

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

welcome. By their blind enthusiasm for all Indian institutions they retard progress towards better things. There is no hope of a society that is built up upon the bondage and degradation of its women as Indian society is, and Indian reformers, perceiving this, have always put among the first of their aims a determined opposition to enforced widowhood. Both Mrs. Besant and Miss Noble have ranged themselves with orthodoxy in seeking to uphold and glorify what is merely a crime and a cruelty. They do their best to cast a halo of fine sentiment about this practice, as about caste,—which, according to Miss Noble, ‘ought to stand translated as honour’ (p. 127),—and much else that degrades and enslaves India. To speak of *mukti* as ‘the beatific vision’ sounds very well, but it conveys an idea that is the very opposite of what the Sanscrit word really means. There is a like ignorance or worse in her representation of the prayer ‘make me Brahman’ as meaning ‘make me holy’ (p. 221), and in her statement that Hinduism seeks constantly to ‘express the idea that in the great Heart of the Absolute there dwells an abiding charity towards men’ (p. 222). Her whole account of Hinduism is a weird blend of Occidental sentimentalism and Oriental metaphysics. Miss Noble must know perfectly well that *mukti* or the attainment of Brahman is neither ‘beatific’ nor a ‘vision.’ It is much more like what Schelling, I think, described as ‘a night in which all cows are black.’

One of the aims of Miss Noble and her coadjutors—and an excellent one—is to encourage the

creation of an Indian nationality, to seek to unify its diverse and antagonistic races and creeds. But that result is not likely to be brought about by misrepresenting facts and falsifying history. The Mohammedan lion and the Hindu lamb are not likely to be beguiled into lying down together by being told that their past conflicts were merely ‘athletic contests between brothers and cousins’ (p. 178). Hinduism is itself a bundle of irreconcilable and diverse religious elements, and when the attempt is made to harmonize it with Mohammedanism in the ‘synthesis of Indian thought,’ even Miss Noble’s hazy rhetoric is inadequate to the task. She moves in a region of thought far above the ordinary requirements of consistency. Thus it appears at p. 196 that in the Hindu view of life ‘high over all law rose, rises, and shall for ever rise, the human will, its brow bright with the sunshine of freedom,’ but by p. 204 the scene is changed, and ‘to the wise man, frankly, life is a bondage.’ ‘Frankly,’ this kind of thing will not do. Such fine words will not heal the wounds of India, and will only mislead England. India needs sympathy, but it must be a sympathy that does not deceive and is not deceived. Even an orthodox Poona paper, which hailed Miss Noble’s book with enthusiasm, was constrained to express this feeling. With a quaint mixture of metaphors it summed up our criticism and condemnation of this book. ‘We must not forget,’ it says, ‘that there is also a seamy side to the canvas which, if at all it were exposed to the public view, would tell quite a different tale.’

Recent Biblical and Oriental Archaeology.

BY A. H. SAYCE, LL.D., PROFESSOR OF ASSYRIOLOGY, OXFORD.

An Archæologist on the Pentateuch.

ONE of the most interesting and suggestive books I have read for a long while has been published by a young Danish archæologist, Dr. Ditlef Nielsen, under the title *Die altarabische Mondreligion und die mosaïsche Ueberlieferung* (Trübner, Strasburg, 1904). On the one side it is a continuation of Professor Hommel’s researches into the religion of the ancient civilized kingdom of Arabia, and on

the other it is the first attempt that has been made to apply to the Pentateuch the archæological method which in Professor Ramsay’s hands has achieved such brilliant results for the study of the New Testament. The book consequently falls into two parts: in the first we have three chapters on the early lunar worship of the Arabians, and in the second a systematic examination of the Mosaic narrative in the light of the recent discoveries of Oriental archæology. One by one the historical

and religious details of the Pentateuchal story are compared with the facts of archæological research, and the results will be a surprise both to the 'higher critic' and to the defender of traditional orthodoxy.

It is now well known that Arabia in the pre-Christian centuries, instead of being a land of barbarism or savagery, was the seat of highly cultured kingdoms, the earliest of which, commonly called the Minæan, extended from the incense-bearing coasts of the south to the frontiers of Egypt and Palestine. It is also known that ancient Arabian religion was essentially lunar, the moon being the chief object of worship, and Professor Hommel has made it clear that the moon-god along with two other deities formed a trinity, to which a fourth deity was sometimes added. At the head of the trinity was the male 'Athtar or planet Venus, borrowed originally from the Babylonian female Istar; then came the moon-god under various names, and lastly the female sun-goddess. The fourth deity added to it in the Hadramautic, Katabanian, and Minæan systems represented the planet Mercury or Saturn, and in Katabanian was called Anbay, that is to say, the Babylonian Nebo.

In Hadramaut the moon-god bore the Babylonian name of Sin, which the name of Sinai shows to have been carried to the north-west; in Kataban he was addressed as 'Amm or 'Uncle'—the 'Ammi of the Western Semites and of the Khammu-rabi dynasty in Babylonia—while in the Minæan texts he is Wadd or 'Love.' Among the Sabæans he was known as *Hāubas wa Almāqu-hu*, 'the moon-god and his hosts.' The members of the South Arabian trinity were conceived of as father, son, and wife, the son holding in it the chief place. It is interesting to find this relation becoming in a late (post-Christian) inscription from the Sabæan city of Marib, *rahmān-an wa-masīh-hu wa-rūh [ga]dis*, 'the merciful one and his Messiah and the holy Spirit.'

In Northern Arabia, where Babylonian influence was less powerful than in the east and south, the conception of the deity was more distinctly monotheistic. In the Minæan inscriptions from the neighbourhood of El-'Ulā, while 'the gods of Ma'an' are recognized, the god of the locality is practically Wadd alone. The same evidence is borne by the West Semitic names in the early Babylonian texts. Here the abstract *ilu*, 'God,'

takes the place of a specific deity, and the ordinary type of name is represented by names like *Ilu-ismê* or *Ismê-ilu* (Ishmael), 'God hears.' Even in Southern Arabia the oldest names are compounded with the same general term—*Ili-sami'a*, *Ili-sa'ada*, and the like,—and the names which came to be confined to specific gods were at the outset merely titles like 'Ammi, 'my uncle'; Abi, 'my father'; Ahi, 'my brother'; Zimri, 'my defence'; Wadd, 'love.'

An important fact to which Dr. Nielsen for the first time draws attention is that the holy place of ancient Arabia was no rude stone or 'beth-el,' but an elaborate sanctuary with walled courts and rock-cut altars, approached by steps. The North Minæan inscriptions from the Midian of the Old Testament are only half intelligible, owing to the number of technical architectural terms which they contain relating to sanctuaries. Among the illustrations which add much to the usefulness of Dr. Nielsen's volume are photographs of rock-hewn altars and temple platforms from the neighbourhood of Petra, which enable us to understand the general plan of an ancient Arabian temple, and to realize that the 'tabernacle in the wilderness' was no invention of a late writer, but, as Dr. Nielsen shows in detail, a 'copy' of the Midianite temple on 'the mount' of Sinai (see Ex 26³⁰).

With the worship of the moon the seven-day week and Sabbath stand in close connexion. As in Babylonia, so too in Arabia, the months were lunar, each consisting of thirty days; and Dr. Nielsen points out for the first time that the seventh-day Sabbaths correspond to the four stations or 'rests' of the moon of which we hear in the Babylonian astronomical texts. He also points out, however, that between the last and the first phases of the moon there is an interval of more than two days during which our satellite is invisible, and that consequently the 'rest'-day of the moon might not only be fixed on the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days of the month, as was the case in the ordinary Babylonian calendar, but also on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th. We thus have an explanation of a fact which has come to light since his book was written, Dr. Pinches having published a Babylonian tablet in which we are told that the Sabattum or 'Sabbath' was more especially the 15th day of the month. From the same tablet we learn that the

Bubbulum was not the day of the new moon as Dr. Nielsen conjectures, but denoted the 19th day of the month, that is to say, the 7th day of the seventh week from the beginning of the previous month. The relation of the lunar festivals and fasts to the Sabbatical rest-day is ingeniously worked out by the Danish scholar, who makes it plain that the ancient Arabian *hagg* or religious pilgrimage originated in the lunar cult, and that in demanding permission from the Pharaoh to perform it at the great Midianitish sanctuary of the moon-god on Mount Sinai, Moses was acting in accordance with the religious requirements of his people and time (see Ex 5³). I am, however, unable to follow Dr. Nielsen when he goes on to suggest that the word *Sabbatum* or *Sabbath* is a West Semitic transformation of the Babylonian *subtu*, 'the resting-place' of the moon, which is often substituted in the astronomical texts for *manzar* or 'station.' At the same time the word does not seem to be genuinely Babylonian, as the native grammarians sought a foreign etymology for it in the Sumerian *sa-bat*, 'heart-completing,' which they interpreted to signify 'rest for the heart.'

One of Dr. Nielsen's conclusions is likely to seem startling to 'orthodox' readers of the Old Testament. It is that Aaron was not a 'brother' of Moses in the European sense of the word, and that the genealogy given in Ex 6²⁰, and repeated in Nu 26⁵⁹, is a later insertion due to a misunderstanding of the term 'brother.' The name of Aaron is Arab, and he first appears on the scene 'in the mount of God' (Ex 4^{14, 27}) with the title of 'the Levite,' which we now know from the North Minæan inscriptions to have been the technical term applied to the priests of the moon-god in the very district in which Sinai was situated. Dr. Nielsen supposes him to have been one of the priests at the great sanctuary which stood on the summit of the mountain, and to have had a considerable share in instructing his 'brother' in its ritual and beliefs. The high-priest would have been Jethro, the father-in-law of the Hebrew law-giver, whose historical personality has been amply vindicated by archæology. The early inscriptions of South Arabia have shown that, as in Assyria, the kings were preceded by high priests, and that it was the fashion for them to receive two names, while the two names assigned to the father-in-law of Moses are both characteristically early Minæan.

The code of Khammu-rabi, moreover, has proved that the account of the origin of the Mosaic laws which are ascribed in the Book of Exodus to the advice of Jethro, is strictly in accordance with fact.

A close examination, however, of the Pentateuchal narrative by a competent archæologist leads to a conclusion which cannot be better summarized than in Dr. Nielsen's words: 'The systematic historical description, the account of the wanderings which is as exact geographically as it is historically, and in which we find a number of small details that would have been valueless and unknown to later writers, and above all else the accurate dating by the sacred lunar periods of an early age, appear to demand as their original basis the existence of written documents contemporaneous with Moses himself.' And not the least interesting part of the volume is the last chapter, in which the life of Moses is compared with that of Mohammed. The parallelism between the two is curiously close, and extends to such points as the later marriage of Moses to a 'Cushite' wife like that of Mohammed to Aisha after the death of his first wife, or the fact that neither of the two religious reformers took an active part in the wars which they nevertheless did so much to bring about. Of more general analogies the most striking is perhaps that in each case a religion and nation was created by an exodus or flight. I cannot conclude without expressing a wish that Dr. Nielsen's book may find an English translator.

The Babylonian Sabbath.

One of the proper names in an Assyrian tablet published by the Rev. C. H. W. Johns in his *Assyrian Deeds and Documents* (No. 360) is worth more than a passing notice. It is Yumu'sibutu (D.P.):*Ā*, 'the seventh day is *Ā*,' the sun-goddess. The identification of the seventh day with a deity was due to its being a holy day, and therefore divine; that it should have been identified with the sun-goddess is a curious anticipation of the substitution of the Christian Sunday for the Jewish Sabbath.

The Name of the Babylonian God usually transcribed Ninip.

One by one the problems of Assyrian decipherment are being solved. A volume of cuneiform texts edited by Professor Clay for the University

of Pennsylvania, and reviewed by Mr. Johns in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for last September, has at last given us the Assyrian pronunciation of the name of the god which it has been the fashion to transcribe Ninip or Adar. The volume contains contracts and other documents belonging to the Babylonian firm of Murasu, and many of them are provided with Aramaic docketts. In these the name of the god is transliterated אַנְרִישַׁת—a reading which has been

now settled by the discovery of fresh docketts. This can only be the Assyrian In-artisti, the Semitic equivalent of the Sumerian Nin-Uras, 'the lord of the mitre' (see my *Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, p. 357). The discovery is particularly gratifying to myself, as years ago in my Hibbert Lectures I maintained that the true name of the god was Uras, the Thouras (to be corrected into En-ouras) of Kedrenos.

Point and Illustration.

IN a book of 200 pages, Dr. Plummer presents us with a history of the Church in England from the death of Archbishop Parker to the death of King Charles I. It is made up of four chapters, of which these are the titles:—

- I. Counter-Reformation and Ultra-Reformation.
- II. The Wise Fool in Church and State.
- III. Development of Despotism in Church and State.
- IV. Downfall of Episcopacy and Monarchy.

There is also a most interesting short appendix containing that beautiful Latin prayer which Mary Queen of Scots is stated to have composed for her own use during her imprisonment, and the verses said to have been written by Charles I. at Carisbrook in 1648. Dr. Plummer sees no good reason for doubting that the prayer is really Mary's; but he is reluctant to believe that Charles wrote the verses, which have neither piety nor poetry in them. As a taste of the good things which his little book contains, let us quote the prayer and Dr. Plummer's own translation—

PRAYER OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS IN CAPTIVITY.

O Domine Deus, speravi in Te.

O care mi Jesu, nunc libera me.

In dura catena,
in misera poena,
desidero Te.

Languendo, gemendo, genuflectendo,
adoro; imploro
ut liberer me.

My Lord and my God, I have hoped in Thee.

O dearest Lord Jesus, deliver Thou me.

Bound by my chain,
In sorrow and pain,

I long sore for Thee.

Sighs and groans sending,
My knees to Thee bending,
I pray and beseech Thee,
Deliver Thou me.

But that is only a taste. To see what can be done in the way of making the history of the Church attractive reading, if a man takes time and pains to write attractively; to see what can be done in the way of making the reading of Church history thoroughly profitable, if a short period is taken at the time and mastered, get the volume itself. Its title is *English Church History, 1575-1649* (T. & T. Clark; 3s. net).

Madam Guyon and William Cowper.

How many of our poets have we lost? Have we lost William Cowper? Do we read "The Task" now? Do we read—oh, yes, we read "John Gilpin"; but do we read Cowper's translations? Do we read his translations of Madam Guyon?

It was a curious providence that brought William Cowper and Madam Guyon together and made him her translator. For, as Mr. Macfadyen says, Madam Guyon's religion was delight in God, William Cowper's was sorrow for sin and dread of judgment. Is that why none of Cowper's translations of Madam Guyon have found their way into our hymnaries? That is not the only reason. Mr. Macfadyen says that Madam Guyon was herself to blame. For 'it is hardly possible to find any single poem which is not marred by some bathos, or disabled by some trifling individualism which renders it unsuitable for general use.' Yet we must read Madam Guyon in Cowper. For 'as the atmosphere of Greece and Italy is said to