

BIBLE STUDIES
ESSAYS ON
PHALLIC WORSHIP
AND
OTHER CURIOUS RITES AND CUSTOMS.
BY
J. M. WHEELER.

"There is nothing unclean of itself : but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean."

PAUL (Romans xiv. 14).

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P R E F A C E .

My old friend Mr. Wheeler asks me to launch this little craft, and I do so with great pleasure. She is not a thunderous ironclad, nor a gigantic ocean liner; but she is stoutly built, well fitted, and calculated to weather all the storms of criticism. My only fear is that she will not encounter them.

During the sixteen years of my friend's collaboration with me in many enterprises for the spread of Freethought and the destruction of Superstition, he has written a vast variety of articles, all possessing distinctive merit, and some extremely valuable. From these he and I have made the following selection. The articles included deal with the Bible from a special standpoint; the standpoint of an Evolutionist, who reads the Jewish Scriptures in the light of anthropology, and finds infinite illustrations in them of the savage origin of religion.

Literary and scientific criticism of the Old Testament have their numerous votaries. Mr. Wheeler's mind is given to a different study of the older half of the Bible. He is bent on showing what it really contains; what religious ideas, rites, and customs prevailed among the

ancient Jews and find expression in their Scriptures. This is a fruitful method, especially in *our* country, if it be true, as Dr. Tylor observes, that "the English mind, not readily swayed by rhetoric, moves freely under the pressure of facts."

Careful readers of this little book will find it full of precious information. Mr. Wheeler has a peculiarly wide acquaintance with the literature of these subjects. He has gathered from far and wide, like the summer bee, and what he yields is not an undigested mass of facts, but the pure honey of truth.

Many readers will be astonished at what Mr. Wheeler tells them. We have read the Bible, they will say, and never saw these things. That is because they read it without knowledge, or without attention. Reading is not done with the eyes only, but also with the brain; and the same sentences will make various impressions, according as the brain is rich or poor in facts and principles. Even the great, strong mind of Darwin had to be plentifully stored with biological knowledge before he could see the meaning of certain simple facts, and discover the wonderful law of Natural Selection.

Those who have studied the works of Spencer, Tylor, Lubbock, Frazer, and such authors, will *not* be astonished at the contents of this volume. But they will probably find some points they had overlooked; some familiar points presented with new force; and some fresh views, whose novelty is not their only virtue: for Mr. Wheeler is not a slavish follower of

even the greatest teachers, he thinks for himself, and shows others what he has seen with his own eyes.

I hope this little volume will find many readers. Its doing so will please the author, for every writer wishes to be read; why else, indeed, should he write? Only less will be the pleasure of his friend who pens this Preface. I am sure the book will be instructive to most of those into whose hands it falls; to the rest, the few who really study and reflect, it will be stimulating and suggestive. Greater praise the author would not desire; so much praise cannot often be given with sincerity.

G. W. FOOTE.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Phallic Worship Among the Jews	1
Circumcision	28
Moses at the Inn	33
The Brazen Serpent	38
Religion and Magic... ..	45
Taboos	56
Blood Rites	64
Scapegoats	69
Trial by Ordeal	73
Bible Witchcraft	77
Saul's Spiritualist Séance at Endor	83
Sacrifices	88
Passover	96
The Evolution of Jahveh	102
Joshua and the Sun	107
Hebrew Prophets	111
Old Testament Marriage	118
Song of Solomon	126
Sacred Seven	132

PHALLIC WORSHIP AMONG THE JEWS.

"The hatred of indecency, which appears to us so natural as to be thought innate, and which is so valuable an aid to chastity, is a modern virtue, appertaining exclusively, as Sir G. Staunton remarks, to civilised life. This is shown by the ancient religious rites of various nations, by the drawings on the walls of Pompeii, and by the practices of many savages."—*C. Darwin, "Descent of Man," pt. 1, chap. iv., vol. i., p. 182; 1888.*

THE study of religions is a department of anthropology, and nowhere is it more important to remember the maxim of the pagan Terence, *Homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto*. It is impossible to dive deep into any ancient faiths without coming across a deal of mud. Man has often been defined as a religious animal. He might as justly be termed a dirty and foolish animal. His religions have been growths of earth, not gifts from heaven, and they usually bear strong marks of their clayey origin.*

I am not one of those who find in phallicism the key to all the mysteries of mythology. All the striking phenomena of nature—the alternations of light and darkness, sun and moon, the terrors of the thunderstorm, and of pain, disease and death, together with his own dreams and imaginations—contributed to evoke the wonder and superstition of early man. But investigation of early religion shows it often nucleated around the phenomena of generation. The first and final problem of religion concerns the production of

* The *Contemporary Review* for June 1888, says (p. 804) "when Lord Dalhousie passed an Act intended to repress obscenity [in India], a special clause in it exempted all temples and religious emblems from its operation."

things. Man's own body was always nearer to him than sun, moon, and stars; and early man, thinking not in words but in things, had to express the very idea of creation or production in terms of his own body. It was so in Egypt, where the symbol, from being the sign of production, became also the sign of life, and of regeneration and resurrection. It was so in Babylonia and Assyria, as in ancient Greece and Troy, and is so till this day in India.

Montaigne says :

"Fifty severall deities were in times past allotted to this office. And there hath beene a nation found which to allay and coole the lustful concupiscence of such as came for devotion, kept wenches of purpose in their temples to be used; for it was a point of religion to deale with them before one went to prayers. *Nimirum propter continentiam incontinentia necessaria est, incendium ignibus extinguitur*: 'Belike we must be incontinent that we may be continent, burning is quenched by fire.' In most places of the world that part of our body was deified. In that same province some flead it to offer, and consecrated a peece thereof; others offered and consecrated their seed."

It is in India that this early worship may be best studied at the present day. The worshippers of Siva identify their great god, Maha Deva, with the linga, and wear on their left arm a bracelet containing the linga and yoni. The rival sect of followers of Vishnu have also a phallic significance in their symbolism. The linga yoni (fig. 1) is indeed one of the commonest of religious symbols in India. Its use extends from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. Major-General Forlong says the ordinary Maha Deva of Northern India is the simple arrangement shown in fig. 2, in which we see "what was I suspect the first Delphic tripod supporting a vase of water over the Linga in Yona. Such

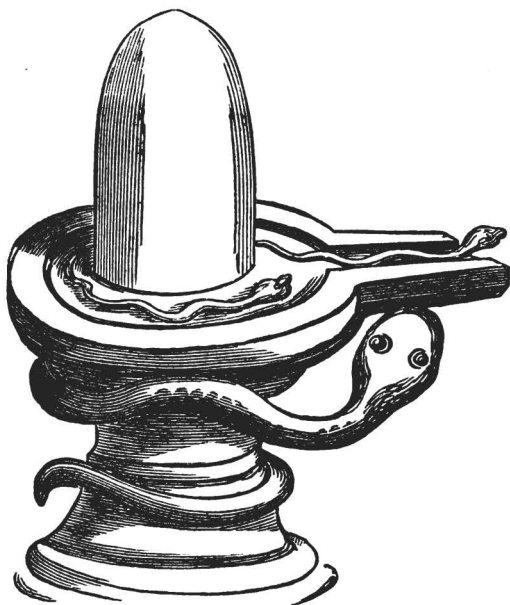


Fig. 1.—The Hindu Maha Deva, or Linga-Yoni.

may be counted by scores in a day's march over Northern India, and especially at ghats or river ferries, or crossings of any streams or roads; for are they not Hermæ?" The Linga Purana tells us that the linga was a pillar of fire in which Siva was present. This reminds one of Jahveh appearing as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

So astounded have been many writers at the phenomena presented by phallic worship that they have sought to explain it, not only by the story of the fall and the belief in original sin, but by the direct agency

of devils.* Yet it may be wrong to associate the origin of phallic worship with obscenity. Early man was rather unmoral than immoral. Obligated to think in things, it was to him no perversion to mentally associate



Fig. 2.—Rural Hindu Lingam.

with his own person the awe of the mysterious power of production. The sense of pleasure and the desire for progeny of course contributed. The worship was indeed both natural and inevitable in the evolution of man from savagery. When, however, phallic worship was established, it naturally led to practices such as those which Herodotus, Diodorus, and Lucian tell us took place in the Egyptian, Babylonian, and Syrian religions.

Hume's observation that polytheism invariably preceded monotheism has been confirmed by all subsequent investigation. The belief in one god or supreme spirit springs out of the belief in many gods or spirits. That this was so with the Jews there is sufficient evidence in the Bible, despite the fact that the documents so called

* See Gougenot des Mousseaux's curious work *Dieu et les Dieux*, Paris, 1854. When the Luxor monument was erected in Rome, Pope Sixtus V. deliberately exorcised the devils out of possession of it.

have been frequently "redacted," that is corrected, and the evidence in large part erased. An instance of this falsification may be found in Judges xviii. 30 (see Revised Version), where "Manasseh" has been piously substituted for Moses, in order to conceal the fact that the direct descendants of Moses were image worshippers down till the time of the captivity. The Rabbis gave what Milton calls "this insulse rule out of their Talmud; 'That all words, which in the Law are written obscenely, must be changed to more civil words.' Fools who would teach men to read more decently than God thought good to write."* Instances of euphemisms may be traced in the case of the "feet" (Judges iii. 24, Song v. 3, Isaiah vii. 20); "thigh" (Num. v. 24); "heel" (Gen. iii. 15); "heels" (Jer. xiii. 22); and "hand" (Isaiah lvii. 7). This last verse is translated by Dr. Cheyne, "and behind the door and the post hast thou placed thy memorial, for apart from me thou hast uncovered and gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and obtained a contract from them (?); thou hast loved their bed; thou hast beheld the phallus." In his note Dr. Cheyne gives the view of the Targum and Jerome "that 'memorial' = idol (or rather idolatrous symbol—the phallus)."

The priests, whose policy it was to keep the nation isolated, did their best to destroy the evidence that the Jews shared in the idolatrous beliefs and practices of the nations around them. In particular the cult of Baal and Asherah, which we shall see was a form of phallic worship, became obnoxious, and the evidence of its existence was sought to be obliterated. The worship, moreover, became an esoteric one, known only to

* "Apology for Smeetymnus," *Works*, p. 84.

the priestly caste, as it still is among Roman Catholic initiates, and the priestly caste were naturally desirous that the ordinary worshipper should not become "as one of us."

It is unquestionable that in the earliest times the Hebrews worshipped Baal. In proof there is the direct assertion of Jahveh himself (Hosea ii. 16) that "thou shalt call me *Ishi* [my husband] and shalt call me no more *Baali*." The evidence of names, too, is decisive. Gideon's other name, Jerubbaal (Jud. vi. 32, and 1 Sam. xii. 11), was evidently the true one, for in 2 Sam. xi. 21, the name Jerubbesheth is substituted. Eshbaal (1 Chron. viii. 33) is called Ishbosheth (2 Sam. ii. 8, 10). Meribbaal (1 Chron. viii. 34) is Mephibosheth (2 Sam. iv. 4).^{*} Now *bosheth* means "shame," or "shameful thing," and as Dr. Donaldson points out, in especial, "sexual shame," as in Gen. ii. 25. In the Septuagint version of 1 Kings xviii. 25, the prophets of Baal are called "the prophets of that shame." Hosea ix. 10 says "they went to Baal-peor and consecrated themselves to Bosheth and became abominable like that they loved." Micah i. 11 "having thy Bosheth naked." Jeremiah xi. 5, "For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to Bosheth, altars to burn incense unto Baal." The place where the ark stood, known afterwards as Kirjath-jearim, was formerly named Baalah, or place of Baal (1 Chron. xiii. 6). The change of name took place after David's time, since the writer of 2 Sam. vi. 2

^{*} So Baaljadah [1 Chron. xiv. 7] is Eliada [2 Sam. v. 16]. In 1 Chron. xii. 5, we have the curious combination, Baaljah, i.e. Baal is Jah, as the name of one of David's heroes.

says merely that David went with the ark from "Baale of Judah."* Colenso notices that when the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal are said to have been destroyed by Elijah, nothing is said of the four hundred prophets of the Asherah. "Also these same '400 prophets,' apparently, are called together by Ahab as prophets of JHVH, and they reply in the name of JHVH, 1 Kings xxii. 5-6."

That phallicism was an important element in Baal and Asherah worship is well known to scholars, and will be made clear to discerning readers. The frequent allusion to "groves" in the Authorised Version must have puzzled many a simple student. The natural but erroneous suggestion of "tree worship" does not fit in very well with the important statement (2 Kings xxiii. 6) that Josiah "brought out the grove from the house of the Lord."† A reference to the Revised Version will show that this misleading word is intended to conceal the real nature of the worship of Asherah. The door of life, the conventional form of the Asherah with its thirteen flowers or measurements of time, is given in fig. 3.

This worship certainly lasted from the earliest historic times until the seventeenth year of Josiah, B.C. 624. We read how in the days of the Judges they "served Baalim and the groves" (R. V., "the Asheroth"; Judges iii. 7; see ii. 12, "Baal and Ash-taroht"). We find that Solomon himself "went after

* The "Baal" was afterwards taken out of all such names of places, and instead of Baal Peor, Baal Meon, Baal Tamar, Baal Shalisha, etc., we find Beth Peor, Beth Meon, Beth Tamar, etc.

† Verse vii. says, "he brake down the houses of the sodomites that were by the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the grove." A reference to the Revised Version shows that it was "in the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings [or tents] for the Asherah." See also Ezek. xvi. 16.

Ashtoreth (1 Kings xi. 5) and that he builded the mount of corruption (margin, *i.e.*, the mount of Olives) for that "abomination of the Zidonians" (2 Kings xxiii. 13). All the distinctive features of Solomon's Temple were Phœnician in character. What the Phœnician



Fig. 3.—Asherah.

temples were like Lucian tells us in his treatise on the goddess of Syria. The great pillars Jachin, "the establisher," and Boaz, "strength"; the ornamentation of palm trees, pomegranates, and lotus work; are all Phœnician and all phallic. The bells and pomegranates on the priests' garment were emblematic of the paps and full womb. The palm-tree, which appears both in Solomon's temple and in Ezekiel's vision, was symbolical, as may be seen in the Assyrian monument (fig. 4), and which finds a place in Eastern Christian symbolism, with the mystic alpha and omega (fig. 5).

The worship of Astoreth, the Assyrian Ishtar, and Greek Astarte, was widespread. The Phœnicians took it with them to Cyprus and Carthage. In the days of Abraham there was a town called after her (Gen. xiv. 5), and to this day her name is preserved in Esther.

It is she who is called the Queen of Heaven, to whom the women made moon-shaped cakes and poured libations (Jer. vii. 18, xlv. 17.) Baal represented the generative, Astoreth the productive power. The pillars and asherah, so often alluded to in the Bible, were the



Fig. 4.—From Layard, *Culte de Venus*, plate 1, fig. 20, depicts the mystic palm-tree, with male and female animals frolicking around the tree of life, the female near the *fleur de lis* and the male near the *yoni*. Tall and straight trees, especially the palm, were revered as symbols. Palm branches carried in procession were signs of fruitfulness and joy.

signs of their worship, and Dr. Oort* says of the name Ashera, "This word expressed originally a pillar on, or near—not only the altars of Baal—but also the altars of JHVH."

Bishop Colenso in his notes to Dr. Oort's work remarks, "It seems plain that the Ashera (from *ashar*, be straight, erect) was in reality a phallus, like the *Linga* or *Lingam* of the Hindoos, the sign of the male organ of generation."† There can be little doubt on the matter in the mind of anyone acquainted with ancient faiths and the inevitable phases of human evolution. We read (1 Kings xv. 13, Revised Version),

* *The Worship of Baalim and Israel*, p. 46.

† Asher was the tutelary god of Assyria. His emblem was the winged circle.

that Maachah, the queen mother of Asa, "made an abominable image for an Asherah." This the Vulgate translates "Priape" and Movers *pudendum*. Jeremiah, who alludes to the same thing (x. 5), tells that the people said, "to a stock, Thou art my father, and to

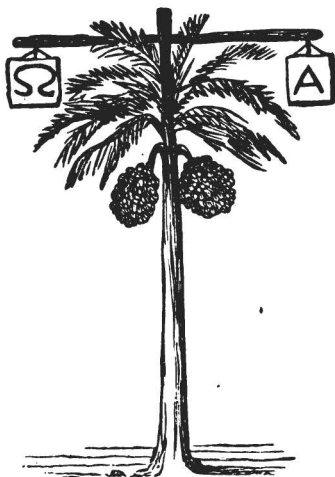


Fig. 5.—The Eastern Christian palm, on which is placed the cross and banners with the Alpha and Omega.

a stone, Thou hast brought me forth" (ii. 27), that they "defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and with stocks" (iii. 9), playing the harlot "under every green tree" (ii. 20, iii. 6, 13; see also Hosea iv. 13). Isaiah xvii. 8, alludes to the Asherim as existing in his own days, and alludes to these religions in plain terms (lvii. 5—8). Micah also prophesies against the "pillars" and "Asherim" (v. 13, 14). Ezekiel xvi. 17, says "Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels, of my gold and of silver, which I have given thee, and madest to thyself images of men,

and didst commit whoredom with them." The margin more properly reads images "*Heb. of a male*" [*tsalmi zachar*], a male here being an euphemism. As Gesenius says of the metaphor in Numbers xxiv. 7, these things are "*ex nostra sensu obscœna, sed Orientalibus familiaria.*" These images are alluded to and prohibited in Deut. iv. 16. It is thus evident that some form of phallic worship lasted among the Jews from the earliest times until their captivity in Babylon.

It is a most significant fact that the Jews used one and the same word to signify both "harlot" and "holy." "There shall be no *kedeshah* of the daughters of Israel" (Deut. xxiii. 17) means no female consecrated to the temple worship. Kuenen says "it is natural to assume that this impurity was practised in the worship of Jahveh, however much soever the lawgiver abhors it." It must be noticed, too, that there is no absolute prohibition. It only insists that the slaves of desire shall not be of the house of Israel, and stipulates that the money so obtained shall not be dedicated to Jahveh. That this was the custom both in Samaria and Jerusalem, as in Babylon, may be gathered from Micah i. 7, and Hosea iv. 14.

Dr. Kalisch, by birth a Jew and one of the most fair-minded of biblical scholars, says in his note on Leviticus xix. 29:

"The unchaste worship of Ashtarte, known also as Beltis and Tanais, Ishtar, Mylitta, and Anaitis, Asherah and Ash-taroath, flourished among the Hebrews at all times, both in the kingdom of Judah and Israel; it consisted in presenting to the goddess, who was revered as the female principle of conception and birth, the virginity of maidens as a first-fruit offering; and it was associated with the utmost licentiousness. This degrading service took such deep root, that in the Assyrian period it was even extended by the adoption of new rites

borrowed from Eastern Asia, and described by the name of 'Tents of the Maidens' (*Succoth Benoth*); and it left its mark in the Hebrew language itself, which ordinarily expressed the notion courtesan by 'a consecrated woman' (*Kadeshah*), and that of sodomite by 'consecrated man' (*Kadesh*)."

The Succoth Benoth in 2 Kings xvii. 30, may be freely rendered Tabernacles of Venus. Venus is plausibly derived from Benoth, whose worship was at an early time disseminated from Carthage and other parts of Africa to the shores of Italy. The merriest festival among the Jews was the Feast of Tabernacles. Plutarch (who suggests that the pig was originally worshipped by the Jews, a position endorsed by Mr. J. G. Frazer, in his *Golden Bough*, vol. ii., pp. 52, 53) says the Jewish feast of Tabernacles "is exactly agreeable to the holy rites of Bacchus."* He adds, "What they do within I know not, but it is very probable that they perform the rites of Bacchus."

Dr. Adam Clarke, in his Commentary on 2 Kings xvii. 30, gives the following:—"Succoth-benoth may be literally translated, *The Tabernacle of the Daughters, or Young Women*; or if *Benoth* be taken as the name of a female idol, from *bnth*, to *build up, procreate, children*, then the words will express the tabernacles sacred to the productive powers feminine. And, agreeably to this latter exposition, the rabbins say that the emblem was a hen and chickens. But however this may be, there is no room to doubt that these *succoth* were *tabernacles*, wherein young women exposed themselves to prostitution in honor of the Babylon goddess Melitta." Herodotus (lib. i., c. 199; Rawlinson) says: "Every woman born in the country must once in her life go and sit down in the precinct of Venus,

* *Symposiaca*, bk. iv., quest. 6, p. 310, vol. iii., *Plutarch's Morals*, 1870.

and there consort with a stranger. Many of the wealthier sort, who are too proud to mix with the others, drive in covered carriages to the precinct, followed by a goodly train of attendants, and there take their station. But the larger number seat themselves within the holy enclosure with wreaths of string about their heads; and here there is always a great crowd, some coming and others going; lines of cord mark out paths in all directions among the women, and the strangers pass along them to make their choice. A woman who has once taken her seat is not allowed to return home till one of the strangers throws a silver coin into her lap, and takes her with him beyond the holy ground. When he throws the coin he says these words—‘The goddess Mylitta prosper thee’ (Venus is called Mylitta by the Assyrians). The silver coin may be of any size; it cannot be refused, for that is forbidden by the law, since once thrown it is sacred. The woman goes with the first man who throws her money, and rejects no one. When she has gone with him, and so satisfied the goddess, she returns home, and from that time forth no gift, however great, will prevail with her. Such of the women as are tall and beautiful are soon released, but others who are ugly have to stay a long time before they can fulfil the law. Some have waited three or four years in the precinct. A custom very much like this is also found in certain parts of the island of Cyprus.” This custom is alluded to in the Apocryphal Epistle of Jeremy (Barch vi. 43): “The women also with cords about them sitting in the ways, burnt bran for perfume; but if any of them, drawn by some that passeth by, lie with him, she reproacheth her fellow, that she was not thought as worthy as herself, nor her cord broken.” The Commentary published by

the S. P. C. K. says, "Women with cords about them," the token that they were devotees of Mylitta, the Babylonian Venus, called in 2 Kings xvii. 30, 'Succoth-benoth,' the ropes denoting the obligation of the vow which they had taken upon themselves." Valerius Maximus speaks of a temple of Sicca Venus in Africa, where a similar custom obtained. Strabo also mentions the custom (lib. xvi., c. i., § 20), and says, "The money is considered as consecrated to Venus." In book xi., c. xiv., § 16, Strabo says the Armenians pay particular reverence to Anaïtes. "They dedicate there to her service male and female slaves; in this there is nothing remarkable, but it is surprising that persons of the highest rank in the nation consecrate their virgin daughters to the goddess. It is customary for these women, after being prostituted a long period at the temple of Anaïtes, to be disposed of in marriage, no one disdaining a connection with such persons. Herodotus mentions something similar respecting the Lydian women, all of whom prostitute themselves." Of the temple of Venus at Corinth, Strabo says "it had more than a thousand women consecrated to the service of the goddess, courtesans, whom men and women had dedicated as offerings to the goddess"; and of Comana, in Cappadocia, he has a similar relation (bk. xii., c. iii., § 36).

Dr. Kalisch also says Baal Peor "was probably the principle of generation *par excellence*, and at his festivals virgins were accustomed to yield themselves in his honor. To this disgraceful idolatry the Hebrews were addicted from very early times; they are related to have already been smitten on account of it by a fearful plague which destroyed 24,000 worshippers, and they seem to have clung to its shameful practices

in later periods.”* Jerome says plainly that Baal-Peor was Priapus, which some derive from Peor Apis. Hosea says (ix. 10, Revised Version) “they came to Baal-Peor and consecrated themselves unto the shameful thing, and became abominable like that which they loved”; see, too, Num. xxvi. 1, 3. Amos (ii. 7, 8) says a son and a father go in unto the same maid in the house of God to profane Jahveh’s holy name, so that it appears this “maid” was regarded as in the service of Jahveh. Maimonides says it was known that the worship of Baal-Peor was by uncovering of the nakedness; and this he makes the reason why God commanded the priests to make themselves breeches to wear at the time of service, and why they might not go up to the altar by steps that their nakedness might not be discovered.† Jules Soury says‡ “The tents of the sacred prostitutes were generally erected on the high places.”

In the temple at Jerusalem the women wove hangings for the Asherah (2 Kings xxiii. 7), that is for concealment in the worship of the genetrix, and in the same precincts were the houses of prostitute priests (see also 1 Kings xiv. 24; xv. 12; xxii. 46. Luther translates “*Hurer*”). Although Josiah destroyed these, B.C. 624, Kalisch says “The image of Ashtarte was probably erected again in the inner court (Jer. xxxii. 34; Ezek. viii. 6).”§ Ezekiel says (xvi. 16), “And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colors and playedst the

* Leviticus, p. 364.

† That even more shameful practices were once common is evident from the narratives in Genesis xix. and Judges xix.

‡ *Religion of Israel*, chap. ix., p. 71.

§ Leviticus, part i., p. 383. Nork, *Die Gotter Syricus*, p. 103, says the pillars and Asherah stood in the adytum, that is the holy of holies, which represented the genetrix.

harlot thereupon," and (v. 24) "Thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee a high place in every street," which is plainly translated in the Roman Catholic Douay version "Thou didst also build thee a common stew and madest thee a brothel house in every street." The "strange woman," against whom the Proverbs warns, practised her profession under cover of religion (see Prov. vii. 14). The "peace offerings" there alluded to were religious sacrifices.

Together with their other functions the Kadeshah, like the eastern nautch girls and bayaderes, devoted themselves to dancing and music (see Isaiah xxiii. 16). Dancing was an important part of ancient religious worship, as may be noticed in the case of King David, who danced before the ark, clad only in a linen ephod, probably a symbolic emblem (see Judges viii. 27), to the scandal of his wife, whom he had purchased by a trophy of two hundred foreskins from the uncircumcised Philistines (1 Sam. xviii. 27; 2 Sam. vi. 14-16). When the Israelites worshipped the golden calf they danced naked (Exodus xxxii. 19, 25). They sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to *play*, the word being the same as that used in Gen. xxvi. 8. The word *chag* is frequently translated "feast," and means "dance." In the wide prevalence of sacred prostitution Sir John Lubbock sees a corroboration of his hypothesis of communal marriage. Mr. Wake, however, refers it to the custom of sexual hospitality, a practice widely spread among all savage races, the rite like that of blood covenanting being associated with ideas of kinship and friendliness.

We have seen that the early Jews shared in the phallic worship of the nations around them. Despite

the war against Baal and Asherah worship by the prophets of Jahveh, it was common in the time of the Judges (iii. 7). Solomon himself was a worshipper of Ashtoreth, a faith doubtless after the heart of the sensual sultan (1 Kings xi. 5). The people of Judah "built them high places and phalli and ashera on every high hill and under every green tree. And there were also Sodomites in the land" (1 Kings xiv. 23, 24). The mother of Asa made "an abominable image for an Asherah" (1 Kings xv. 13).^{*} The images of Asherah were kept in the house of Jahveh till the time of Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 6). Dr. Kuenen says (*Religion of Israel*, vol. i., p. 80), "the images, pillars and asheras were not considered by those who worshipped them as antagonistic to the acknowledgment of Jahveh as the God of Israel." The same writer contends that Jeroboam exhibiting the calves or young bulls could truly say "These be thy gods, O Israel." Remembering, too, that every Jew bears in his own body the mark of a special covenant with the Lord, the reader may take up his Bible and find much over which pious preachers and commentators have woven a pretty close veil. I will briefly notice a few particulars.

Without going into the question of the translation of Genesis i. 2, it is evident from v. 27 that God is hermaphrodite. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female (zakar and nekaba) created he them."

It is not difficult to find traces of phallicism in the allegory of the Garden of Eden. This has been noticed from the earliest times. The rabbis classed the first chapters of Genesis with the Song of Solomon and

^{*} Larousse, in his *Grande Dictionnaire Universelle*, says: "Le phallos hébraïque fut pendant neuf cent ans le rival souvent victorieux de Jéhovah."

certain portions of Ezekiel as not to be read by anyone under thirty. The Manichæans and other early Christians held the phallic view. Clement of Alexandria (Strom iii.) admits the sin of Adam consists in a premature indulgence of the sexual appetite. This view explains why knowledge was prohibited and why the first effect of the fall was the perception of nakedness. Basilides contended that we should reverence the serpent because it induced Eve to share the caresses of Adam, without which the human race would never have existed. Many modern writers, notably Beverland and Dr. Donaldson, have sustained the phallic interpretation. Archbishop Whately is also said to have advocated a similar opinion in an anonymous Latin work published in Germany. Dr. Donaldson, who was renowned as a scholar, makes some curious versions of the Hebrew. His translation of the alleged "Messianic promise" in Genesis iii. 15, his adversary, Dr. Perowne, the present Dean of Peterborough, says, is "so gross that it will not bear rendering into English." A good Hebraist, a Jew by birth, who had never heard of Dr. Donaldson's *Jashar*, gave me an exactly similar rendering of this verse—which makes it a representation of coition—and instanced the phrase "the serpent was more subtle than the other beasts of the field," as an illustration of early Jewish humor.

The French physician, Parise, eloquently says: "This sublime gift of transmitting life—fatal prerogative, which man continually forfeits—at once the mainstay of morality by means of family ties, and the powerful cause of depravity—the energetic spring of life and health—the ceaseless source of disease and infirmity—this faculty involves almost all that man can attain of earthly happiness or misfortune, of earthly

pleasure or of pain ; and the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, is the symbol of it, as true as it is expressive."

Dr. Adam Clarke was so impressed by the difficulty of the serpent having originally gone erect, that he thinks that *nachash* means "a creature of the ape or ourang-outang kind." Yet it has been suggested that a key to the word may be found in Ezekiel xvi. 36, where it is translated "filthiness." There is nothing whatever in the story to show that the serpent is the Devil. This was an after idea when the Devil had become the symbol of passion and the instigator of lust. De Gubernatis, in his *Zoological Mythology* (vol. ii., p. 399), says "The phallic serpent is the cause of the fall of the first man." Many other difficulties in the story become less obscure when it is viewed as a remnant in which a phallic element is embodied.

Some have detected a phallic signification in the story of the ark and the deluge, a legend capable of many interpretations. The phallic view is represented in the symbols in fig. 6, taken from Jacob Bryant's *Mythology*, vol. iv., p. 286, in which the rainbow overshadows the mystic ark, which carries the life across the restless flood of time, which drowns everything that has life, and promises that seed-time and harvest shall endure, and the Ruach broods over the waters. Gerald Massey devotes a section of his *Natural Genesis* to the typology of the Ark and the Deluge. M. Clermont-Ganneau holds that the Ruach was the feminine companion of Elohim, and that this idea was continued under the name of Kodesh the Ruach Kodesh or Holy Ghost, which with the Jews and early Nazarene Christians was feminine.

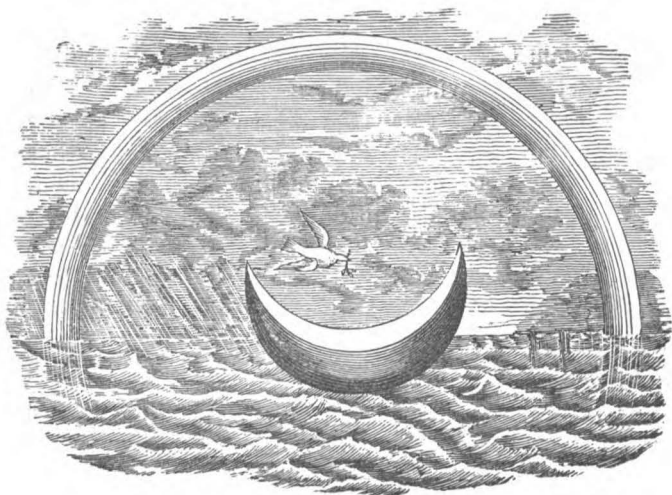


Fig. 6.—The Mystic Ark.

Another point to be briefly noticed is Jacob's anointing of the stone which he slept on, and then erected and called Beth El, or "house of God," the residence of the creative spirit. This was a phallic rite. Exactly the same anointing of the linga is performed in India till this day. It is evident that Jacob's worship of the pillar was orthodox at the time the narrative was written, for God sends him back to the pillar to perform his vow (see Gen. xxxv.), and again he goes through phallic rites (v. 14). When Paul says, "Flee fornication. Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" he elevates and spiritualises the conception which lay in the word Bethel. According to Philo Byblius, the huge stones common in Syria, as

in so many lands, were called Baetylia. Kalisch says it is not extravagant to suppose that the words are identical. From this custom of anointing comes the conception of the Messiah, or Christ the Anointed. Kissing the stone or god appears also to have been a religious rite. Thus we read of kissing Baal (1 Kings xix. 18) and kissing the "calves" (Hos. xiii. 2). Epiphanius said that the Ophites kissed the serpent which this wretched people called the Eucharist. They concluded the ceremonies by singing a hymn through him to the Supreme Father. (See Fergusson's *Tree and Serpent Worship*, p. 9.) The kissing of the Mohammedan saint's member and of the Pope's toe are probably connected. Amalarius, who lived in the age of Charlemagne, says that on Friday (*Dies Veneris*) the Pope and cardinals crawl on all fours along the aisles of St. Peter's to a cross before an altar which they salute and kiss.

Mr. Grant Allen, in an article on Sacred Stones in the *Fortnightly Review*, Jan., 1890, says :

"Samuel judged Israel every year at Bethel, the place of Jacob's sacred pillar; at Gilgal, the place where Joshua's twelve stones were set up; and at Mizpeh, where stood the cairn surmounted by the pillars of Laban's servant. He, himself, 'took a stone and set it up between Mizpeh and Shen'; and its very name, Ebenezer, 'the stone of help,' shows that it was originally worshipped before proceeding on an expedition, though the Jehovistic gloss, 'saying Hitherto the Lord hath helped us,' does its best, of course, to obscure the real meaning. It was to the stone circle of Gilgal that Samuel directed Saul to go down, saying 'I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings.' It was at the cairn of Mizpeh that Saul was chosen king; and after the victory over the Ammonites, Saul went once more to the great Stonehenge at Gilgal to 'review the kingdom,' and 'There they made Saul king before Jahveh in

Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before Jahveh.'"

This last passage, as Mr. Allen points out, is very instructive, as showing that in the opinion of the writer, Jahveh was then domiciled at Gilgal.

M. Soury, in his note to chap. ii. of his *Religion of Israel*, says: "It is needful to point out, with M. Schrader, that the most ancient Babylonian inscriptions in the Accadian tongues, those of Urukh and of Ur Kasdim, preserved in the British Museum, were engraved on clay phalii. We have here the origin of the usages and customs of religion so long followed among the Canaanites and Hebrews (V. Movers, *Die Phœnizer*, I., 591, *et passim*)."

In the old hymn embodied in Deut. xxxii., God is frequently called *Tsur*, "The Rock which begat thee," etc. Major-General Forlong believes "that the Jews had a Phallus or phallic symbol in their 'Ark of the Testimony' or Ark of the Eduth, a word which I hold tries to veil the real objects" (*Rivers of Life*, vol. i., p. 149). He does not scruple to say this was "the real God of the Jews; that God of the Ark or the Testimony, but surely not of Europe" (vol. i., p. 169). This contention is forcibly suggested by the picture of the Egyptian Ark found in Dr. Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, art. "Ark of the Covenant." The Ark of the Testimony, or significant thing, the tabernacle of the testimony and the veil of the testimony alluded to in Exodus are never mentioned in Deuteronomy. The Rev. T. Wilson, in his *Archæological Dictionary*, art. "Sanctum," observes that "the Ark of the Covenant, which was the greatest ornament of the first temple, was wanting in the second, but a stone of three inches thick, it is said, supplied its place,

which they [the Jews] further assert is still in the Mahommedan mosque called *the temple of the Stone*, which is erected where the Temple of Jerusalem stood." This forcibly suggests that the nature of the "God in the box" which the Jews carried about with them was similar to that carried in the processions of Osiris and Dionysos. According to 1 Kings viii. 9 the Ark contained two stones, but the much later writer of Heb. ix. 4 makes it contain the golden pot with manna, Aaron's rod, and the tables of the covenant.

Mr. Sellon, in the papers of the Anthropological Society of London, 1863-4, p. 327, argues: "There would also now appear good ground for believing that the ark of the covenant, held so sacred by the Jews, contained nothing more nor less than a phallus, the ark being the type of the Argha or Yoni (Linga worship) of India." Hargrave Jennings (*Phallicism*, p. 67) says: "We know from the Jewish records that the ark contained a table of stone. . . . That stone was phallic, and yet identical with the sacred name Jehovah, which, written in unpointed Hebrew with four letters, is JEVE, or JHVH (the *H* being merely an aspirate and the same as *E*). This process leaves us the two letters I and V (in another form, U); then, if we place the I in the V, we have the 'Holy of Holies'; we also have the Linga and Yoni and Argha of the Hindus, the Isvara and 'Supreme Lord'; and here we have the whole secret of its mystic and arc-celestial import confirmed in itself by being identical with the Ling-yoni of the Ark of the Covenant."

In Hosea, who finds it quite natural that the Lord should tell him "Go take unto thee a wife of whoredoms," we find the Lord called his *zakar* (translated memorial, xii. 5). In the same prophet we read that Jahveh

declares thou shalt call me *Ishi* (my husband); and shalt no more call me *Baali* (ii. 16). Again he says to his people "I am your husband" (Hosea iii. 14); "Thy maker is thine husband; Jahveh Sabaoth is his name" (Isaiah liv. 5). I was an husband to them, saith Jahveh (Jer. xxxi. 32. See also Jer. iii. 20 and Ezek. xvi. 32). God even does not scruple to represent himself in Ezekiel xxiii. as the husband of two adulterous sisters. Taking to other deities is continually called whoring and adultery. See Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16; Lev. xx. 5; Num. xxv. 1-3; Deut. xxxi. 16; xxxii. 16-21; Jud. ii. 17; viii. 27; 1 Chron. v. 25; Ps. lxxiii. 27; cvi. 39; Jer. iii. 1, 2, 6; Ezek. xvi. 15, 17; xxiii. 3; Hos. i. 2; ii. 4, 5; iv. 13, 15; v. 3, 4; ix. 7. In the Wisdom of Solomon (xiv. 12), we read: "For the devising of idols was the beginning of *spiritual* fornication, and the invention of them the corruption of life." Here the word "spiritual" is deliberately inserted to pervert the meaning. Let any one reflect how such coarse expressions could continually be used unless the writers were used to phallic worship. Further consider the narrative in Numbers xxxi., where the Lord takes a maiden tribute out of 32,000 girls, who must all have been examined. Vestal virgins and nuns are all consecrated like the *kadeshim* to the god, and the god is personified by the priest. In this sense phallicism is the key of all the creeds.

That some remnants of phallicism may be traced even in Christianity, will be evident to the readers of *Anacalypsis*, by Godfrey Higgins; *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names*, by Dr. Thomas Inman, and *Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism Exposed and Explained*, by the same author; the valuable *Rivers of Life*, by Major-General Forlong; a

little book on *Idolomania*, by "Investigator Abhorrens"; and another on *The Masculine Cross*, by Sha Rocco (New York, 1874). The sign of the cross, certainly long pre-Christian in the Egyptian sign for life, is specially dealt with in the last two works. In fig. 7 we see the connection of the Egyptian tau with the Hermæ. Of fig. 8 General Forlong (*Rivers of Life*, vol i., p 65)

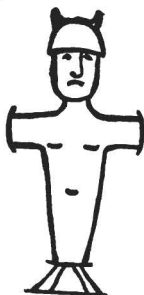


Fig. 7.

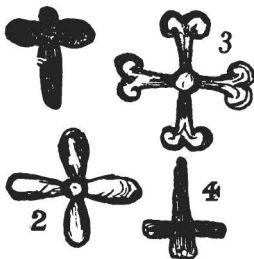


Fig. 8.

says: "The Samaritan cross, which they stamped on their coins, was No. 1, but the Norseman preferred No. 2 (the circle and four stout arms of equal size and weight), and called it Tor's hammer. It is somewhat like No. 3, which the Greek Christians early adopted, though this is more decidedly phallic, and shows clearly the meaning so much insisted on by some writers as to all meeting in the centre."

The custom of eating fish on Friday (*Dies Veneris*) is considered a survival of the days when a peculiar sexual signification was given to the fish, which has such a prominent place in Christian symbolism. Fig. 9 illustrates the origin of the bishop's mitre.

The *vescica piscis*, or fish's bladder (fig. 10), is a well-known ecclesiastical emblem of the virgin, often used in church windows, seals, etc. The symbol is equally known in India. Its real nature is shown in fig. 11,



Fig. 9.



Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.

discovered by Layard at Nineveh, depicting its worshipper seated on a lotus. The *vescica piscis* is conspicuously displayed in fig. 12, copied from a Rosary of



Fig. 12.

the Blessed Virgin, printed at Venice 1582, with the license from the Inquisition, in which the Holy Dove darts his ray, fecundating the Holy Virgin. Many instances of Christ in an elliptical aureole may be seen in Didron's *Christian Iconography*, fig. 71, p. 281, vol. i. strikingly resembles our figure.

CIRCUMCISION.

AMONG the many traces that the Jews were once savages I place the distinguishing mark of their race, circumcision. Many explanations have been given of this curious custom. The account, in Genesis xvii., that God commanded it to Abraham, at the ripe age of 99, critics agree was written after the exile—that is, thirteen hundred years after the death of the patriarch. Now, there is evidence from the Egyptian monuments that circumcision was known long before Abraham's time. This constrains Dr. Kitto to say, "God might have selected a practice already in use among other nations." If so, God must have had a curious taste and an uninventive mind. Why, having made people as they are, he should order his chosen race to be mutilated, must be a puzzle to the orthodox. Some writers have absurdly argued that the Egyptians borrowed from the Jews, whom they despised (see Genesis xliii. 32). Apart from the evidence of Herodotus and of monuments and mummies to the contrary, this view is never suggested in the Bible, but the testimony of the book of Joshua (v. 9) implies the reverse.

The narrative of the Lord's attempted assassination of Moses (Exodus iv. 24-26), which we shall shortly

examine, has the most archaic complexion of any of the biblical references to circumcision, and from it Dr. T. K. Cheyne argues that the rite is of Arabian origin.* If instituted in the time of Abraham under the penalty of death, it is curious that Moses never circumcised his own son, nor saw to its performance in the wilderness for forty years, so that Joshua had personally to circumcise over a million males at Gilgal.

Let us now look at the various theories of the origin and purpose of circumcision. Rationalising Jews say it is of a sanatory character. This view, though found in Philo, may be dismissed as an after theory to meet a religious difficulty. Most Asiatic nations are uncircumcised. The Philistines did not practice the rite, nor did the Syrians in the time of Josephus. Even if in a few cases it might possibly be beneficial, that would be no sufficient reason for imposing it on a whole nation under penalty of death. The fact is, the rite is a religious one. Indeed, upon its retention the early controversy between Jews and Christians largely turned.

The view that it is an imposed mutilation of a subject race is suggested in Dr. Remondino's *History of Circumcision*, and has the high authority of Herbert Spencer. He instances the trophy of foreskins taken by David as a dowry for Saul's daughter (1 Sam. xviii. 27), and that Hyrcanus having subdued the Idumeans, made them submit to circumcision. This, however, may have been a part of the policy of making them one with the Jewish race in being tributary to Jahveh. It is not easy to see how a mutilation imposed from without should ever become a part of the pride of race

* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article "Circumcision."

and be enjoined when all other mutilations were forbidden.

I incline to a view which, although in accord with early sociological conditions, I have never yet seen stated. It was suggested to me by the passage where Tacitus alludes to this custom among the Jews. It is that circumcision is of the nature of savage totem and tattoo marks—a device to distinguish the tribal division from other tribes, and to indicate those with whom the tribe might marry.* If, as has been suggested, the meaning of Genesis xxxiv. 14 is “one who is uncircumcised is as a woman to us,” this view is confirmed. The Jewish abhorrence to mixed marriages and “the bed of the uncircumcised” is well known.

The Hebrew distinguishing term for male—*zachar*, which also means record or *memorial*—will agree with this view, as also with that of Dr. Trumbull, which associates circumcision with that of blood-covenanting. It seems evident from the narrative in Exodus iv., where Zipporah, after circumcising her son, says—not as generally understood to Moses—“A bloody husband art thou to me,” but to Jahveh, “Thou art a *Kathan* of blood”—*i.e.*, one made akin by circumcision—that this idea of a blood-covenant became interwoven with the rite. It is to be noticed that in the covenant between God and the Jews women had no share.

Dr. Kuenen holds that circumcision is of the nature of a substitute for human sacrifice. No doubt the Jews had such sacrifices, and were familiar with the idea of substitution; but with this I rather connect the

* What Tacitus says is, “They do not eat with strangers or make marriages with them, and this nation, otherwise most prone to debauchery, abstains from all strange women. They have introduced circumcision in order to distinguish themselves thereby.”

Passover observance. If a sacrifice, it was doubtless phallic—an offering to the god on whom the fruit of the womb depended; possibly a substitution for the barbarous rites by which the priests of Cybele were instituted for office. Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, speaking of the neighboring nations, says: "Many of them devote their genitals to their divinities." According to Gerald Massey, "it was a dedication of the first-fruits of the male at the shrine of the virgin mother and child, which was one way of passing the seed through the fire to Moloch."

Westrop and Wake (*Phallicism in Ancient Religion*, p. 37) say "Circumcision, in its inception, is a purely phallic rite, having for its aim the marking of that which from its associations is viewed with peculiar veneration, and it converts the two phases of this superstition which have for their object respectively the *instrument* of generation and the *agent*."

General Forlong, who maintains the phallic view, also holds that "truth compels us to attach an Aphrodisiacal character to the mutilations of this highly sensual Jewish race." This view will not be hastily rejected by those who know of the many strange devices resorted to by barbarous peoples. Some have believed that circumcision enhances fecundity.

With the exception of the two first views, which I dismiss as not explaining the religious and permanent character of the rite, all these views imply a special regard being paid to the emblem of generation. This is further confirmed by the manner of oath-taking customary among the ancient Jews. When Abraham swore his servant, he said, "Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh" (Gen. xxiv. 2). The same euphemism is used in the account of Jacob swearing Joseph (xlvi).

29), and the custom, which has lasted among Arabs until modern days, is also alluded to in the Hebrew of 1 Chronicles xxix. 24. The Latin testiculi seems to point to a similar custom. In the law that no uncircumcised or sexually-imperfect person might appear before the shrine of the Lord, we may see yet further evidence that Jewish worship was akin to the phallic rites of the nations around them.

MOSES AT THE INN.

And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord, met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.—EXODUS IV. 24-26.

ANYONE who wishes to note the various shifts to which orthodox people will resort in their attempts to pass off the barbarous records of the Jews as God's holy word, should demand an explanation of the attempted assassination of Moses by Jehovah, as recorded in the above verses. Some commentators say that by the Lord is meant "the angel of the Lord," as if Jehovah was incapable of personally conducting so nefarious a piece of business. Bishop Patrick says "The Schechinah, I suppose, appeared to him—appeared with a drawn sword, perhaps, as he did to Balaam and David." Some say it was Moses's firstborn the Lord sought to kill. Some say it was at the child's feet the foreskin was cast, others at those of Moses, but the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem more properly represent that it was at the feet of God, in order to pacify him.

The story certainly presents some difficulties. Moses had just had one of his numerous interviews with Jehovah, who had told him to go back to Egypt, for all those are dead who sought his life. He is to tell

D

Pharaoh that Israel is the Lord's firstborn, and that if Pharaoh will not let the Israelites go he will slay Pharaoh's firstborn. Then immediately follows this passage. Why this sudden change of conduct towards Moses, whose life Jehovah was apparently so anxious to save?

Adam Clarke says the meaning is that the son of Moses had not been circumcised, and therefore Jehovah was about to have slain the child because not in covenant with him by circumcision, and thus he intended [after his usual brutal fashion] to punish the disobedience of the father by the death of the son. Zipporah getting acquainted with the nature of the case, and the danger to which her firstborn was exposed, took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son. By this act the displeasure of the Lord was turned aside, and Zipporah considered herself as now allied to God because of this circumcision. Old Adam tries to gloss over the attempted assassination of Moses by pretending it was only a child's life that was in danger. But we beg the reader to notice that no *child* is mentioned, but only a son whose age is unspecified. Dr. Clarke can hardly have read the treatise of John Frischl, *De Circumcisione Zipporæ*, or he would surely have admitted that the person menaced with death was Moses, and not his son.

Other commentators say that Zipporah did not like the snipping business (although she seems to have understood it at once), and therefore addressed her husband opprobriously. Circumcision, we may remark, was anciently performed with stone. The Septuagint version records how the flints with which Joshua circumcised the people at Gilgal were buried in his grave.

A nice specimen of the modern Christian method of semi-rationalising may be found in Dr. Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, to which the clergy usually turn for help in regard to any difficulties in connection with the sacred fetish they call the word of God. Smith says :

"The most probable explanation seems to be, that at the caravanserai either Moses or Gershom was struck with what seemed to be a mortal illness. In some way, not apparent to us, this illness was connected by Zipporah with the fact that her son had not been circumcised. She instantly performed the rite, and threw the sharp instrument, stained with the fresh blood, at the feet of her husband, exclaiming in the agony of a mother's anxiety for the life of her child, 'A bloody husband thou art, to cause the death of my son.' Then when the recovery from the illness took place (whether of Moses or Gershom), she exclaims again, 'A bloody husband still thou art, but not so as to cause the child's death, but only to bring about his circumcision.'"

We have no hesitation in saying that this most approved explanation is the worst. In seeking to make the story rational, it utterly ignores the primitive ideas and customs by which alone this ancient fragment can be interpreted. One little fact is sufficient to refute it. The Jews never use the word *Khathan*, improperly translated "husband," after marriage. The word may be interpreted spouse, betrothed or bridegroom, but not husband. The Revised Version, which always follows as closely as possible the Authorised Version, translates "a bridegroom of blood." But this makes it evident that Moses was not addressed, for no woman having a son calls her husband "bridegroom." We may now see the true meaning of the incident—that by the blood covenant of circumcision Zipporah entered into kinship with Jehovah and thereby claimed his

friendship instead of enmity. In ancient times only the good-will of those who recognise the family bond or ties of blood could be relied on. Herbert Spencer, in his *Ceremonial Institutions*, contends that bloody sacrifices arise "from the practice of establishing a sacred bond between living persons by partaking of each other's blood: the derived conception, being that those who give some of their blood to the ghost of a man just dead and lingering near, effect with it a union which on the one side implies submission, and on the other side friendliness."

Dr. T. K. Cheyne, in his article on Circumcision in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, takes the story of Moses at the inn as a proof that circumcision was of Arabic origin. He says: "*Khathan* meant originally not 'husband,' but 'a newly admitted member of the family.' So that 'a *khathan* of blood' meant one who has become a *khathan*, not by marriage, but by circumcision," a meaning confirmed by the derived sense of the Arabic *khatana*, "to circumcise"—circumcision being performed in Arabia at the age of puberty.

The English of the Catholic Douay version is not so good as the Authorised Version, but it brings us nearer the real meaning of the story. It runs thus:

"And when he was in his journey, in the inn, the Lord met him and would have killed him. Immediately Saphira took a very sharp stone, and circumcised the foreskin of her son, and touched his feet, and said: A bloody spouse art thou to me. And he let him go after she had said: A bloody spouse art thou unto me, because of the circumcision."

Here it is evidently the feet of the Lord that are touched, as was the ancient practice in rendering tribute, and we see that the foreskin was a propitiatory offering.

Dr. Trumbull in his interesting book on the Blood Covenant, says: "The Hebrew word *Khathan* has as its root idea, the binding through severing, the covenanting by blood; an idea that is in the marriage-rite, as the Orientals view it, and that is in the rite of circumcision also." Dr. Trumbull omits to say that the term is not used after marriage, and consequently that it must be taken as applied to the Lord. Zipporah, being already married, did not need to enter into the blood covenant with Moses, but with Jehovah, so that to her and hers the Lord might henceforth be friendly.

We do not make much of the inn. There were no public-houses between Midian and Egypt. Probably the reference is only to a resting-place or caravanserai. We would, therefore, render the passage thus:

The Lord met him [Moses] at a halting place and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a flint, and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at [made it touch] his [the Lord's] feet, and she said: Surely a kinsman of blood [one newly bound through blood] art thou to me. So he [the Lord] let him [Moses] alone.

Kuenen considers the passage, in connection with the place where it is inserted, indicated that circumcision was a substitute for child sacrifice. Any way, it may safely be said that the mark which every Jew bears on his own body is a sign that his ancestry worshipped a deity who sought to assassinate Moses, and was only to be appeased by an offering of blood.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT, AND SALVATION BY SIMILARS.

HAHNEMANN, the founder of homœopathy, is usually credited with the introduction of the medical maxim, *similia similibus curantur*—like things are cured by like. Those who would dispute his originality need not refer to the ancient saying familiar to all toppers, of “taking a hair of the dog that bit you”; they may find the origin of the homœopathic doctrine in the great source of all inspiration—the holy Bible.

The book of Numbers contains several recipes which would be invaluable if divine grace would enable us to re-discover and correctly employ them. There is, for instance, the holy water described in chap. v.; the effects of which will enable any jealous husband to discover if his wife has been faithful to him or not, and in the case of her guilt enable him to dispense with the services of Sir James Hannen.

But perhaps the most curious prescription in the book is that recorded in the twenty-first chapter. The Israelites wandering about for forty years, without travelling forty miles, got tired of the heavenly manna with which the “universal provider” supplied them. They looked back on the fried fish, which

they "did eat in Egypt freely," the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic, wherein the Jewish stomach delighteth, and they longed for a change of diet. Upon remonstrating with Moses, and stating their preference for Egyptian lentils rather than celestial mushrooms, the Lord of his tender mercy sent "fiery serpents" (the word is properly translated "seraphim"), and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Then the people prayed Moses to intercede for them, saying, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee;" and Jahveh, in direct opposition to his own commandment, directed Moses to "make a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten when he looketh upon it shall live." Moses accordingly made a serpent of brass, we presume from some of that stolen from the Egyptians, which had the desired effect. Instead of being but one monster more, the sight immediately cured the wounds, and these seraphim sent by the Lord, ashamed of being beaten by their brazen brother, skedaddled. Of course it may be contended that a seraph is neither in the likeness of anything in heaven above, in earth beneath, or in the water, or fire, under the earth, and that consequently Moses in no wise infringed the Decalogue.

Commentators have been puzzled to account for this evident relic of serpent worship in a religion so abhorrent of idolatry as that of the Jews. These gentry usually shut their eyes very close to the many evidences that the god-guided people were always falling into the idolatries of the surrounding nations. Now we know that the Babylonians, in common with all the great nations of antiquity, worshipped the

serpent. It has been thought, indeed, that the name Baal is an abbreviation of Ob-el, "the serpent god." In the Apocryphal book of Bel and the Dragon, to be found in every Catholic Bible, it says (v. 23) : "And in that same place there was a great dragon, which they of Babylon worshipped. And the king said unto Daniel, Wilt thou also say that this is of brass? Lo, he liveth, he eateth and drinketh, thou canst not say that he is no living god; therefore worship him." Serpent worship is indeed so widely spread, and of such great antiquity, that it has been conjectured to have sprung from the antipathy between our monkey ancestors and snakes. In this legend the brazen serpent is benevolent, but more usually that reptile represents the evil principle. Thus a story in the Zendavesta (which is clearly allied to, and may have suggested that in Genesis) says that Ahriman assumed a serpent's form in order to destroy the first of the human race, whom he accordingly poisoned. In the Saddu we read : "When you kill serpents you shall repeat the Zendavesta, whereby you will obtain great merit; for it is the same as if you had killed so many devils." It is curious that the serpent which is the evil genius of Genesis is the good genius in Numbers, and that Jesus himself is represented as comparing himself to it (John iii. 14). An early Christian sect, the Ophites, found serpent worshipping quite consistent with their Christianity.

It seems likely that this story of the brazen serpent having been made by Moses, was a priestly invention to account for its being an object of idolatry among the Jews, as we know from 2 Kings xviii. 4, it was worshipped down to the time of Hezekiah, that is

700 years after the time of Moses. Hezekiah, we are told, broke the brazen serpent in pieces, but it must have been miraculously joined again, for the identical article is still to be seen, for a consideration, in the Church of St. Ambrose at Milan. Some learned rabbis regard the brazen serpent as a talisman which Moses was enabled to prepare from his knowledge of astrology. Others say it was a form of amulet to be copied and worn as a charm against disease. Others again declare it was only set up *in terrorem*, as a man who has chastised his son hangs up the rod against the wall as a warning. Rationalising commentators have pretended that it was but an emblem of healing by the medical art, a sort of sign-post to a camp hospital, like the red cross flag over an ambulance. These altogether pervert the text, and miss the meaning of the passage. The resemblance of the object set up was of the essence of the cure, as may be seen in 1 Sam. vi. 5. In truth, the doctrine of like curing like, instead of being a modern discovery is a very ancient superstition. The old medical books are full of prescriptions, or rather charms, founded on this notion.* It is, indeed, one of the recognised principles in savage magic and medicine that things like each other, however superficially, affect each other in a mystic way, and possess identical properties. Thus in Melanesia, according to Mr. Codrington,† “a stone in the shape of a pig, of a bread fruit, of a yam, was a most valuable find,” because it made pigs prolific, and fertilised bread, fruit trees, and yam plots. In Scotland, too, “stones were called by the names of the limbs they resembled, as ‘eye-stanes,

* See *Myths in Medicine and Old Time Doctors*, by Alfred C. Garratt, M.D.

† *Journal Anthropological Institute*, February, 1881.

head-stane.'” A patient washed the affected part of his body, and rubbed it well with the stone corresponding. In precisely the same way the mandrake* root, being thought to resemble the human body, was supposed to be of wondrous medical efficacy, and was credited with human and super-human powers.† The method of cure, when the Philistines were smitten with emerods and mice, was to make images of the same (1 Sam. vi. 5), and the same idea was found in the well-known superstition of sorcerers making “a waxen man” to represent an enemy, injuries to the waxen figure being supposed to affect the person represented.

Many curious customs and superstitions may be traced to this belief. In old medical works one may still read that to eat of a lion's heart is a specific to ensure courage, while other organs and certain bulbous plants are a remedy for sterility. The virtue of all the ancient aphrodisiacs resided in their shape. This notion, which largely affected the early history of medicine, is known as the doctrine of signatures.

Certain plants and other natural objects were believed to be so marked or stamped that they presented visibly the indications of the diseases, or diseased organs, for which they were specifics; these were their signatures. Hence a large portion of the ancient art of medicine consisted in ascertaining what plants were analogous to the symptoms of disease, or to the organ diseased. To this doctrine we owe some popular names of plants, such as eye-bright, liver-wort, spleen-wort, etc. The mandrake, from its supposed resemblance to

* Gregor, *Folk-lore of North-East Counties*, p. 40.

† See the paper on “Moly and Mandragora,” in *A. Lang's Custom and Myth*; 1884.

the human form, was credited with marvellous powers, and anyone who will take the trouble to inquire into the folk-lore concerning plants and disease will find that much depends upon the appearance of the remedy.

One of the most curious peculiarities of Christianity is its doctrine of a God crucified for sinners. So strange, so repugnant to reason as such a doctrine is, it was quite consonant to the thoughts of those who held the belief in salvation by similars. If Paul said, since by man came death by man came also the resurrection of the dead, the development of the doctrine necessitated that if it is God who damns it is also God who saves. Any casual reader of Paul must have been struck by the antithesis which he constantly draws between the law and the Gospel, works and faith, the fall of man, and the redemption through "the second Adam." The very phrase "second Adam" implies this doctrine, which is summed up in the statement that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13).

God, in order to redeem man, had to take on sinful flesh and be himself the curse in order to be the cure. Hence we read in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, chap. xvi., that "they who endure in their faith shall be saved by the very curse." Thus may we understand that which modern Christians find so difficult of explanation, viz., that the whole Christian world for the first thousand years from St. Justin to St. Anselm believed that Christ paid the ransom for sinners to the Devil, their natural owner. Christ in order to become the Savior had to become the curse, had to die and had to descend to hell, though of course, being God, he could not stay there. Hence his being likened to the brazen serpent, that remnant of early Jewish fetichism

which was smashed by Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 4). John makes Jesus himself teach that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness [as a cure for serpent bites] even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life."

So Irenæus says (bk. iv., chap. 2), "men can be saved in no other way from the old wound of the serpent than by believing in him, who in the likeness of sinful flesh, is lifted up from the earth on the tree of martyrdom, and draws all things to himself and vivified the dead." That is, Christ was made sinful flesh to be the curse itself, just as the innocent brass appeared a serpent. because the form of the curse was necessary to the cure. Paul dwells on the passage of the law "Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree," with the very object of showing that Christ, cursed under the law, was a blessing under his glad tidings. The Fathers were never tired of saying that man was lost by a tree (in Eden) and saved by a tree (on Calvary), that as the curse came in child-birth* and thorns, so the world was saved by the birth of Christ and his crown of thorns. Justin says, "As the curse came by a Virgin, so by a Virgin the salvation," and this antithesis between Eve and Mary has been carried on by Catholic writers down to our own day.

As the Christian doctrine of salvation through the blood of Christ has certainly no more foundation in fact than the efficacy of liver-wort in liver diseases, we suggest it may have no better foundation than the ancient superstition of salvation by similars.

* Notice too 1 Tim. 15, where women are said to be saved by child-birth, their curse.

RELIGION AND MAGIC.

"NEW PRESBYTER," says Milton, "is but old priest writ large." Old priest, it may be said, is but older sorcerer in disguise. In early times religion and magic were intimately associated; indeed, it may be said they were one and the same. The earliest religion being the belief in spirits, the earliest worship is an attempt to influence or propitiate them by means that can only be described as magical; the belief in spirits and in magic both being founded on dreams. Medicine men and sorcerers were the first priests. Herbert Spencer says (*Principles of Sociology*, sec. 589): "A satisfactory distinction between priests and medicine men is difficult to find. Both are concerned with supernatural agents, which in their original form are ghosts; and their ways of dealing with these supernatural agents are so variously mingled, that at the outset no clear classification can be made." Among the Patagonians the same men officiate in the "threefold capacity of priests, magicians and doctors"; and among the North American Indians the functions of "sorcerer, prophet, physician, exorciser, priest, and rain doctor" are united.

Everywhere we find the priests are magicians. Their authority rests on imagined and dreaded power.

They are supposed by their spells and incantations to have power over nature, or rather the spirits supposed to preside over it. Hence they became the rulers of the people. The modern priest, who is supposed by muttering a formula to change the nature of consecrated elements or by his prayers to bring blessings on the people, betrays his lineal descent from the primitive rain-makers and sorcerers of savagery.

The Bible is full of magic and sorcery. Its heroes are magicians, from Jahveh Elohim, who puts Adam into a sleep and then makes woman from his rib, to Jesus who casts out devils and cures blindness with clay and spittle, and whose followers perform similar works by the power of his name. The most esteemed persons among the Jews were magicians. Pious Jacob cheats his uncle by a species of magic with peeled rods. Joseph not only tells fortunes by interpreting dreams but has a divining cup (Gen. xliv. 5), doubtless similar to the magic bowls used to the present day in Egypt, in which, as described by Lane in his *Modern Egyptians*, a boy looks and pretends to see images of the future in water.

The fourth chapter of Exodus gives the initiation of Moses into the magician's art by Jahveh, the great adept, who changes the rod of Moses into a serpent and back again into a rod; suddenly makes his hand leprous, and as suddenly restores it. Moses and Aaron show themselves superior magicians to those at the court of Pharaoh, who, when Aaron cast down his magic rod and it became a serpent, did in like manner with their rods, which also became serpents, though Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods (Exodus vii. 11, 12). Upon this passage the learned Methodist commentator, Dr. Adam Clarke, writing at an age when the belief

in witchcraft was almost extinct, after remarking that such feats evidently required something more than jugglery, observes: "How much more rational at once to allow that these magicians had familiar spirits who could assume all shapes, change the appearance of the subjects on which they operated, or suddenly convey one thing away and substitute another in its place."

Aaron also used his rod to change *all* the water into blood, a feat which the Egyptian magicians also contrived to perform—we presume with the aid of spirits. If you believe in spirits, there is no end to the supposition of what they might do. The magic rod of Moses is used to divide the water of the Red Sea, so that the children went through the midst of the sea on dry ground (Ex. xiv. 16), and to draw water from a rock (Num. xx. 8). Aaron's rod blossoms miraculously to show the superiority of the tribe of Levi (Num. xvii. 8).

The Urim and Thummin of Aaron's breastplate were also magical articles used in divination (see Num. xxviii. 21; 1 Sam. xxiii. 9, and xxx. 7, 8). Casting lots was another method of divination often referred to in the Bible. Prov. xvi. 31, says "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is with the Lord." It was because "when Saul inquired of Jahveh, Jahveh answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" (1 Sam. xxviii. 6), that he resorted to the witch of Endor. The ephod and holy plate (Ex. xxviii.), and the phylacteries worn as frontlets between the eyes (Deut. vi. 8), were magical amulets. Modern Arabs wear scraps of the Koran in a similar way. The holy oil (Ex. xxx.) and the water of jealousy (Num. v.) were magical, as was also the brazen serpent, adored down to the days of

Hezekiah. The great Wizard's ark was also endowed with magical powers, bringing with it victory and punishing those who infringed its tabu; it was taken into battle. His sanctuary was also called an oracle where the priest "inquired of the Lord" (2 Sam. xvi. 23; 1 Kings vi. 16).

The teraphim were also magical, as we learn from Ezek. xxi. 21, where the word is translated "images." The prophet Hosea, one of the very earliest of the Old Testament writers (about 740), announced as a misfortune that "the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." Laban, although a believer in Elohim, calls the teraphim "his gods" (Genesis xxxi. 29, 30), and so does Micah (Judges xviii. 18-24). The latter chapter shows that the teraphim were worshipped and served by the descendants of Moses down to the time of David (see Revised Version). David's wife Michal kept one in the house (1 Sam. xix. 13). It was evidently a fetish in human shape. How comes it, then, one may ask, that divination and sorcery are denounced in Deuteronomy xviii.? The answer is simple. The Deuteronomic law was first found in the time of Josiah, B.C. 641 (see 2 Kings xxii. 8-11), and there is abundant evidence it was not known before that time. Josiah, as we learn from 2 Kings xxiii. 24, put away "the familiar spirits, and the wizards and the teraphim and the idols," as Hezekiah (B.C. 726) had destroyed the brazen serpent. Not only had Jezebel practised witchcraft (2 Kings ix. 22), but Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, "dealt with a familiar spirit and with wizards" (2 Chron. xxxiii. 6). These, it may be said, were wicked persons.

Yet another piece of evidence is derived from the fact that *Nashon*, the chief of the tribe of Judah and one of the ancestry of the blessed Savior, signifies "enchanter." Zechariah (B.C. 580) shows the great advance made from the time of Hosea by declaring that "the teraphim have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams" (x. 2).

Samuel, like other early priests, was ruler and weather doctor. Elijah was a corpse restorer and rain compeller. Elisha not only inherited his mantle, but also raised the dead and multiplied food. His very bones proved magical. Jesus Christ was a great wonder-worker or magician, casting out devils, turning water into wine, healing diseases even by the touch of his magical robe, and finally levitating from earth.

The charge brought against Jesus by the Jews was that he had stolen the sacred Word and by it wrought miracles. We read in the Gospels that Jesus "cast out spirits with his word" (Matt. viii. 16). Jesus promised that in his *name* his disciples should cast out devils, and Peter declared that his name healed the lame (Acts iii. 16). When the Jews asked, "By what power, or by what name have we done this" (Acts iv. 7), Peter answered, "By the name of Jesus Christ." Paul says, "God hath . . . given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and in earth and under the earth" (Philip ii. 9, 10).

Any careful reader of the Bible must have been struck with the frequency with which "the name of the Lord" is mentioned, and the care not to profane that name. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" is the second commandment,

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and Christians still speak of God "in a bondsman's key with bated breath and whispering humbleness," for no better reason than this old superstition. In Leviticus xxiv. 11 and 16, the word translated by us "blasphemeth" was by the Jews rendered "pronounces," so that the son of the Israelitish woman was stoned to death for pronouncing the ineffable name of J.H.V.H. The Talmud say "He who attempts to pronounce it shall have no part in the world to come." Once a year only, on the day of Atonement, was the high priest allowed to whisper the word, even as at the present day "the word" is whispered in Masonic lodges. The Hebrew Jehovah dates only from the Massoretic invention of points. When the Rabbis began to insert the vowel-points they had lost the true pronunciation of the sacred name. To the letters J. H. V. H. they put the vowels of Edonai or Adonai, *lord* or *master*, the name which in their prayers they substitute for Jahveh. Moses wanted to know the name of the god of the burning bush. He was put off with the formula I AM THAT I AM. Jahveh having lost his name has become "I was but am not." When Jacob wrestled with the god, angel, or ghost, he demanded his name. The wary angel did not comply (Gen. xxxii. 29.) So the father of Samson begs the angel to say what is his name. "And the angel of the Lord said unto him, why asketh thou thus after my name seeing it is *secret*" (Judges xiii. 18). All this superstition can be traced to the belief that to know the names of persons was to acquire power over them.

In process of time the priest displaces the sorcerer, while still retaining certain of his functions. The gods of a displaced religion are regarded as devils and their worship as sorcery. Much of the persecution

of witchcraft which went on in the ages when Christianity was dominant was really the extirpation of the surviving rites of Paganism. It is curious that it is always the more savage races that are believed to have the greatest magical powers. Dr. E. B. Tylor says: "In the Middle Ages the name of Finn was, as it still remains among seafaring men, equivalent to that of sorcerer, while Lapland witches had a European celebrity as practitioners of the black art. Ages after the Finns had risen in the social scale, the Lapps retained much of their old half-savage habit of life, and with it naturally their witchcraft, so that even the magic-gifted Finns revered the occult powers of a people more barbarous than themselves."

The same writer continues*: "Among the early Christians, sorcery was recognised as illegal miracle; and magic arts, such as turning men into beasts, calling up familiar demons, raising storms, etc., are mentioned, not in a sceptical spirit, but with reprobation. In the changed relations of the state to the church under Constantine, the laws against magic served the new purpose of proscribing the rites of the Greek and Roman religion, whose oracles, sacrifices and auguries, once carried on under the highest public sanction, were put under the same ban with the low arts of the necromancer and the witch. As Christianity extended its sway over Europe, the same antagonism continued, the church striving with considerable success to put down at once the old local religions, and the even older practices of witchcraft; condemning Thor and Woden as demons, they punished their

* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article "Magic."

rites in common with those of the sorceresses who bewitched their neighbors and turned themselves into wolves or cats. Thus gradually arose the legal persecution of witches which went on through the Middle Ages under ecclesiastical sanction both Catholic and Protestant."

But the religion of Christendom contained scarcely less elements of magical practices than that of Paganism. In the early Christian Church a considerable section of its ministry was devoted to the casting out of devils. Regulations concerning the same were contained in the canons of the Church of England. The magical power of giving absolution and remission of sins is still claimed in our national Church. Throughout the course of Christianity, indeed, magical effects have been ascribed to religious rites and consecrated objects.

Viktor Rydberg, the Swedish author of an interesting work on *The Magic of the Middle Ages*, says (p. 85): "Every monastery has its master magician, who sells *agni Dei*, conception billets, magic incense, salt and tapers which have been consecrated on Candlemas Day, palms consecrated on Palm Sunday, flowers besprinkled with holy water on Ascension Day, and many other appliances belonging to the great magical apparatus of the Church."

Bells are consecrated to this day, because they were supposed to have a magical effect in warding off demons. Their efficacy for this purpose is specifically asserted by St. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest doctor of the Church, who lays it down that the changeableness of the weather is owing to the constant conflict between good and bad spirits.

Baptism is another magical process. There are

people still in England who think harm will come to a child if it is not christened. In Christian baptism we have the magical invocation of certain names, those of the ever-blessed Trinity. The names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were used as spells to ward off demons. The process is supposed to have a magical efficacy, and is as much in the nature of a charm as making the sign of the cross with holy water, or the unction with holy oil, as a preparation for death. So important was it considered that the saving water should prevent demoniac power, that holy squirts were used to bring magical liquid in contact with the child before it saw the light!

The doctrine of salvation through blood is nothing but a survival of the faith in magic. Volumes might be written on the belief in the magical efficacy of blood as a sacrifice, a cementer of kinship, and a means of evoking protecting spirits. Blood baths for the cure of certain diseases were used in Egypt and mediæval Europe. Longfellow alludes to this superstition in his *Golden Legend*:

The only remedy that remains
Is the blood that flows from a maiden's veins,
Who of her own free will shall die,
And give her life as the price of yours!
This is the strangest of all cures,
And one I think, you will never try.

The changing of the bread and wine of the Christian sacrament into the body and blood of God is evidently a piece of magic, dependent on the priestly magical formula. The affinities of the Christian communion with savage superstition are so many that they deserve to be treated in a separate article. Meanwhile let it be noticed that priests lay much stress upon the Blessed

Sacrament, for it is this which invests them with magical functions and the awe and reverence consequent upon belief therein.

Formulated prayers are of the nature of magical spells or invocations. A prayer-book is a collection of spells for fine weather, rain, or other blessings. The Catholic soldier takes care to be armed with a blessed scapular to guard off stray bullets, or, in the event of the worst coming, to waft his soul into heaven. The Protestant smiles at this superstition, but mutters a prayer for the self-same purpose. In essence the procedure is the same. The earliest known Egyptian and Chaldean psalms and hymns are spells against sorcery or the influence of evil spirits, just as the invocation taught to Christian children—

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
Bless the bed that I lie on.

The belief in magic, though it shows a survival in Theosophy, as ghost belief does in Spiritism, is dying slowly; and with it, in the long run, must die those religious doctrines and practices founded upon it. No magic can endure scientific scrutiny. Almost expelled from the physical world, it takes refuge in the domain of psychology; but there, too, it is being gradually ousted, though it still affords a profitable area for charlatanry.

Lucian has a story how Pancrates, wanting a servant, took a door-bar and pronounced over it magical words, whereon he stood up, brought him water, turned a spit, and did all the other tasks of a slave. What is this, asks Emerson, but a prophecy of the progress of art? Moses striking water from the rock was inferior to Sir Hugh Middleton bringing a water supply to London.

Jesus walking on the water was nothing to crossing the Atlantic by steam. The only true magic is that of science, which is a conquest of the human mind, and not a phantasy of superstition.

T A B O O S .

VISCOUNT AMBERLEY, in his able *Analysis of Religious Belief*, points out that everywhere the religious instinct leads to the consecration of certain actions, places, and things. If this instinct is analysed, it is found at bottom to spring from fear. Certain places are to be dreaded as the abode of evil spirits; certain actions are calculated to propitiate them, and certain things are dangerous, and are therefore tabooed.

From Polynesia was derived the word *taboo* or *tapu*, and the first conception of its importance as an element lying at the bottom of many of our religious and social conventions; though this is not as yet by any means sufficiently recognised.

The term *taboo* implies something sacred, reserved, prohibited by supernatural agents, the breaking of which prohibition will be visited by supernatural punishment. This notion is one of the most widely extended features of early religion. Holy places, holy persons, and holy things are all founded on this conception. Prof. W. Robertson Smith,* says: "Rules of holiness in the sense just explained, *i.e.*, a system of restrictions on man's arbitrary use of natural things enforced by the dread of supernatural penalties, are found among all primitive peoples."

* *Religion of the Semites*, p. 142.

The holy ark of the North American Indians was deemed "so sacred and dangerous to be touched" that no one except the war chief and his attendant will touch it "under the penalty of incurring great evil. Nor would the most inveterate enemy touch it in the woods for the very same reason."*

In Numbers iv. 15 we read of the Jewish ark, "The sons of Kohath shall come to bear it; but they shall not touch any holy thing lest they die." In 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7, we are told how the Lord smote Uzzah so that he died, simply for putting his hand on the ark to steady it. So the Lord punished the Philistines for keeping his ark, and smote fifty thousand and seventy men of Bethshemesh, "because they had looked into the ark of the Lord" (1 Sam. v. 6).

Disease and death were so constantly thought of as the penalties of breaking taboo that cases are on record of those who, having unwittingly done this, have died of terror upon recognising their error. Mr. Frazer, in his *Golden Bough*, instances a New Zealand chief, who left the remains of his dinner by the way side. A slave ate it up without asking questions. Hardly had he finished when he was told the food was the chief's, and taboo. "No sooner did he hear the fatal news than he was seized by the most extraordinary convulsions and cramp in the stomach, which never ceased till he died, about sundown the same day."

All the old temples had an adytum, sanctuary, or holy of holies—a place not open to the profane, but protected by rigid taboos. This was the case with the Jews. It was death to enter the holy places, or even to make the holy oil of the priests. Even the name

* Adair, *History of the American Indians*, p. 162, sq.

of the Lord was taboo, and to this day cannot be pronounced. Take off your sandals, says God to Moses, for the place whereon you stand is taboo. The whole of Mount Horeb was taboo, and we continually read of the holy mountain. The ideas of taboo and of holiness are admitted by Prof. Robertson Smith to be at bottom identical.

Some taboos are simply artful, as the prohibition of boats to South Pacific women, lest they should escape to other islands. When Tamehameha, the King of the Sandwich Islands, heard that diamonds had been found in the mountains near Honolulu, he at once declared the mountains taboo, in order that he might be the sole possessor.

In Hawai the flesh of hogs, fowls, turtle, and several kinds of fish, cocoa-nuts, and nearly everything offered in sacrifice, were reserved for gods and men, and could not, except in special cases, be consumed by women. Some taboos of animals being used for food seem to have been dictated by dread or aversion, but others had a foundation of prudence and forethought. Thus there is little doubt that the prohibition of the sacred cow in India has been the means of preserving that animal from extermination in times of famine.

Various reasons have been assigned for the taboos upon certain kinds of food found in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. As we have these laws they seem to represent a rough attempt at classifying animals it was beneficial or hurtful to eat. Some ridiculous mistakes were made by the divine tabooist. The hare, a rodent, was declared to "chew the cud" (Lev. xi. 6, Deut. xiv. 7). The camel was excluded because it does not divide the hoof; yet in reality it has cloven feet. But doubtless it was seen it might be disastrous to kill the

camel for food. Mr. Frazer is of opinion that the pig was originally a sacred animal among the Jews.

The cause of the custom of tabooing certain kinds of food, which was in existence long before the Levitical laws were written, perhaps arose partly from reverence, partly from aversion. It may, too, have been connected with the totemism of early tribes. No less than one hundred and eighty Bible names have a zoological signification. Caleb, the dog tribe; Doeg, the fish tribe; may be instanced as specimens.

Touching the carcass of a dead animal was taboo, and the taboo was contagious. In Lev. xi. 21—25 we find rigorous laws on the subject. Whoever carries the carcass of an unclean animal must wash his garments. The objects upon which a carcass accidentally falls, must be washed, and left in water till the evening, and if of earthenware the defilement is supposed to enter into the pores, and the vessel, oven, or stove-range must be broken.

Touching a corpse was taboo among the Greeks,* Romans,† Hindoos,‡ Parsees,§ and Phœnicians.|| If a Jew touched a dead body—even a dead animal (Lev. xi. 89)—he became unclean, and if he purified not himself, “that soul shall be cut off from Israel” (Num. xix. 13). So “those who have defiled themselves by touching a dead body are regarded by the Maoris as in a very dangerous state, and are sedulously shunned and isolated.”¶ Doubtless it was felt that death was something which could communicate itself, as disease was seen to do.

When iron was first discovered it was invested with

* Eurip. *Alcest*, 100.

† Virgil *Æn.*, vi. 221; Tacit. *Annal.*, 162.

‡ Manu, v. 59, 62, 74-79.

§ *Vendid* iii. 25-27.

|| Lucian *Dea Syr.*, 523.

¶ J. G. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vol. i., p. 169.

mystery and held as a charm. It was tabooed. The Jews would use no iron tools in building the temple or making an altar (Ex. xx. 25, 1 Kings vi. 7). Roman and Sabine priests might not be shaved with iron but only with bronze, as stone knives were used in circumcision (Ex. iv. 25, Josh. v. 2). To this day a Hottentot priest never uses an iron knife, but always a sharp splint of quartz in sacrificing an animal or circumcising a boy. In the boys' game of touch iron we may see a remnant of the old belief in its charm. When Scotch fishermen were at sea and one of them happened to take the name of God in vain, the first man who heard him called out "Cauld airn," at which every man of the crew grasped the nearest bit of iron and held it between his hand for a while.*

Women were especially tabooed after childbirth and during menstruation (Lev. xii. and xv.) Among the Indians of North America, women at this time are forbidden to touch men's utensils, which would be so defiled by their touch that their subsequent use would be attended with misfortune. They walk round the fields at night dragging their garments, this being considered a protection against vermin. Among the Eskimo, of Alaska, no one will eat or drink from the same cup or dishes used by a woman at her confinement until it has been purified by certain incantations.

In the Church of England Service, what is now called the "Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth, commonly called the Churching of Women," was formerly known as *The Order of the Purification of Women*, and was read at the church door before the "unclean" creatures were permitted to enter the

* E. E. Guthrie, *Old Scottish Customs*, p. 149. Charles Rogers, *Social Life in Scotland*, iii. 218.

"holy" building. This should be known by all women who think it their duty to be "churched" after fulfilling the sacred office of motherhood.

In Hebrew the same word signifies at once a holy person, a harlot and a sodomite—sacred prostitution having been common in ancient times. Mr. Frazer, noticing that the rules of ceremonial purity observed by divine kings, priests, homicides, women in child-births, and so on, are in some respects alike, says: "To us these different classes of persons appear to differ totally in character and condition; some of them we should call holy, others we might pronounce unclean and polluted. But the savages make no such moral distinction between them; the conceptions of holiness and pollution are not yet differentiated in his mind. To him the common feature of all these persons is that they are dangerous and in danger, and the danger in which they stand and to which they expose others is what we should call spiritual or supernatural—that is, imaginary."*

Few would suspect it, but it is likely that the custom of wearing Sunday clothes comes from certain garments being tabooed in the holy places. Among the Maoris "A slave or other person would not enter a *wahi tapu*, or sacred place, without having first stripped off his clothes; for the clothes, having become sacred the instant they entered the precincts of the *wahi tapu*, would ever after be useless to him in the ordinary business of life."† According to the Rabbins, the handling of the scriptures defiles the hands—that is, entails a washing of purification. This because the notions of holiness and uncleanness are alike merged

* *Golden Bough*, vol. i., p. 171.

† Shortland's *Southern Districts of New Zealand*, p. 293, sq.

in the earlier conception of taboo. Blood, the great defilement, is also the most holy thing. Just as with the Hindus to this day, the excrements of the cow are the great means of purification.

Dr. Kalisch says, "Next to sacrifices purifications were the most important of Hebrew rituals."* The purpose was to remove the stain of contact either with the holy or unclean taboos. A holy, or taboo water—or, as it is called in the Authorised Version, "water of separation"—was prepared. First, an unblemished red heifer was slain by the son of the high priest outside the camp, then burnt, and as the ash mingled with spring water, which was supposed to have a magical effect in removing impurities when the tabooed person was sprinkled with it on the third and again on the seventh day. It was called a "purification for sin" (Num. xix. 9), and was doubtless good as the blood of the Lamb, if not equal to Pear's soap.

In the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Mr. J. G. Frazer says: "Amongst the Jews the vow of the Nazarite (Num. vi. 1—21) presents the closest resemblance to the Polynesian taboo. The meaning of the word Nazarite is 'one separated or consecrated,' and this is precisely the meaning of taboo. It is the head of the Nazarite that is especially consecrated, and so it was in the taboo. The Nazarite might not partake of certain meats and drinks, nor shave his head, nor touch a dead body—all rules of taboo." Mr. Frazer points out other particulars in the mode of terminating the vow. Secondly that some of the rules of Sabbath observance are identical with the rules of strict taboo; such are the

* *Leviticus*, pt. ii., p. 187.

prohibitions to do any work, to kindle a fire in the house, to cook food and to go out of doors.

We still have some remnant of the Sabbath taboo, and many a child's life is made miserable by being checked for doing what is tabooed on the Lord's Day. Other taboos abound. We must not, for instance, question the sacred books, the sacred character of Jesus, or the existence of the divine being. These subjects are tabooed. For reverence is a virtue much esteemed by solemn humbugs.

BLOOD RITES.

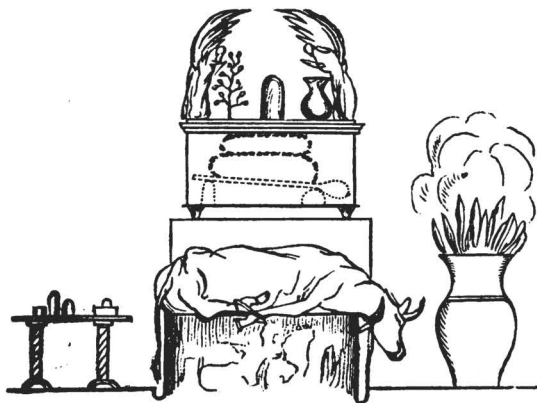
"Without shedding of blood is no remission."

—HEB. IX. 22.

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

JUDAISM was a religion of blood and thunder. The Lord God of Israel delighted in blood. His worshippers praised him as a god of battles and a man of war. All his favorites were men of blood. The Lord God was likewise very fond of roast meat, and the smell thereof was a sweet savor unto his nostrils. He had respect to Abel and his bloody offering, but not to Cain and his vegetables. He ordered that in his holy temple a bullock and a lamb should be killed and hacked to pieces every morning for dinner, and a lamb for supper in the evening. To flavor the repast he had twelve flour cakes, olive oil, salt and spice; and to wash it down he had the fourth part of a hin of wine (over a quart) with a lamb twice a day, the third part of a hin with a ram, and half a hin with a bullock (Exodus xxix. 40, Numbers xv. 5-11, xxviii. 7). But his great delight was blood, and from every victim that was slaughtered the blood was caught by the priest in a bason and offered to him upon his altar, which daily reeked with the sanguine stream from slaughtered

animals. The interior of his temple was like shambles, and a drain had to be made to the brook Cedron to carry off the refuse.* Incense had to be used to take away the smell of putrifying blood.



The Altar of Jehovah.

The most characteristic customs of the Jews, circumcision and the Passover, alike show the sanguinary character of their deity. Because Moses did not mutilate his child, the Lord met him at an inn and sought to kill him (Exodus iv. 25). The Passover, according to the Jews' own account, commemorated the Lord's slaying all the first-born of Egypt, and sparing those of the Jews upon recognising the blood sprinkled upon the lintels and sideposts of the doors; more probably it was a survival of human sacrifice. God's worshippers were interdicted from tasting, though not from shedding, the sacred fluid; yet we read of Saul's army that "the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew them on the ground, and

* *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, article "Blood."

the people did eat them with the blood " (1 Sam. xiv. 32), much as the Abyssinians cut off living steaks to this day.

Christianity is a modified gospel of gore. The great theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews is that the blood and sacrifice of Christ is so much better than that of animals. The substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the great inspiration of emotional religion. Revivalists revel in "the blood, the precious blood":

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
Oh! Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Chorus—Jesus paid it all,
All to him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow.

Jesus Christ says, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him," and the most holy sacrament of the Christian Church consists in this cannibalistic communion.

To understand this fundamental rite of communion, or, indeed, the essence of any other part of the Christian religion, we must go back to those savage ideas out of which it has evolved. It is easy to account for savage superstitions in connection with blood. The life of the savage being largely spent in warfare, either with animals or his fellow men, the connection between blood and life is strongly impressed upon his mind. He sees, moreover, the child formed from the mother, the flow of whose blood is arrested. Hence the children of one mother are termed "of the same blood." In a state of continual warfare the only safe alliances were with those who recognised the family bond. Those

who would be friends must be sharers in the same blood. Hence we find all over the savage world rites of blood-covenanting, of drinking together from the same blood, thereby symbolising community of nature. Like eating and drinking together, it was a sign of communion and the substitution of bread and wine for flesh and blood is a sun-worshipping refinement upon more primitive and cannibalistic communion.

Dr. Trumbull, in his work on *The Blood Covenant*, has given many instances of shedding blood in celebrating covenants and "blood brotherhood." The idea of substitution is widespread in all early religions. One of the most curious was the sacrament of the natives of Central America, thus noticed by Dr. Trumbull :

"Cakes of the maize sprinkled with their own blood, drawn from 'under the girdle,' during the religious worship, were 'distributed and eaten as blessed bread.' Moreover an image of their god, made with certain seeds from the first fruits of their temple gardens, with a certain gum, and with the blood of human sacrifices, were partaken of by them reverently, under the name, 'Food of our Soul.'"

Here we have, no doubt, a link between the rude cannibal theory of sacrifice and the Christian doctrine of communion.

Millington, in his *Testimony of the Heathen*, cites as illustration of Exodus .xxii. 8, the most telling passages from Herodotus in regard to the Lydians and Arabians confirming alliances in this fashions. The well-known case of Cataline and his fellow conspirators who drank from goblets of wine mixed with blood is of course not forgotten, but Dr. Trumbull overlooks the passage in Plutarch's "Life of Publicola," in which he narrates that "the conspirators (against Brutus) agreed to take

a great and horrible oath, by drinking together of the blood, and tasting the entrails of a man sacrificed for that purpose." Mr. Wake also in his *Evolution of Morality*, has drawn attention to the subject, and, what is more, to its important place in the history of the evolution of society. Herbert Spencer points out in his "Ceremonial Institutions," that blood offerings over the dead may be explained as arising in some cases "from the practice of establishing a sacred bond between living persons by partaking of each other's blood: the derived conception being that those who give some of their blood to the ghost of a man just dead and lingering near, effect with it a union which on the one side implies submission, and on the other side, friendliness."

The widespread custom of blood-covenanting illustrates most clearly, as Dr. Tylor points out, "the great principle of old-world morals, that man owes friendship, not to mankind at large, but only to his own kin; so that to entitle a stranger to kindness and good faith he must become a kinsman by blood."* That any sane man seated at a table ever said, "Take eat, this is my body," and "Drink, this is my blood," is ridiculous. The bread and wine are the fruits of the the Sun. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest of the Christian fathers, informs us that this eucharist was partaken in the mysteries of Mithra. The Christian doctrine of partaking of the blood of Christ is a mingling of the rites of sun-worshippers with the early savage ceremony of the blood covenant.

* The origin of the mystery of the Rosy Cross may have been in the savage rite of initiation by baptism with arms outstretched in a cruciform pool of blood. See *Nimrod*, vol. ii.

SCAPEGOATS.

IN the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus is found a description of the rites ordained for the most solemn Day of Atonement. Of these, the principal was the selection of two goats. "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat"—(Heb. *Azazel*). The goat on whom Jahveh's lot fell was sacrificed as a sin offering, but all the iniquities of the children of Israel were put on the head of *Azazel's* goat, and it was sent into the wilderness. The parallelism makes it clear that *Azazel* was a separate evil spirit or demon, opposed to Jahveh, and supposed to dwell in the wilderness. The purification necessary after touching the goat upon whose head the sins of Israel were put corroborates this.* Yet how often has *Azazel* been instanced as a type of the blessed Savior! And indeed the chief purpose to which Jesus is put by orthodox Christians at the present day is that of being their scapegoat, the substitute for their sins.

The doctrine of the transference of sin was by no means peculiar to the Jews. Both Herodotus and Plutarch tells us how the Egyptians cursed the head

* *Azazel* appears to mean the goat god. The goat, like some other animals, seems to have had a sacred character among the Jews. (See Ex. xxiii. 19, Lev. ix. 3-15, x. 16, xvii. 17, Jud. vi. 19, xiii. 16, 1 Sam. xix. 13-16, 2 Chron. xi. 15.)

of the sacrifice and then threw it into the river. It seems likely that the expression "Your blood be on your own head" refers to this belief. (See Lev. xx. 9-11, Psalms vii. 16, Acts xviii. 6.)

At the cleansing of a leper and of a house suspected of being tainted with leprosy, the Jews had a peculiar ceremony. Two birds were taken, one killed in an earthen vessel over running water, and the living bird after being dipped in the blood of the killed bird let loose into the open air (Lev. xiv. 7 and 53). The idea evidently was that the bird by sympathy took away the plague. The Battas of Sumatra have a rite they call "making the curse to fly away." When a woman is childless a sacrifice is offered and a swallow set free, with a prayer that the curse may fall on the bird and fly away with it. The doctrine of substitution found among all savages flows from the belief in sympathetic magic. It arises, as Mr. Frazer says, from an obvious confusion between the physical and the mental. Because a load of stones may be transferred from one back to another, the savage fancies it equally possible to transfer the burden of his pains and sorrows to another who will suffer then in his stead. Many instances could be given from peasant folk-lore. "A cure current in Sunderland for a cough is to shave the patient's head and hang the hair on a bush. When the birds carry the hair to the nests, they will carry the cough with it. A Northamptonshire and Devonshire cure is to put a hair of the patient's head between two slices of buttered bread and give it to a dog. The dog will get the cough and the patient will lose it."

Mr. Frazer, after showing that the custom of killing the god had been practised by peoples in the hunting, pastoral, and agricultural stages of society, says

(vol. ii., p. 148): "One aspect of the custom still remains to be noticed. The accumulated misfortunes and sins of the whole people are sometimes laid upon the dying god, who is supposed to bear them away for ever, leaving the people innocent and happy." He gives many instances of scapegoats, of sending away diseases in boats, and of the annual expulsion of evils, of which, I conjecture, our ringing-out of the old year may, perhaps, be a survival. Of the divine scapegoat, he says:

"If we ask why a dying god should be selected to take upon himself and carry away the sins and sorrow of the people, it may be suggested that in the practice of using the divinity as a scapegoat, we have a combination of two customs which were at one time distinct and independent. On the one hand we have seen that it has been customary to kill the human or animal god in order to save his divine life from being weakened by the inroads of age. On the other hand we have seen that it has been customary to have a general expulsion of evils and sins once a year. Now, if it occurred to people to combine these two customs, the result would be the employment of the dying god as scapegoat. He was killed not originally to take away sin, but to save the divine life from the degeneracy of old age; but, since he had to be killed at any rate, people may have thought that they might as well seize the opportunity to lay upon him the burden of their sufferings and sins, in order that he might bear it away with him to the unknown world beyond the grave."*

The early Christians believed that diseases were the work of devils, and that cures could be effected by casting out the devils by the spell of a name (see Mark ix. 25-38, etc.) They believed in the transference of devils to swine. We need not wonder, then, that they explained the death of their hero as the satisfaction for their own sins. The doctrine of

* *Golden Bough*, vol. ii., p. 206.

the substitutionary atonement, like that of the divinity of Christ, appears to have been an after-growth of Christianity, the foundations of both being laid in pre-Christian Paganism. Both doctrines are alike remnants of savagery.

A BIBLE BARBARITY.

THE fifth chapter of the Book of Numbers (11—31) exhibits as gross a specimen of superstition as can be culled from the customs of any known race of savages. The divine “law of jealousy,” to which I allude, provides that a man who is jealous of his wife may, simply to satisfy his own suspicions, and without having the slightest evidence against her, bring her before the priest, who shall take “holy water,” and charge her by an oath of cursing to declare if she has been unfaithful to her husband. The priest writes out the curse and blots it into the water, which he then administers to the woman. The description of the effects of the water is more suitable to the pages of the holy Bible than to those of a modern book. Sufficient to say, if faithful, the holy water has only a beneficial effect on the lady, but if unfaithful, its operation is such as to dispense with the necessity of her husband writing out a bill of divorcement.

The absurdity and atrocity of this divine law only finds its parallel in the customs of the worst barbarians, and in the ecclesiastical laws of the Dark Ages, that is of the days when Christianity was predominant and the Bible was considered as the guide in legislation.

A curious approach to the Jewish custom is that which found place among the savages at Cape Breton. At a marriage feast two dishes of meat were brought to the bride and bridegroom, and the priest addressed himself to the bride thus :

"Thou that art upon the point of entering the marriage state, know that the nourishment thou art going to take forebodes the greatest calamities to thee if thy heart is capable of harboring any ill design against thy husband or against thy nation ; should thou ever be led astray by the caresses of a stranger ; or shouldst thou betray thy husband or thy country, the victuals in this vessel will have the effect of a slow poison, with which thou wilt be tainted from this very instant. If, on the other hand, thou art faithful to thy husband and thy country, thou wilt find the nourishment agreeable and wholesome."*

This custom manifestly was, like the Christian doctrine of hell, designed to restrain crime by operating upon superstitious fear. It was devoid of the worst feature of the Jewish law—the opportunity for crime disguised under the mask of justice. For this we must go to the tribes of Africa.

Dr. Kitto, in his *Bible Encyclopædia* (article Adultery), alludes thus to the trial by red water among African savages, which, he says, is so much dreaded that innocent persons often confess themselves guilty in order to avoid it.

"The person who drinks the red water invokes the Fetish to destroy him if he is really guilty of the offence of which he is charged. The drink is made by an infusion in water of pieces of a certain tree or of herbs. It is highly poisonous in itself ; and if rightly prepared, the only chance of escape is the rejection of it by the stomach, in which case the party is deemed innocent, as he also is if, being retained, it has no

* *Genuine Letters and Memoirs Relating to the Isle of Cape Breton.* By T. Pichon. 1760.

sensible effect, which can only be the case when the priests, who have the management of the matters, are influenced by private considerations, or by reference to the probabilities of the case, to prepare the draught with a view to acquittal.”*

Dr. Livingstone says the practice of ordeal is common among all the negro natives north of the Zambesi :

“ When a man suspects that any of his wives have bewitched him, he sends for the witch-doctor, and all the wives go forth into the field, and remain fasting till the person has made an infusion of the plant called ‘go ho.’ They all drink it, each one holding up her hand to heaven in attestation of her innocence. Those who vomit it are considered innocent, while those whom it purges are pronounced guilty, and are put to death by burning.”

In this case, be it noticed, there is no provision for the woman who thinks her husband has bewitched her, as in the holy Bible there is no law for the woman who conceives she has cause for jealousy ; nor, although she is supernaturally punished, is there any indication of any punishment falling on the male culprit who has perhaps seduced her from her allegiance to her lord and master.

Throughout Europe, when under the sway of Christian priests, trials by ordeal were quite common. It was held as a general maxim that God would judge as to the righteousness or unrighteousness of a cause. The chief modes of the *Judicium Dei*, as it was called, was by walking on or handling hot iron ; by chewing consecrated bread, with the wish that the morsel might be the last ; by plunging the arm in boiling water, or by being thrown into cold water, to swim being considered a proof of guilt, and to sink the demonstration

* In like manner Maimonides, the great Jewish commentator, said that innocent women would give all they had to escape it, and reckoned death preferable (*Moreh Nevachim*, pt. iii., ch. xlix.)

of innocence. Pope Eugenius had the honor of inventing this last ordeal, which became famous as a trial for witches.

Dr. E. B. Tylor, whose information on all such matters is only equalled by his philosophical insight, says of ordeals :

“As is well known, they have always been engines of political power in the hands of unscrupulous priests and chiefs. Often it was unnecessary even to cheat, when the arbiter had it at his pleasure to administer either a harmless ordeal, like drinking cursed water, or a deadly ordeal, by a dose of aconite or physostigma. When it comes to sheer cheating, nothing can be more atrocious than this poison ordeal. In West Africa, where the Calabar bean is used, the administrators can give the accused a dose which will make him sick, and so prove his innocence; or they can give him enough to prove him guilty, and murder him in the very act of proof. When we consider that over a great part of that great continent this and similar drugs usually determine the destiny of people inconvenient to the Fetish man and the chief—the constituted authorities of Church and State—we see before us one efficient cause of the unprogressive character of African society.”

Trial by ordeal was in all countries, whether Pagan or Christian, under the management of the priesthood. That it originated in ignorance and superstition, and was maintained by fraud, is unquestionable. Christians, when reading of ordeals among savages, deplore the ignorance and barbarity of the unenlightened heathen among whom such customs prevail, quite unmindful that in their own sacred book, headed with the words “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,” occurs as gross an instance of superstitious ordeal as can be found among the records of any people.

BIBLE WITCHCRAFT.

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Ex. xxii. 18).

"If there had been no *witches*, such a law as this had never been made. The existence of the *law*, given under the direction of the Spirit of God, proves the existence of the thing . . . that *witches, wizards, those who dwell with familiar spirits*, etc., are represented in the sacred writing as actually possessing a power to evoke the dead, to perform supernatural operations, and to discover hidden or secret things by spells, charms, incantations, etc., is evident to every unprejudiced reader of the Bible."—*Dr. Adam Clarke*, Commentary on the above passage.

Thus wrote the great Methodist theologian. His master, John Wesley, had previously declared, "It is true that the English in general, and, indeed, most of the men of learning in Europe have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions as mere old wives' fables. I am sorry for it, and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest against this violent compliment which so many that believe the Bible pay to those who do not believe it. I owe them no such service. They well know (whether Christians know it or not) that the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible."*

* Journal, May 25, 1768, p. 308, vol. iii., Works, 1856. The earlier volumes of the *Methodist Magazine* abound with tales of diabolical possession.

That Wesley was right is a fact patent to all who have eyes. From the Egyptian magicians, who performed like unto Moses and Aaron with their enchantments, to the demoniacs of the Gospels and the "sorcerers" of the fifteenth verse of the last chapter of Revelation, the Bible abounds in references to this superstition.

Matthew Henry, the great Bible commentator, writing upon our text, at a time when the statutes against witchcraft were still in force, said: "By our law, consulting, covenanting with, invoking, or employing, any evil spirit to any intent whatsoever, and exercising any enchantment, charm, or sorcery, whereby hurt shall be done to any person whatsoever, is made felony without benefit of clergy; also, pretending to tell where goods lost or stolen may be found, or the like, is an iniquity punishable by the judge, and the second offence with death. The justice of our law herein is supported by the law of God here."

The number of innocent, helpless women who have been legally tortured and murdered by this law of God is beyond computation.

In Suffolk alone sixty persons were hung in a single year. The learned Dr. Zachary Grey states that between three and four thousand persons suffered death for witchcraft from the year 1640 to 1660.* In Scotland the Bible-supported superstition raged worse than in England. The clergy there had, as part of their duty, to question their parishioners as to their knowledge of witches. Boxes were placed in the churches to receive the accusations, and when a woman had fallen under suspicion the minister from the pulpit

* Note on Butler's *Hudibras*, part ii., canto 3, line 143.

denounced her by name, exhorted his parishioners to give evidence against her, and prohibited any one from sheltering her.* A traveller casually notices having seen nine women burning together in Leith, in 1664. "Scotch witchcraft," says Lecky, "was but the result of Scotch Puritanism, and it faithfully reflected the character of its parent."†

On the Continent it was as bad. Catholics and Protestants could unite in one thing—the extirpation of witches and infidels. Papal bulls were issued against witchcraft as well as heresy. Luther said: "I would have no compassion on these witches—I would burn them all."‡ In Catholic Italy a thousand persons were executed in a single year in the province of Como. In one province of Protestant Sweden 2,500 witches were burnt in 1670. Stories of the horrid tortures which accompanied witch-finding, stories that will fill the eyes with tears and the heart with raging fire against the brutal superstition which provoked such barbarities, may be found in Dalyell, Lecky, Michelet, and the voluminous literature of the subject. And all these tortures and executions were sanctioned and defended from the Bible. The more pious the people the more firm their conviction of the reality of witchcraft. Sir Matthew Hale, in hanging two men in 1664, took the opportunity of declaring that the reality of witchcraft was unquestionable; "for first, the Scripture had affirmed so much; and, secondly, the wisdom of all nations had provided laws against such persons."

Witch belief and witch persecutions have existed

* See *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, by Sir John Graham Dalyell, chap. xviii. Glasgow, 1835.

† *History of the Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. i., p. 144.

‡ *Colloquia de Fascinationibus*.

from the most savage times down to the rise and spread of medical science, but nothing is more striking in history than the fact of the great European outburst against witchcraft following upon the Reformation and the translations of God's Holy Word. This was no mere coincidence, but a necessary consequence. "It was not until after the Reformation that there was any systematic hunting out of witches," says J. R. Lowell.*

If the Bible teaches not witchcraft, then it teaches nothing.

Science and scepticism having made Christians ashamed of this biblical doctrine, as usual they have sought a new interpretation. They say it is a mis-translation; that *poisoners* are meant, and not *witches*. Now, in the first place, poisoners were really dealt with by the command, "Thou shalt not kill." In the second place, not a single Hebrew scholar of repute would venture to so render the word of our text. Its root, translated "witch," is given by Gesenius as "to use enchantment." Fuerst, Parkhurst, Frey, Newman, Buxtorf, in short, all Hebrew lexicographers, agree. Not one suggests that "poisoner" could be considered an equivalent. The derivatives of this word are translated with this meaning wherever they occur. Thus Exodus vii. 11, "the wise men and the sorcerers." Deuteronomy xviii., 10, 11, "There shalt not be found among you anyone that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard or a necromancer." 2 Kings ix. 22, "her witchcrafts." 2 Chronicles xxxiii. 6, Manasseh "used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit

* *Among my Books*, p. 128. Macmillan, 1870.

and with wizards." Isaiah xlvii. 9 and 12, "thy sorceries." Jeremiah xxvii. 9, "your sorcerers." Daniel ii. 2, "the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans." Micah v. 12, "And I will cut off witchcrafts, and thou shalt have no soothsayers." Nahum iii. 4, "witchcrafts." Malachi iii. 5, "I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers." The only pretence for this rendering of *poisoner* is the fact that Josephus (*Antiquities*, bk. iv., ch. viii., sec. 34) gives a law against keeping poisons. As there is no such law in the Pentateuch, Whiston tried to kill two difficulties with one note, by saying that what we render a *witch* meant a poisoner. The Septuagint has also been appealed to, but Sir Charles Lee Brenton, in his translation of the Septuagint, has not thought proper to render our text other than, "Ye shall not save the lives of sorcerers."

But apart from texts (of which I have only given those in which occurs one word out of the many implying the belief), the *thing* itself is woven into the structure of the Bible. Not only do the Egyptian enchanters work miracles and the witch of Endor raise Samuel, but the power of evil spirits over men is the occasion of most of the miracles of Jesus. The very doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible, so cherished by Protestant Christians, is but a part of that doctrine of men being possessed by spirits, good and evil, which is the substratum of belief in witchcraft.

Even yet this belief is not entirely extinct in England; and Dr. Buckley says that in America a majority of the citizens believe in witchcraft. The modern Roman Catholic priest is cautioned in the rubric concerning the examination of a possessed patient "not to believe the demon if he profess to be

the soul of some saint or deceased person, or a good angel." As late as 1773 the divines of the Associated Presbytery passed a resolution declaring their belief in witchcraft, and deploring the scepticism that was general. In the Church Catechism, explained by the Rev. John Lewis, minister of Margate in Kent—a work which went through many editions, and received the sanction of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge—a copy of which lies before me, published in 1813, reads (p. 18): "Q. What is meant by renouncing the Devil?—A. The refusing of all familiarity and contracts with the Devil, whereof witches, conjurors, and such as resort to them are guilty."

Let it never be forgotten that this belief which has not only been the cause of the deaths of tens of thousands of innocent women, but has sent far more into the worst convulsions of madness and despair, is the evident and unmistakeable teaching of the Bible.

SAUL'S SPIRITUALIST SÉANCE AT ENDOR.

"Our own time has revived a group of beliefs and practices which have their roots deep in the very stratum of early philosophy, where witchcraft makes its first appearance. This group of beliefs and practices constitutes what is now commonly known as Spiritualism."—*Dr. E. B. Tylor, "Primitive Culture,"* vol. i., p. 128.

THE oldest portion of the Old Testament scriptures are imbedded in the Book of Judges and the Books of Samuel. Few indeed of these narratives throw more light on the early belief of the Jews than the story of Saul and the witch of Endor. It is hardly necessary to recount the story, which is told with a vigor and simplicity showing its antiquity and genuineness. Saul, who had incurred Samuel's enmity by refusing to slay the king Agag, after the death of the prophet, found troubles come upon him. Alarmed at the strength of his enemies, the Philistines, he "inquired of the Lord." But the Lord was not at home. At any rate, he "answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." The legitimate modes of learning one's fortune being thus shut up, Saul sought in disguise and by night a woman who had an *ob*, or familiar spirit. Now Saul had done his best to suppress witchcraft, having "put away those who had familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land." So when he said to the witch, "I pray thee divine unto me by the familiar spirit and bring him up whom I shall

name unto thee," the woman was afraid, and asked if he laid a snare for her. Saul swore hard and fast he would not hurt her, and it is evident from his question he believed in her powers of necromancy by the aid of the familiar spirit. This alone shows that the Jews, like all uncivilised people, and many who call themselves civilised, believed in ghosts and the possibility of their return, but, as we shall see, it does not imply that they believed in future rewards and punishments. Saul's expectations were not disappointed. He asked to see Samuel, and *up* Samuel came. He asked what she saw, and she said *Elohim*, or as we have it, "gods ascending out of the earth." In this fact that the same word in Hebrew is used for *ghosts* and for *gods*, we have the most important light upon the origin of all theology.

The modern Christian of course believes that Samuel as a holy prophet dwells in heaven above, and may wonder, if he thinks of the narrative at all, why he should be recalled from his abode of bliss and placed under the magic control of this weird, not to say scandalous, female. But Samuel came up, not down from heaven, in accordance, of course, with the old belief that Sheol, or the underworld, was beneath the earth.

Christian commentators have resorted to a deal of shuffling and wriggling to escape the difficulties of this story, and its endorsement of the superstition of witchcraft. The *Speakers' Commentary* suggests that the Witch of Endor was a female ventriloquist, but, disingenuously, does not explain that ventriloquists in ancient times were really supposed to have a spirit rumbling or talking inside their bodies. As Dr. E. B. Tylor says in that great storehouse of savage beliefs,

Primitive Culture, "To this day in China one may get an oracular response from a spirit apparently talking out of a medium's stomach, for a fee of about twopence-halfpenny."

Some make out, because Saul at first asked the woman what she saw, that, as at many modern séances, it was only the medium, who saw the ghost, and Saul only knew who it was through her, else why should he have asked her what form Samuel had?—which elicited the not very detailed reply of "an old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle"—that is, we suppose, with the ghost of a mantle. She did the seeing and he the hearing. But it says "Saul perceived it was Samuel," and prostrated himself, which he would hardly have done at a description. Indeed, the whole narrative is inconsistent with the modern theory of imposture on the part of the witch. Had this been the explanation, the writer should have said so plainly. He should have said her terror was pretended, that the apparition was unreal, and that Saul trembled at the woman's words, whereas it is plainly declared that "he was sore afraid because of the words of Samuel." Moreover, and this is decisive, the spirit utters a prophecy—not an encouraging, but a gloomy one—which was exactly fulfilled.

All this shows the writer was saturated in supernaturalism. He never uses an expression indicating a shadow of a ghost or a doubt of the ghost. He might easily have said the whole thing was deceit. He does not, for he believed in witchcraft like the priests who ordered "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." One little circumstance shows his sympathy. Samuel says: "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" This is quite in consonance with savage belief that spirits

should not be disturbed. Here was Samuel quietly buried in Ramah, some fifty miles off, taking his comfortable nap, may be for millenniums in Sheol, when the old woman's incantations bustle him out of his grave and transport him to Endor. No wonder he felt disquieted and prophesied vengeance to Saul and to his sons, "because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord nor executedest his fierce wrath upon Amalek."

Matthew Henry and other commentators think that the person who presented himself to Saul was not Samuel, but Satan assuming his appearance. Those who believe in Satan, and that he can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. xi. 14), cannot refuse to credit the possibility of this. Folks with that comfortable belief can credit anything. To sensible people it is scarcely necessary to say there is nothing about Satan in the narrative, nor any conceivable reason why he should be credited with a true prophecy. The words uttered are declared to be the words of Samuel.

Much is said of Saul's wickedness, but the only wickedness attributed to him is his mercy in not executing God's fierce wrath. If it was wicked to seek the old woman, it is curious God should grant the object he was seeking, by raising up one of his own holy servants. Why did the Lord employ such an agency? It looks very much like sanctioning necromancy. And further, if a spirit returned from the dead to tell Saul he should die and go to Sheol—where Samuel was, for he says "to-morrow shalt thou

* The seventeenth verse stupidly reads, "The Lord hath done *to him* as he spake by me." The LXX and Vulgate more sensibly reads *to thee*.

and thy sons be *with me*"—why should not spirits now return to tell us we are immortal? If the witch of Endor could raise spirits, why not Lottie Fowler or Mr. Eglinton? Such are the arguments of the spiritists. We venture to think they cannot be answered by the orthodox. To us, however, the fact that the beliefs of the spiritists find their countenance in the beliefs of savages like the early Jews is their sufficient refutation. Spiritism, as Dr. Tylor says, is but a revival of old savage animism.

SACRIFICES.

No sacrifice to heaven, no help from heaven ;
That runs through all the faiths of all the world.

—TENNYSON—*Harold*.

THE origin and meaning of sacrifices constitute a central problem of ancient religion. It links indeed the stronghold of orthodox Christianity—its doctrine of the Atonement—with the most barbarous customs of primitive savages. When we hear of the Lamb slain for sinners, the very phrase takes us back to the time when sins were formally placed upon the heads of unconscious animals that they might be held accursed instead of man ; and to the yet older notion of human sacrifice as a most acceptable offering to the gods.

Sacrifices were primarily meals offered to the spirits of the dead. It is not hard to understand how they arose. The Hindoos who placed upon the grave of an English officer the brandy and cheroots which he loved in life in order to propitiate his spirit illustrated a prominent aspect. Just as men were appeased with gifts, usually of substances which minister to life, so were spirits supposed to be, and the general form which the offering took was something in the shape of what the Americans call a square meal. The Romans never

sat down to eat without placing a portion aside for the Lares and Penates. Professor Smith, in his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, gives abundant evidence that the early sacrifices of the Semitic people were animals offered at a meal partaken by the worshippers. The sacrifice, he holds, was originally a nourishing of the common life of the kindred and their god by a common meal. The primary communion with deity was communion of food. This may not be very poetical, but it is natural and true. Eating and drinking together were primarily signs of fraternity. Only to his own kin did early man own duty, and his god was always of his own kin. Jehovah was, as we are often told, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was their father and their king. When Ruth said to Naomi, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God," the exclamation showed that taking up new kindred involved a change of worship. Professor Smith says: "It cannot be too strongly insisted on that the idea of kinship between gods and men was originally taken in a purely physical sense." The modern Christian's explanations of biblical anthropomorphisms may be dismissed as unfounded assumptions. The story in Genesis of the sons of God going with the daughters of men is one of the remnants of early myths unexplained by later editors.

The Bible God, as any careful reader will perceive, was very partial to roast meat. One of the earliest items recorded of him is that he had no respect for Cain and his offering of vegetables, while to Abel who brought him the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof, he had respect. He much preferred mutton to turnips. When Noah offered a sacrifice, we are told "He smelt a sweet savor" (Gen. vii. 21). But

the Lord was by no means content with the smell. On his altars huge hecatombs of animals were continually being slaughtered, and the choicest portions set aside as the Lord's. The Lord God seems to have been extremely fond of fat, especially that about the rump. As the richest part of the animal, it was reserved with "the two kidneys and the fat that is upon them" especially for the Lord (Lev. iii. 9-11). Let it be noticed that the Lord God required no sacrifices except of eatable animals, oxen, rams, goats, lambs, and kids. Fishes he had no regard for, and of birds only turtle doves and pigeons were his favorite dishes. Wine and oil he took to wash them down, but never mentioned water. Like his ministers, he lived on the fat of the land,* claiming as his own the firstlings of the flock. From his claim to the first born, it appears that Jahveh was originally given to "long pig," but in the case of Abraham's son, he took a ram instead. He was, however, so partial to blood that he interdicted the sacred fluid to his worshippers, but demanded that it should be poured out upon his altar (Deut. xii.) Even the early Christians made it a fundamental rule of the Church that disciples should abstain from blood, and from things strangled (Acts xv. 20). The blood was supposed to be especially the Lord's.

Let not the serious reader suppose we are jesting. Hear what Prof. Robertson Smith says.

"All sacrifices laid upon the altar were taken by the ancients as being literally the food of the gods. The Homeric deities 'feast on hecatombs,' nay particular Greek gods have special epithets designating them as the goat-eater, the ram-eater, the bull-eater, even 'cannibal,' with allusion to human sacrifices.

* To "eat the fat" seems, as in Neh. viii. 10, to have been a biblical expression for good living.

Among the Hebrews the conception that Jehovah eats the flesh of bulls and drinks the blood of goats, against which the author of Psalm l. protests so strongly, was never eliminated from the ancient technical language of the priestly ritual, in which the sacrifices are called *lechem Elohim*, 'the food of the deity.'**

Our translators of the passages where this phrase occurs (Lev. xxi. 8, 17, 21, 22 ; Num. xxviii. 2) have done their best to conceal the meaning, but like the phrase "wine which cheereth God and man" (Judges ix. 13), it takes us back to the time when gods were supposed, like men, to eat, drink, and be refreshed.

It was a fundamental rule of the Jewish faith that no one should appear before the Lord empty handed (Exodus xxiii. 15.) Not to take him an offering was as improper as in the East it still is to approach a chief or great man without some present. A sacrifice was as imperative as it now is to put something in the church plate. When God made a call on Abraham, with Eastern hospitality the patriarch procured water to wash his feet and killed a calf for the entertainment of his visitor. The Lord God was not a vegetarian but a stout kreophagist. In Numbers (xxix. 13) he orders as a sacrifice "of a sweet savor unto the Lord, thirteen young bullocks, two rams and fourteen lambs of the first year."

From the frequent mention of the "sweet savor," it seems likely that the original idea of the god partaking of the food, developed into that of his taking only the essence of the food. As God got less anthropomorphic he lost his teeth and had, poor spirit, to be content with the smell of the good things offered up to him. We gather from Lev. vii. 6 that the kidneys, fat and

* *Religion of the Semites*, p. 207.

other delicacies really fell to the lot of the priests, and some people have found a sufficient reason for the sacrifices to God in the fact that the priests liked mutton.

In 1 Samuel ii. 13-16 we are told how it was the custom of the priests that when any man offered sacrifice, "the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand. And he struck it into the pan or kettle, or caldron or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself."

In the time of David the Lord had a table of shew-bread set before him—that is, a table spread with food in the temple, where he was supposed to come and take it when he desired, just as Africans place meal and liquor in their fetish houses. Such tables were set in the great temple of Bel at Babylon, and the story of Bel and the Dragon in the Apocrypha explains how the priests and their women and children came in by a secret door and ate up the things which were supposed to be consumed by the God.

While the Lord and the priests were certainly not vegetarians, neither did they insist on a vegetable diet for their people. The Lord's table of fare is set out in Leviticus xi., and a very curious *menu* it is. The hare is expressly excluded "because he cheweth the cud," although he does nothing of the kind; but "the locust after his kind, the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind," are freely permitted. Another divine regulation, and one which throws much light on the divine methods, is recorded in Deut. xvi. 21—"Thou shalt not eat of anything that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is within thy gates that

he may eat it, or thou mayest sell it unto an alien." To this day the Jews are particular in observing this godly method of disposing of diseased meat.

To arrive at the truth in regard to the question whether human sacrifice was at one time a portion of the Jewish religion, or whether it was, as the orthodox generally assert, simply a corruption copied from the surrounding heathen nations, it is necessary to bear in mind that every portion of the Jewish law is of later date than the prophets. The book of the law was only found in the time of King Josiah, who opposed this very practice (2 Kings xxiii. 10), and there is no evidence of its existence before that date. There is reason to believe that the priestly code of Leviticus is later still, dating only from the time of Ezra. Instead of reflecting the ideas of the age of Moses, it reflects those of almost a thousand years later. It is therefore only in the historical books that we can expect to find traces of what the actual religion of Israel was. There is ample evidence that human sacrifice formed a conspicuous element. Ahaz, King of Judah, "burnt his children in the fire" (2 Chron. xxviii. 3); Manasseh, King of Judah, was guilty of the same atrocity (2 Chron. xxxiii. 6); Jeremiah denounces the children of Judah for having "built the high place of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire" (vii. 31); Micah remonstrates against both animal and human sacrifice—"Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams; shall I give my first-born for my transgression; the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (vi. 7). In the well-known story of Abraham and Isaac, as in the Greek story of Iphigenia, and the Roman one of Valeria Luperca, we have an account of the transition

to a less barbarous stage in the substitution of animal for human sacrifice. It was natural that this legend should be ascribed to the time of the father of the faithful, but there is, as we have seen, abundant evidence of the practice existing long subsequent to the time of Abraham, who was by no means surprised at and in no way demurred to the divine command, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee unto the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Genesis xxii. 2). Anyone who at the present day should exhibit a faith like unto that of the patriarchal saint would be in jeopardy of finding himself within the walls of a criminal lunatic asylum.

That human sacrifices lasted long after the time of Abraham we have an instance in the case of Jephthah, who vowed that if Jahveh would deliver the children of Ammon into his hand, he would offer up for a burnt offering whosoever came forth from his house to meet him upon his return from his expedition (Judges xi. 30, 31). In order to tone this down the Authorised Version reads "whatsoever" instead of "whosoever," which is supplied in the margin of the Revised Version. Despite the emphatic statement that Jephthah did with her according to his vow, it has been alleged that because his daughter petitioned to be allowed to bewail her virginity for two months, she was only condemned to a life of celibacy. This is preposterous. Jahveh, unlike Jesus, had no partiality for the unmarried state. He liked a real sacrifice of blood. To lament childlessness was a common ancient custom, and even the Greek and Latin poets have represented their heroines who were similarly doomed to an early death, such as Anti-

gone, Polyxena, and Iphigenia, as actually lamenting in a very similar manner their virginity or unmarried condition. There is no single instance in the Old Testament of a woman being set apart as a virgin, though, as we have seen, there are numerous indications of human sacrifices.

Even in the Levitical law sanction is given to human sacrifice. "None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death (Lev. xxvii. 29). Jahveh insisted on the sacrifice being completed. David sent seven sons of Saul to be hung before the Lord to stay a famine.

That a party remained in Israel who considered human sacrifice a part of their religion is evident also from Jeremiah, who says: "They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind" (xix. 5). These strong asseverations were evidently called forth by assertions made by persons addicted to such practices, and those persons had the support of Ezekiel, who, in contradiction to the statements of Jeremiah, contended that Jahveh gave them up to pollution, even as he hardened the heart of Pharaoh that they might know that he was the Lord (Ezek. xx. 25-26).

THE PASSOVER.

"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."—PAUL (1 Cor. v. 7.)

THE Passover is the most important and impressive festival of the Jews, instituted, it is said, by God himself, and a type of the sacrifice of his only son. Its observance was most rigorously enjoined under penalty of death, and although the circumstances of the Jews have prevented their carrying out the sacrificial details, they still, in the custom of each head of the family assuming *pro tem.* the rôle of high priest, preserve the most primitive type of priesthood known.

The Bible account of the institution of the Passover is utterly incredible. After afflicting the Egyptians with nine plagues, God still hardens Pharaoh's heart (Exodus x. 27), and tells Moses that "about midnight" he will go into the midst of Egypt and slay all the firstborn. But in order that he shall make no mistake in carrying out his atrocious design, he orders that each family of the children of Israel shall take a lamb and kill it in the evening, and smear the doorposts of the house with blood, "and when I see the blood I will pass over you." The omniscient needed this sign, that he might not make a mistake and slay the very people he meant to deliver. One cannot help wondering what would have been the result if some Egyptian,

like Morgiana in "The Forty Thieves," had wiped off the blood from the Israelite doorposts and sprinkled the doorposts of the Egyptians. Moses received this command on the very day at the close of which the paschal lambs were to be killed. This was very short notice for communicating with the head of each family about to start on a hurried flight. As the people were two million in number and the lambs had to be all males, without blemish, of one year old, this supposes, on the most moderate computation, a flock of sheep as numerous as the people. Who can credit this monstrous libel on the character of God and on the intelligence of those to whom such a story is proffered?

What, then, is the correct version of the origin of the Passover? Dr. Hardwicke, in his *Popular Faith Unveiled*, following Sir Wm. Drummond and Godfrey Higgins, says it meant "nothing more or less than the pass-over of the sun across the equator, into the constellation *Aries*, when the astronomical lamb was consequently obliterated or sacrificed by the superior effulgence of the sun." It is noticeable that the principal festivals of the Jews, as of other nations, were in spring and autumn, at the time of lambing and sowing and when the harvest ripened. But while allowing that this may have determined the time of the festival, I cannot think it covers the ground of its significance. The story relates that when Moses first asked Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, it was that they might celebrate a feast in the wilderness which was accompanied by a sacrifice (see Exodus v. i. and iii. 19). This may be taken as indicating that there was known to be a festival at this season prior to the days of Pharaoh. And at the festival of the spring increase of flocks the god must of course have his share.

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Epiphanius declares that the Egyptians marked their sheep with red, because of the general conflagration which once raged at the time when the sun passed over into the sign of Aries, thereby to symbolise the fiery death of those animals who were not actually offered up. Von Bohlen says the ancient Peruvians marked with blood the doors of the temples, royal residences, and private dwellings, to symbolise the triumph of the sun over the winter.

The suggestion that owing to peculiarities of diet or of constitution some pestilence afflicted the Egyptians which passed over and spared the Jews, is a very plausible one, and deserves more attention than it has yet received, since it would account for many features in the institution. But there remains another signification, which seems indicated in the thirteenth chapter of Exodus in connection with the institution of the Passover. There we read the order, "Thou shalt set apart [the margin more properly reads "cause to pass over"] unto the Lord, all that openeth the matrix" (verse 12). "And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem."* Professor Huxley asks upon this passage: "Is it possible to avoid the conclusion that immolation of their first-born sons would have been incumbent on the worshippers of Jahveh, had they not been thus specially excused?"† In one of the oldest portions of the Pentateuch (Exodus xxii. 29) the command stands

* Why is the ass only mentioned besides man? One cannot but suspect that his introduction is an interpolation by the reformed Jews, who had outgrown the custom of human sacrifice, betrayed by the phrase "thou shalt break his neck."

† *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1886.

simply, "the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me." In Exodus xii. 27, xxiii. 18, xxxiv. 25; and Numbers ix. 13, the Passover is spoken of as particularly the Lord's own sacrifice.

The law proceeds to enjoin that the father shall tell his son as the reason for the festival, how the Lord "slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beasts: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem." Evidently here is the notion of a substitutive offering, although the reason given is not the true reason. In Exodus xxxiv. 18-20, the festival is brought into the same connection with immediate reference to the redemption of the firstborn. In the story of Abraham and Isaac we have the same idea. God commands the patriarch to offer up his only son as a burnt sacrifice (Gen. xxii. 2), an order which he receives without astonishment, and proceeds to execute as if it were the most ordinary business imaginable, without the slightest sign of reluctance. A messenger from Jahveh, however, intervenes and a ram is substituted.* I do not doubt that this story, like similar ones found in Hindu and Greek mythology, indicates an era when animal sacrifices were substituted for human ones.† The legend is of course far older than the record of it which reaches us. In a notable passage in Ezekiel xx. 25, 26, the Lord declares that he had given his people "statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." And he

* Observe that *Elohim*, the old gods, claim the sacrifice and *Jahveh*, the new Lord, prevents it.

† It may help us to understand how the sacrifice of an animal may atone for human life, if we notice how in South Africa a Zulu will redeem a lost child from the finder by a bullock.

continues, "I polluted them in their own gifts in that they cause to pass through *the fire* all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord." The fact that the very same words are used in Ezekiel which are found in Exodus xiii. 12, at once suggests that originally the passover was a human sacrifice, and that of the most abominable kind—the offering of the firstborn—and that the story of the Lord slaying the firstborn of Egypt was an invention to account for the relics of the custom. We know that such sacrifices did remain as part of the Jewish religion. Ezekiel himself says that when they had slain their children to their idols, they came the same day in the sanctuary to profane it (xxiii. 39). Micah argues against the barbarous practice: "Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (vi. 6). Two kings of Judah, Ahaz and Manasseh, are recorded to have offered up their children as burnt offerings (2 Chron. xxviii. 3, xxxiii. 6), as upon one occasion did the king of Moab (2 Kings iii. 27). 2 Chron. xxx., in relating how Hezekiah commanded all Israel to keep the Passover, says that "they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written," and relates how the Levites were ashamed and many yet did eat the Passover otherwise than it was written. And in the account of how Josiah broke down the altars which had been set up by Ahaz and Manasseh one reads "surely there was not held such a Passover from the days of the judges." In other words, it had never been kept in the same fashion within human memory. The keeping of the Passover had been different before this reformation, just as until the age of Hezekiah the Jews worshipped a brazen serpent, which they afterwards

accounted for by ascribing it to Moses, the law-giver who had prohibited all idolatry. On the eve of the Passover, to the present day, the firstborn son among the Jews, who is of full age—*i.e.*, thirteen—fasts. This we take to be a rudimentary survival.

If then we interpret the offering of the paschal lamb as being substituted for a human sacrifice, we shall understand how it is at once a thank-offering and yet eaten with "the bread of affliction," the motzahs, or unleavened cakes, and bitter herbs, which are the remaining features of the festival, and this may help to explain the accusation which in all ages has been brought against the Jews, *viz.*, that once in seven years at least they required their Passover to be celebrated with human blood. It is true the accusation has been often brought without evidence, but the Jews themselves profess astonishment at the unanimity with which their opponents have fixed upon this charge. Further, we shall see that in adopting the paschal lamb as the type of Christ, the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins, the Christians were simply reverting to the early savage notion that deities are only to be appeased with blood, and to this degraded belief they have added the absurdity that Christ himself was God, thus making God sacrifice himself in order to appease himself!

THE EVOLUTION OF JAHVEH.

IN the beginning when men created gods they made them in their own image, cruel, unrestrained and vacillating. All the early religions give evidence of the savage nature of ancient man. The departed gods, viewed in the light of modern ideals, were all ugly devils. The boasted God of the Jews is no exception. Although the books of the Old Testament do not give us the earliest and doubtless still more savage beliefs of the Israelites, the oldest portions, such as the legends embodied in Genesis and the historical books, sufficiently betray that Jahveh was no better than his compeers. It is evident that originally he was only one of many gods. He is always spoken of as a family deity—the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. Human sacrifices were at one time offered to him (see Genesis xxii., Leviticus xxvii. 29, Numbers xxv. 4, Judges xi. 31-39, 1 Samuel xv. 23, Micah vi. 6, 7). He is anthropomorphic, yet anything but a gentleman. In his decalogue he describes himself as “a jealous god, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children until the third and fourth generation.” He delights in blood and sacrifice. He is entitled “a god of battles,” “Lord of hosts,” and “a man of war.” He has the form, the movements, and the imperfections of a human being. Man is said to be made in his image and after

his likeness. It is plain these words must be taken in their literal significance, since, a little further on, Adam is described, in the same language, as having begotten Seth "in his own likeness and after his image" (Genesis v. 3).

Jahveh walks in the garden in the cool of the day. He has come down to see the tower of Babel (Gen. xi. 5). He covers Moses with "his hand" so that he should not see "his face"; and while Moses stands in a clift of the rock Jahveh shows him "his back parts" (Exodus xxxiii. 23). He makes clothes for Adam and Eve, and writes his laws with his own finger. After six days' work we are told that "on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed" (Exodus xxxi. 17). When Noah sacrificed we are told that "Jahveh smelled a sweet savor" (Gen. vii. 21). He creates mankind and then regrets their creation—"It repented Jahveh that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him at his heart" (Genesis vi. 6). He puts a bow in the clouds in order to remember his vow, and again and again he repents of the evil which he thought to do unto his people (see Exodus xxxii. 14; Numbers xiv.; 2 Sam. xxiv. 16; Jonah iii. 10; etc.).

Jacob wrestles with him; and when things do not go as they wish, Moses, Joshua, David and Job no more hesitate to remonstrate with their deity than the African hesitates to chide the fetish that does not answer his prayers.

In the early books Jahveh is irascible and unjust. His temper is soon up, and his vengeance usually falls on the wrong parties. Eve eats the forbidden fruit and all her female descendants are condemned to pains at childbirth. Pharaoh refuses to let the Hebrews go and the firstborn child of every Egyptian family is

slain, and other dreadful afflictions are poured on the innocent people. David, like a wise king, takes a census of his nation, and Jahveh punishes him by slaying seventy thousand of the people by a pestilence (1 Chron. xxi. 1—17). He slaughters fifty thousand inhabitants of the village of Bethshemesh for innocently looking into his travelling-trunk on its return from captivity (1 Samuel vi. 19). He smites Uzzah for putting his hand to save the ark from falling (2 Samuel vi. 6, 7), and withers Jeroboam's hand for venturing to put it upon the altar (1 Kings xiii. 4). He sends bears to kill forty-two little children for calling Elisha "bald-head" (2 Kings ii. 23, 24), and his general conduct is that of a barbarous, bloodthirsty and irresponsible tyrant. We say nothing here of the character of his favorite people. "Man paints himself in his gods," said Schiller.

The captivity of the Jews and their consequent contact with other nations led to their own refinement and an enlarged ideal of their divinity. He improves much in his character, tastes and propensities. Nehemiah addressed Jahveh in the elevated tone the Persians addressed Ahura-Mazda. Whereas in the old days Jahveh ordered whole hecatombs of sheep and oxen to be sacrificed to him, doubtless because his priests liked beef and mutton (they had the meat and he had the smell)—the prophet Isaiah in his first chapter writes, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?" saith Jahveh. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Similarly, Micah gives worship an ethical instead of a ceremonial character: "Will Jahveh be

pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jahveh require of thee but to do justly and love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Ezekiel bluntly contradicts Moses, and declares that "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (xviii. 20).

The second Isaiah even looks forward to the time when Gentiles will acknowledge the Jewish Jahveh, and Zechariah declares "Thus saith Jahveh of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass that the ten men shall take hold of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (viii. 23).

Jewish vanity did not permit tolerance to extend beyond this. Even in the New Testament God only offers salvation to those who believe, and mercilessly damns all the rest. "An honest God is the noblest work of man," and theists of all kinds have found great difficulty in supplying the article.

Herbert Spencer, in a paper on "Religion" in the *Nineteenth Century*,* well says: "If we contrast the Hebrew God described in primitive tradition, man-like in appearance, appetites and emotions, with the Hebrew Gods as characterised by the prophets, there is shown a widening range of power along with a nature increasingly remote from that of man. And on passing to the conceptions of him which are now entertained, we are made aware of an extreme trans-

* January, 1884.

figuration. By a convenient obliviousness, a deity who in early times is represented as hardening men's hearts so that they may commit punishable acts, and as employing a lying spirit to deceive them, comes to be mostly thought of as an embodiment of virtues transcending the highest we can imagine." And so the idea of God developes

"Till by broad spreading it disperse to nought."

For the process is not simply from the savage to the civilised—it is from the definite to the dim. As man advances God retires. With each increase of our knowledge of nature the sphere of the supernatural is lessened till all deities and devils are seen to be but reflections of man's imagination and symbols of his ignorance.

JOSHUA AND THE SUN.

SAVAGES fail to recognise the limits of their power over nature. Things which the experience of the race shows us to be obviously impossible are not only attempted but believed to be performed by persons in a low stage of culture. Miracles always accompany ignorance. No better proof of the barbarous and unintelligent state whence we have emerged could be given than the stories of the supernatural which are found embodied in all religions, and also in the customs of savages and the folk-lore of peasantry.

Primitive man thinks of all phenomena as caused by spirits. Hence to control the spirits is to control the phenomena. Herodotus (iv., 173) tells a curious tale how once in the land of Psylli, the modern Tripoli, the wind blowing from the Sahara dried up all the water-tanks. So the people took counsel and marched in a body to make war on the south wind. But when they entered the desert, the simoon swept down on them and buried them. It is still said of the Bedouins of Eastern Africa that "no whirlwind ever sweeps across the path without being pursued by a dozen savages with drawn creeses, who stab into the centre of the dusty column, in order to drive away the evil spirit that is believed to be riding on the blast." The Chinese beat gongs and make other noises at an eclipse, to drive away the dragon of

darkness. At an eclipse, too, the Ojibbeways used to think the sun was being extinguished, so they shot fire-tipped arrows in the air, hoping thus to re-ignite his expiring light. At the present day Theosophists seek to compass magical powers which in early times were supposed to be generally possessed by sorcerers.

Rain-making was one of the most common of these supposed powers. Instances are found in the Bible. Samuel says: "I will call unto the Lord and he shall send thunder and rain," and he does so (1 Sam. xii. 17, 18). So Elijah, by prayer (which in early times meant a magical spell), obtained rain. Jesus controls the winds and the waves, walks on the water, and levitates through the air.

Mr. J. G. Frazer, in his splendid work *The Golden Bough*, gives many instances of savages making sunshine and staying the sun. Thus "the Melanesians make sunshine by means of a mock sun. A round stone is wound about with red braid and stuck with owl's feathers to represent rays; it is then hung on a high tree." "In a pass of the Peruvian Andes stand two ruined towers on opposite hills. Iron hooks are clamped into their walls for the purpose of stretching a net from one tower to another. The net is intended to catch the sun." Numerous other methods are resorted to by different tribes. Jerome, of Prague, travelling among the Lithuanians, who early in the fifteenth century were still Pagans, found a tribe who worshipped the sun and venerated a large iron hammer. "The priests told him at once the sun had been invisible for several months because a powerful king had shut it up in a strong tower; but the signs of the zodiac had broken open the tower with this very hammer and released the sun. Therefore they adored

the hammer.”* Mr. Frazer gives reasons for thinking that the fire festivals solemnised at Midsummer in ancient times were really sun-charms.

The phenomena of nature were supposed to be at the service of the pious. The thunderbolts of Zeus fell upon the heads of perjurers. Some people still wonder the earth does not open when a man announces himself an Atheist. Jahveh just before stopping the sun, pelted the enemies of Israel with hailstones (Joshua x. 11). So Diodorus Siculus (xi. 1) relates how the Persians when on their way to spoil the temple at Delphi, were deterred by “a sudden and incredible tempest of wind and hail, with dreadful thunder and lightning, by which great rocks were rent to pieces and cast upon the heads of the Persians, destroying them in heaps.” Herodotus too (ii. 142) tells how “The Egyptians asserted that the sun had four times deviated from his ordinary course.” Clergymen cite this as a corroboration of the fact that all ancient peoples have similar absurd legends displaying their ignorance of nature and consequent superstition. The power of arresting the stars in their courses, and lengthening the days and nights was imputed to witches. Thus Tibullus says of a sorceress (i. eleg. 2)—

I’ve seen her tear the planets from the sky,
Seen lightning backward at her bidding fly.

And Lucan in his *Pharsalia* (vi. 462)—

Whene’er the proud enchantress gives command,
Eternal motion stops her active hand;
No more Heav’n’s rapid circles journey on,
But universal nature stands foredone;
The lazy God of day forgets to rise,
And everlasting night pollutes the skies.

* *The Golden Bough*, vol. i., pp. 24, 25.

No modern poet would think of saying like Statius that the sun stood still at the unnatural murder of Atreus. Such an idea found its way into poetry because it had previously been conceived as a fact.

Hence we find numerous similar stories to that of Joshua. Thus it is related of Bacchus in the Orphic hymns that he arrested the course of the sun and the moon. Mr. Spence Hardy in his *Legends and Theories of Buddhists*, shows that arresting the course of the sun was a common thing among the disciples of Buddha. We need not be surprised to find that men were once believed to be able to control the sun when we reflect that to this day the majority of people fancy there is some magnified non-natural man, they call God, who is able to do the same. Seeing the legend of Joshua in its true form as one of numerous similar instances illustrating the barbarity and ignorance of the past, we see also that the whole merit and instruction of the story is taken away by those modern Christians, who speak of it as poetry, or who endeavor to reconcile it with the conclusions of science. These explanations were never sought for while miracles were generally credible. Josephus speaks of the miracle as a literal one, and the author of Ecclesiasticus xlv. 5 says the Lord "stopped the sun in his anger and made one day as two."

"Rationalistic" explanations of miracles are often the most irrational, because they fail to take into account the vast difference between the state of mind which gave rise to the stories, and that which seeks to rationalise them.

THE HEBREW PROPHETS.

ANYONE who has read an account of the mystery men among savages, will have the clue to the original nature and functions of the inspired prophets of Jahveh. These persons occupied a *rôle* somewhat similar to that of Brian the hermit, the highland seer described by Sir Walter Scott in his "Lady of the Lake." They were a sort of cross between the bard and the fortune-teller. Divination, though forbidden by the law of Moses, was continually resorted to by the superstitious Jews.

The mysterious Urim and Thummim clearly represented some method of divination. In 1 Kings vi. 16 and Psalms xxviii. 2, the adytum of the temple is called the "oracle." Numerous references are to be found in the Bible to the practice of casting lots, the disposing of which is said to be "of the Lord" (see Num. xxvi. 55, Joshua xiii. 6, 1 Sam. xiv. 41, Prov. xiv. 33, xviii. 18, and Esther iii. 7), and also to "inquiring of God," which was equivalent to divination. Thus in Judges xviii. 5 five Danites ask the Levite, who became Micah's priest, to "ask counsel of God" whether they shall prosper on their way.

The ninth chapter of the first book of Samuel gives an instructive glimpse into the nature of the prophets. Saul, sent to recover his father's asses, and, unable to

find them, is told by his servant that there is in the city a man of God, and all what he saith cometh surely to pass. Saul, perhaps guessing the lucre-loving propensities of men of God, complains that he has no present to offer. The servant, however, had the fourth part of a shekel of silver (about 8d.) wherewith to cross the seer's palms; and Saul, seeking for asses, is made king over Israel by the prophet Samuel. The custom of making a present to the prophet is also alluded to in 1 Kings xiv. 3. Jereboam, when his son falls sick, sends his wife to Ahijah the prophet with ten loaves and cracknels and a cruse of honey, to inquire his fate. Later on, Micah (iii. 11) complains that "the prophets divine for money." See also Nehemiah vi. 12. As with the oracles of ancient Greece and Rome (the inspiration of which was believed by the early Christian fathers, with the proviso that they were inspired not by deities, but by devils), the prophets were especially consulted in times of war. Thus, in 1 Kings xxii., Ahab consults 400 prophets about going to battle against Ramoth-Gilead. He is told to go and prosper, for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand. Micaiah the prophet, however, explains that he had seen the Lord in counsel with all the host of heaven, and the Lord sent a lying spirit to the prophets in order to persuade Ahab to go to his destruction. This is quite in accordance with the declaration in Ezekiel xiv. 9, that "if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord hath deceived that prophet." David on one occasion (1 Sam. xxiii. 9) "took counsel of God," as this divination was called, by means of the ephod, probably connected with the Urim and Thummim. He sought to know if he would be safe from his enemy, Saul, if he

stayed at Keilah. On receiving an unfavorable response David decamped. Inquiring of the Lord on another occasion, David got more particular instructions than were usually imparted by oracles. He was told not to go up against the Philistines, but to fetch a compass behind them and come on them over against the mulberry trees (2 Sam. v. 23).

We read, 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, that "when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." This, presumably, was because (verse 3) "Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land." He therefore had to seek out the witch of Endor to raise the spirit of Samuel.

The Lord is said to have declared through Moses, "If there be a prophet among you I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream" (Num. xii. 6). This method of divine revelation is alluded to in Job xxxiii. 14-16, "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth his instruction." God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and threatened him for taking Abraham's wife (Gen. xx. 3). So he revealed himself and his angels to his favorite Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 12). "God came to Laban, the Syrian, in a dream by night" (Gen. xxxi. 24) to warn him against touching juggling Jacob. Joseph dreams of his own future advancement and of the famine in Egypt, and interprets the dreams of others. Gideon was visited by the Lord in the night, and encouraged by some other person's dream (Judges vii.) Jahveh appeared also to his servant, Sultan

Solomon, "in a dream by night" (1 Kings iii. 5). Daniel, too, was a dreamer and dream interpreter (Dan. ii. 19, vii. 1). God promises through Joel that he will pour his spirit upon all flesh, "and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (chap. ii. 28).

The original meaning of the Hebrew word *cohen* or priest is said to be "diviner." It is, I believe, still so in Arabic. Prophets and dreamers are frequently classed together in the Bible, as in Deut. xiii. 1: "If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams." Jer. xxvii. 9: "Therefore hearken ye not to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers." Zech. x. 2: "The diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams." When religion is organised the dreamers and interpreters of dreams, who are an irresponsible class, fall into the background before the priests.

No one can read the account of Balaam's falling, and lying prostrate with his eyes open while prophesying (Numbers xxiv.); and of Saul when, after an evil spirit from God had come upon him (1 Sam. xviii. 10), "he stripped off his clothes also and prophesied in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night; wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets" (1 Sam. xix. 24), without calling to mind the exhibitions of ecstatic mania among semi-savages. The Shamans of Siberia, for instance, work themselves up into fury, supposing or pretending that in this condition they are inspired by the spirit in whose name they speak, and through whose inspiration they are enabled to answer questions as well as to foretell the future. The root of the Hebrew word for prophet—

Nabi, said to mean a bubbling up—confirms this view. The vehement gestures and gushing current of speech which accompanied their improvisations suggested a fountain bubbling up. Insanity and inspiration are closely allied. Various methods were resorted to among the ancients to attain the state of ecstasy, when the excited nerves found significance in all around. The Brahmins used the intoxicating Soma. At Delphi the Pythia inhaled an incense until she fell into a state of delirious intoxication; and the sounds she uttered in this state were believed to contain the revelations of Apollo. In David dancing with all his might and scantily clad before the ark of Jahveh, we are forcibly reminded of the dervishes and other religious dancers. From the mention of music in connection with prophesying (1 Sam. x. 5, xvi. 23, 2 Kings iii. 5), it has been conjectured the Jewish prophets anticipated the Salvationists in this means of producing or relieving excitement. In the Mysteries of Isis, in Orphic Corymbantian revels, music was employed to work the worshippers into a state of orgiastic frenzy.

The passage about Saul suggests the nudity or scanty costume of the prophets. Isaiah the elder—for the poet who wrote from chap. xl. to lxvi. must be distinguished from his predecessor—alleges a commandment from Jahveh to walk naked and barefoot for three years (Isaiah xx. 3). Apollos, or whoever wrote the epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 37), speaks of them wandering about in sheepskins and goatskins. A girdle of leather seems to have been the sole costume of Elijah (2 Kings i. 8). Micah (i. 8) says "I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked." Zechariah speaks of the prophets who "wear a rough garment to deceive," and "say I am no prophet I am

an husbandman" (Zech. xiii. 45), which is like what Amos (vii. 14) says: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit."

Isaiah (xxviii. 7) says, "the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink; they are swallowed up of wine." Jahveh tells Jeremiah "The prophets prophesy lies in my name, I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them; they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart" (xiv. 14). Further on he says, "O Lord thou hast deceived me and I was deceived" (xx. 7). The prophets of Jerusalem, Jeremiah declares, "commit adultery and walk in lies" (xxiii. 14). Ezekiel too, prophesies against the prophets and their lying divination (xiii. 2-7). Hosea (ix. 7) says, "the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad."*

Some of the prophets can only be described as silly. Such are the two in 1 Kings xiii.; the prophet who asks to be smitten (1 Kings xii.); Zedekiah, who makes himself horns of iron; and Micaiah, who opposes him when a lying spirit comes from the Lord (1 Kings xxii.) To these may be added the man of God (2 Chron. xxv. 7), who made Amaziah dismiss his "hundred thousand mighty men of valor," who in consequence fell upon the cities of Judah and took much spoil.

The student of comparative religion in reading of the Hebrew prophets, is forcibly reminded of the Hindu sunnyasis and Mussulman fakirs. In the east insanity is confounded with inspiration, and Dr. Maudsley, in his *Responsibility in Mental Disease*, has given his

* See too Isaiah lvi. 11-12; Jer. xxvii. 10-15, xxix. 8-9; Micah iii. 5-7.

opinion that several of the Hebrew prophets were insane. The dread and respect in which they were held is evinced in the legend of the forty-two children who were slain by bears for calling Elisha bald-head. Their arrogance and ferocity were exhibited by Samuel, who made Saul king till he found a more serviceable tool in David, and "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord" (1 Sam. xv. 30); and by Elijah, who destroyed 102 men for obeying the order of their king (2 Kings ii. 9-13), and at another time slew 850 for a difference of opinion (1 Kings xviii. 19-40). Elisha was unscrupulous enough to send Hazael to his master saying he should certainly recover; though at the time he knew he would certainly die (2 Kings viii. 10). Judging by such examples we may congratulate ourselves that the race of prophets is almost extinct.

It must in fairness be said that some of the prophets used their influence in protecting the people against their priests and rulers, and that the greater prophets like Isaiah did much to elevate the religion of Israel, which in its modern form is largely their creation.

OLD TESTAMENT MARRIAGE.

"MARRIAGE," says Goethe, "is the beginning and end of all culture." Too often the end of all culture, the cynic may say. It may safely be affirmed that marriage is the chief cause and product of civilisation. Like other institutions, it has passed through various stages of growth among all nations, the Jews included. It has been said "Motherhood is a matter of observation, fatherhood a matter of opinion." Certain it is that in early society kinship was reckoned through mothers only. Of this we have some evidence in the Bible. Abraham, the father of the faithful, married Sarah, "the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother" (Gen. xx. 12). His brother Nahor took the daughter of his other brother, Haran, to wife (Gen. ix. 27-29). Such marriages could not have occurred except when relationship through males was not sufficiently acknowledged for a bar to marriage to have been raised upon it. Jacob had two sisters to wife at once. Amram, the father of Moses, married his own aunt (Exodus ii. 1 and 1 Chron. vii. 3). Even in the time of pious King David marriage with half-sisters was not considered improper, for when Ammon wished to force his sister Tamar, she said unto him, "Speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee"

(2 Samuel xiii. 13). Brothers by the same mother are specially distinguished (Deut. xiii. 6, Judges viii. 19). The child, moreover, in early times, was thought rather to belong to the mother than the father. Thus we find that Ishmael was turned adrift with Hagar, and Hannah, one of the wives of Elkanah the Levite, had the right of presenting or devoting her son Samuel to Jahveh.

A survival of consanguine marriage is found in Deut. xxv., where it is expressly ordered that when a brother's widow is left childless "her husband's brother shall go in unto her and take her to him to wife"; and in the event of his refusing to do so he has to have his shoe loosed and his face spat upon. Of the antiquity of this usage we have evidence in Genesis xxxviii. When Er, Judah's firstborn, died, the father commanded his second son, "Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother." The second son refusing, the thing which he did displeased the Lord, wherefore he slew him. Judah now putting Tamar off from taking his next son, she disguised herself and made her father-in-law do his son's duty, he acknowledging "she hath been more righteous than I." The custom is also referred to in the story of Ruth. Ewald amends Ruth iv. 5: "Thou must buy also Ruth the Moabitess." The Bible reader will remember that the disgusting story of the patriarch Lot and his daughters is related without the slightest token of disapproval. The daughters justified themselves by the plea that they would "preserve seed of our father." To understand these narratives, the reader must remember that in the early history of the family it was desirable, in the struggle for existence, that its numbers should not be diminished. Many instances are found in the Bible

of the blessing of a large family. "Happy is the man who has his quiver full." The blessing on the typical servant of Jahveh is that "he shall see his seed." It was the duty of the next of kin to see that the family stock did not diminish. We find at the beginning of Genesis that, when Abel was slain, God gave Seth "instead." In patriarchal life, as exhibited by the Bedouins, the "next of kin," the *goel*, is a most important personage. To him the tribe looks to avenge or redeem a kinsman's death or misfortune. On him the widow and fatherless depend for support. He is, above all, the blood-balancer, who sees that the house is kept in its normal strength, and who seeks to recruit it as far as possible from the same blood—a state of things implying feud with surrounding tribes. Job, in his anguish, can find no stronger consolation this—"I know that my *goel* liveth." According to the morality of that time, not only Tamar, but the family was grossly wronged by Onan. By refusing to allow Shelah to take the duties of *goel*, on the ground of his youth, Judah himself incurred the responsibilities of that office. It was his duty to see that seed was raised. Tamar resorted to cunning, the weapon of the weak, and Judah's confession is the real moral of what, to a modern, must be considered the very disgusting story in Genesis xxxviii.

All the Old Testament heroes, from Lamech downwards, were polygamists. Indeed, both polygamy and concubinage were practised by those Hebrew saints who were most distinguished by their piety, faith, and communion with Jahveh. Abraham not only took Hagar as a secondary wife, but turned her adrift in the wilderness when it suited his own goodwill and pleasure. Jacob, who lived under the special guidance

of God, married two sisters at the same time, and each of them presented him with concubines. David, the man after God's own heart, had many wives and concubines (2 Samuel iii. 2-5, v. 13), while Solomon, who was wiser than all men, boasted of seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (1 Kings xi. 5). Jahveh, while denouncing intermarriage with women of foreign races, never says a word against either polygamy or concubinage. On the contrary, both are sanctioned and regulated by the Mosaic law (Deut. xxi. 10-15). More than this, God himself is said to have married two sisters, Aholah and Aholibah (Ezekiel xxiii.), and although this is figurative, the figure would never have been used had the fact been considered sinful.

A Hebrew father might sell his daughter to be a wife, concubine, or maid-servant to an Israelite, and her master might put her away if she pleased him not (Exodus xxi. 7-11). Women taken captives in war might be used as wives and dismissed at pleasure (Deut. xxi. 10-14). In the case of the Midianites only virgins were preserved. Moses indignantly asked, Have ye saved all the women alive? "Now therefore kill every male among the little ones and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children, that hath not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves." And the Lord took shares in this maiden tribute (Numb. xxxi.)

Woman in the Bible is treated as merchandise. In Jacob's time she was bought by seven years' service, but in the time of the prophet Hosea she was valued only at fifteen pieces of silver and a homer and a half of barley. In the Decalogue it is prohibited to covet a man's wife on the same ground as his man slave, his

maid slave, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is his. Her lord and master could say with Petruchio :

She is my goods, my chattels ; she is my house,
My household stuff, my field, my barn,
My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything.

By God's law a man was permitted to dismiss a wife when she found "no favor in his eyes," by simply writing out a bill of divorcement. There is no mention of the woman having any similar power of getting quit of her lord and master. If he suspected her fidelity he could compel her to go through an ordeal in which the priest administered to her the water of jealousy, which if guilty would cause her to rot, but which was harmless if she was innocent. No doubt this was a potent means in securing wifely devotion and a ready remedy for any hated spouse. In the hands of a friendly priest the concoction would be little likely to fail, and even should it prove innocuous there was the expedient of writing a bill of divorcement.

It is usually said that God "winked at" (Acts xvii. 30) these proceedings, because of the hardness of the old Jews' hearts, and that from the beginning it was not so. In proof of this is cited the passage in Genesis which says, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." The proper interpretation of this passage illustrates a very early form of marriage still found in some tribes, and known in Ceylon as *beenah* marriage. Mr. McLennan, one of the highest authorities on primitive marriage, says :

"In *beenah* marriage the young husband leaves the family of his birth and passes into the family of his wife, and to that he belongs as long as the marriage subsists. The children born to him belong, not to him, but to the family of their

mother. Living with, he works for, the family of his wife; and he commonly gains his footing in it by service. His marriage involves usually a change of village; nearly always (where the tribal system is in force) a change of tribe, but always a change of family. So that, as used to happen in New Zealand, he may be bound even to take part in war against those of his father's house. The man leaves father and mother as completely as with the Patriarchal Family prevailing, a bride would do; and he leaves them to live with his wife and her family. That this accords with the passage in Genesis will not be disputed.*

"Marriage by purchase of the bride and her issue can hardly be thought to have been primeval practice. When we find beenah marriage and marriage by purchase as alternatives, therefore it is not difficult to believe that the former is the older of the two, and it was once in sole possession of the field."†

It was a beenah marriage which Jacob made into the family of Laban, and we find from Genesis xxiv. 1-8 that it was thought not improbable that Isaac might do the same. In beenah marriage the children belong to the mother's clan, and we thus find that Laban says: "These daughters are my daughters, and these children my children." It was exactly against such a marriage as that of Jacob, viz., with two women at one time that the text (Lev. xvii. 18) was directed which is so much squabbled about by both opponents of and advocates for marriage with a deceased wife's sister. The custom of the Levirate mentioned in Deut. xxv. possibly indicates pre-existent polyandry. Lewis, in his *Hebrew Republic*, says: "In the earliest ages the Levir had no alternative but to take the widow; indeed, she was his wife without any form of marriage."

Casting off a shoe, it may be said, is a symbol of

* *The Patriarchal Theory*, p. 43; 1885.

† *Ibid*, p. 45.

foregoing a right; thus the relatives of a bride still "throw slippers." The Arabs have preserved the ceremony intact. A proverb among them, when a young man foregoes his prescriptive right to marry his first cousin, is, "She was my slipper; I have cast her off" (Burckhardt, *Bedouins and Wahabys*, i. 113). Among the Caribs of Venezuela and in Equatorial West Africa, the eldest son inherits all the wives of his deceased father with the sole exception of his own mother. Schweinfurth relates that the same custom obtains in Central Africa. On the Gold Coast the throne is occupied by the prince, who gains possession of the paternal harem before his other brothers. Thus Absalom took David's harem in the sight of all Israel before the old man had gone to glory, as a proof he wished his reign to be considered over; and when Adonijah asks his brother Solomon for Abishag, the comforter of David's old age, the wise Solomon kills him, as thus betraying designs on the throne. In the custom that widows passed to the heir with other property, and hence that marriage with the widow grew to be a sign of a claim to the deceased person's possessions, we have a reasonable explanation of what must otherwise appear irrational crime. The custom of inheriting widows is adverted to in the Koran; and Bendhawi, in his commentary, gives the whole ceremony, which consists in the relative of the deceased throwing his cloak over the widow and saying, "I claim her."

The Mormons always defended their plurality of wives from the divine book, and polygamy has been defended by various Christian ministers, from the Lutheran divine, Joannes Lyser, author of *Discoursus Politicus de Polygamia*, and the Rev. Martin Madan, author of *Thelyphthora* to the Rev. Mercer Davies,

author of *Hagar*, and Ap Richard, M.A., who urges a biblical plea for polygamy under the title of *Marriage and Divorce*. Such works have done little to bring into favor the divine ordinance of polygamy, but they have done much to show how unsuited is the morality of "the word of God" to the requirements of modern civilisation. Surely it is time that the Christians were ashamed of appealing to polygamous Jews for any laws to regulate social institutions.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

ALTHOUGH there is no book with which students of divinity are better acquainted than with the "Song of Songs," there is also none of the same dimensions over which theologians have expressed so much diversity of opinion. Its authorship has been ascribed to Solomon for no better reason than because that sensual sultan is one of the subjects of its story. It is true it is one of the oldest books of the Old Testament, and begins by calling itself "the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's"; but the book of Ecclesiastes, which is one of the latest in the Hebrew collection, is also ascribed to Solomon, and possibly with as much reason. It has been credited with unfolding the sublime mysteries of the relation of Christ to his Church. It has been called an epithalamium upon the marriage of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh. According to a distinguished commentator, De Lyra, the first portion describes the history of Israel from the time of the Exodus to the birth of Christ, while from chapter vii. to the end gives the history of the Christian Church to Constantine. The Roman Catholic theologian, Hug, makes it treat of the ten tribes and Hezekiah. Cocceius, in accordance with his principle that holy scripture meant whatever it could be made to mean,

found in the Canticle the history of the Church from its origin to its final judgment. Hahn sees in it a prediction of the victory obtained over the heathen, by the love of Israel, and finds the conversion of the negro in the passage which says, "We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts." In short, nearly every possible explanation has been offered of this portion of the Word of God except the obvious and natural one, that it is an erotic poem. That there is any allegory in the piece is a pure assumption. The theory was unknown before the time of the Talmud. The Canticles are never referred to in the New Testament. There is not the slightest indication in the work itself that there is any such object. Not the most delicate hint, save in the headings of the chapters made by King James's bishops, that by the secret charms of the young lady we are to understand the mysterious graces of the Christian Church. In all allegories it is necessary the subject should be in some way indicated. The parables of Jesus often proved puzzles to his disciples, but they had no doubt they were parables. Moreover, the allegory—if it is one—is absurd or blasphemous. Why should the Church say of God: "His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven"? or compare his legs to pillars of marble, or celebrate other parts of his divine person which are not usually mentioned in polite society? Nor is it easy to see why Christ should say to the Church: "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them"; or why he should declare, "Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim; thy nose is as

the Tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus." Of course, to parody a phrase of Voltaire's, the Holy Ghost was not bound to write like Alfred Tennyson, but, if intended for human guidance, one would think the divine meaning should be a little more apparent.

The truth of the matter is, an allegorical interpretation has been forced into the Song of Solomon in order to relieve the Holy Ghost from a charge of indecency. Grotius ventured to call the Song of Songs a libertine work. Even the orthodox Methodist commentator, Adam Clarke, earnestly exhorted young ministers not to found their sermons on its doubtful phrases. He knew how apt religious people are to mix up carnal desire and appetite with love to their blessed Savior, and was perhaps aware that a number of Christian hymns might appropriately have been addressed to Priapus.*

In the Jewish Church no one under the age of thirty was permitted to read the Song of Songs, a prohibition which may have assisted to give it its sacred character. It is, nevertheless, not more indelicate than many other portions of God's Holy Word, and viewed in its proper light as an Oriental dramatic love poem, although it cannot be acquitted of outraging modern notions of decency, it is not, I think, so much, as some other portions of the Bible, open to the charge of teaching immorality. On the contrary, its purpose is commendable. An attentive reading of the Revised Version, which is without the misleading headlines, and is divided to indicate the different speakers in the love drama, will make this apparent, and show this little scrap of

* See Rimini's *History of the Moravians* and Southey's *Life of Wesley*, vol. i. pp. 188, 387.

the Jewish national literature to possess a certain natural beauty which has been utterly obscured by the orthodox commentators who, from the time of the early fathers to Hengstenberg and Keil, have sought to associate it with Christ and his Church.

Sir William Jones, in his essay on the mystical poetry of Persia and India, called attention to the sensuous images in which Oriental religious poetry expresses itself. This connection will surprise no one who has discovered from the history of religion that women and wine formed important features in ancient worship. The readiness with which ungratified sexual passion runs into religious emotion has frequently been marked by physicians, and finds much corroboration in the devotional works of monks and nuns. But the *Song of Songs* has nothing religious about it. Even the personages are not religious, as in the Hindu erotic *Gita Govinda*, by Jayadeva, which tells of the loves of Radha and the god Krishna in the guise of a shepherd. Christ and his Church only appear in the headings given to the chapters.

Though to be classed among erotic poems, the *Song of Songs* cannot fairly be called immoral or obscene. The character of the interlocutors and the division of the scenes is a little uncertain. It is, for instance, dubious whether the first speaker is Solomon or the Shulamite. If we take the version of M. Réville, the piece opens with the yearnings of the heroine, whom "the king hath brought into his chambers," for her absent lover. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine." She is black but comely; swarthy, because having to tend the vineyards she has been scorched by the sun. She is a Shulammite, or native of Shulam, now Solma, near

Carmel—a part renowned for the beauty of its women. It was Abishag, a Shulamite, who was chosen when they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel to warm the bed of old King David. Solomon had seen the fair maid of Shulam, and, when she went down into the garden of nuts “to see the green plants of the valley,” or ever she was aware, she was abducted. In vain, however, does the monarch offer her the best place in his harem. Amid the glories of the court she sighs for the shepherd lover from whom she is separated. She tells how early one spring morning her beloved engaged her to go out with him. “For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come. And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;” and now, although she seeks and finds him not, she declares “my beloved is mine and I am his.” Her constant burden to her harem companions is, “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awaken love until it please.”* Love must be spontaneous, she declares, and she refuses to yield to the wishes of the libidinous monarch. When Solomon praises her she replies with praises of her beloved peasant swain. She longs for him by day and seeks him in dreams by night. Solomon offers to place her above his “threescore queens and fourscore concubines and virgins without number”; but she is home-sick, and prefers the embraces of her lover to those of the lascivious king. Her humble vineyard is more to her than all the king’s riches. The moral is, “Many waters

* Revised Version. The Authorised Version changes the whole purpose of the piece by reading “that ye stir not up nor awaken my love till he please.”

cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it : If a man would give all the substance of his house for love he would utterly be condemned." And a far better one too than most morals to be drawn from the pages of the Old Testament.

The Song of Songs, which is *not* Solomon's, is a valuable relic of antiquity, both because it utterly refutes the orthodox notion of biblical inspiration, and because it deals with the old old story of human passion which surges alike in peasants and in princes, and which animated the hearts of men and maidens two thousand years ago even as it does to-day.

SACRED SEVEN.

It was natural that in the early ages of human intelligence man should attach a superstitious reverence to numbers. The mystery attached to the number seven has been variously accounted for. Some have explained it by the figures of the square and triangle, others by the stars of the Great Bear nightly seen overhead. Gerald Massey says: "The Constellation of the Seven Great Stars (Ursa Major) was probably the primordial figure of Seven. Seven was often called the perfect number. Its name as Hept (Eg.) is also the name for Plenty—a heap of food and good luck. The Seven were the great heap or cluster of stars, an image of plenty, or a lot that revolved together."* My own opinion is that the superstition arose in connection first with the menstrual period, and then with the phases of the moon as a measurer of time. Its period of twenty-eight days could be twice divided until the week of seven days was reached, and then further division was impossible. Hence we everywhere find the superstition linked to the days of the week and the seven planets supposed to preside over these days.

The Egyptians worshipped the seven planets, and Herodotus tells us of their seven castes. So with the

* *Natural Genesis*, ii., 219.

Babylonians. From them was derived the Jewish week. Hesiod, according to Eusebius, said "The seventh is the sacred day." What he says in his *Works and Days* is, "On the seventh day Latona brought forth Apollo"; and Æschylus, in his *Seven Against Thebes*, says the number Seven was sacred to Apollo. The moon periods were sacred as measuring time and also in connection with female periodicity. Man discovered the month before the year. Hence the moon was widely worshipped. The worship of the queen of heaven in Palestine is alluded to in Jer. vii. 18 and xliv. 17. The superstition of the new moon bringing luck has descended to our own time. When the year was reckoned by thirteen moons of twenty-eight days, thirteen was the lucky number; but when this was changed for the twelve months of solar time, thirteen became one too many. The Parsee Bundahish, according to Gerald Massey, exhibits seven races of men—(1) the earth-men, (2) water-men, (3) breast-eared men, (4) breast-eyed men, (5) one-legged men, (6) bat-winged men, (7) men with tails.

Section 7 of the Kabbalistic Sepher Yezirah* says, "The seven planets in the world are Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon. Seven days in the year are the seven days of the week; seven gates in man, male and female, are two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and the mouth." Again, section 15 says, "By the seven double consonants were also designed seven worlds, seven heavens, seven lands, seven seas, seven rivers, seven deserts, seven days a week, seven weeks from Passover to Pentecost, there is a cycle of seven years, the seventh is the release year, and after seven

* Trans. by Dr. I. Kalisch, pp. 27 and 31.

release years is jubilee. Hence God loves the number seven under the whole heaven."

The Bible, it has been remarked, begins in Genesis with a seven, and ends in the Apocalypse with a series of sevens. God himself took a rest on the seventh day and was refreshed, or, as the Hebrew reads, took breath. The Passover and other festivals lasted seven days; Jacob bowed seven times; Solomon's temple was seven years in building; the tabernacle had seven lamps, a candlestick with seven arms, etc. In a variety of passages it seems, like 40, to have been a sort of round number—as people sometimes say a dozen for an indeterminate quantity. Thus in Daniel iii. 19 the fiery furnace was to be heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. In Proverbs (xxiv. 16) we are told a just man falleth seven times and rises up again. One of the Psalmists says (cix. 164), "Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments" (see too Lev. xxvi. 18, 28; Deut. xxviii. 7, 35; Job ix; Psalm xii. 6, lxxix. 12; Isaiah iv. 1, xi. 15, xxx. 26; Jer. xv. 9, Matt. xii. 45). The week induced reckoning by sevens, and led to such enactments as that the Jews on the seventh day of the seventh month should feast seven days and remain seven days in tents.

The root idea of the number is that of religious periodicity. We find it not only in the Sabbath, but in all other sacred periods. Thus the seventh month is ushered in by the Feast of Trumpets, and signalled by the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles and Yom Kippur. Seven weeks is the interval between Passover and Pentecost. The seventh is the Sabbatical year, when bondsmen were to be released and debts go free. With this custom is connected the binding

of youths for seven years apprenticeship, and of punishing incorrigible offenders for 7, 14, or 21 years. The year succeeding seven times seven is the Jubilee. The earliest form, that of the menstrual period, is shown in the duration of various kinds of legal uncleanness, as after childbirth, after contact with a corpse, etc. So we have the sprinkling of the house seven times with the water of purification (Lev. xiv. 51), the command of Elisha to Naaman to wash in Jordan seven times (2 Kings v. 10). Hezekiah, in cleansing the temple, offered seven bullocks, seven rams, and seven he-goats for a sin offering. Septuple actions and agents abound. Thus the blood of sacrifices were sprinkled seven times (Lev. iv. 6, 17; xiv. 7, 16, 27; xvi. 14, 15). So Jacob bowed to his brother Esau seven times (Gen. xxxiii. 3). Balak built for Balaam seven altars, and prepares seven oxen and seven rams (Num. xxiii. 1, 4, 14, 29), and Abraham employed seven victims for sacrifice (Gen. xxi. 28, 30). We are reminded of the lines in Virgil's *Æneid* (vi. 58).

Seven bullocks, yet unyoked, for Phoebus choose,
And for Diana, seven unspotted ewes.

The Hebrew verb *Shaba*, to swear, is evidently derived from *Sheba* seven, and denoted a sevenfold affirmation. Herodotus (xiii. 8), tells us the manner of swearing among the ancient Arabians included smearing seven stones with blood. Sheba is allied to the Egyptian Seb-ti (5-2), the Zend Hapta, Greek Epta, Latin septem. The Pythagoreans said that Heptad came from the Greek *Sebo* to venerate, but Egyptian and other African dialects suffice to prove it is far earlier.

The writer of the Apocalypse had the mystic number on the brain. Dr. Milligan has explained the 666

number of the beast, as a fall below the sacred seven John of Patmos gives us seven golden candlesticks. (i. 1), seven stars (i. 20), seven spirits and churches (iii. 1), seven seals (v. 1), trumpets (viii. 2), thunders (x. 34), vials (xvi. 1), and seven angels with seven plagues (xvi.) The beast has seven heads, horns and crowns (xii. 3, xiii. 1, xvii. 7). The Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes (v. 1). There are seven spirits before the throne of God (Rev. i. 4, etc.) like the seven Dhyani Chohans emanating from Parabrahm in Hindu Theosophy.

So Christians have kept up legends of seven wise men, seven wonders of the world, seven champions of Christendom, seven cardinal virtues, seven deadly sins, seven devils in Mary Magdalene, etc. Of course there is no better reason why there should be seven than the old idea of mystery and completion attached to the number.

Modern Theosophists, too, go in largely for the number seven. There are seven planets, seven rounds on each planet and seven races. Every ego is composed of seven principles—Atma, Buddhi, Manas, Kamarupa, Linga Sharira, Prana, and Sthula Sharira. It may seem strange that a lady of Madame Blavatsky's undoubted powers of imagination should run in the old rut. But the well-worn superstitions work the easiest, although to every instructed person this one carries the mind back to the days when men knew only of seven planets and measured their time by the moon.
