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THE

BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

THE SERPENT TEMPTER IN ORIENTAL MYTHOLOGY.

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In a valuable and interesting volume published during the present year (1880) M. Fr. Lenormant points a contrast between the serpent form taken by the tempter in the Mosaic story, and the griffin form taken in the Chaldean legends. The Chaldean mythologers called the power of disorder and evil Tihamti, or Tiamat, the Deep, who was not a serpent at all, but a griffin with the jaws of a lion and the talons of an eagle; and with them the attack of Bel-Merodach upon the Dragon was not so much in punishment for the temptation of man as it was to represent the warfare of light and order upon darkness and chaos. "We need not introduce here," he says, "the myth of the great cosmogonic struggle between Tiamat, the personification of chaos, and the god Maraduk, related in a portion of the epic fragments in cuneiform characters discovered by George Smith. Tiamat assumes the form of a monster, often repeated on the monuments, but this form is not that of the serpent." [1]

Perhaps it may be interesting to look a little at oriental mythology, and see if it does not recognize this Bible attribution to the serpent of the character of a tempter and

[1] Les origines de l'histoire d'après la Bible et les traditions des peuples orientaux (Paris, 1880), p. 100, note (2).

enemy. If the writer is not mistaken this famous Timat, the dragon principle of chaos and disorder was sometimes represented as a serpent, and not always as a monstrous griffin, as the distinguished French scholar supposes. I think it can be shown that the Chaldeans, as well as the Hebrews, possessed an indigenous and extremely ancient story of the temptation, which compared very closely to that given by Moses, and in which the serpent performs the same part.

Apart from the Chaldean poems and monuments the traditions of antiquity cast but a dim light upon this remarkable Hebrew narrative. The serpent was a favorite object of worship among the primitive non-Shemitic and non-Aryan races everywhere. The Mexicans worshipped the serpent under the name of Coatl. The Turanian aborigines of India paid very great honor to the serpent, and although such worship was quite foreign to the conquering Aryan faith, it yet was finally adopted in the deification of the wicked and hated Siva. To a comparatively recent epoch the serpent has been an object of divine honor in Cashmere. Indeed the worship of serpents as benevolent deities was, and still is, widely diffused among the lower and more primitive races. The fact admits of a sufficient explanation in the mysterious character of the serpent itself: in its sloughing its skin and renewing its youth; in its stealthy, gliding motion, which excited the wonder of Agur; its poison so speedily deadly to every living creature; its credited power of fascinating larger animals than itself; its sudden appearance, and its disappearence into holes in the earth, which made it seem veritably earth-born, and also the guardian genius of all treasures buried in the ground. Originally the serpent was a good genius, an agatho-demon, even as he appears in Greek mythology connected with Hermes, or Asklepios, worshipped at Epidaurus as a serpent, or like the Egyptian serpent Chnuphis. He was the protecting deity of homes, so that, as among the Whydah Negroes, to kill a serpent was a crime to be avenged by death, and which has more than once been the occasion of the massacre of European travellers or residents. "*Nullus*

enim locus sine genio est, qui per anguem plerumque ostenditur."

As in India the Aryan conquerors degraded the good serpent to a Siva, so the Iranian conquerors of the primitive Turanian inhabitants of Media, in overcoming the serpent-worshipping aborigines, represented their conquest under the form of a conflict in which Thraetona was victorious over Azhi-dahaka, the serpent that bites, the creature of the wicked Anromainyus, Azhi being the Zend for the Sanskrit Ahi, the hostile serpent, and Thraetona representing the Sanskrit Trita. This Ante-Zoroastrian conflict reappears in a form more epic than legendary in Firdusi's Persian story of Feridun and Zohak, Feridun being the corrupted form of Thraetona, and Zohak of Azhi-dahaka. A lately discovered inscription of Cyrus proves, however, that we must not carry back this identification, as had been proposed, so as to make the Astyages conquered by Cyrus merely another form of this Azhi-dahaka. The earliest form of this myth is that of the Aryan Trita, who fights the monstrous three-headed serpent Ahi, which captures the divine cows that symbolize the rays of light. The Zohak of Firdusi was represented as a tyrant of the black race who, by compact with Satan, had been fated to the punishment of having two serpents feed upon his shoulders. To appease their hunger he required that two children of the Iranian race should daily be provided for them, until the Iranian hero Feridun conquered him and confined him in a dark cavern. Another version makes Zohak himself a monstrous serpent. These are all variations of a single theme, that of the dark, primitive Turanian inhabitants of Media, autochthons and serpent worshippers, conquered by the white Iranian invaders. We have here three religious elements united. The primitive Aryan storm-myth of Ahi and Trita is blended with the Turanian ophiolatry, under Mazdean dualism. The Iranians lost the original notion of the storm-myth entirely, converting it into a legend of a conflict between the Iranian hero Thraetona, servant of the good god Ahura-mazda, and the serpent mon-

ster Azhi-dahak, servant of the evil principle Anromainyus; and the legend has both a historical element as impersonating the conflict between Iran and Turan, and a moral element as representing the warfare between good and evil. The old kings of Media, says Moses of Khorene, called themselves "the race of the serpent," which implies the worship of the serpent by them as by the primitive Turanians of India. But the old Turanian belief we can get little notion of, except from the hints contained in the travesties of its conquerors. An ancient bronze bowl of Phenician workmanship found at Palestrina, representing in successive scenes, within an encircling serpent, the beginning, progress, and conclusion of a hunting excursion of an Oriental king, gives in three of its scenes the victory of the king over a cave-dweller who has stealthily attacked him. The savage is drawn as an ape-faced brute, clad only in long hair, hardly able to stand upright, and wielding no other weapon than a stone. It was thus contemptuously that the conquering races of India and Persia and Media looked upon the aborigines whom they had supplanted.

Among the Phenicians, who borrowed much from the Egyptians, the encircling serpent with its tail brought to its mouth, as represented on the bowl of Palestrina, was the emblem of the world, or perhaps, more exactly, of the ocean surrounding the world; the serpent being regarded, like the Babylonian dragon, as the vital representative and embodiment of the deep. That he was worshipped is testified to in a fragment of the Tyrian philosopher Sanchoniathon who says that Taautus, the Egyptian Thoth, who gave the Phenicians letters, laws, and religious rites, "first consecrated the basilisk, and introduced the worship of the serpent tribe; in which he was followed by the Phenicians and Egyptians. For this animal was held by him to be the most inspirited of all the reptiles, and of a fiery nature; inasmuch as it exhibits an incredible celerity, moving by its spirit without either hands or feet, or any of those external organs by which other animals effect their motion. And in

its progress it assumes a variety of forms, moving in a spiral course, and at what degree of swiftness it pleases. And it is very longlived, and has the quality not only of putting off its old age, and assuming a second youth; but it receives a greater increase [of size]. And when it has fulfilled the appointed measure of its existence it consumes itself, as Taautus has laid down in the sacred books; wherefore this animal is introduced in the sacred rites and mysteries."[1] The worship of the serpent among the Phenicians is testified to by Pherecydes, said to have been the earliest Greek prose writer (600 B.C.) and to have drawn his mythology from the sacred writings of the Phenicians. According to Pherecydes there was a severe contest between Cronos (El) and Ophion, or as the serpent-god is also called, Ophioneus, which resulted in the defeat of the latter and his being cast into the Deep (Ogen). But in this myth, which has reached us imperfectly and at second-hand, with Greek names substituted for the Phenician, Ophion and his wife Eurynome and their vanquishers Cronos and Rhea being all disguised under names which conceal the Phenician appelatives, there is not so much worship indicated, as the ancient philosophizing over the conflict between order and disorder. We have here the victory of a demiurge over the chaos which first invested sky and sea. It is likely, as Lenormant suggests, that the Ophion was, in Phenicia, Kadmon, קדמן, also called by the Greeks Cadmus. The name denotes Ancient, a very proper designation for the serpent-god, who is called by Nonnus *γέρων Ὀφίων*, which connects him with "the great dragon," "that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan," of the Apocalypse. The accounts professedly taken from Pherecydes or the Orphic writers sometimes speak of the conflict as not being simply with Ophion or Eurynome, but also with his numerous attendants, the Titans; and it is remarkable that the magnificent fragments of the altar of Pergamum lately brought to Berlin, in this Asiatic representation of the war between the gods and the Titans represent the latter as ending below

[1] Cory's "Ancient Fragments" (London, 1876), p. 23.

in snaky coils, which take their ineffectual part in this elemental war against the forces of beauty and order. This, however, is related to a later form of the same story, in which the half serpent Typhon, the storm, the Phenician Zephon, was conquered by Zeus, or Baal, and thrust under the Serbonian Bog. We may add that Eshmun seems also to be a serpent god of the Phenicians, and there is reason to identify him on the one side with the Greek Asklepios, who is always connected with the serpent; while on the other he is related to the seven Phenician Cabiri, minor gods who are represented as holding a serpent.

Phenician art, however, does not often give to the serpent a religious character. Yet an important Tyrian coin represents the Tyrian Hercules contending with a serpent, which cannot well represent anything else than the myth of the powers of order and disorder, which we shall consider further, and the struggle, narrated, as I have said, by Pherecydes, between Cronos and Ophioneus. There may also be mentioned a vase figured in General di Cesnola's "Cyprus," p. 101, on which is seen a serpent moving in undulations up to the hanging fruit of a tree. This is an old vase, of perhaps five or six centuries B.C., of Phenician workmanship, and certainly suggests that some myth like the Mosaic story of the temptation was known to the Phenicians of Cyprus. I do not dwell on later Roman representations of the first man and woman, standing naked at the foot of a tree whose fruit they are plucking, while a serpent is twined about its trunk, as found on a famous sarcophagus in the Museum of the Capitol, and on a bass-relief in the garden of the Villa Albani, at Rome, since these, though probably made under Phenician, may have been indebted also to Jewish influence. The evidence is clear that the Phenicians honored the serpent, and recognized it in its two aspects as a beneficent and a malign power; but it is not clear how much this versatile people, always hospitable to the ideas of other people, borrowed from the Egyptians in their worship of the serpent.

While there are indications in Egyptian mythology that

the serpent, like that on which Asklepios rested his hand, was an agatho-daemon, as Plutarch says, he is generally made the emblem of the evil principle. In the Ritual of the Dead the pious soul on his way to the realm of Osiris was compelled, among other conflicts, to defeat the great serpent Apep, Apophis. Set, the Greek Typhon, was the principle of evil symbolized by the serpent, now slaying the good Osiris, and now slain by his son and avenger Horus. Not the serpent only, but the two water animals, the crocodile and the hippopotamus, were regarded as representing Set; for it seems as if water, the deep and its products, were regarded as the seat and symbols of disorder, and so of evil.

In all these legends or mythologies we find very little that reminds us of the Mosaic story of the temptation of Eve by a serpent. There is simply the identifying of the serpent with the evil principle, and the conflict with it of the impersonation of the good principle. Whether this general, but not universal, malign view of the serpent by the more cultivated races,—the Aryans, the Iranians, and the Egyptians,—but not by the Turanians or the Mexicans, should be regarded as a result of a common tradition or as caused by the character itself of the treacherous and poisonous reptile, will depend very much on the prepossession of the inquirer. While on this point the Chaldean legends may give us not so much light as we might wish, they will, at least, illustrate more fully the story of the serpent recorded in Genesis.

It is to Chaldea, and Chaldea only, that the Bible itself seems to direct us for light on this subject. Genesis begins with Shinar, as it ends with Egypt. Abraham comes from Ur of the Chaldees, and must be thought of as bringing with him the lore of Chaldea. The two rivers that we can recognize which surrounded Eden are the two between which lies Mesopotamia. The first event recorded after the Flood is the destruction of the Tower of Babel. The four kings who fought against five in the Vale of Siddim came from beyond the Euphrates. It was Bel-Merodach, Bin, Sin, Hea, and Ishtar, the gods of the Babylonians, that were the gods

of Terah and Nahor, "the gods whom your fathers served beyond the flood," to whom Joshua bade the people return if they would not serve the Lord. The remarkable discovery by George Smith, a few years ago, of a Babylonian story of the Deluge very like that told in Genesis gives us reason to believe that other parts of the earliest Mosaic history of the world were as familiar to the Chaldeans as to the Jews. Jewish and Christian writers had preserved us an account of the Deluge said to have been written from national records by the Babylonian priest Berosus; but it was easy to assert and difficult to disprove that it was merely the Hebrew story carried to Babylon at the Captivity. But we now possess the very tablets, laid away nearly a hundred years before the Captivity in the royal library, and which are endorsed as copied from others a thousand years older still, written in the Assyrian cuneiform characters, on which is recorded the complete story of the Ark, the Flood, the destruction of men and beasts, the deliverance of Xisuthrus, the sending out of the birds, the resting of the ark on a high mountain, the sacrifice, and the divine promise. There is considerable reason to believe that the old Chaldeans also possessed legends of the creation of the world and of the confusion of tongues, corresponding more or less with the accounts given in Genesis. We might, then, look, with some reasonable expectation of finding it, for a legend of the temptation of our first parents by the serpent which will illustrate the Mosaic story.

While the tablets from the library of Assur-bani-pal which recorded the creation of the world have been recovered in fragments, those which in all probability existed describing the creation of man have not yet been found. We only know from allusions in sacred hymns that Hea, the god of the deep, and also the god of supreme intelligence, the master of all wisdom, "the god of pure life," "director of purity," "the merciful one, with whom is life," "the lord of the race of man," was the creator of man. But no record yet discovered gives a story of the creation of man and woman correspond-

ing to the biblical account. To be sure, George Smith, in his translation of a mutilated fragment discovered by him, thought he found a portion of the Babylonian account of the creation of man and his temptation and fall; but this must not pass into the literature of the subject as an accepted translation. The text was sadly misconceived by George Smith, and scholars universally reject his rendering of it. The creation of man, however, is distinctly asserted, and is the work of the god Hea. In the hymn to Hea, giving his seven titles and declaring under each his glory, we read:

"In the fourth place, he is the god of the sacred disk, who vivifies the seed of life;
He is the lord of the holy psalm, who raises up the dead,
Who pardons the hostile gods when he turns towards them:
But he devotes to eternal corruption those that are obstinate against him.
That they might be obedient to him *he created man.*
He is the merciful one, with whom exists life.
May his commandment endure and never be forgotten
In the mouth of *the race of men whom his hands have made.*"[1]

Although George Smith was wrong in supposing that one of the fragments of the clay tablets found by him contained an account of the fall of man, it is yet probable that such a story was contained in the cycle of myths familiar to the Babylonians, which were so generally parallel to the accounts in Genesis. It must be remembered that only fragments of one of these old libraries of Mesopotamia have been discovered, and that it is by the greatest good fortune that we happen to have the Chaldean versions, in part, of the creation or the flood. Very much more doubtless awaits intelligent exploration. The records of kings were most carefully hidden in the foundations of temples and palaces and preserved with a religious veneration, so that they have come down to us in great numbers and great perfection. But, unlike these royal annals, about whose safe preservation so much superstition attached, and whose destruction was so guarded against, the remaining literature of the people has

[1] See George Smith's "Chaldean Genesis," pp. 82–85; Ledrain's "Histoire d'Israel," pp. 415, 416; Lenormant's "Les Origines de l'histoire," pp. 45, 46.

come down to us only in fragments from one library, the fragile tablets of which fell from their shelves and were broken or destroyed when the building in which they had been preserved was sacked and burned. Had not one king Assurbani-pal been a peculiar cultivator of learning, we should have had nothing, scarcely, but the royal records.

The fragments of Berosus, as they have come down to us, contain, like the monuments, no account of the temptation and fall, and so none of the serpent tempter. It is to be considered, however, that with this account of the temptation in all the places where we find it — in Genesis, among the Hindus, in the Iranian or the Mendaite tradition,—it is closely connected with a tradition of a tree of life. Now this tree of life, or what can scarcely be anything else, though explained in no monument that has come down to us, is one of the most frequent and characteristic representations to be found on the seals and sculptured slabs of Babylon and Nineveh. It was evidently a most sacred symbol, often surmounted by the winged disk of deity. This tree, a tree of life, so thoroughly conventionalized, itself suggests some legend of a temptation, even though the form may have been, as is likely, that of a temptation through an intoxicating beverage of the juice of this tree whose *aqua vitae* gave the knowledge of good and evil and of nakedness. The latter result we find not only follows Adam's partaking of the forbidden fruit, but also Noah's first recorded use of the fruit of the vine. The evil principle in the Chaldean literature and art appears to be generally represented by a dragon rather than a serpent. This dragon or griffin, is Tiamat, the chaotic, disorderly sea, the principle of evil, and the mother of monstrous shapeless creatures. Tiamat would seem to have been more the symbol of physical than of moral disorder. It was Tiamat (Heb. תְּהוֹם, the deep) that Berosus had in mind when he said that the god Bel, according to the Babylonians, cut the sea in two, forming the heaven and the earth out of the two fragments.

The warfare of Bel-Merodach against the dragon Tiamat

is one of the most common subjects of Babylonian art, and forms the subject of one of the most curious fragments that have come down to us of the mythological inscribed tablets. Whether, as George Smith conjectures, Merodach was chosen by the gods or volunteered to be their champion is not certain. Perhaps, more likely, when this portion of the sacred epic was composed Merodach was in the mind of the poet as the chief of the gods, just as supreme attributions are given in turn to each of the several gods (or phases of the great divinity) in Shemitic as well as Aryan hymns.

Bel-Merodach went forth to the conflict armed with the thunderbolt, which is probably represented by the curved sabre-like weapon which, on the cylinders, he carries in his hand. He also had the talismanic word which can arouse or still the storm. His servitors were the four winds and the seven winds. Tiamat was attended by her evil spirit, by the monstrous composite creatures—serpent or bull or leopard—which appear on the seals, bred of the deep. When the battle joined, the auxiliar gods on either side stood back until the two champions of light and of darkness, of order and of chaos, of heaven and of the abyss, the hero demiurge Bel-Merodach and the monster dragon and destroyer Tiamat, had opened the fray. The champion of the gods repeated the magical word that let loose the four winds, the seven winds, the whirlwind, and the tempest. He took in his hand his thunderbolt and mounted his chariot, and his hand seized the reins that held his four couples of horses. Then he uttered his challenge to Tiamat. She, who was sea as well as dragon, carefully examined her protecting cliffs, and fortified her position. She repeated her talisman and examined the arms of her attendants. I follow here the translation of Oppert,[1] which, though imperfect, is superior to that of George Smith.

"And Tiamat threw herself upon Merodach, the purifier of the gods.
But the master resisted her, and confounded her with his mysterious word.
And he let loose the evil wind which should turn her upside down.

[1] Ledrain's Histoire d'Israel, Vol. i. pp. 410, 411.

Then Tiamat opened her mouth to swallow that wind;
But the evil wind entered her, so that she could not shut her lips.
The force of the wind filled her stomach,
Her heart was overturned, her mouth was choked,
Her bowels burst, and her digestion ceased.
The god broke her heart and tore open her body.
He made her die there, and cut short her life.
He cast away her ..... and scattered her brains
Those who had issued from the sea before her he annihilated.
He scattered her battalions and pursued her armies.
The gods, her allies, who had helped her
Trembled, were afraid, and turned back:
They tried to save their lives, and fled away.
They hid themselves, saving themselves without courage;
But he surprised them and broke their arms.
Gathered together, like a herd, they remained as in a net.
Their force was destroyed, their hand was dried up."

The Babylonian story was certainly developed beyond the Mosaic in the account thus given of the war between the divine power and the destroyer of order and purity. Depending merely on the literary and mythological records thus far discovered, we have imperfect evidence that there was any Chaldean account of the temptation of man by Tiamat corresponding fully to the Bible story, as in the case of the complete and surprising parallelisms between the two stories of the Deluge, of which the Chaldean has been recovered almost without the loss of a line. The existence, however, of such an account of the temptation is probable, and its recovery to be hoped for. If, as seems likely, the "war in heaven" between Merodach and Tiamat is a further continuation of the Mosaic story of the curse on the serpent, there is a notable difference between the two in the form taken by the tempter; the Chaldean story, reproduced with scarcely a variation in Babylonian, Assyrian, and Persian art for more than a thousand years, giving him the form of a winged griffin, half lion and half eagle, the queen of the watery abyss, Tiamat, the תְּהוֹם of Gen. i. 2, while the biblical version ascribes to him the form of a serpent more subtle than all the beasts of the field.

There are reasons, however, to believe that a parallel and perhaps older version, equally indigenous to Chaldea, represented the tempter and destroyer as a serpent; and it is far from improbable that the Jews, in their captivity, learned to identify the dragon and the serpent, with both of which they were familiar, so that we find the identification of nature complete in Rev. xii. 7–9, which recounts the war in heaven between Michael and the dragon, and describes the latter as "the great dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan."

The edition of the Chaldean story which we have recovered, and which was copied out for the palatine library of Assur-bani-pal was perhaps that of the city of Erech. But it is not unlikely that others of the primitive cities of lower Mesopotamia had each their somewhat variant forms of their common myths. At least two stories of the Creation have been preserved in fragments, quite different from each other, one of them being very similar to that in the first chapter of Genesis. From the immense mass of mythological fancy in which the early Chaldeans revelled there has come down to us little more than a detached fragment here, and a broken line there, for the completion and understanding of which we must wait in hope that the opening at some time of the buried libraries of Agane and Erech and Sippara and Babylon may give us the older and original documents which Assur-bani-pal had copied for the royal library of his northern kingdom. It may be that it was from the version of the story current in Ur of the Chaldees that Abraham brought the tradition of the serpent afterwards recorded in Genesis.

The Steuart collection, now in the British Museum, included an early Babylonian cylinder, a copy of the engraving on which we give in fig. 1. It represents a

Fig. 1.

male and a female figure, sitting one on each side of a tree, toward which they are reaching, apparently to pluck a hanging fruit. Behind the woman is figured an erect serpent. It seems impossible to regard this very ancient cylinder as representing anything else than a Chaldean legend of the temptation. The horns above the head of the male figure might seem to represent that it was a deity or a demigod. Accordingly Lenormant,[1] before the discovery of the other Chaldean tales of the cosmogony, supposed Bel and Belit to be represented. But, on his discovery of the Creation and Deluge accounts, George Smith[2] concluded, and apparently with the best reason, that this cylinder could represent nothing else than a very ancient Chaldean legend of the Fall, of a character very similar to that in Genesis. Baudissin, a very high and late German authority, says in his "Studies of the Religious History of the Shemites" (pp. 260, 261), that no one can look at this seal without being reminded of the Mosaic story of the fall, although he cautiously adds that its antiquity needs to be fully established so as to show that it was not produced from a Jewish conception; and he also adds that it is possible that it represents some other unknown legend. Friedrich Delitzsch, one of the most careful and scholarly Assyrian authorities living, says in his admirable appendix to the German translation of Smith's "Chaldean Genesis" (p. 305), that the seal is doubtless of a very high antiquity, and that it cannot represent anything else than the story of the temptation and fall.

This interpertation of the seal has, however, been seriously attacked, of late, by Menant who has been publishing a number of papers on ancient seals. He says: "An attentive examination of the two personages on the cylinder has convinced me that they are *two men*, such as are found on numerous analogous cylinders. The tree which separates them has nothing whatever in common with the tree of the terrestrial paradise; and, finally, the serpent occurs in this scene just as in a great number of others, where his presence

[1] Commentaire des Fragments cosmogoniques de Bérose, p. 331.

[2] The Chaldean Account of Genesis, p. 91.

is still unexplained."[1] That the sacred tree of the cylinders and monuments has "nothing in common" with that of the Mosaic paradise can be no more than assumption, as nothing is known of the source of the Chaldean symbol, and the connection of the two is antecedently probable. The serpent, it is true, occurs on other cylinders, yet by no means frequently, and for the most part as a cabiric emblem. This, however, is a unique cylinder, having a unity very different from the confusion of many others, in which the lapidicide has seemed to have no other object than to cover his stone with as many conventional figures as possible, arranging them as they might happen to come. In many seals a god, or a crescent, or seven stars, or a rhombus, and occasionally a serpent, is thrown in to fill a vacant space, and it is possible that such is the case here. Still the unity of the rest of the figures seems to tell against this notion. But Menant's chief argument against this cylinder's representing the temptation of man is that the two figures are, he says, both masculine; that they "are two men, such as are found on numerous analogous cylinders." On this point I cannot at all agree with M. Menant. As careful a study as I have been able to make of the published cylinders, and of others unpublished that have come under my eye, convinces me that one of the two figures is male, and the other female. I know of no other seal at all closely analogous to this with which to compare it, unless it be one in Menant's "*Catalogue des cylinders Orientaux du Cabinet Royal des Médailles de la Haye*," pl. III. no. 14, in which two standing figures appear, one on each side of a tree with pendant fruit, which they seem to be plucking, of whom one is handing a fruit to a third personage. But in this case one of the two personnages by the tree is certainly feminine, as represented by the breasts, or probably all three. In these cylinders the male figures have regularly a long beard, and a beardless figure is presumably feminine. In the cylinder before us the personnage on the right hand with the horned cap appears to be

[1] "Empreintes de cylindres Assyro-chaldéens," p. 48.

bearded, while the other is certainly beardless. Certain figures on the cylinders are always bearded, though they occur dozens of times, and others are as constantly beardless. The absence of the beard should generally be taken as indicating the female sex. An examination of about a hundred different figures on some hundreds of published seals, shows no confusion of types, except so far as the beard may be neglected in very rudely carved seals, or lost in those that are in soft stone, like the one under consideration, which is in an earthy chlorite.

But I wish to call attention to another Chaldean seal (fig. 2) which I have been so fortunate as to discover in the possession of the Hon. S. Wells Williams, now professor of the Chinese Language and Literature in Yale College, and which is of great importance as corroborating our interpretation of the seal in the British Museum, and supplementing its information. It represents a fleeing serpent, with its head

Fig. 2.

turned back toward a deity, who is swiftly pursuing it, and who smites it with a weapon. The other figures in the seal have no relation to the pursuit of the serpent by the god. They are put in by the engraver simply to fill up the space, although all separately significant, no doubt. The small kneeling figure probably represents the owner of the seal. The two other figures behind the god represent no recognizable deities, and may be meant for priests. Filling up the smaller spaces are the female emblem κτείς, six planets, or perhaps stars of the Pleiades, and two smaller branches, which it would be hazardous to regard as representing the two trees of the garden of Eden.

To show the significance of this seal it will be necessary to compare it with others which represent the conflict of Bel-

Merodach with the Dragon. The Dragon we have seen is Tiamat, the spirit of evil and disorder. That Tiamat took the pictorial form of a scaly dragon or griffin appears not only from the story of her war with Merodach, quoted above, nor from the account in Berosus of the cutting in pieces of Tiamat (under the name of Thauatth, Θαυάτθ) by Bel, but especially from the numerous representations on the cylinders of the conflict between the two, in which the griffin form is regularly given to the evil spirit. These are of all periods, from a time perhaps two thousand years B.C. to that of the Persian empire of the Achamenian kings. From these I select an important cylinder, which I give after George Smith[1] in fig. 3.

It will be seen that this is very much like Dr. Williams's cylinder. The dragon, which corresponds with the serpent in the latter, is in the attitude of retreat, and turns its head back toward its pursuer, who is running rapidly and who shoots it with an arrow. The figure of the priest is the same (reversed), and of the kneeling owner, as also the representation of the minor accessories, the stars and the κτείς, although the winged circle, emblem of the supreme power, replaces this crescent of the moon-god. There is also a figure of a winged monster represented under the feet of Bel, for which there was not room on Dr. Williams's cylinder, but where an indistinct line or two indicates that it was in the mind of the engraver. It was very likely an attendant of the Dragon, or possibly of Bel. The two seals are so much alike that they may have been engraved by the same artist. They certainly present the same event, and we may conjecture that they were made for customers of two different cities of Chaldea, in one of which the evil one was Tiamat, the griffin, while in the other it was a serpent. With fig. 3 may be compared another much like it in Lajard's "*Culte de Mithra*," Pl. XXIII.

Fig. 3.

[1] Chaldean Genesis, p. 100.

We may, then, regard this new seal of Dr. Williams as certainly representing the conflict of Bel and the Dragon, the dragon being figured as a serpent. Coincident with the more popular Chaldean legend, which gave to the dragon Tiamat the form of a griffin, these other two seals which we have discovered represent it under the same form as is given in the Mosaic story. In the first of these we see the serpent tempter accompanying the first pair, who reach out their hands to pluck the fruit of the forbidden tree. In the second seal we find the story taken up in its next stage, when the demiurge Bel-Merodach attacks and punishes the Serpent by bruising its head. The two confirm each other, and the proof which they afford seems to me incontrovertible that at a very early period in the history of Chaldea, before any influence could have been borrowed from Hebrew sources, there existed an indigenous story of the temptation and fall more like that given in Genesis than is generally figured on the monuments, or is indicated by the fragments of the story that have come down to us on the Assyrian tablets.

But there exist some other indications in the Chaldean mythology, as gathered from the monuments, of the ill-repute in which the serpent was held. Among the beasts and winged figures at which, on a perhaps rather late carved stone,[1] Izdubar (Nimrod, really another form of Merodach) is shooting his arrows, one of those thus transfixed is a serpent. Indeed, the massive sculpture of Izdubar, which was often repeated on late palaces, and which was evidently regarded as a *chef d'oeuvre* of Assyrian art, represented Izdubar as grasping a serpent by the neck with his right hand, while strangling a lion under his left arm. The boundary-stones set up with the record of the sale of lands, beside the inscriptions invoking curses on whosoever should feloniously remove them, also contained representations of the superior powers, and notably always a serpent, which would pursue any one who should venture to remove the landmarks. Half a dozen of these stones have been found, varying somewhat

[1] "Lecture litterale des hiéroglyphs et des cuneiformes" (Barrois), Plate xv.

in details, but with a monstrous serpent as the predominant figure in them all. It is possible that these figures represent only, in some way, the great gods whose curses are invoked in the accompanying inscriptions on whoever should venture to remove the stone, or bury it in the ground, or throw it into the water, or burn it in the fire, or alter its record. It is evident that one of the disks represents Shamas, the sun-god, and another Sin, the moon-god; but the serpent and the horned monsters whose foreparts are attached to the altars, would seem to represent the malignant spirits rather than gods under malignant forms. But this is little more than a conjecture, and an important cylinder represents a god, apparently not malignant, half man and half serpent, whose human body forms the seventh element above the sixfold coil of the serpent, and before whom minister two priests on either side of a high altar.[1] This has been conjectured to represent an Assyrian god Sabi, meaning Seven, who seems to correspond to Eshmun, the Phenician chief over the seven Cabiri. Here and there other inconspicuous, or perhaps unmeaning, serpents are introduced on Babylonian seals; but such cases are quite rare. It is evident that the serpent was not, so far as most of Chaldea and Assyria is concerned, a favorite object to figure, although, according to Diodorus Siculus, the image of Juno in the temple of Bel in Babylon, had a serpent in her right hand, and two immense silver serpents were set up near the image of Rhea.

In the comparatively few instances in which the serpent appears in the inscriptions it is generally as a malign being. Thus the serpent is one of the seven evil spirits that made war with the gods in that curious tablet given in Smith's "Chaldean Genesis" (pp. 107–111), which seems to represent, first, chaos, as the rebellion of these seven spirits against Anu, until they are repelled by the demiurge Bel-Merodach, who conquers order by creating the sun, moon, and Venus (Shamas, Sin, and Ishtar); and, secondly, the eclipse of the moon, described under the poetical disguise of an attack of

[1] Lajard's Culte de Mithra, Pl. xlii. fig. 13.

the serpent, the leopard, and the rest of the seven evil spirits upon the god Sin, until driven back again by Merodach.

In another very interesting inscription on a tablet, one of the gods, very likely Merodach, arming for battle against Tiamat, indulges in a long panegyric on his weapon, apparently the thunderbolt. He compares it, among other things, to "the enormous seven-headed serpent," "the serpent which lashes the waves of the sea, and attacks the face of the enemy." No seven-headed serpent is figured on the monuments, so far as they have been discovered, but the ordinary sign of the thunderbolt, often depicted as the index of Merodach, is on one stone of Michaux (if correctly figured by Millin and Münter) drawn with the extremities of the two prongs fashioned into separate heads.

A zoölogical tablet, in a list of insects, fishes, and reptiles, gives to one — apparently a serpent, as it is followed by three other names of serpents — the designation of *aiub ilu*, the foe of God. This name, seemingly given to a monstrous sort of serpent living in the mountains, as its Accadian name indicates, must have a mythological basis, and refer to some Chaldean story like that of the Hebrew serpent in Paradise, or the Persian Azhi-dahak and Anromainyus, which clothed the principle of evil in the form of a serpent.

It may now, I think, be accepted as probable that the Chaldeans possessed an independent legend of the temptation of our first parents by the serpent, and its subsequent punishment by the great warrior of the gods, quite analogous to the story of Genesis. Its present form is quite uncertain, although we may yet hope to recover it. It is very likely, however, judging not only from the evidence which I have collated, but also from the importance ascribed in Chaldean art to the sacred tree, as also from the analogy of the known legends of the Creation and of the Flood, that it approximated very closely to the Hebrew story, with a difference chiefly in its polytheistic dress. It was, however, a less prevalent form of the myth than that which made the tempter to be the Dragon of the Deep, or, as personified, the Deep herself,

Tiamat. Probably, as the different seats of Chaldean religion and literature had each their libraries and their varying mythologies, this recension of the story of the fall had its seat in some one of the cities of lower Mesopotamia, and was overborne later by forms of the story prevalent in Erech and Babylon. It may have been the version recorded in the library of Ur, the birth-place of Abraham, which yet awaits the spade of some, let us hope American, explorer. At any rate the idea is seen to be older than the Revelation of St. John of combining together as various representations of a single principle of chaos, disorder, and evil, "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan."

I hesitate to claim for these Chaldean myths that they do anything more than illustrate the Bible account. There is too much yet uncertain to allow us to claim that they confirm it. The form of these myths is not so self-evidencing as to allow us to settle off hand that they represent nothing more than mere myths, either like the Vedic, which sees a serpent in the storm-cloud, or like the Mazdean, which, occupied with great moral problems, and no longer with the phenomena of the sky, looks at evil and disorder under the form of a serpent hostile to Ahura-mazda. Their form is not really inconsistent with the faith of those who prefer to regard them as the perversion through tradition of a great historical fact at the beginning of the history of the human race. We need a clearer notion of the myths of the various great families. We need to understand what is the ethnic relation of Turanian to the Hamitic races. We need also to be able to answer more certainly the question whether, as would seem from the language in which these myths appear, they have a Turanian origin, or whether they can belong to the extremely early Shemitic eruption over Mesopotamia from the Persian Gulf. This, however, it seems to me, must be recognized as a fact, that there had been somehow developed, and had become perfectly familiar in Mesopotamia, at a period centuries anterior to the time of Moses, as far back as the age ascribed to Abraham, stories perfectly

parallel to those of Moses, which in form are purely mythical; and that, therefore, the burden of proof will rest upon those who regard the Mosaic stories as historical to prove that the earlier Chaldean stories had an origin different from other myths. This they will not be slow to attempt; and Dr. Tayler Lewis, in an able discussion on the Chaldean Deluge, which ought to be rescued from the columns of the New York Times, in which it is now lost, has indicated what would be the direction of the argument.

ARTICLE II.

TWO ISAIAHS, OR ONE?

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THE subject of the unity of the Book of Isaiah may be discussed as a purely philological question. One of the advantages of this method is that it brings the controversy to an arena common to all parties. There exists at present, as is well known, a radical disagreement among biblical scholars as to the authorship of chapters xl.–lxvi. (to say nothing of certain portions in chapters i.–xxxix.); and it cannot be doubted that much ammunition has been wasted on either side by the failure of the parties to come to a decisive action in this common arena. When, for example, a Christian believer takes the ground that inasmuch as the New Testament ascribes to Isaiah passages from the disputed chapters, he will defend the integrity of the book at all hazards, it is plain that the "mere critic" can never dislodge him from that position. He has intrenched himself behind a rampart which (from the stand-point of philology simply) would be called a theological bias. When, on the other hand, an unbeliever asserts *a priori* that it is impossible for a writer who died one hundred and fifty years before the Babylonian captivity to have made that period his present,