

of proof. Briefly, the author holds that religious certainty is impossible under the conditions set forth by the theory of knowledge held up to the present time, still less is it possible under the presuppositions of the natural philosophy of the past. He has his own solution of the problem, but religious certainty is possible only if men return to healthiness of thought, and healthy thought is for him identical with the system set forth in this book.

The book is highly suggestive. It is characterized by clearness of style, and by wide knowledge. But on the whole, one is not prepared to bring an indictment of errancy and incompetency against all previous thought. On many parts of the book a great deal might be said, but a thorough examination of it would lead us far afield, so we conclude by saying that it is a fresh and stimulating book.

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A Modern Attempt to reduce King Saul to a Mythological Figure.

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SOME time ago I called attention in this periodical (February 1903, p. 217 ff.) to recent attempts to give a mythological character to the patriarchal history. The same disposition to combine biblical personages with the figures of mythology has been at work seeking to apply this transforming process even to O.T. persons whose history has never hitherto been regarded (even in Goldziher's *Der Mythos bei den Hebräern*) as anything but a purely human one. Such a person, for instance, is King Saul, regarding whom H. Winckler, in particular, has put forward the assertion that the O.T. accounts of him contain elements which indicate that this king was looked at in conjunction with the *moon-god*. Winckler has developed his theory in various publications, partly in vol. ii. of his *Geschichte Israels* (1900), partly in an article 'Die Weltanschauung des alten Orients' (*Preuss. Jahrb.*, May 1901, p. 224 ff.), partly in vol. i. of his *Die Keilinschriften und das A.T.*³ (1903), as well as in his brochure *Das Himmel- und Weltenbild der alten Babylonier als Grundlage der Mythologie aller Völker* (1901). Let us now proceed to examine the strength of the foundations on which this startling assertion is built.

1. The starting-point of this attempt to explain the O.T. history of Saul in the way above noted is found in his very name. The name 'Saul,' we are told by Winckler (*Preuss. Jahrb.*, p. 268), never recurs, and, like the names of the patriarchs, comes to be used as a personal name only in the era of late Judaism, when the Bible had been already

canonized. But this statement is simply incorrect, as far as the name 'Saul' is concerned. The name (Heb. שָׁאֻל, *Shā'ul*) occurs not only as that of an Edomite king (Gn 36³⁷), but also as that of a son of Simeon (46¹⁰; witnessed to also by the derivative form *Shā'ulī*, Nu 26¹³), while a third *Shā'ul* is mentioned in 1 Ch 6⁹. Moreover, even with regard to the names of the patriarchs, it is only seemingly correct to say that they do not recur in the Bible as personal names. For *Abram* is the contracted form of *Abiram*, just as *Abner* arose by contraction from *Abiner*, and *Absalom* from *Abishalom*. About the latter two instances there can be no doubt. For Saul's well-known commander-in-chief, the first time he is mentioned, is called by the full form of his name, *Abiner* (1 S 14⁵⁰), but after he has been thus introduced with the proper form we encounter immediately (v. 51), and so uniformly, the contracted form *Abner*. In like manner the less known father of Queen Maacah is called *Abishalom* (1 K 15²), but the son of David, whose name was constantly on the lips of the people, is always *Absalom* (2 S 3³, etc.). So, too, *Abiram* is found in the case of persons who play only a subordinate part in history (Nu 16^{1, 12}, etc., 26⁹; Dt 11⁶; 1 K 16³⁴), but the great ancestor of the Hebrews is regularly called by the shorter form of the name, *Abram*, Gn 11²⁶, etc.). Thus the assertion that the name of the first patriarch has only a *single* bearer in the O.T. is only relatively valid.

Is it the case, however, that the name 'Saul' is of such a character that it cannot possibly have belonged to an historical person? This question is suggested by other assertions of Winckler. For instance, we read (*Preuss. Jahrb.*, p. 269): 'This name; which is not a personal one at all, and which accordingly cannot be itself historical, is the clearest possible reproduction of the usual appellation of the moon-god, and serves the same symbolical purpose in a multitude of other instances as well. It is the Hebrew equivalent of the Assyrian designation of *Sin* as the "oracle god," for it means "the consulted one."' But this notion cannot be derived from Hebrew linguistic usage. The latter would give to *Shā'ul* the sense of 'one asked for,' and the idea of a child being asked for from God is expressly witnessed to in the O.T. Samuel's mother Hannah said with reference to this son, 'I asked him of Jahweh' (1 S 1²⁰); and the participle *shā'ul* is actually used of Samuel when it is said, 'He is one asked for from Jahweh' (v. 28). In supplying then to *Shā'ul* ('asked for') the addition 'from God,' as the source to which the request is addressed, we are following out an idea which was beyond question alike a real and a very natural one to the people of Israel. And do we not find in the O.T. a name closely allied in form and meaning with *Shā'ul*? I mean the name *Hānān* (Neh 3^{13, 30}), which is likewise a passive participle, and means 'favoured.' Here again we have naturally to complete the expression by the explanatory circumstance 'on the part of the Deity.'

How then can Winckler maintain that *Shā'ul* has the sense of 'the consulted one?' This could be asserted only if we were already aware that the first king of Israel was brought into combination with the moon-god *Sin*. But the name *Shā'ul* furnishes no independent support for such an opinion. We have shown that it finds its natural explanation in the Israelitish world of ideas, and no reason for rendering it 'consulted' can be found in the circumstance that among the *Babylonians* the moon-god *Sin* once receives the appellation *bel purusse*, 'oracle god.'

2. But although the name of the first king of Israel contains no trace of his having been looked at in combination with the stars or the figures of heathen mythology, it may be asked, Are such traces to be discovered in what the O.T. relates otherwise concerning this king? Winckler answers

this question in the affirmative. He writes as follows: 'All that is recorded of Saul is moon legend, or is clothed in this form. It had previously been noted as a striking circumstance that Saul has always his spear at hand, so that in this a relic must have been preserved of his mythological original. The latter, however, is the moon-god, whose symbol is the spear or staff, as one may see in Janus' (*Preuss. Jahrb.*, p. 268). But what are the facts of the case? Had Saul really his spear 'always' at hand? Yes, at least in 1 S 18^{10f.} 19^{of.} 20²³ 22^{6f.} 26^{8ff.}, 2 S 1⁶. But does the history of Saul only begin with 1 S 18¹⁰? No, it begins with 9¹. Then we have his anointing as early as 10¹, and from 11¹⁶ onwards his kingly exploits are recounted. But nowhere in these passages is there mention of his spear. Has anyone previously asked why it is that from 18¹⁰ onwards Saul is so frequently introduced even in time of peace with his spear? This question I myself have raised, and I think I have also succeeded in giving the correct answer to it. It commenced with the moment when the women of Israel sang the two lines—

'Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands' (1 S 18⁷).

Then awoke Saul's jealousy of David, and the suspicion of this rival became in Saul's mind a species of persecuting mania.

3. This brings us to the next proposition with which Winckler proposes to interpret the O.T. account of Saul: 'Saul's melancholy is a piece of moon-legend based upon the monthly darkening of the lunar disc' (*l.c.* p. 269). But we have just learned from the familiar biblical narratives about Saul *what* his melancholy was and *whence* it arose. It was a suspicious jealousy directed against the rival whom a tragical conflict between the monarchy and the prophetic claims of Samuel had set up against him. The penal activity of the Deity, which imposed the consequences upon Saul's transgression, is described as 'an evil spirit from God,' in accordance with the religious notions that prevailed in Israel. The same divine action is mentioned where we read of the breach between the assassin Abimelech and his Shechemite accomplices in the murder of the princes (Jg 9²³). What right then has anyone to explain this divine reaction in the history of Saul in a peculiar fashion? At all events the influence in question is attributed by the Israelitish historian to God or Jahweh. Consequently it can by no means be

maintained that the O.T. note regarding the melancholy of Saul is made with an eye on the monthly darkening of the *moon*.

But Winckler has discovered yet another ground for his hypothesis. We read: 'Saul's death is typical of the fate of the moon, the head cut off is likewise a symbol of the darkened moon, and this typical death befalls Saul near a city which was a seat of moon-worship, and whose name is brought by an etymological word-play into relation with his' (*l.c.* p. 269). But, in proceeding to criticise these words, we may begin by asking, Is there no parallel to the action of Saul's arch-enemies in cutting off his head and sending it along with his armour as trophies to their own land (1 S 31⁹)? Certainly, and the analogous instance is one that very readily occurs to the mind. David acted in precisely the same way towards Goliath (1 S 17^{51, 54}), and we cannot but feel it to be extremely unnatural for Winckler to find a reference to the darkening of the moon in what is simply a natural custom under a brutal system of warfare. And does what is said of *Bethshé'ân*? Winckler thinks so, as may be gathered from the above quotation. He alludes to the circumstance that the Philistines fastened the decapitated body of Saul upon the wall of *Bethshé'ân* (1 S 31^{10b}), and he supposes that the original name of this city was *Bethsin*, and that its name was only afterwards assimilated to the name *Shā'ûl*. But the name *Bethshé'ân* may signify 'house or place of rest,' *i.e.* 'settlement.' Besides, in all its forms, ancient and modern (*Bethshé'an*, *Bethshân*, *Bethshan*, and Arab. *Beisân*), it is pronounced with an *a* sound in the final syllable, where the name of the moon-god (Sin) has an *i*. Moreover, the correctness of the *sh* (ש) sound in the Hebrew name is shown by the *s* (س) of the Arabic form, which in the normal interchange of sounds corresponds to the Hebrew sibilant in question. Nor can it be suggested that the *spiritus lenis* in *Bethshé'ân* was introduced in allusion to the name *Shā'ûl*. For *shā'anān* ('restful,' 'quiet') is a common adjective in Hebrew, and is derived from a verb which has the same *spiritus lenis*.

We have been told, then, by Winckler of three peculiarities in the history of Saul which indicate a combination with the moon-god. But, even if this were the case, would it be correct to say that

'everything that is related of Saul is moon legend' (*l.c.* p. 268)? No, for a great deal more is recorded of him than what is included in the three points we have discussed. We read of his transactions with Samuel and of his being anointed by that prophet (1 S 9 f.). We see him also inflamed with the sacred fire of patriotism, hurrying as Israel's leader against the Ammonites on the east and the Philistines on the west of his kingdom (chaps. 11, 13). We accompany him on the campaign against the Amalekites (chap. 15), and admire the courage with which at an advanced age he still combats the Philistines (chap. 31). In none of these portions of the O.T. account of Saul has even Winckler been able to trace any relation to the moon cult, and yet he ventures to say: 'Everything done by Saul is brought into relation to his lunar character' (*l.c.* p. 269).

But as we do not wish to overlook any of the considerations which Winckler adduces in support of his present theory, we must notice the following three points.

(a) According to Winckler, Saul resembles, in the use of the spear, *Alexander the Great*, who was also 'a first king.' Here are Winckler's words: 'The two narratives of how Saul and Alexander hurled their spears, the one at David, the other at Clitus, indicate allusions to the same prototype, and these occur frequently also in other instances. The form of description required, that is to say, this device even in the case of Alexander, and the (historical) murder of Clitus supplied the occasion for its use, although the story, when examined more closely, indicates that the narrator has had trouble in bringing everything happily or unhappily into one connection' (*l.c.* p. 268). It comes to this, then. The founders of two dynasties made use naturally enough of a weapon suited for attacking a distant adversary. Truly a sufficiently broad basis on which to found a general judgment as to the manner of action of 'first kings'!

(b) The circumstance that Saul's head was cut off and sent by the Philistines to their own land is not compared with the precisely analogous conduct of David towards Goliath. No, this analogy would have been too obvious. Therefore Saul is placed alongside of *Cyrus*, for in his case too we are told that 'his death, with the cutting off of his head and the raising of it aloft in triumph by the victress is typical of his lunar character' (*l.c.* p. 271). But this does not tally with the narrative of

Herodotus (i. 214) regarding the death of Cyrus. He records how Tomyris, the queen of the Massagetæ, plunged the head of Cyrus into a wineskin filled with blood, remarking at the same time: 'While I was yet alive and conquered thee in battle, thou didst bring me down by taking prisoner my son through guile, but I will satiate thee with blood, as I threatened.' So that here again this instance in which the head of a conquered foe is cut off, is not connected with Cyrus having been the first of a dynasty and with the monthly darkening of the moon; on the contrary, it had motives quite peculiar to itself. It is evident, then, that the basis is wanting for that general judgment that the fortunes of the *moon* are attributed to 'first kings.'

(c) But what cannot be derived from the history of Saul himself, may, according to Winckler, be proved from what we are told about his son. 'Jonathan, Saul's son, is the archer. If his father gains his battles by night as the moon-god, Jonathan gains his by day' (*l.c.* p. 269f.). But how very natural that a son of Saul should be a skilful archer! To rob this circumstance of anything surprising, we do not need to recall how the Benjamites are more than once extolled for their skill in archery (Jg 20¹⁶, 1 Ch 8⁴⁰, 2 Ch 14⁷). In

any case, Jonathan's accomplishments as an archer should not be made an occasion of combining him with the *sun-god*. Yet Winckler feels reminded of the latter by the history of Jonathan. He holds that the Israelites, in thinking of Saul and Jonathan, pursued the following course of ideas: 'The moon-god's son is: the sun-god, whose weapons are bow and arrow (Apollo),' and *therefore* the Israelites would ascribe to Jonathan skill in archery. Again, in continuing a victorious attack begun by Jonathan (1 S 14¹), the natural thought occurred to Saul that the favourable situation might be utilized even in the night, and that as much spoil as possible should be taken from the Philistines (v.³⁰). What has Winckler made of all this? He discovers in it a solid basis for the proposition that 'if Saul gains his battles by night as the moon-god, Jonathan gains his by day.'

An examination of all the points on which Winckler seeks to rest his new theory, has thus led to the conclusion that those features of the O.T. history of Saul, which are supposed to contain allusions to the moon, possess another meaning; and it seems to me that this other meaning is the simpler and more natural. Winckler's hypothesis must, accordingly, be pronounced an arbitrary one.

'The House was filled with the Odour of the Ointment' (John xii. 3).

AN AFTER-TABLE ADDRESS.

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ONE of the most beautiful stories in the Gospels is the story of Mary's action in the Supper room at Bethany, when she broke her alabaster box 'and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair.' Jesus Himself was so touched by the beauty and the deep meaning of it, that He foretold for it a memory as deathless as the Gospel itself. And one of the eye-witnesses, in telling the story, the one who perhaps of all the disciples best understood what Mary meant,—John the Apostle of Love,—adds this comment: 'The house was filled with the odour of the ointment.' For a few minutes before we rise from this table, I should like you to think of these words of John.

1. *The Explanation of the Widespread Fragrance.*
—The explanation lay, we can see at once, in the fact that the box was broken, and *all* the contents spilled out. If Mary had done what the disciples would have liked her to do, she would have carefully poured out just enough to serve for the anointing. She would not have broken the box, but only shaken out what was required, and kept the rest for some other time. And Christ would have been anointed just the same, and the balance might even have been given to the poor, but—the fragrance would not have filled the whole house.

There are lives that we know just like that.