

697TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, MARCH 7TH, 1927,

AT 4.30 P.M.

DR. JAMES W. THIRTLE IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced Professor Theophilus G. Pinches, LL.D., M.R.A.S., to read his paper on "The Completed Legend of Bel-Merodach and the Dragon," which was illustrated by lantern slides.

*THE COMPLETED LEGEND OF BEL-MERODACH
AND THE DRAGON.*

By PROFESSOR THEOPHILUS G. PINCHES, LL.D., M.R.A.S.

OF all the known accounts of the Creation of the world, there is none which, after the majestic narrative contained in the first two chapters of Genesis, exercises such attraction for the student as does that handed down to us by the Babylonians and the Assyrians. With this account I have dealt on several previous occasions, but every addition thereto renews our interest in that noteworthy legend and leads us to turn our attention once more to the religion, the philosophy, the pantheon, and the turn of mind of that age-old nation with which the Tradition of the beginnings of the Universe originated, as well as the sister-nation—Assyria—which accepted it, and helped in such great measure to hand it down through our explorers of modern times.

And here, at the outset, it is well to consider and realize how different were the two accounts of those two Semitic nations, the Babylonians and the Hebrews. The author of the latter plunges at once into the details, telling us that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and explaining that the earth was without form and void, with darkness upon the face of the Deep, and the Spirit of God brooding over the face of the waters. The Assyro-Babylonian account, on the other hand, makes the creators to be Tauthé or Tiawath and Apason or Apsū—the personified sea as the mother, and the Ab-zu, Semiticized as Apsū, the knowing, and therefore realizing abode of the waters, the father of all things at first existing. As Damascius says, the Babylonians rejected the one-principal of the creator and constituted two, from whom sprang Moumisi or Mummu, the great intelligence which gave all primitive creatures their forms. As a result of the action of these two divine but crude creative forces (aided by Mummu, who, according to Professor Langdon, was their *Logos*), the gods of the later world, who created mankind, came into existence.

Elsewhere, and more than once, I have explained this as a kind of theory of evolution—not of the beings inhabiting the earth, but of the divine powers which brought all the order (and, we may also say, the beauty) which we see in the world and in the universe, into existence. To the chief of these superior divinities the Babylonians believed that mankind owed its existence. But before that great work of the gods took place, much had to be done, and great was the struggle, between the gods and their evil progenitors, to produce the perfected world and the wonders of the universe which the Babylonians saw around them, and for which their sages wished to account.

How far Mummu may be regarded as standing for the "Word" of Tiawath will probably be regarded as doubtful, especially as there may have been two personages bearing the same name, the one seemingly combined with the name of Tiawath, and having no divine prefix, and the other regarded as an independent deity, whose name is introduced with the prefix referred to. The gods whose names follow as having been produced "within them"—that is, as Langdon says, within the Apsū and the Tiawath—the freshwater Deep and the saltwater Ocean—were Lahmu and Lahamu, Anšar and Kišar, Anu their son, and Nudimmud son of Anu. What mystic teaching may be regarded as lying behind these names is uncertain, but when the words are in pairs it is

certain that the male and female deity is in each case intended. *Lahmu* and *Lahamu* would in this case stand for the state of creation preceding the *Anšar* and *Kišar*—the Host of Heaven and the Host of earth, whatever that may stand for. In Gen. ii, 1, “the heavens and the earth . . . and all the host of them” are referred to after their creation, but in the Babylonian story the deities bearing names understood to have a similar meaning are mentioned long before the completion of these essential portions of the universe is described. There must, then, be something very different in the real meaning of the names *Anšar* and *Kišar*.

Next in order comes *Anu*, the Assyro-Babylonian god of the heavens—implying, perhaps, an interval whilst *Anšar* and *Kišar* grew up and became parents, before the heavens appeared as we now see them. Finally *Nudimmud*, *Anu*'s son, the great creator, identified with *Ēa* or *Enki*, “the lord of the earth,” arose.

It is at this point that the great change comes in, and the reason for the war between the gods and the powers of evil—the crude beginning of things symbolized by the watery wastes. To all appearance the heavenly powers (as we may call them) had access to an abode of the gods in general called *Andurana*, which, as Langdon points out, is a name of *Arallu*, the place afterwards allotted to the departed. Here the gods rebelled against *Tiawath*, and troubled her, and sang songs in praise, apparently, of their protector—probably *Anšar*. As they could not be silenced, and had become so powerful that their crude progenitors feared them, *Apsū* called to *Mummu*, and the two went together to *Tiawath* to consult what they should do. *Apsū* complained that he could not rest by day nor sleep by night—he would therefore confound them and destroy their ways. “Let the noise be stilled, and let us sleep, (even) us.”

Tiawath, enraged, asks, “How shall we destroy that which we have made?” In his capacity of “word” or adviser of *Apsū* and *Tiawath*, *Mummu* answered and gave advice to *Apsū*, and this advice of “his *Mummu*,” as the text has it, was wicked and unfavourable. “Go,” he says, “thou art able, (though it be) a difficult way.” Nothing is said about the action to be taken, and we may imagine that *Mummu*, the “word” of *Apsū* and *Tiawath*, was regarded as knowing their thoughts without hearing spoken words. Reference to their plans “in their assembly” is then made, and these plans, whatever they were, they communicated to the gods their first-born—that is, the gods of holier mind.

And here we see how manlike the Babylonians conceived their gods to be, for on learning the intentions of their progenitors, "the gods their first-born" wept, and sat whispering in silence. It was only the all-wise god Êa, however, who understood what the powers of evil intended to do, and he set to work to circumvent their designs by devising and fixing "the curse (or ban) of all things"—he made it skilfully, and this incantation was passing great:—

"He repeated it, and he caused it to be in the waters,
 In sleep he bewitched him, reposing in a cavern.
 He had then caused Apsū to slumber, bewitching (his) sleep.
 Mummu, in his lower part frightfully mutilated,
 He severed his sinews and tore off [his] crown.
 His magnificence he removed, him he stripped.
 He then bound him, and Apsū he slew.
 [M]ummu he confined, his skull he crushed.
 He then fixed over Apsū his dwelling.
 Mummu he held fast—he strenghtend his bonds.
 After he had bound (and) slain his enemies,
 [Êa] made firm his victory over his foes.
 In his chamber composedly he rested.
 He named it then Apsū, (and) specified the shrines.
 Therein he caused his secret chamber to be founded.
 Laḥma (and) Laḥamu his spouse abode (there) in majesty.
 In the chamber of the fates, the abode of (holy) concepts,
 The wisest of the gods, the counsellor of the gods, was
 engendered.
 In the midst of the Apsū was formed Aššur—
 In the midst of the holy Apsū was formed Aššur.
 Laḥmu his father then formed him,
 Laḥamu his mother was his bearer.
 He sucked then the breasts of goddesses (*Ištarāti*).
 A nurse tended him (and) filled him with fearsomeness.
 Pleasant was his form, bright the gaze of his eye.
 Virile was his growth, potent from the beginning.
 Laḥmu, the begetter, his father, then beheld him ;
 His heart rejoiced (and) was glad, with rejoicing he was filled.
 He perfected him, and added to him a god's double measure.
 He was exceedingly tall, and he surpassed notably.
 Not understood and gracious were his proportions,
 Not suited for the intelligence, oppressive to the sight.

Four were his eyes, four were his ears,
 When he moved his lips fire* [was kindled].
 (His) understanding increased fourfold ;
 And the eyes perceived all things like that.
 Then was he lifted up among the gods, his form made sublime.
 His limbs made massive, in height surpassing great.
 ' My son the godhead ; my son the godhead.
 My son the Sun, the Sun of Anu (or of heaven).'
 Clothed in the splendour of ten gods, he was exceedingly
 powerful."

At this point the inscription is defective, and the partial gap gives an opportunity for a few remarks upon the translation just given. It will be noticed that the text makes the deity described to be Aššur, the national god of the Assyrians. This, however, is due to Assyrian patriotism—or Chauvinism—because they wished it to be thought that it was to the head of their own pantheon that the creation of the world was due. The fact, however, is, that they had simply substituted the name of Aššur for that of the Babylonian Merodach, as the duplicates of the tablets inscribed with the Legend show.

Noteworthy, too—and still more important—is the description of Aššur (or Merodach) here given. Anything more unlike the way in which the Hebrews depicted to themselves the God whom they worshipped could hardly be imagined ; yet Mordecai (better Maredecai) means "the Merodachite"—the worshipper and servant of Merodach. We can only suppose, therefore, that the idea of Merodach prevailing about the Persian period in Babylonia was that of the portion of the Babylonian people who were monotheistically inclined, as I showed in my paper upon "The Religious Ideas of the Babylonians" in the *Transactions* of this Institute thirty-two years ago. In the inscription proving this belief, all the chief gods of the Babylonians are identified with Merodach, whose emanations they were. The identification of Merodach with Jehovah, however, is of an earlier date than this, as the Biblical references to Rahab, the Hebrew name of Merodach's opponent Tiawath, show.

That the Babylonians did not altogether accept the description

* 𐎶𐎵 𐎶𐎵 𐎶𐎵, transcribed by Langdon ^u *gibil*. The divine prefix before the word is not uncommon, and shows the esteem in which fire was held. The usual word is *išatu*.

of Merodach in this Creation-legend is clear from the well-known outline-carving depicting that god found by the German explorers at Babylon. As far as I know, he is never represented with four eyes, four ears, and fire coming from his mouth. The perfection of his form and his intelligence, however, we may well accept as being in accord with Babylonian ideas of the chief of their pantheon. It cannot be said that the translation of this (which is based on that of Professor Langdon, of Oxford) is beyond all doubt, but it is probably better than any rendering given by me previously, and in departing here and there from that of Professor Langdon I may have given a worse, rather than a better, rendering.

In the last line but one of the above rendering I have regarded *îlûtu* or *yaûtu* as being, in accordance with the generally received renderings, words indicating the god's high status as a divinity. *Yaûtu* is an archaic word expressing this, but *îlûtu* is probably of later date, and therefore more usual. The interesting point for the modern commentator is, that *yaûtu* is derived from *ya'u*, the Hebrew Jah, the well-known word for the God of the Israelites when Yahwah (Jehovah) was not used. This naturally has no theological bearing on the Biblical account of the Creation—*yaûtu* is simply an abstract noun from *ya'u*, which is familiar as a common Semitic word for "god," especially when they wished to indicate the one, or the chief, ruler of the universe.

According to Damascius (and the Babylonian story of the Creation confirmed this when it was in an incomplete state) there was but one conflict between the gods and the original creative powers, as represented by Apsû and Tiawath, but the present completed legend indicates that the Babylonians regarded the contest as having been renewed when the Dragon of Chaos took to herself a second spouse, whom they named Kingu. This is owing to the heavenly powers having overcome Apsû, the former male creative principle, whose watery domain they had annexed, and upon whose body Êa, the god of the waters and of deep wisdom, had founded his seat. In this same domain, as the legend relates, Lahmu and Lahamu were installed, and there Aššur-Merodach was born. The completion of the Assyro-Babylonian story of the Creation renders it stranger still than it was in its seemingly less detailed and seemingly incomplete form.

The death of Apsû enraged Tiawath, and she and her followers then determined to wreak vengeance. The details of the plot

against their heavenly offspring are unfortunately wanting, but where the text again becomes fully understandable we find ourselves upon fairly familiar ground. "Mother Ĥubur," as Tiawath is at this point called, apparently now creates all the monsters of her watery abode which she had conceived in her mind to help her, and in order to ensure success they seem to have exercised themselves in feats of arms:—

"They cursed the day, and went forth by the side of Tiawath,
They raged, they plotted, not resting day or night.
They raised a conflict, they chafed, they fumed,
They set themselves in (battle-)array, and made contests."

The monsters whom "Mother Ĥubur" created were "sharp of tooth, unsparing of fang, filled with poison like (instead of) blood, uncouth monsters clothed with fearfulness." She loaded them with magnificence, and made them like the gods. Their beholder was verily transfixed with terror—their bodies, indeed, reared high, and (none) restrained their breasts. At this point (and also farther on) their names are given—names which Assyriologists try to reproduce in the languages of to-day. The monsters were the *bašmu* or "viper," the *muš-ruššu* or "raging serpent," the *Laḥamu* or "sea-monster," the *ūgallu*^m, which Langdon contends means the "great lion." This is not the word used for the constellation Leo, as that is represented by the compound *ur-gula*. Next comes the *ur-idimmu* or "raging hound," *akrab-awēlu*, "the scorpion-man," such as we see on the Babylonian boundary-stones and cylinder-seals. To these were added "the destructive spirits of wrath," "the fish-man," and "the fish-ram." All these bore unsparing weapons, and feared not the conflict. Altogether there were eleven newly created beings of monstrous form, and one of these, the demon named Kingu, she proclaimed as her spouse instead of Apsū, to whose existence the gods of heaven had already made an end.

From this point onwards Kingu, as well as Tiawath, are the leaders of the host against the gods of heaven, though the counterpart of the Hebrew Rahab is always the greater of the two. She exalts him to undertake the bearing of arms, to advance to the attack, and to become the victorious chief in the expected battle. As a sign of mourning for the slain Apsū, his predecessor, she causes him to sit in sackcloth, and then, addressing him in a grandiloquent speech, she tells him of the "spell" which she had made for him, and how she had exalted him to the rule of all

the gods, expressing the hope that his names might be greater than (those of) all the Anunnaki—the gods of the heavens.

It is a strange story—that of the conflict of the primitive powers of evil and heavenly offspring. Yet the Babylonians apparently saw nothing incongruous in it. Here they are shown as believers in, and supporters of, the gods of heaven, but nevertheless they regarded Tiawath as possessing the highest powers and the might of those holy ones, as though equal with them in holiness and capable of conferring all the legitimate power and dignity of which she (and her followers) were unworthy. This was probably due to the fact that she still possessed, in the belief of the Babylonians, “the Tablets of Fate”—documents belonging to the ruler of heaven alone. As she was about to make Kingu ruler of heaven (though he seems not to have inhabited that exalted realm), she now hands to him the Fate-Tablets, giving him a sure command, which could not be annulled, and also “the Anuship”—the supreme authority in the heavens, Anu’s domain.

With this episode the first tablet of the series comes to an end, and the colophon tells us that the document in question belongs to Nabû-balaṭ-su-iqbî son of Na’id-Marduk, by whose hand it was apparently written. The colophon at the end of another copy states that it was from Babylon, and was written on the 9th of Iyyar in the twenty-seventh year of Darius.

In the second tablet of the legend, Tiawath prepares for the battle against “the gods her offspring,” doing evil “in order to avenge Apsū”—*ah tûr gimillî Apsî*, as Professor Langdon reads. The god Êa hears of the preparations, and becomes faint and pained. When his anger had subsided he set out to seek Anšar his father, to whom he repeats the whole story in the words describing the preparations for the conflict in the first tablet. On hearing the news, Anšar in despair smote his loins and bit his lip. It is thought that he is described in the mutilated passage which occurs here as requesting the god Êa to curse Tiawath as he had done Apsū and Mummu, but that Êa held back. Anšar therefore turns to the heaven-god Anu, telling him to go and stand before Tiawath. Apparently Anšar expected much from this interview, for he says to Anu, “May her mind be appeased—may she be glad in her heart.” When Anu approached Tiawath, however, and, by his divine power, saw her plan, as Professor Langdon translates, he turned and fled, confessing his want of power in the presence of her great might. Anšar ponders the situation in his heart, and then announces

to the Anunnaki that the only deity mighty enough to cope with the power of evil is the valiant Merodach. Êa summons his son, and many words are spoken, and he kissed away Anšar's fear, asking what man had dared to bring battle against him? On learning that the foe was Tiawath, Merodach gives Anšar full assurance of his ultimate success. He asks only that an assembly of the gods should be called wherein his fate—his position as a member of the pantheon—should again be declared, and, as is implied, his power increased:—

“ In Ub-šu-ukkinnaki sit ye then joyfully together ;
 My mouth being opened, like you, then, fates may I fix.
 Whatever I create, even I, shall not be changed.
 Let not return and let not be changed the pronouncement of
 my lips.”

The second tablet closes with this line, and we learn from the colophons of the two copies extant that the Assyrian text came from the city of Aššur. The other belonged to Nabû-âhê-iddina son of Êtir-bêl, son of the priest of Maš. “ Wilfully he withholds not (anything).”

The third tablet deals with the convening of the assembly, and not only are the gods to meet—they are also to make high festival. Again the history of Tiawath's preparations to destroy the gods of heaven is repeated in identical words by Gaga, Anšar's messenger, to Laḥmu and Laḥamu. They were to be brought unto him, and were, in their turn, to bring the other gods. Nothing is omitted in the tale Gaga was to tell, but the account of the orders of Anšar afterwards seems to be somewhat shortened:—

“ I sent then Anu—he was powerless before her,
 Nudimmud (Êa) feared and turned back.
 Merodach, sage of the gods, your son, came forward.”

And the terms of Merodach when he offered to meet Tiawath are repeated. The ceremonial acts of Gaga when he came into the presence of Laḥmu and Laḥamu (in their chamber, seemingly, under the sea) are not without interest:—

“ Gaga went, he pursued his way, and
 In the place of Laḥmu and Laḥamu, the gods, his fathers,
 He bowed and kissed the ground beneath them.
 He lay prostrate, he stood up and addressed them :

' Anšar, your son, hath now sent me—
 The decision of his heart he hath caused me, (even) me, to
 understand,
 Thus : Tiawath our procreatress hath cursed us—
 She conveneth an assembly and angrily she rageth.
 The gods, all of them, have now turned to her,
 Except those whom ye have created, they go by her side.
 They have cursed the day, and are going up to the side of
 Tiawath.' ”

The whole story is repeated as on pp. 143 and 144. When Lahḫa (Lahmu) and Lahamu heard the words of Gaga they cried aloud and all the Igigi wailed bitterly. “ Why have they become hostile until the conception of this decision ? We knew not of the deed of Tiawath.”

“ They met together and went—
 The great gods, all of them, deciders of Fates.
 They entered then before Anšar, they filled [Ub-šu-
 ukkinaku].
 They kissed one another—they were united in the assembly.
 They conversed together seated at the banquet.
 They ate bread, they prepared wine.
 The sweet drink drowned their cares ;
 The liquor, as they drank, satiated their bodies.
 Much they discoursed and their mood became exalted.
 For Merodach, their avenger, they decreed his fate.”

Here the third tablet comes to an end, and we are admitted again to what may be regarded as a phase of Babylonian life. The short but realistic description of the feast recalls the relief found by the French explorers in Sargon's palace at Khorsabad, where Assyrian soldiers are shown seated at tables and raising their drinking-cups—perhaps in response to a toast. In the feast of the gods here described, however, there are other details which are worth noticing. The gods are not only described as sitting, but their “ love-feast ” (as we may call it) consists only of *ašnan* and *kurunnu*, translated respectively as “ bread ” and “ wine.” It is to be noted that *ašnan* occurs generally in religious texts, and possibly designates some kind of divine food. A section in one of the great lists of gods is devoted to the deity of this divine bread (*Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets*,

Part xxiv, pl. 23, completed to a certain extent from plates 7-9), and from this we learn that $\rightarrow\text{†} \text{𒌦} \text{𒌦}=\text{𒌦}\text{𒌦}\text{𒌦}\text{𒌦}$ (so to be completed, in all probability) was identified with $\rightarrow\text{†} \text{𒌦} \text{𒌦} \rightarrow\text{†}$ (so read, apparently, instead of $\rightarrow\text{†} \text{𒌦} \text{𒌦} \rightarrow\text{†}$), the pronunciation of which is *Ašnan*, and that another name of the god was $\rightarrow\text{†} \text{𒌦} \rightarrow\text{†} \text{𒌦} \rightarrow\text{†} \text{𒌦} \rightarrow\text{†}$, *Ezinū*, a form apparently preferred by the Sumerians. He is associated in this section with "the great doorkeeper of Êkurra"—"the temple of the land," or "of the mountain"—and the god Hani, with whom the names of $\rightarrow\text{†} \text{𒌦}\text{𒌦}\text{𒌦}$, *Mesi*, and $\rightarrow\text{†} \text{𒌦}$, *Še*, "the god of grain" (barley), also appear. One of the deities mentioned in connection with this name for grain is *En-zi-kamma*, "the lord of the life of the land," whilst the last deity of the second section referring to the gods of grain is $\rightarrow\text{†} \text{𒌦} \text{𒌦}\text{𒌦}\text{𒌦}\text{𒌦}$, *Nisaba*, possibly identified with *Ašnan* or *Ezinū*.

With regard to the gods' drink at that famous divine feast, it is to be noted that they prepared it whilst at table. Nevertheless it is called *širisa* and *šikaru*, both of which seem to be words for fermented liquor. Naturally the gods, being of unlimited supernatural power, could be regarded as not needing the stimulus of alcohol or as capable of producing it in their drink at will. The human element in the Babylonian pantheon, however, obliges us to think of their divine intelligence as subject to the same physical needs as that of the generality of men.

We now come to the fourth tablet of the completed Story of the Creation. This begins with a reference to the princely chamber which they had constructed for Merodach—apparently as a council-hall. The gods then address him, telling him that his word was that of Anu, the god of the heavens—his command could not be changed, and to exalt and to abase, that was in his power. Restoration was the need of the sanctuaries of the gods, so wherever their sanctuaries lay, that was his place. Merodach was therefore the god of the restoration of Babylonia's holy places, and consequently must have had a share in the divine honours rendered therein. This naturally tended to end in his identification with all "the gods his fathers"—and "the gods his brothers" as well.

"Sit thou then in the assembly—verily supreme has thy word become.

May thy weapons not fail—may they annihilate thy foes.

Lord, who trusteth in thee, spare thou then his life ;
 And (as to) the god who hath conceived evil, pour thou his
 life away."

At this point comes the test of the garment, by which Merodach was to know that he really possessed the power "to destroy and to make" by the word of his mouth. The successful fulfilment of this test rouses the gods to enthusiasm, and they did homage, shouting, "Merodach then is king." As a sign of his sovereignty they added to his possessions sceptre, throne, and warrior's battle-axe as a sign of his power. They gave to him also an irresistible weapon wherewith to overwhelm the hateful.

"Go thou and cut off Tiawath's life-breath ;
 May the winds bear away her blood to a secret place."

Merodach then made ready his bow and arrows, fixing himself the bowstring. He did not forget the weapon which is described as "the toothed sickle," and he then hung the bow and the quiver at his side. Lightning he set before him, and with a burning flame was his body filled. Then comes something special in his armoury—the net with which, as a sea-monster, he intended to enclose her. The winds of the four cardinal points, too, accompanied him, and near by his side he brought another net, which was the gift of his father Anu.

The Assyro-Babylonians were accustomed to regard Addu, Adad, or Rammānu (Haddo, Hadad, or Rimmon) as the great wind-god, because he was the god of rains, storms, inundations, floods, thunder, and lightning, but Merodach would seem to have been in an even greater measure the god of the winds, for not content with the aid of those of the cardinal points, he created seven others, among them being "the fourfold wind" and "the sevenfold wind," which followed him to trouble Tiawath inwardly ; and rode, himself, the chariot of the irresistible, terrible storm. To this he yoked four "span," as Professor Langdon translates, and attached them beside it (*īdušša ilul*). Each steed bore a name—"the Destroyer," "the Unsparing," "the Stormer," "the Swift-runner"—"sharp were their poison-laden teeth." As to the god himself, he was clad in a heavy garment woven to imitate a fleece, like that worn by the king Ê-anna-tum as depicted on the Vulture-Stele (Langdon, Heuzey, and Thureau-Dangin), whilst his head was crowned with the brilliance of flames—a flaming halo, as we might, perhaps, translate. Every kind of

destructive appliance was attributed by the Babylonians to the chief of their pantheon when he went to attack Tiawath, and a few lines farther on he is described as even holding some destructive thing—probably a violent wind—in his mouth, whilst he grasped in his hand “the plant annihilating poison.” Surrounded by the gods “his fathers” and other divinities, he advanced, but notwithstanding all his preparations he only drew near in fear, and, seeing his trouble, the gods who had hastened to his side were troubled too. Tiawath, without “turning her neck”—without looking back, uttered her (curse or reproach) against him—the gods had raised him to his present position (to which, as is probably implied, he had no right), and now occupied *his* place—that which he ought to have occupied. At this point “the lord raised his great weapon,” the “Cyclone,” and sent his answer to Tiawath, “who was enraged,” saying thus:—

“As for thee, thou hast become great, thou art lifted up,
Thy heart has then urged thee to summon to a conflict.

Thou hast exalted Kingu to be thy husband,
Thou hast made greater his decree than the decree of Anuship.
Evil deeds thou seekest, and
Thou settest thine evil against the gods my fathers.
Let thy host be harnessed, and let their weapons be girded on.
Stand then, I and thou—we (will) make battle.”

The clashing of the forces of evil and the god of heaven is told in vigorous language, and after that “the lord” spread out his net and enmeshed her. Tiawath, on her part, opened wide her mouth to consume him, but the evil wind entered before she could close her lips. Filled with the raging winds, she opened wide her mouth. Pierced by the god’s arrow, which rent asunder her heart, he bound her and annihilated her life. Casting down her corpse, he stood upon it, and the gods her helpers, seeing that her end had come, turned and fled. The capture of those helpers followed, and they were cast into the net and sat down in the snare. The eleven monsters created by Tiawath were overthrown and trampled on, and Kingu, her husband, was bound and counted with Ugga, the god of Death. The Fate-Tablets, which were not rightfully his, Merodach took from him, and pressing his seal upon them, took them to his breast. After this he strengthened his hold upon the gods whom he had captured and then, returning to Tiawath, trampled upon her,

and split her skull with his unsparing sickle. After he had cut asunder the arteries of her blood, the north wind carried it away to secret places. The gods his fathers, seeing this, shouted for joy, and brought him gifts and presents. The splitting of the body of the monster, like a shell-fish, into two parts to form the waters above and below the firmament—above and below “the welkin”—is here described at length. The fourth tablet then ends with a description of the abodes which he made for the gods—for Nudimmud, on the face of the Deep, and as a counterpart of the Apsū below, a great abode called Ê-šarra—described as the heavens—wherein he founded strongholds for Anu, Enlil, and Êa.

The colophon states that the text consists of 146 lines written according to a text which was damaged. If this rendering be correct, the scribe Nabû-bêl-šu son of Na'id-Maruduk, who wrote it, must have been very successful in his restorations. The scribe's grandfather or remoter ancestor was a smith. The scribe himself copied the legend for the saving of his soul and the life of his family (literally “his house”), and placed it in Ê-zida—possibly the temple of Nebo in Aššur.

How great is the difference between the Babylonian anthropomorphic Merodach and his equally manlike fathers or companions and the great and noble uncreated and unbegotten God of the Hebrews! That the chief of the Babylonian pantheon should fear, and flinch at the sight of any monster, however terrible in appearance, strikes our Western minds as being in the highest degree incongruous. Naturally, this legend is a key to the Babylonian character as a nation—they, too, would have flinched at the sight of anything uncanny, and the least terrible of the mythical beings described would have put them to flight.

Noteworthy, however, is the fact that this remarkable Babylonian Legend of the Creation makes Merodach to have been begotten, and not the uncreated first cause. The apparently uncreated first cause was the twofold principle which, as Damascius points out, was characteristic of Babylonian religious belief. Apsū and Tiawath were the great producers of all things, and, by evolution, the result was the gods—the creators of man.

The fifth tablet continues the description of Merodach's creative acts. First came the stations for the great gods in the likeness of stars, and those stars were the *Lumasi* or planets—indeed, the Babylonian belief in that identification of the planets with the gods is recorded in the names by which we

designate them, as well as in our Teutonic names of the days of the week. This, however, is a subject which would need a paper all to itself. In arranging the Signs of the Zodiac the god was regarded by the Babylonians as having set three stars (constellations) for each month, in accordance with what we find inscribed on the Assyrian so-called planispheres—I published a fairly complete list of these, from a tablet not arranged in planisphere form, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1900, Part iii (July), pp. 573-5. This portion of the Legend of the Creation corresponds with the Hebrew account, in which God is said to have placed the two great lights in the heavens “for signs and for seasons and for days and years.” I doubt, however, whether the Babylonians regarded Merodach as the creator of the heavenly bodies—he seems to have been regarded merely as the god who ordered them by setting them in their appointed places. The details of the god’s directions for the phases of the moon are interesting, and it is here that the word *šapattu*^m occurs—a word which is possibly the original of the Hebrew Sabbath, though many deny this, as the Sumerian *šabat*, from which it is derived, is regarded as meaning “mid-rest” and not “heart-rest,” as it was at first translated. The moon “rested” at the full in the middle of the month. The directions to the moon, given as to a living thing—here probably as the god Nannar, the light-giver—are rather detailed, and in Langdon’s rendering require many words to complete the sense, and the equivalent of about eight pages of footnotes (in smaller type) to explain. It is needless to say that this is a very interesting section of the Legend from an astronomical point of view, and it is greatly to be regretted that after line 22, in which the earth’s satellite is described as being in opposition to the sun a second time, the sense is more than merely obscure owing to mutilation, and shortly afterwards breaks off altogether. Nothing, in fact, has been added to the fragments of the fifth tablet discovered by the late George Smith. The colophon is the usual short one of Aššur-bani-apli (Asshurbanipal), in rendering which Langdon departs somewhat from the usual rendering:—

“Land of Assurbanipal, king of universal dominion, king of Assyria.”

In the lost portion of the fifth tablet many important legendary details were recorded, as the opening lines of the sixth tablet show. Evidently Merodach had completed the more material of

his work of ordering the universe and creating new forms, and the question of the final and crowning work had to be considered. They therefore met in council and decided upon the creation of mankind :—

“ When Merodach heard the words of the gods,
His heart prompts him—he devises clever things.
He opened his mouth, to Êa he s[peaks, and]
What he had conceived in his heart, he gives (as) advice :
‘ Blood will I compose, and bone will I then cause to be :
Verily I will make *lilû* stand (forth), and let *awêlu* (man) be
his name.

Verily I will create then *lilû*, man.

The services of the gods will then be instituted, and they shall then be appeased.

I will change then the ways of the gods—I will skilfully contrive (them).

Together* let them be honoured, and as two† (orders) let them divide.’

Êa then answered him, speaking to him a word :

For the appeasement of the gods he imparts to him a plan.

‘ Let now one of their companions be given—

Let him perish, and let men be created.

Let then the great gods assemble,

Let my punishment be imposed, and let the gods insist.’

Merodach assembled then the great gods,

Kindly he arranges (them), giving instruction.

Opening his mouth, he charges the gods—

The king speaks the word to the Anunnaki :

‘ Verily then (is) true the first (thing that) we announced to you.

The truths I announce (were) oaths with me.

{W}ho now was it who made the conflict ?

Caused Tiawath to rebel and joined battle ?

Let him be given who make the conflict—

I will verily cause him to bear his guilt—rest ye in peace.’

The Igigi, the great gods, then answered him :

Unto Lugal-dimmer-an-kia, the counsellor of the gods, their lord :

‘ Kingu it was who made the conflict,

Caused Tiawath to rebel and joined battle.’

* *Iš!eniš.*

† *Ana šina.*

They bound him, before Êa they brought him—
They imposed upon him the sin, and severed (the arteries of)
his blood.

With his blood he made mankind (*awêlûtu*)
In the service* of the gods, and he set the gods free.
After that he had created mankind, Êa then
Imposed the service of the gods upon him.
That work was beyond understanding.
By the skill of Merodach [and the wisdom] of Nudimmud,
Merodach, king of the gods, divided
The Anunnaki [and the Igigi] above and below.”

Here the text becomes imperfect, and the sense of the narrative is difficult to determine. Anu was told to watch or guard something,† and (Merodach) ordered the ways of the earth and “issued” the laws concerning it. Merodach then seems to have consulted the Anunnaki of the heavens and of the earth, who, addressing him as Nannar, “the light-giver”—the name often given to the Moon-god—proposed the founding of a shrine which was to be called “The Shrine of our repose,” wherein they could all rest. There, too, apparently, they offered to found an abode for Merodach their king. When he heard this proposal his countenance grew as bright as the day, and he said:—

“ ‘ Like th[at] shall be Babylon (𒂗𒍪 𒂗𒍪 𒂗𒍪 𒂗𒍪),
Bâb-îlāni†), whose construction ye have desired—
Let a city be built, let an enclosed shrine be constructed.’
The Anunnaki seized (?) the spade :
(For) one year [they made] its bricks,
When the second year arrived,
They raised the summit of Ê-sagila (as) the counterpart of
the Apsū.§
They then built the lofty stage-tower of the Apsū.||

* Or “for the worship.” † “The Ordinances” (?).

‡ A small mutilated tablet from Kougunjik, unnumbered when I made a note of it many years ago, has the writing 𒂗𒍪 𒂗𒍪 𒂗𒍪 𒂗𒍪, probably *Bîb-ilan*, “the Gate of the Two Gods”—but which two?

§ Rendered by Professor Langdon “the nether sea.” The divine chamber in that sea is probably intended, wherein Laḥma and Laḥama begat Aššur-Merodach.

|| 𒂗𒍪 𒂗𒍪 𒂗𒍪 𒂗𒍪, Ê-temen-an-kiā, “the Temple of the Foundation of Heaven and Earth.”

For Merodach, Enlil, Êa,* they founded his temple as his abode.

In magnificence they caused it to rise up before them—

From the base of Ê-sagila do they behold its horns.

After they had done the work of Ê-sagila,

The Anunnaki elaborated for themselves their shirines.

They all assembled at Ê-sagila, the basin of the Apsû.

In the sublime shrine which they had built (as) his abode.”

From this it would seem that the gods in their assembly had (in Tablet V) proposed and discussed the building of Babylon, and there, too, they decided, as stated here, to build the great temple-tower which the gods had decided to erect upon what Langdon calls “the bowl of the Nether sea.” Explanation of the details given here must for the present remain conjectural, but it is to be noted that, in later times, the land of Babylonia seems not to have been called Akkad, but Êridu—the name of the Paradise-city on the Persian Gulf, at the head of which the Apsû was supposed to lie, apparently beneath the waters. It is possible that the Gulf extended, in still more ancient times, yet farther inland; and, if so, were the Babylonians (or Akkadians) aware of the fact? Perhaps—time alone will show; but it is to be noted that Professor Warren, who wrote a book locating Paradise at the North Pole, because that was the coolest and therefore the first tract where men could have lived before the globe was sufficiently cool, imagined Ê-sagila as a great temple-tower in stages poised upon its inverted counterpart in the Abyss, as though always accompanied by its own reflection. And why were the gods imagined as looking up at the “horns” of the *zikkurat* from its base (*šuršiš*)?

But to leave the domain of suggestion and conjecture, we may, perhaps, here compare the description of the building of the Tower of Babel as told in Gen. xi. There, clearly, it is not the gods who build Babylon and its tower, but men. Both the men and the gods, however, make bricks for the purpose. In both cases the tower was to be a very high one—*ša Ê-sag-ila mihrît apsî ullâ rêša-šu*, “of Ê-sag-ila, the counterpart of the Apsû (below), they raised its head.” The Babylonian gods, however, did not need to make for themselves a name, lest they should be

* Apparently the three deities united in one, hence the singular possessive pronoun.

scattered abroad on the face of the earth. Moreover, for the Babylonians, Babylon was founded before the creation of man, and a confusion of tongues was naturally impossible. Finally, both city and tower were built in accordance with the wishes of the gods and their king, and not out of pride by mere men, thus incurring the Creator's displeasure.

And now, at last, we see the reason of the composition of the great Babylonian story of the Creation—it was to bring before the people of the land the romance of the foundation of their city, and especially its divine origin. For them, it was not Babila^m, the possible Akkadian form of Babel, "Confusion"—it was Bâb-îli, "the Gate of the Gods"—the place of their entrance into the land—it was Tindir, "the Life-seat"; Šu-anna, "the hand of Anu," the god of the heavens, unless we accept Fried. Delitzsch's rendering of the word—"the (city of the) high defences," referring to its lofty walls; and it was Êri-du when they thought of it as the prototype of the other smaller Êri-du at the head of the Persian Gulf in those early days of the Babylonian empire, but now far inland. To-day it is known as Abu-shahreïn.

The gods' work upon the building of Babylon and its shrines having been finished, their king addressed them, telling them that that was their dwelling-place, and bidding them to make merry with music therein. This they did, feasting and holding high festival with music. Then they made decrees and designs for the future, and the stations of the great gods of the heavens and the earth were fixed. A display of the weapons used in the fight with Tiawath followed, and Anu, the god of the heavens, taking up the skilfully-constructed bow (used by Merodach), kissed it and recited its names. This bow then, set in the heavens, became one of the constellations. The gods in the end praise Merodach, glorify his heroic deeds, and recite his names:—

"Asari-lu-duga is his name, which his father called him.

Verily he is the light of the gods, the mighty hero,

Who like a consoling and protecting genius giveth life to the land."

Asari-lu-duga is one of Merodach's most famous names, and has been compared—probably rightly—with the Osiris Unnofer of the Egyptians. Under this title he is described in the "Great List of Gods" (*Cuneiform Texts*, Part xxiv, pl. 42, line 98) as *Maruduk*

ša šipti, which Langdon translates as “Marduk of judgment,” which is probably false. Asari-lu-duga, “Asari the good man,” or “being,” however, is probably not a bad reproduction of the Wasiri un-nofer of the Egyptians, who was a judge of the dead. Asari and Osiris are both written with the corresponding characters in the respective scripts.* In other respects there is also a likeness between the Babylonian Asari and the Egyptian Osiris. Other names of Merodach given in this part of the legend are Namtilaku, “life,” from the Sumerian *Namtila*, so named because he restored certain dead gods to life—possibly “the gods who were his enemies.” As a sun-god, like Osiris, he was called Namru, “the bright one,” because he was the gods’ “brilliant god who illuminateth our way.” At the conclusion of this recitation, gifts or “portions” were assigned to the gods in Ub-šu-ukkinaka, the place of the fates, and there all the gods again recited and commented on his names. The colophon states that this is the sixth tablet of *énúma éliš*, but there is no owner’s name. Another copy of the text, however, belonged to a certain Nabû-balaṭ-su-iqbi.

The seventh tablet, the text of which, according to the catch-line, immediately followed on, is regarded as not having originally belonged to the series. Whilst admitting the possibility of this, I prefer to keep “an open mind” upon that point. One thing, however, is certain, and that is, that there existed in Assyria, and therefore in Babylonia as well, a dialectic Sumerian glossary of all the words which it contained, thus testifying to the esteem in which it was held. No such glossary seems to have been compiled for the first six tablets, but negative evidence is not always trustworthy.

This interesting final section seems to consist of rough explanations or paraphrases of Merodach’s names, in which the reasons for applying them to him are given. The following are the opening lines:—

“Asari, bestower of husbandry, who has fixed the boundaries
(of the fields).

Creator of grain and vegetation, causing grass to grow.

* I have given the Assyrian form in my paper, “The Religious Ideas of the Babylonians,” p. 2 (paper read April 26th, 1894), in the *Journal* of this Institute. The identification of Asari with Osiris was proposed by Professor Hommel (*ibid.*). For “*Šilig*,” read “*Asari*.”

Asari-alim, who is honoured in the house of counsel—excellent
in counsel.

The gods attended (him when) by sorrow they were seized.
Asari-alim-nunna, intercessor, light of the father his begetter,
Director of the ordinances of Anu, Enlil, and Êa.

He then is their guardian, determining their abodes ;
From whose storehouse abundance goeth forth for all.

Tutu, maker of their renewal [is he].

May he purify their tabernacles and may they be content.

Let him create the incantation, and let the gods be at rest.

Angrily did they then advance, did they turn back their
breasts.

Verily he was then lifted up in the assembly of the gods—
Not anyone among the gods compares himself with him.”

This is the tenor of the seventh tablet of the Creation-series all the way through. Every epithet and explanation is worthy of analysis, but the space for this is lacking, and a perusal of it, if written, would certainly exhaust the patience of readers. The reason of the creation of man by the gods Merodach, Êa (and Merodach's spouse Zêr-panith), however, is certainly worth noticing, notwithstanding that it has often been referred to already :—

“Tutu is Aga-azaga, in the fourth (place)—may all things
glorify him—

The lord of the holy incantation giving life to the dead.

He who had mercy on the gods who were captive,

The yoke imposed he caused to be removed from the gods his
enemies,

For their redeeming he created mankind.”

There has been much discussion as to what this last phrase can really mean. My old translation was “to redeem them he created mankind.” I had no idea, however, as to how this was to be brought about. Jensen queries the statement by inserting the word “Eschatology ?” Perhaps the Babylonians did not know themselves. We may hazard the explanation, however, that there was an idea that the gods who aided Tiawath were alone in consideration. Mankind was created to worship the gods of heaven—to praise and give them thanks for their own existence, as well as for the means of sustaining and enjoying life, and it may have been felt that by this adoration of the gods of

heaven, the followers of Tiawath would in the end benefit—indeed, the miracle-play on the occasion of the New-Year Festival may have contained ceremonies tending to secure the release of the “rebellious gods” from bondage and their restoration to intercourse with their kith and kin on high.

“The merciful one, with whom is the giving of life,
 May his words endure and not be forgotten
 In the mouth of the ‘Dark of Head’ (the Semites) whom
 his hands have made.

He who, in the four regions, created the ‘Dark of Head,’
 Ordained upon him the decree of the ‘Day of the Gods.’”

As we know from the bilingual lists, the “day” of a god or of a king was his festival, and the great festival of the Babylonian gods must have been that at Du-azaga, “the holy abode,” where the miracle-play and its accompanying ceremonies were performed.

As I have already said, there is much to discuss in this seventh and last tablet of the Fight between Bel and the Dragon, but the text is here and there very imperfect, and a further examination of it would be unsatisfactory.

“By fifty announcements the great gods
 His fifty names proclaimed—they made supreme his path.”

The remaining lines, bringing up the total on the seventh tablet to 140 or more, is regarded as the epilogue. They praise Merodach and his work from the human point of view, and wish the great god, his work, words, and counsel, every success.

“The utterance of his mouth no god annuls,
 Should he look favourably, he turns not his neck;
 In his anger no god withstands his wrath.
 Remote is his heart, reserved is his mind,
 Before whom sin and wantonness are hateful.”

The secret of the great Babylonian story of the Creation is revealed. We now know what were the thoughts which troubled them. They wanted to explain how all things came into existence, and they found that explanation in imagining the beginnings of things to have originated in two powers of evil. But whilst there is much that is evil in the world, there is also a great deal that is good, and the good in this life far outweighs, in the pleasure which it brings, the evil. They therefore conceived the evolution

of beings, offspring of the two first causes, ever growing more and more perfect, until—so great was the change from the first creators of the formless and the void—a great conflict took place, in which the old powers were either destroyed or their power curtailed, though much that originated with them still remained in existence, and still had to be resisted. By prayer and supplication could perfection, as they understood it, be acquired, until the faithful follower of his god attained to bliss with him on high.