

they called them, and there are now about a thousand, I think, round the coasts of Britain, and I don't know what we should do without them. One of our poets has given them a voice, and this is what he has made them say :

Our brows are bound with spin-drift and the weed is on our knees,

Our loins are battered 'neath us by the swinging, smoking seas

From reef and rock and skerry—over headland, ness, and voe—

The coastwise lights of England watch the ships of England go.

And what are these 'Lighthouses'? They are the giants of the race of Lamps. Great lamps they are which stand ever in one place, and shine ever in the darkness. For the most part they are *Lamps of Warning* which tell the ships where *not* to go. They seem to say 'Beware! Beware! Come not too near us! Here is a sunken rock! Here is a cruel sand! Here many a vessel has been wrecked! Here many a human life has been lost! Be warned in time! Seize the rudder firmly in your hands and steer away! And when you have safely made the harbour thank God for the "coastwise lights."'

And what may we learn from these giants of the race of Lamps,—these great lights that stand, and stand, and shine?

Is not our whole life like the voyage of a ship? We set out from the port which we call our

birth and seek to make that harbour which we call Heaven. It is often a long voyage and always a perilous one. There are sunken rocks and cruel sands in our way too—dangerous places where many a poor mariner has made shipwreck of his life. But, thank God, there are lights to guide us, great warning lights that stand and stand and shine evermore. They are the Lighthouses of the moral world which mark the dangerous places and tell us where we ought *not* to go, and what we ought *not* to do. We call these great warning lights 'The Ten Commandments,' but there are others besides the ten. Every commandment which tells us what we ought *not* to do is a lighthouse reared by the hands of God Himself to guide us in life's way. Oh that men were wise and would keep these commandments, then they would not make shipwreck of their lives!

Every sailor who wishes to hold a captain's certificate is expected to know the names of all the coastwise lights of England and what they mean, and if we are wise we too shall learn the commandments of God and keep them—and keep them.

When you go to bed to-night thank God for the 'coastwise lights' that mark the dangerous places in the sea and point the sailor's way to security and home; thank God, too, for the great commandments which tell us what *not* to do and point the way to the shelter and security of our Heavenly Home.

## Chinese Sidelights upon Scripture Passages.

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### I.

In this series of chapters it is proposed to give some instances in which the West Asian Scriptures may be illustrated, and perhaps illuminated, from the literature, philosophy, and customs of East Asia.

There is an old Chinese literary adage: 'East-flowing streams contain west-water fish'; and the Chinese seem to have been anciently an 'east-flowing' race. From their most ancient annals (whose mythical period dates no further back than 2800—a thousand years later than the fall of Akkad),

and from their language itself (whose primary hieroglyphs must have been extremely ancient), we gain undoubted indications that the Chinese immigrated from the west of their present domain. How far west we cannot say. But, at any rate, as far west as the valley of the Tarim River (north-west from modern Tibet), which Sven Hedin supposes to have been their original home. The Chinese, prior to about 2600 B.C., would seem to have been a Mid-Asian race, having some contact with Chaldean and Persian civilization.

(a) Ancient Chinese astronomy is identical with ancient Chaldean astronomy. There are traces of an ancient division of time into periods of seven days. In ancient Chaldea inscribed tablets of clay were preserved after use (apparently in storehouses) within the temple enclosures; in China all written paper is supposed to be 'respectfully cherished' and carried to pavilion-like structures or braziers (usually marked 'storehouse of writings') connected with temples, and burnt after use. The early Accadian literary parallelism survives to this day in China in the parallel mottoes adorning all guest-rooms, and at New Year's time every front door of mansion or cottage. Moreover, the Chinese language, crystallized-out at an earlier stage of development than the Chaldean of Hammurabi, perpetuates one characteristic of the Hammurabian inscriptions. In these inscriptions (perhaps as a survival) there is found a cross-like sign of *sacredness*, which, placed before *house*, makes it a temple. This, in Chinese, would be called 'the worship radical,'<sup>1</sup> and all the written signs in China are to this day classified under 214 such 'radicals.'

(b) Imported into the ancient conceptions of China, and somewhat clashing with its very earliest conceptions, we find the Zoroastrian powers of Light and Darkness in an idealized form, as creative potencies, and later as the basis of all male and female relations.

There seems to have been no contact between these Mid-Asian Chinese and India, the Himalayas being a sufficient barrier; and the Chinese conquest of China happened about the same time as the Aryan invasion of India. It may be noted, however, that those Aryans began their India residence with personal Powers (some of them possessing creative attributes) as objects of worship; and then philosophized them away into a pervasive Force (as we may take Brahma to be). And the Chinese immigrants, beginning with a personal Supreme,<sup>2</sup> tended, in process of time, to philosophize Him away, either into a diffused Nature-force, called *Tao*; or into a duality of impersonal Forces, called *Yin* and *Yang*—apparently under Persian influence.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Chinese, the 'worship radical' added to *earth* makes the sign *altar*, added to *aid* it forms the sign for *Divine aid*, added to *joy* the sign for *Divinely-granted joy*, added to *long life* the sign for *prayer* (for long life).

<sup>2</sup> See *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, 'God (Chinese).'

<sup>3</sup> The word *Tao* covers a wide range of meanings. Literally *path* or *way*, it may mean *Way of truth*, or *method of con-*

(1) Thus, in China's ancient dictionary, the *Shuo Wen*, issued in the year 100 A.D., and replete with quotations from earlier centuries, we find, under the sign for *Spirit*:

'Heaven-Spirit, the pro-ducer (lit. leader-forth) of all things'; which the ancient commentator explains by saying: 'The Heaven-Lord sent down his breath, influencing all things, and so it is written "pro-duced all things."'

(2) Also, in the same ancient dictionary, under the sign for *One* or *Unity*, we find words which almost completely echo those of Jn 1<sup>1-3</sup>, in the Chinese versions (where *Tao* is used for *Logos*):

'Alone in the great beginning was the *Tao*, established in unity, creating and dividing-out heaven and earth, evolving and completing all things.'

(3) Then, in the opening sentences of the Historical Records, which begin at Creation, we find the results of a once-dominant school of philosophy:

'Infinite evolved the Two Principles (Yin and Yang), and these together gave birth to the whole complexity of existences.'

Here we have three distinct accounts of Creation, which help to illustrate much in the Hebrew Scriptures, for among the Hebrews we find that many were inclined to philosophize on somewhat similar lines to those of the second and third statements, and with remarkable results.

(1) The Scriptures start with the authoritative declaration: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'—which is the normal conclusion of faith (He 11<sup>1-3</sup>) and intelligence (Ro 1<sup>19-20</sup>). In every part of China, whatever confusion of belief may be current, the missionary declaration that all things were made by the Most High meets with instant assent, and perhaps the remark: 'Of course, it must be so.'

duct, then *factor* or *principle*, *guidance*, *discourse*, *speech*. It is thus, in its indefiniteness, a chosen word among Chinese mystics, or *Taoists*.

In the pair of words *Yin* and *Yang* the true order is reversed for the sake of euphony. *Yang* is literally *bright*, *clear*, *manifest*. *Yin* is literally *obscure*, *sombre*, *concealed*. Hence *Yang* came to be applied to the sun, and is used for *solar*; *Yin* to the moon, forming the word *lunar*. But eventually, upon the rise of the 'Yin-Yang School' of philosophy, the term *Yang* came to be applied to things literally or metaphorically *male*, and the term *Yin* to things *female*.

(2) Then, in the Book of the Proverbs (8<sup>22-31</sup>) we find Wisdom poetically described as a distinct entity, and associate Creator—the result of philosophizing which, among the Hebrews, stopped short of a competitive statement (such as Lao Tzu makes when he says: 'Fathomless is Tao! It seems to be the Ancestor of all things. Its *eidōlon* existed before God was,' *Tao Teh King*, iv.). Later, in Christian philosophy (Jn 1<sup>1-18</sup>) a personal *Logos* takes the place of *Wisdom*, as associate Creator, the statement being a non-competitive one, but replete with new impulses to godliness.

(3) But a second stream of philosophy had tended to flood the land of Israel. And those engulfed in it were carried further than the Chinese ever were. It swept them away from all morality. Its effects were ruinous to an extreme. Zerdusht (whom the Greeks called Zoroaster) had held and taught the theory that Yezdan and Ahreman (light and darkness) were two contrasting principles, from which originated everything subsisting in the world; sun and moon worship had been of hoary antiquity in Egypt and Chaldea; and the two cults had become combined among various West Asian tribes, with the further identification of male and female forces with Light (or brightness) and Dark (or obscurity)—which forces became objects of practical worship under the sanctions of an exceedingly specious and altogether corrupt philosophy. We have read of the Aphrodite temples of Corinth, and the 'nautch' temples of India, but our imagination refuses to picture a condition of

things where the dual progenitive principles were deified in place of the Creator, and worshipped with general outbreaks of lust and frequent child-immolation. And thus it comes to pass that there are in existence Christian writers whose pages are disfigured with such words as 'a savage Jehovah-Nissi, craving for murder and thirsting for vengeance'!

It was this quasi-philosophical and horribly depraved religion of 'lust—hard by hate,' and savage murder, that so many in Israel were every now and again adopting, from neighbouring tribes, to the disintegration of all family ties, and the bonds which make a nation. They ate of *that tree* of forbidden philosophy, and lost their national Eden. The vengeance threatened upon those tempting tribes may have been by no means unnecessary vengeful. For there to be any 'chosen race' at all, of blessed influence on all nations; these cancerous growths of cursed iniquity might well demand some surgical processes of destruction, if any mercy to humanity at large dwelt in the Most High. As it was, the West Asian religion of debauchery early corrupted the heroic mythology of Greece and Rome, propagating the condition of things described, centuries after, in some paragraphs of the Epistle to the Romans—which God, to be God at all, could not but regard with 'wrath' and antagonism.

Thus, our comparative study—of East and West Asian accounts of Creation—may tend to

assert eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men.

## Contributions and Comments.

### 'Notes on Samuel.'

WHILE thanking Professor Kennedy very warmly for his appreciative notice of my *Notes on Samuel* in the November number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, I should be glad to be allowed to say a few words on one or two statements made by him, through, I think, incomplete knowledge of the facts, which may create an incorrect impression.

1. The reason why a second edition did not appear sooner was not, I am glad to say, indifference in England to the study of the original text

of the Old Testament, but my own inability, through pressure of other work, to produce it sooner. The book had been out of print for several years; but, though I had made a few notes previously, I was not able to begin the revision systematically till the spring of 1911; and even then its completion occupied much longer time than I originally anticipated.

2. The ascription of the silver shekel to Simon was due simply to an oversight. I made a great many notes of points for revision, especially in regard to references to recent books, and new