

## THE INFLUENCE OF BABYLONIAN IDEAS ON JEWISH MESSIANISM.

### I.

THE account which Damascius gives of Babylonian ideas concerning the origin of things is substantially confirmed by the Babylonian Epic of Creation. The Greek writer says that the son of Apsu and Tauthe was Mouis, and conceives this term to mean 'the intelligible universe'. From Apsu and Tauthe the gods also took their origin, until after the lapse of ages 'the son of Apsu and Tauthe was Belos, who, they say, was creator of the world'.

Damascius's *Mouis* corresponds with *Mummu* in the Epic, where he is the son of Apsu and Tiamat the male and female generative principles inherent in chaos. Instead of *Ταυθή* and *Δαυκή*, Damascius probably wrote *Ταμθή* and *Δαμκή*, who would then correspond with Tamtu (= Tiamat) and Damkina, the respective mothers of Mouis and Bel-Marduk.

The interpretation, 'the intelligible universe', which Damascius suggests for the name Mouis, makes this figure the cosmos, or as Professor Langdon translates the word *Mummu* here, 'the Form'.<sup>1</sup> The name Mummu has, however, curious and important associations in the Epic. When the gods revolted from their evil parents, Mummu, son of Apsu, is wholly on the side of Apsu and Tiamat: he shares their wishes for the destruction of the rebellious gods, and counsels Apsu, whose 'messenger' he is, in the plans for their overthrow. But in the strife which follows, Ea defeats Apsu, occupies Apsu's dwelling, and then slays Mummu whose name he takes for his own possession. Thus the cosmos which came into being from chaos now passes into the control of a deity, i. e. the 'Form' of the intelligible universe becomes divinely ordered by a divine power which is good and not evil. The name Mummu, Langdon<sup>2</sup> has derived from the verb *ému* = to speak, which derivation gives it the meaning Logos, and makes it the original of the Greek Logos-conception. But even more so is it the original of the Jewish Logos, as we shall hereafter shew.

In Apsu, the home of Wisdom, Marduk the son of the god and goddess of wisdom is born: he is destined to be the conqueror of Tiamat. The fight between them is described in the Epic. As the reward for his victory Marduk receives an eternal and universal kingdom

<sup>1</sup> *Babylonian Epic of Creation* p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 72, note.

from the assembled gods, is acclaimed by them as their chief, and receives all Ea's honours and titles. Thus Marduk becomes Mummu, the creator of the world, the creative Logos who gives order to the universe and plans the creation of mankind.

We may here remark that Apsu, Tiamat, and Mummu of the opening verses of the Epic, correspond with Ea, Damkina, and Marduk-Mummu of later passages: in both cases Mummu derives from Apsu, the home of wisdom, just as the Logos of late Jewish thought is made the offspring of the Heavenly Wisdom. Thureau-Dangin's suggestion, therefore, that the word Mummu is ultimately derived from a hypothetical Sumerian word *mumma* = wise, finds some support from these facts. But however this may be, the Mummu is in each case represented as a beloved child, a darling son whose counsels are highly esteemed by his sire.

No account of Marduk's birth, such as is given of the birth of the Logos in Revelation xii, has yet been found in Babylonian literature; but that some such story was known in Assyria, and passed from Assyria into Judah, seems to be probable from the evidence which we shall bring forward. Meanwhile we may observe that by the time of Jeremiah<sup>1</sup> a foreign cult of 'the Queen of Heaven' had been imported into Judah, that this goddess seems to have been Ishtar, since to her Ishtar-cakes were offered, and that at the same time there were Hākamim who prophesied security and peace for Judah and accordingly met with severe rebuke from Jeremiah. We recall also the theory that the '*almah* of Isaiah's 'Immanuel' prophecy,<sup>2</sup> the 'she which beareth' of Micah's prediction,<sup>3</sup> may have had her original in a mythological divine mother whose son should bring peace to Judah. It is worth while to follow up the trains of thought suggested by these different, but possibly related facts, in order to reconstruct the background of religious ideas in the minds of the people of Judah from the time of Isaiah onwards.

## II.

'The Queen of Heaven' is in itself a vague title; but in this respect Jeremiah's description is not without a parallel in Assyrian records. The Assyrians called the mother goddess Belit, but as to her identity there was considerable confusion of thought. Jastrow<sup>4</sup> says of her, 'at times Belit appears as the wife of Bel, again as the consort of Ashur, again as the consort of Ea, and again simply as a description of Ishtar'. The Assyrian title is therefore as little determinate as is the Jewish

<sup>1</sup> Jer. vii 18, viii 8, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Micah v 3.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. vii 13 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* p. 226.

title. Confining our attention to the last two of her characters, as the wife of Ea she is Damkina, mother of Marduk, and at the same time she is Ishtar: and though the cult of Ishtar had a libidinous side to it, the goddess herself was regarded as a virgin-mother.<sup>1</sup> In any case, it was this Damkina-Ishtar, the Assyrian goddess of wisdom, who appears to have suggested the imagery which the later Jewish Ḥakamim used to describe the figure of the Heavenly Wisdom, the mother of the Divine Logos. As the patroness of wisdom she may well have been held in respect by the Ḥakamim of Jeremiah's day, while those who gave themselves up to her cult would certainly have accepted the teaching of those who predicted peace for Judah and Jerusalem while Jeremiah prophesied calamity.

But what justification could the people of Judah have pleaded for their adoption of the cult of the Queen of Heaven? Was it merely a spontaneous outbreak of heathenism such as came from contact with heathen neighbours, or was there some deeper reason in the mind of the Jewish people? Was there anything in the oracles of earlier prophets than Jeremiah which could warrant the belief of the Ḥakamim that peace should come to Judah, and not disaster? To find answers to these questions we turn to the predictions of Isaiah and Micah.

Much thought<sup>2</sup> has been given to Isaiah's term descriptive of Immanuel's mother—'the *'almah'*'—and to the person thus denoted. The Septuagint unequivocally translates it by ἡ παρθένος, and S. Matthew's quotation of the Septuagint has established the traditional Christian rendering, 'the virgin'. On the other hand, Aquila translated it by ἡ νεάνις, an indefinite word like 'the *'almah'*'. Jewish commentators refuse to accept the translation 'the virgin', and try to find some wife—either the king's, or the prophet's—as the figure indicated. Modern scholars are divided in opinion, some translating by 'the damsel', others thinking Isaiah meant the term to be used in a collective sense, 'young mothers in Israel', and others again accepting the hypothesis that Isaiah meant to indicate a virgin-mother. It should be observed, however, that the late Jewish belief that the mother of the Divine Logos, the Heavenly Wisdom, was a virgin undefiled,<sup>3</sup> supports the Septuagint translation of 'the *'almah'*' by ἡ παρθένος.

It is undoubtedly true that Isaiah might have used a more definite word than *'almah'* to indicate a virgin-mother, if such had been his intention (e.g. *Bethulah*). But not to traverse a path already well worn by scholars, we wish to call attention to the Sumerian word

<sup>1</sup> Langdon *Tammuz and Ishtar* ch. 2.

<sup>2</sup> For a summary of opinions see Buchanan Gray *Isaiah i-xxvi* (I.C.C.), *in loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Wisdom* vii 24 ff.

'*mugig*' which always refers to a 'goddess-mother', and never to women, and is significant of virginity, as Langdon<sup>1</sup> has shewn. In Semitic the word *mugig* is rendered by '*ishtaritu*' which, except when applied to the mother-goddess, is as indeterminate of virginity as is the Hebrew word '*almah*'. We suggest, therefore, that '*almah*' was a literal translation of *ishtaritu*, that Isaiah used it in the sense of 'virgin', that he indicated by it a mother corresponding with the Babylonian goddess of wisdom—the Queen of Heaven' imported into Jewry from Assyria, Damkina-Ishtar the Belit of the Assyrians—the original of the Heavenly Wisdom, the mother of the Logos. Beyond calling her 'the *almah*', the virgin, he says nothing of her, because he knew no such divine womanly figure in Yahwism. For him, the fulfilment would justify the prediction!

The theory here advanced finds further support from Micah's prediction of the Peace-bringer whose mother is denoted as 'she which beareth'. Micah uses the feminine participle of the verb יָלַד = to bear, viz. יֹלֶדֶת, which is again a literal translation of the feminine participle, *alīdat*, of the Babylonian verb *alādu* = to bear, bring forth. This is a title of Ishtar, as is shewn by Langdon,<sup>2</sup> who instances the name given to her by Herodotus when describing Babylonian religious beliefs, viz. *Myliitta*. Both the Babylonian and the Hebrew terms therefore indicate the mother-goddess 'she who beareth', whom we have called Damkina-Ishtar, the mythological divine mother of the Messianic Peace-bringer.

We conclude, therefore, that both Isaiah and Micah knew this mother-goddess full well, as did their contemporaries also. It would have been pointless to describe the mother in terms which were literal translations of titles for this goddess of wisdom unless those who read the predictions were familiar with her figure, and knew the terms under which she was described. It seems probable that both prophets made use of terms which had become current in Judah, and that their contemporaries were wont so to describe the Assyrian goddess of wisdom whom they knew as 'the Queen of Heaven'. In any case we find in these predictions the mother whom the later Jewish Ḥakamim identified with the Divine Wisdom—Damkina-Ishtar, the virgin-mother undefiled.

The Hebrew prophets gave her no name: they could not style her Belit, because that would have been to make a heathen goddess the mother of Immanuel, the Peace-bringer. There is no evidence to shew that the Assyrians held any expectation of the birth of such a Divine being as Immanuel. The Babylonian myth taught that Damkina had brought forth Marduk-Mummu in the beginning, whereas both Isaiah and Micah said that the child was yet to be born. It may be that the

<sup>1</sup> *Tammuz and Ishtar* p. 81, note.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73 ff

myth suggested the Messianic Hope to these two prophets, who saw no hope of a deliverer from the family of David, and that they transformed the myth to make it indicative of what was yet to be. The promises of Yahweh had yet to be fulfilled, and the glowing pictures of the Messianic Age which Jewish eschatologists fashioned were based upon the belief that the conditions of Paradise would be restored in the coming time of bliss. It was but natural therefore that the myth which told of the birth of the Divine Son of a Divine Mother should find its place in the Messianic expectation as part of the whole faith and hope which Israel placed in the faithful promises of its God.

If then Jeremiah's contemporaries sought for any justification for their teaching in earlier prophetic oracles they could have pointed to these two predictions of Isaiah and Micah which contained references to the mother-goddess, the Queen of Heaven, who should bring forth the Messianic child, the Peace-giver to the coming age. So far those predictions remained unfulfilled; but they afforded a basis for the hope that no calamity should befall Judah, and that very soon the Deliverer should be born. Moreover, since everyone knew the mother-goddess thus indicated, as the goddess of wisdom, we can understand why the Jewish teachers fostered the pursuit of wisdom—probably the Babylonian wisdom-literature—and so drew upon themselves Jeremiah's rebukes. Here also are to be sought the beginnings of that development which eventually produced the 'wisdom-literature' of later Jewry with its striking personification of the Divine Wisdom, the mother of the Logos.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

The author of the great Messianic prophecy in Isaiah ix, though referring to the coming Messiah as a 'child' and a 'son', does not allude to the mother. His answer to those who asked concerning the mother was, 'The zeal of Yahweh of the hosts shall perform this'.

The prophecy appears to be post-exilic in date of composition. If so, the Jews had learnt many things concerning Yahweh and Yahwism during the Exile. The cult of the Queen of Heaven, for example, was abandoned when it was seen that Jeremiah's condemnation of it was justified by events. The peacemongers had also proved to be bad counsellors: the Exile had falsified their predictions. When the exiles returned to Judah they set themselves the task of rebuilding Jerusalem, while their leaders in course of time began the purgation which established Yahwism as the only religion for the new community.

There were those among them who could not forget the Messianic

<sup>1</sup> J. T. S. Oct. 1924, *The Heavenly Wisdom and the Divine Logos*.

Hope which had been given by Isaiah and Micah. That obstinate faith which has ever been characteristic of Judaism found expression in the prophecy of the 'Prince of the Four Names' (Isa. ix 1-7), a prediction of a glorious ruler yet to come to restore the fortunes of the impoverished nation and to usher in the age of blessings. This prophecy makes use of Babylonian material, as we shall shew, though it suppresses all reference to the mythological mother of the Messiah. As Marduk had been an adumbration of Immanuel and the Peace-giver, so we shall look for the influence of the Marduk-idea upon this later Messianic prediction.

The four names of the Messiah are given as 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace'. These names are very difficult to interpret if they were intended to describe a merely human king; consequently various suggestions have been made for emending the text. The Septuagint paraphrase of the four names is, however, of the greatest importance, for it indicates the Messianic figure which the names denote as 'the Angel of Great Counsel'. Three of the four names have parallels in Babylonian belief concerning Marduk, while the title 'Prince of Peace' at once suggests Micah's earlier prediction of the Messianic Peace-giver. We suggest therefore that the prophecy indicates a Divine Messiah, and that the application to him of Babylonian Marduk-titles serves to connect him with Isaiah's Immanuel, the son of the heavenly mother.

*Wonderful* means past human comprehension, and is applied to the name of the Angel of Yahweh in Judges xiii 18: 'Thou canst not know my name, for it is wonderful'. *Counsellor* is a regular title for Marduk in Babylonian literature. In the Epic of Creation he is called 'the counsellor of the gods'.<sup>1</sup> To Marduk's counsel is ascribed the plan for the overthrow of Tiamat; and the creation of man from the blood of a slain god follows upon his advice. Therefore Marduk's title—modified slightly in meaning—is applied to the Divine figure of the Messiah, Marduk's representative to Jewish thought, the Angel of Yahweh in the Messianic office.

*Mighty God* is a description of Yahweh Himself in Isa. x 21: it is therefore a fitting description of the Angel of Yahweh, since this Angel is Yahweh in manifestation, the Angel of His Presence (Isa. lxiii 9). The Hebrew *El Gibbor* may be translated as 'Divine Hero', or 'Hero God'. But Marduk in the Babylonian Epic is pictured exactly as such a hero,<sup>2</sup> for he undertakes the combat with Tiamat when other deities

<sup>1</sup> *Abkal Ilani*, 'the counsellor of the gods', is a common title in Babylonian literature for Marduk. See the *Epic*, Langdon, pp. 122, 138, lines 113, 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Epic*. p. 137, line 70.

had fled in fear from the monster, and the whole company of the gods had become downcast with terror. The fact that the Angel of Yahweh had led Israel from Sinai to Canaan,<sup>1</sup> and had appeared to Joshua as the 'Captain of Yahweh's hosts',<sup>2</sup> and was well-known as the battle-leader of Israel's warriors,<sup>3</sup> was sufficient justification to apply to him the Marduk-title, since he was to be the fulfiller of all that the myth had spoken concerning the great god of Babylon.

*Everlasting Father* aptly describes Yahweh Himself, and is therefore fittingly applied to His Angel. In Babylonian thought Ea was the father of the gods; but as Ea bestowed his name and titles upon Marduk for the victory won over Tiamat, the latter might also be fittingly called the father of the gods. Hence this title for the Messianic Angel of Jewry had its origin and its counterpart in Babylonianism.

The title *Prince of Peace* seems to have no direct parallel in Babylonian thought; but it recalls the prophecies of Isaiah and Micah in which the Messiah is to be the giver of peace. Hence it serves to link together these three prophecies, and to make them mutually interpretative of the Messianic Angel of Yahweh, the fulfiller of the mythological adumbration. Concerning this Angel Yahweh had declared 'My Name is in Him',<sup>4</sup> that is, he was the manifestation of Yahweh to men. Therefore it was that Isaiah could call him Immanuel, God is with us, when he should come as King in the Messianic Kingdom. The author of the prophecy of the 'Prince of the Four Names' could also say of him that he would reign over the Kingdom upon the throne of David, exercising the sovereignty of Yahweh to give His people the promised blessings.

When we put together the whole of the three foregoing predictions of the Messianic child we are met by certain difficulties. Though Isaiah and Micah foretell the birth of one who is to be born of a goddess, and give no indication of his father—the implication being that Yahweh will be his Father and that he will be the Messianic Angel, the 'son' of God—yet they predicate of him certain human activities—he is to come from Bethlehem, the place of birth of David, he will learn to know good from evil, he will eat butter and honey, and in time will sit upon David's throne. Though Divine, he will yet be veritably human. How are we to reconcile these two different conceptions?

In Early Sumerian belief the kings of Ur and Isin<sup>5</sup> were regarded as divine men, and each of them was expected to usher in a golden age. Hebrew belief had said of David that 'the Spirit of Yahweh came upon

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxxii 34.

<sup>2</sup> Joshua v 13 f.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xxxv 5.

<sup>4</sup> Exod. xxiii 20.

<sup>5</sup> Langdon *Sumerian Liturgical Texts*, Introduction, with references there made, and p. 141, line 7.

him'<sup>1</sup> and that he was 'as the Angel of God'.<sup>2</sup> It would appear therefore that the Divinity of kings, possibly in a modified form, was an article of faith in Yahwism, and that the ancient Sumerian belief was preserved in Caanan in connexion with each of the descendants of David. But as in ancient Babylon, so in Palestine, the actual course of history falsified expectation, and the prophets projected their hopes onwards to a future day when one should be born who would not fail them. They regarded the early Babylonian mythology as anticipative of a Divine fact yet to be accomplished. Their Messiah, though possessing humanity, should be in person and work the Angel of Yahweh who had ever been Israel's God. To them his inherent Deity would be his qualification for the Messianic office: he would be God made manifest to men in a real humanity. The mystery was that he should become man, since 'his origin was in ancient times, in the days of beginnings did he arise'. The myth spoke of Damkina: they told of 'the 'almah', 'she which beareth' because the myth contained this figure, until with greater restraint the third prophet said 'the zeal of Yahweh of the hosts shall perform this'.

Thus did the idea of the Messiah's Person develop in prophetic thought, which insisted upon the real Deity and the real, though mysterious, Humanity of the Messiah. Nor could apocalyptic wholly extrude the Humanity from the Messianic figure of its visions: it still retained the *form* of man for the Messianic Angel whom it called 'the Son of Man'. But though this Messianic title was the gift of apocalyptic to the Messianic Hope, and though the title is that chiefly used in the Gospels by Christ to describe His Person and Mission, He filled it with the prophetic Messianic content, and His followers taught, in accordance with prophecy and His own revelation, that He was the Eternal Word who 'became flesh and tabernacled among us'.

We pass on to consider the apocalyptic visions of the Messiah foretold by the prophets.

#### IV.

As the Marduk-material of Babylonian mythology was so largely employed by the Hebrew prophets in their Messianic predictions, it is worth while to consider whether the 'one like unto a son of man' of Daniel vii—in which chapter Marduk-material is employed to set forth an apocalyptic vision—ought to be likewise interpreted as the Messianic Angel. The traditional Christian interpretation makes this figure Messianic, as also did the Jewish authors of the 'Similitudes' of 1 Enoch and of 4 Ezra (2 Esdras). There is thus a long line of testimony to this

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. xvi 13.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. xiv 17, 20; xix 27.



Messianic interpretation. Modern scholars, however, basing their arguments upon verses 18, 23, and 27, think that 'Daniel' intended to indicate 'the people of the saints of the Most High', the Chasidim who should form the final Kingdom, and not the Messiah.

Now in verse 17 Daniel interprets the 'four beasts' as 'four kings': but in verse 23 he re-interprets the 'fourth beast' as a 'kingdom'. He is thus inconsistent. Whence then arises his inconsistency? Why did he change the significance of the fourth beast from 'king' to 'kingdom'?

It seems to be due to the fact that he elaborated the vision of the fourth beast by 'the little horn' which he gave to it. If we omit verses 8 and 11a we have a simple vision of four beasts, and then of the 'one like unto a son of man'. Adopting the interpretation of the four beasts as 'kings', it follows that the human figure also represents a king; and if the beasts represent human kings, the human figure must represent a Divine King, i.e. the Messianic Angel.

But if 'the little horn' is intrusive here, as we suggest, whence came it? The very same image is found in chapter viii, where it most appropriately belongs to the he-goat of the vision and signifies Antiochus Epiphanes. We suggest therefore that it was brought over into chapter vii from chapter viii in order to elaborate the figure of the fourth beast; and further, that this was done *after the first edition of the Book of Daniel was issued to the circles for whom it was written.*

The arguments in support of this contention are as follows. The editor of the 'Similitudes' knew the title 'Son of Man' as a designation of the Messiah. His knowledge was acquired either from the apocalyptic circles where the title was well known, or from the documentary 'sources' from which he compiled his work, or from both these. But among the 'sources' was a 'Son of Man source' based upon this very vision in Daniel vii. It is highly improbable that the 'source' would have changed the interpretation of the Danielic figure from kingdom to king: it is probable rather that its author knew the significance of the figure to be Messianic, because the edition of Daniel which he used interpreted the four beasts as 'kings', and the human figure as the Messianic King.

Moreover, the interpretation of the vision in *vv.* 15-28 reads strangely: thus who is the 'one of them that stood by'? The phrase is very artificial; it has no parallel in other apocalypses, and is difficult to explain from the context. Possibly it means 'an angel'; but elsewhere Gabriel interprets the visions, and his appearance to the seer is terrifying. This is not the case here.

Again, the present Book of Daniel is the only document making use of the Marduk-material which interprets this material to describe the Messianic 'Kingdom', and not the Messianic 'King', even as it is

the only extant Jewish apocalypse which interprets the figure of the 'one like unto a son of man' with only a secondary application to the Messiah. Yet the author must have been familiar with the work of his predecessors, the Hebrew prophets, and must have known that they had sanctioned the use of Marduk-imagery to denote the Messiah by their employment of it in their Messianic predictions: that was undoubtedly his warrant for making use of it in his vision. Then where was his warrant for interpreting it in a non-Messianic sense?

Moreover, this work is the earliest of extant Jewish apocalypses to use the description, 'one like unto a son of man', of this figure; and this description recalls the Ezekiel phrase describing 'the Glory of the Lord', 'a similitude as the likeness of a man' (i 26), the manifestation of Yahweh, i. e. His Angel. It is the apocalypse which suggested the Messianic title 'Son of Man' to the author of the Enoch 'source', to the writer of the 'Similitudes', to the author of 4 Ezra (2 Esdras), and to John in Revelation i 13—not to speak of Christ's employment of it, or S. Stephen's use of it. If 'Daniel' did not suggest the title, it is difficult to understand the Messianic interpretation of the figure by his successors in the apocalyptic schools; and still more difficult is it to explain why none of them gave it the meaning of 'the kingdom', and not 'the king'.

It is possible, of course, that the symbolism of 'the little horn' should have been incorporated in chapter vii by 'Daniel' himself in a first or second edition of his work. If so, is it quite certain that he wished to deprive the figure of the 'one like unto a son of man' of Messianic significance? If the 'fourth beast', plus 'the little horn', represents the Kingdom of Syria plus its king (Antiochus), then the other beasts are also to be interpreted as 'kingdoms' plus their kings, and the human figure symbolizes the Messianic Kingdom plus its King, the Messiah. The conflated text, while obscuring the Messiah, does not necessarily exclude him from his kingdom.

There are other considerations which warrant the Messianic interpretation of the Danielic figure, but since these are not directly connected with the theme of this study, and would involve a discussion of the identity of the great angel of chapters x and xii, we must refrain from pursuing the subject. The influence of Babylonian Marduk-ideas upon the vision in chapter vii supports the contention that this figure described as 'one like unto a son of man' represented the Messiah; for the same influence is found in the predictions of the prophets, and in the visions of subsequent apocalypticists; and in every case the Messianic Angel of Yahweh is the figure indicated.

## V.

We now turn to the greatest figure in all Old Testament prophetic literature, the Suffering Servant of Yahweh, who is described in the four Songs of the Suffering Servant—especially in the fourth (Isa. lii 13–liiii)—and (probably) also in Zech. xii 9–14.

The history of the interpretation of the fourth of the Songs is interesting. Judaism on the whole rejected its Messianic significance, though here and there a Jewish commentator affirmed that parts of the song at least were Messianic.<sup>1</sup> Christian tradition affirmed the Messianic import of this song until recent times, when commentators began to make the Suffering Servant a symbol of the righteous part of the nation, giving the figure a collective significance. On the whole the trend of modern scholarship is in the direction of making the Servant Messianic only in a secondary sense: Edghill,<sup>2</sup> for example, thinks that the prophet 'intends to describe the ideal Israel, Israel such as God meant it to be', but agrees that the failure of Israel to attain the ideal was more than compensated by Christ's perfect fulfilment of the prophet's hopes.

But let us begin with an examination of the phrase 'the Arm of Yahweh' in liiii 1. The prophet is astounded and sadly disappointed that little credence is given to his 'report'; for 'the Arm of Yahweh' has been revealed to him. The term is a remarkable one, but it is found elsewhere in Deutero-Isaiah, e. g. in l 9, lii 10. By comparing the passages, and assimilating them with passages of similar meaning in Exod. xxiii 10, xxxiii 14, and Isa. lxiii 9 (which combines the Exodus passages), we are forced to the conclusion that 'the Arm' or 'the Hand' of Yahweh is indicative of the figure of 'the Angel of His Presence' who ever saved Israel in its distresses, and would be king in the final kingdom. There would be no point in the prophet's employment of this term unless it indicated the 'he' of verse 2, who is also 'the righteous servant' of verse 11. Therefore 'the Arm of Yahweh', the Messianic Angel, would appear to be the Suffering Servant of this fourth Song.

This interpretation is supported by a Babylonian phrase of similar meaning. The divine mother, whom we have identified with Damkina-Ishtar, was known as Innini, the lady of heaven. It was recognized that as she had assimilated Ishtar's characteristics she had lost thereby her pristine purity, and to eradicate the taint she was regarded as having under her protection 'a demon of lust', a beautiful harlot—a vision-image therefore of the immoral Ishtar—to whom was given the

<sup>1</sup> See the collection of Jewish comments by Driver.

<sup>2</sup> *Evidential Value of Prophecy* p. 318. See also Buchanan Gray in Hastings' *One Volume Dictionary of the Bible*, and arts. in *H. D. B.* and *Enc. Bib.*

title 'the Hand of Innini'.<sup>1</sup> This vision-image was 'the Angel of Ishtar', her manifestation to men.

Here we have an exact parallel to the idea conveyed by the phrase 'the Arm of Yahweh', for the figure thus indicated is the Angel of Yahweh, Yahweh's self-manifestation to the prophets. We feel bound to conclude that Babylonian phraseology influenced the Hebrew terminology, and that the Arm of Yahweh in the Isaianic passages means the Angel of His Presence whom the author of the Songs, like his predecessors, expected as the future Messiah.

But the Songs differ from all earlier Messianic predictions in making the Messianic Angel a sufferer on his people's behalf. Did the prophet suddenly conceive this idea as an entirely new revelation of Yahweh's purpose, or was there anything in preceding thought which helped him to form the idea of a Suffering Messiah?

Langdon<sup>2</sup> has given a 'commentary' upon a Marduk-liturgy which is important for consideration of this problem. This commentary shews that Marduk came to be identified with the much older god Tammuz, the spirit of the sprouting grain, the budding vine, and young life, who died in autumn to rise again in spring—a god of gentleness, a sufferer, who was pictured as a child or youth sharing mankind's mortality, the son of the ancient earth-goddess, who was afterwards known as Innini to the Babylonians, Belit to the Assyrians, and 'the Queen of Heaven' to the Jews. The death of Marduk-Tammuz was accompanied by 'the wailings of Tammuz', the lamentation of the people for his departure to the other world.

In the Semitic cult of Tammuz, the king of a city often played the part of the dying god, and actually suffered death at the hands of his people to insure their future well-being.<sup>3</sup> This fact of early Babylonian history passed into the later Marduk-Tammuz liturgy to be re-enacted as drama, one interesting feature of which is that a malefactor was smitten and slain by the people and his head was fastened upon the door of the temple of Beltis, Marduk's consort.<sup>4</sup> Possibly the death of the malefactor was substituted for the death of the early king. The author of the fourth Song seems to have been aware of this: in any case his Messianic King is to suffer the malefactor's fate,<sup>5</sup> and to be made a sacrifice for his people. Being the Angel of Yahweh, to whom the prophets applied the whole Marduk-idea, his sacrificial death will

<sup>1</sup> *Tammuz and Ishtar* p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *Epic* p. 34 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Tammuz and Ishtar* p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Epic* p. 39, lines 20, 21. The Mohammedan festival of 'Muhorram', as celebrated in autumn at Bombay, has a procession in which a votary with bound hands enacts the part, and is beaten and spit upon.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Is. liii 16.

accomplish all that the ritual sacrifices of the Law had failed to do ; it will bring the people to penitence and make them meet to become the Kingdom of God.

The autumn wailings for Tammuz changed to joyous songs when the vernal god returned to earth from the darkness of the grave. In one of these songs the divine mother exclaims :—

‘In heaven there is light, on earth there is light . . .  
Magnified is he, magnified, magnified is the lord’,<sup>1</sup>

a passage which has its parallels in the Servant-Song where Yahweh promises : ‘He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high’ . . . ‘I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong’, after his self-sacrificial death in which he makes his soul a sin-offering : then he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, and he shall prolong his days in the land where he sees ‘light to the full’.<sup>2</sup> Thus will he rise to claim his kingdom of promised bliss and righteousness.

The fact that Tammuz was the young god of spring vegetation may have some bearing upon the prophet’s comparison of the Servant with ‘a tender plant, a root out of a dry ground’ in liii 2. Allied to this is the title ‘the Branch’ found in Jeremiah and Zechariah.

The following occurs in one of the Tammuz liturgies :—

‘For the far-removed there is wailing.  
Ah me, my child the far-removed,  
My Damu, the far-removed,  
My anointed one, the far-removed,  
For the sacred cedar where the mother bore him.’

‘The far-removed’ is the god who is here identified with the sacred cedar. He is also called ‘child’ and ‘anointed one’. The term ‘child’ has a parallel in the Septuagint version which translates the Hebrew פֶּלֶאֱלִי by the Greek παιδίον, and thus reflects the early idea of the god. Langdon questions the translation ‘anointed one’, preferring ‘anointer’; but if the Tammuz idea influenced the composition of the Songs as we suggest, the prophet’s title and description of the Servant in the first song (xlii 1, 2), ‘my Elect One’ upon whom Yahweh has put His Spirit—i. e. has ‘anointed’ him—gives the meaning ‘anointed one’ to the Babylonian text. The title ‘Anointed One’ is found in Isa. lxi 1, and in 1 Enoch lii 4, as a Messianic title, equivalent in the latter work to ‘the Elect One’.

Still more striking is the parallel between the title for Tammuz, ‘the Man of Sorrows’; found in a second Tammuz liturgy,<sup>3</sup> and the

<sup>1</sup> *Tammuz and Ishtar* p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ball’s reconstructed text of verse 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 14.

description of the Servant as 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief' in Isa. liii 3.

On all these grounds we feel that the Tammuz-Marduk idea exercised a very strong and direct influence upon the author of the Songs. The prophet may have come to the conclusion that the Messiah must die for his kingdom from quite other sources; for our part we think he did so. But the Tammuz liturgies of Babylonian fashioning furnished him with the imagery, the literary form in which to clothe his visions and beliefs.

The school of prophecy of which he was a member, that school which predicted the coming of the Messianic Angel and made use of the Marduk-imagery to set forth its Messianic faith, would have found it difficult to refrain from making the Angel the Suffering Servant of Yahweh if it remained true to its tenets that Marduk, the mythological god of Babylon, was really an adumbration of the Angel: for when Marduk had been identified with the gentle, suffering young god Tammuz, it seemed inevitable that some Jewish prophet should sing of the Angel, 'He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street: a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench' . . . 'He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief' . . . 'He was taken from prison and from judgement'.

We conclude that the Babylonian Tammuz-songs influenced the Jewish prophet's description of the Suffering Servant, the Messianic Angel, and that the Songs indicate an individual and not the nation or any part of it. The New Testament writers, following the teaching of Jesus, rightly gave them a direct Messianic significance, and the Christian traditional interpretation of them is justified.

Concerning Zech. xii 9-14, which was quoted by the fourth evangelist as a prediction of the death of Christ, we recall, without now enlarging upon the theme, that the passage was the foundation passage for the later Jewish belief in the suffering Messiah Ben-Joseph. The death of some great person is predicted, a death which will cause lamentation and mourning throughout the land: the Hebrew text says, 'They shall look upon Me (Yahweh) Whom they pierced'; the Septuagint substitutes 'Him' for 'Me'; but if the slain one be the Messianic Angel, the manifestation of Yahweh to His Kingdom, the Hebrew and Greek texts are mutually interpretative.

The lamentation spoken of by the prophet would be excessive if made for a human being merely, for it should be 'as the mourning of Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddon'. Hadad-Rimmon is a god of the Tammuz type, and consequently the mourning is for a Divine person who has been 'pierced', exactly as was the Suffering Servant in

Isa. liii 10<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the death of the slain one brings cleansing to the nation, and there follows the Messianic age of peace and bliss. We conclude, therefore, that the passage is directly predictive of the suffering and death of the Messianic Angel, and that the fourth evangelist's application of the passage to Christ's passion was justified. The prophecy is parallel to the Songs of the Suffering Servant in its prediction of the sacrifice of Christ.

## VI.

We return to the theme of the Heavenly Mother and her divine son, Innini and Tammuz, Damkina-Ishtar and Marduk, the Heavenly Wisdom and the Divine Word. There is evidence to shew that the ancient kings of Babylon were regarded as divine men, each of whom might inaugurate a kingdom of peace and blessing; but the prophets and apocalyptists of Jewry looked for a king yet to come who should do all that the ancient hope had taught Babylon to look for from their human kings, and even more than this for Israel. But the figure of the Jewish Messianic Hope was to be Divine, the participant in Yahweh's sole Deity, the Angel of whom Yahweh had said 'My Name is in him'. To express this Hope the Jewish teachers made full use of the ancient myth; for they were eschatologists, and they believed that the end of the age would witness the creation of a new heaven and a new earth which should repeat the primeval paradisaical conditions of Eden. Therefore to these teachers the Babylonian myths which spoke of the first creation by 'the Word', 'the counsellor of the gods', the son of the goddess of wisdom, was an adumbration of events that must be at the end when the Messianic Angel, the Divine Logos, the Wonderful Counsellor, the Son of the Heavenly Wisdom should be born to put an end to all evil in order that his kingdom might have perfect joy in righteousness and peace for ever.

So is the Logos-doctrine of the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse the summary of the whole Messianic Hope of Babylon and Jewry in application to Jesus Christ, the Christian Messiah; for the Word who 'in the beginning was with God, and was God', was Immanuel and the Peace-giver, the Prince of the Four Names and the Arm of Yahweh, the Elect One and the Son of Man, whom Marduk-Mummu and Tammuz foreshadowed—the Christ of expectation, the Christ of doctrine, and the Christ of life.

Concerning the heavenly mother much more might be told if we traced her descent from the original goddess, the sister-mother-bride of Tammuz; but we would add only that the author of the Christian

<sup>1</sup> Note that the verb דָּבַר is used in both passages.

Apocalypse knew her full well. The glories of the Heavenly Wisdom, mother of the Divine Logos, had been fashioned from the splendour which adorned Damkina, mother of Marduk-Mummu. The Apocalyptic separated Damkina from Ishtar once more, making the latter 'the great harlot, the mother of the harlots'—no virgin-goddess, but the woman clothed in scarlet,<sup>1</sup> the impersonation of lust, the representative goddess of Babylon, as Babylon was representative of Rome. The cup of wine in her hand bespeaks her as the ancient goddess of the vine.

Yet one more womanly figure is seen in the Apocalypse, the New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb, 'our mother' as St Paul calls her. Weiss identified her with 'the woman clothed with the sun' (xii), and thought her to be the mother of the Logos. There is this to be said for Weiss's idea, that the original goddess-mother was both the mother and the bride of Tammuz, and from her all other divine mothers of Babylonian, Assyrian, and Jewish religious thought, derived some of their characteristics. In the mythology from which the Jewish predecessors of the Christian Seer took their personifications, the divine mothers were accounted one and the same goddess, 'the Queen of Heaven', who thus represented various conceptions; but the Apocalyptic distinguished them one from another, making the Heavenly Wisdom the mother, and the New Jerusalem the bride, of the Logos.

In such wise did the visionary take from the myth its fullest significance for Christian doctrine, and in so doing linked up the foreshadowings of mythology with the predictions of the Old Testament, giving to both one origin, 'the Spirit of prophecy'.

G. H. DIX.

## THE BIOGRAPHICAL FORM OF THE *VITAE* *SANCTORUM*

(with special reference to the *Dialogus de vita S. Chrysostomi*  
by Palladius Helenopolitanus).

THE biographical writings dealing with the saints of the Church—hagiographa—fall into three classes: *μαρτύρια* or *passiones*, accounts of the martyrdoms of saints; *βιοί* or *vitae*, ordinary biographies; *ἐγκώμια* or *laudationes*, encomiastic panegyrics of saints.

1. Most of the lives, and I use 'lives' in the widest sense to comprehend these three divisions of hagiographa, begin with an introduction in the form of an address either to the general reader, as in the *Vita*

<sup>1</sup> In a liturgy of the Tammuz wallings (Langdon *Sumerian Liturgies* p. 192), the goddess mother, the Queen of Heaven, calls herself 'sacred harlot (*mugig*) of heaven'.