel, ix. x.; Ezekiel, xx. 28.

⁴ 1 Kings, xi. xv. 14; xvi. 14; xxiii. 43.

⁷ Hosea, viii. 6; xiii. 2, 4.

⁹ Judges, xi. 30.

¹⁰ 2 Samuel, xxi. 1-14.



hews Agag in pieces.¹ By Jahveh, as well as by every other form of Moloch, the life of a first-born is claimed. Abraham's offering of Isaac, in the myth, though prevented by miracle, at least implies and inculcates willingness to serve Jahveh in that way, as acceptable service; and this very spirit is blessed by Jahveh with the covenant of seed.² The dedication of men by *Chèrem*, however, not to be redeemed from death, was an offering to Jahveh as punishment, not as tribute.³

It is evident from these hints how difficult it was for Jahvism to throw off its early associations with those consuming fire-gods in which Semitism embodied the absolute claims of omnipotent Will. And all these traits of sun-worship belong to its Assyrian descent.⁴ Adrammelech (fire-king), adored at Sepharvaim in Mesopotamia,⁵ to whom men "burned their sons," is a fair type of these gods of Western Asia, from Chaldea to the borders of Egypt. The sun and fire worship of the Aryan, as we shall see, was of another order.

If, as is charged by the prophet,⁶ the Hebrews in the desert adored Chiun (the planet Saturn), while Jahveh was their guiding God; if, as is certain, "in the patriarchal age they accepted as sacred all the places the Canaanites held sacred (trees, mountains, fountains, stones), and the intercourse was still closer after the return from Egypt,"⁷—it is reasonable to believe that their worship of Jahveh grew out of a similar circle of religious conceptions.

Whether the name was introduced by Moses,⁸ on the Elôhim's announcing for the first time that they were Jahveh,—in other words, by substituting a more distinctly monotheistic term for deity,—or was borrowed

¹ 1 Samuel, xv. 33.

² See Kuenen, i. 291; Leviticus, xxvii. 28.

³ See Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*, ii. 228.

⁴ Ainos, v. 26.

⁵ Renan: *Langues Sémitiques*, p. 110.

⁶ Genesis, xxii. 16.

⁷ 2 Kings, xvii. 32.

⁸ Exodus, vi. 3.



from some desert tribe with whom the Hebrews came in contact;¹ whether it already existed in Assyrian mythology, and is to be associated with the Phœnician Jao, or is a pure creation of the prophets of the eighth century before Christ,—it is certain that the Jahveh or Jahveh-Elôhîm of the Prophets, in whose interest the whole literature of the Hebrew books has been worked over, is a product of slow growth, and by no means entered full-born into the Hebrew consciousness.

His final elevation to a far higher level than the surrounding deities, and the renunciation of their worship as idolatry, in favor of one who had created all nations and made the world his footstool, was a prophetic ideal of the eighth century before Christ and onwards; but it was made possible only by the partial nationalization of religion through earlier periods of Hebrew history. This lifting of a national god into a universal Creator and Ruler had its stages,—just as the old aspiration of the Assyrian kings to put all other gods under the feet of their own Asshur by conquest of the nations, and thoroughly to absorb the worship of all other tribes in themselves as his representatives, was a long and necessary step towards monotheism, and prepared the way for receiving its maturer form through the Persian worship of Ormuzd.² It is an indispensable condition to the attainment of unity in the religious idea of a people, that they should become powerfully organized as a whole, and aim at unlimited power as a national ideal. As the child's first idea of supreme authority is the law he finds in his parents, so in races the authority of the national ruler, considered as a universal claim, is the starting point of belief in one definite personal God above all gods, or exclusive of them. Nor can there be any doubt that the positive Jahvistic theism of the Hebrews was coincident in time with the

¹ Thiele

² See *Yaçna*, i. 1; xix. 37; xliii. 3, 7; xliv. i. 1.