Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:

Buy me a coffee https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology

PATREON https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb

PayPal https://paypal.me/robbradshaw

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

Tillyard (Heffer; 2s. 6d. net), will be the making of other mystics or not, it will certainly be enjoyed by its readers. Written in the form of letters, confessed to be fictitious, it will not attract the idly curious, but the reading of a single page will finish the book. What is the way of the making of a mystic? It is meditation. Lie down at night, cross your hands over your breast, think of consecration, or some other big idea. Do it again in the morning. The mystical life will begin and grow, and the visions and revelations will come. So stated it may seem frivolous: it is not frivolous by any means.

Take note of the Calendars issued by Messrs. Pickering & Inglis of Glasgow. One is the *Daily Meditation Calendar* (1s. net); the other the *Daily Manna Calendar* (6d. net).

It is not Irishmen only that will read with pride of the doings of *The Tenth (Irish) Division in Gallipoli* as told by Major Bryan Cooper (Herbert Jenkins; 6s. net). No man on earth, whatever his nationality, be he friend or foe, if he is a man, will be able to read unmoved the story of that rocky peninsula. And the Tenth (Irish) Division, under Major-General Sir Bryan Mahon, had a fine share in its glory. Major Cooper is proud of his men, and would not have their deeds left unsung, He has furnished the facts for the poet who is to come. With surprising clearness he describes the operations in which the Tenth had a part. Only in this way can we ever understand how wonderful these operations were—every man who has the gift telling us what he himself saw.

And this is the model for the future historian. There is no self-glorification. We do not remember once discovering Major Cooper's own name throughout the book. The Division does everything. And the Division is a reality. 'A unit trained to arms has a spiritual as well as a material being. A battalion of infantry is not merely a collection of a thousand men armed with rifles; it is, or at any rate, it should be, a community possessing mutual hopes, mutual fears, and mutual affection. Officers and men have learnt to know one another and to rely on one another, and if they are worth their salt, the spiritual bond uniting them is far stronger and more effectual for good than the power conferred by rank and authority. In the 10th Division the bonds uniting all ranks were unusually strong. In the first place came love of Ireland, shared in equal degree by officers and men. Second to this, and only second, was pride of regiment, happiness at forming part of a unit which had had so many glorious deeds recorded of it and resolution to be worthy of its fame. The names of the battalions—Dublins, Munsters, Inniskillings, Connaught Rangers—spoke not only of home, but also of splendid achievements performed in the past, and nerved us to courage and endurance in the future.'

The Babylonian Paradise and its Rivers.

By Theophilus G. Pinches, LL.D., London.

In The Expository Times for September 1915, Professor Sayce published a most interesting article upon 'The Garden of Eden and the Fall of Man according to the Sumerians.' This is an examination of the details given in Langdon's *Epic of Paradise, the Flood, and the Fall of Man* (Philadelphia, 1915), in which the veteran Assyriologist points out that the situation of the Sumerian Paradise in the land of Tilmun (thus, apparently, not Dilmun) was the same as that of the Biblical Garden of Eden. *Til-mun* seemingly means 'the salt tract' (*til*, 'to come to an end,' and *mun*, 'salt') on the shores of the Persian Gulf. This district owed its fertility to the rivers—the Tigris and the Euphrates—which watered the tract, and whose efficiency was increased by the many artificial waterways which ran through it, and carried the salt away at the same time as they irrigated the land. In this we have a further indication of the Babylonian origin of the Biblical Creation-Story, which, as a theory, has now been in existence for about 370 years.

As pointed out by Fried. Delitzsch (*Wo lag das Paradies*, p. 38), the earliest localization of Paradise in Babylonia is that of Calvin in his *Commentary on Genesis*—a theory in which he was

followed, more or less closely, by other scholars. It is not so much Calvin's theory, however, which Delitzsch has adopted in the above-named work, as that of Hopkinson (*Paradise*, p. 49), whose explanation was curtly dismissed by Dillman with the words: 'Hopkinson even took as an aid (to this identification) two connecting canals between the Euphrates and the Tigris constructed by human hands.'

Though we should like to welcome the theory of an Englishman with regard to the rivers of Paradise, and, at the same time, accept Professor Delitzsch's views, we feel that there is some difficulty in doing so. What will turn out to be the true explanation with regard to the rivers of Paradise, as described in Gn 2^{10}, cannot, at present, be predicted, but one point seems to be certain—namely, that Babylonia, either wholly or in part, was the land of Eden, eastward (really south-eastward), in which the garden — the earthly Paradise—was located; and whatever the differing details of their theories, Calvin, Hopkinson, and Delitzsch are all of them right. In connexion with this, it may be assumed that the Sumero-Akkadian plain, *edina* is the Biblical Eden, and that the Babylonian belief that their land was the place of the Paradise-city, Êri-du, is correct. In any case, two of the rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, are there, and the identification of the other two may be but a matter of minor importance. It is even possible that Delitzsch is right in accepting the theory that two Babylonian artificial waterways are to be identified with the Pison and the Gihon, but more light upon this question is required.

Naturally, as has been already pointed out, it was not the Babylonian plain which was identified with the Garden of Paradise, but only a small portion of it, namely, the region of Abu-Shahrein, which is universally identified with the Babylonian *Êṛi-du*, 'the good city,' regarded long ago, by the late Sir Henry Rawlinson, as the Babylonian Paradise-city. Concerning this interesting place, it may not be altogether useless to quote again the well-known poetical incantation concerning it:

In Êri-du a black vine grew—in a sacred spot it was made.
Its substance was white-flaked lapis-stone, planted in the Deep.
Êa's path in Êri-du is filled with fruitfulness—
His seat is the place (probably centre-place) of the earth,[1]
His abode is the bed of Engur (or Nammu).
In his holy house, which is like a forest, (his) shelter is set—no man can enter therein.
In the midst of it is Šamaš (and) Tammuz,
Between the mouths of the rivers on both sides:
Ka-ḫengala, Igi-ḫengala, [(and) Ka-na-ab-ul, keep] the vine of Êri-du, and ut[ter] the incantation of the deep.
Has he plac[ed] it (the vine) at the head of the sick[2] man?
Then the spirit of luck, the fortunate genius of the man, the son of his god, verily stands by his side.

This incantation, which runs to a considerable length, is somewhat mutilated, but the important thing about it is the above descriptive introduction. It was Êa's vine which grew in this sacred place, and Êa has been identified—whether rightly or wrongly remains to be seen—with the Yah (Jah) of the Hebrews. That the 'dark vine' is probably the Babylonian equivalent of the Tree of Life is suggested by the fact that a branch of it, placed by the head of a sick man, would ward off the evil influences which afflicted him.

Another point is that of the position of Êri-du. This city, if rightly identified with Abu-shahrein, lay close to the Euphrates, and far from the Tigris, and was by no means 'between' these two rivers in the real sense of the word. As far as the Babylonian view is concerned, therefore, it is best to leave those two great waterways out of account, and confine ourselves to the three artificial waterways or canals mentioned in the incantation. A reference to the great list of gods shows that the section referring to Êa (*Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets*, part xxiv. pl. 28) mentions five others, making eight in all, the additional names being *Igi-na-ab-ul*, *Ka-ba-ni-namtila*, *Ka-ba-hi-silima*, *Igi-bi-šu-namtila*, and *Igi-bi-šu-silima*. Now *Igi*, 'eye,' means also 'spring,' and *ka* means 'mouth,' so that the eight streams resolve themselves into four, as follows:

Igi-ḫengala, the spring of abundance.
Ka-ḫengala, the mouth of abundance.
Igi-na-ab-ul, by its spring it hath perfection.

[1] The Sumerian has 'earth-eye-land,' but 'eye' may be used in the sense of 'spring.'

[2] Or 'fever-stricken.'

Ka-na-ab-ul, by its mouth it hath perfection.
Igi-bi-šu-namtila, in its spring is life.
Ka-bi-šu-namtila, in its mouth is life.
Igi-bi-šu-silima, in its spring is well-being.
Ka-bi-šu-silima, in its mouth is well-being.[1]

Nourished by such streams as these, there is no wonder that the 'dark vine' of Êri-du was held to be capable of healing all diseases, and even of restoring the dead to life.

It would therefore seem that, as in Gn $2^{10ff.}$, the Babylonian Paradise-streams were four in number, but as their Paradise-city was a very small tract, they did not include the Tigris and the Euphrates among the number. They would seem, however, not to have been artificial waterways, but streams due to springs. Whether they will ever be found and identified is doubtful, as the country has greatly changed since Sumerian times, and the head of the Persian Gulf is now some 110 miles south-east of Abu-Shahrein.

Concerning the nature of the plant translated as 'vine,' nothing is known, but the references to it in the inscriptions are interesting. The word so translated is *kiškanû*, Semiticized from the Sumerian *giš-kin* (originally, seemingly, *giš-kan*), literally 'tree' and probably) 'pip-fruit.' This, which immediately precedes various words for 'vine' in *W. Asia Inscriptions*, ii. pl. 45, no. 4, is there described as having been 'white' (*piṣû*), 'black' (*ṣalmu*), and 'red' or 'violet' (*sâmu*), apparently referring to the colour of its fruit. Among the 'vines' indicated by the more usual character or group pronounced *geštin*, it is to be noted that we find mentioned the *geštin lula*, in Semitic *karan šêlibi*, 'the fox-vine.' And in *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets*, xiv. 22, col. viii. lines 52, we are informed that *šam gin-gin* was the *šam geštin-lula*, 'the herb fox-vine.' This has every appearance of being a synonym of *geštin-lula*, and proves that the *giš-kin* or *giš-kan*, like the *geš-tin* was a vine.

And, finally, *geš-tin*, 'vine,' has long been known to mean 'tree of life.'

Concerning the Tree of Knowledge in Babylonian religious inscriptions, very little can be said. The 'Tree of Knowledge' in the true sense, among the Babylonians, was the *gis-zu*, a word (or group) which generally stands for 'wooden tablet,' or the like. The tree of which the Babylonians ate 'all the days of their lives' was the date-palm, which is the central feature of what many regard as the Babylonian temptation scene, preserved on a cylinder seal in the British Museum.

Something may also be said concerning the strange river-name (or canal-name) given in one of the lists. This was referred to by Delitzsch in *Babel und Bibel*, and opens up the possibility of further interesting discoveries when excavations can be resumed. The meaning of the name is 'the river of the serpent-god shattering the abode of life,' or the like. Now 'the abode of life' is expressed by the characters *tin-dir*, which, in other texts, with the place-suffix, is one of the ideographic groups for 'Babylon.' It is therefore not improbable that the scene of the 'shattering' was laid somewhere in the neighbourhood of Babylon, though Êri-du or the neighbourhood is not excluded.

Naturally the details with regard to the Babylonian Paradise-streams do not diminish the difficulties of the identification of the Hebrew record with regard to Paradise—the Tigris and the Euphrates are there, but what about the Pison, which 'encompasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold,' and the Gihon, which 'floweth round the whole land of Ethiopia'? Or, if it be not Ethiopia, but the Cappadocian Cush, what stream in that neighbourhood are we to identify the Gihon with? Were there districts in Babylonia bearing the names of Havilah and Cush? All these still remain difficult points—nevertheless, whatever the answers to these questions may be, the parallels between the Babylonian indications as to the site of Paradise and the description thereof in the opening chapters of Genesis are sufficiently striking.

River Gods.

I have taken the four deities whose names contain the word 'eye' or 'spring,' and the four whose names contain the word 'mouth,' as personified streams, notwithstanding that the determinative prefix for 'river,' *nâru*, is in each case absent. The name of the river-god proper naturally has the character for 'river' as one of its constituents, but none of the six sons of Enki or Êa, who were probably river gods, are indicated by this prefix.

[1] The order of the original text differs, as the mouths precede the 'eyes' or 'springs,' and in the case of two couples the grouping is horizontal, and in the other two vertical. It is also to be noted that they are all personified, each 'eye' and each 'mouth' having been regarded as a god.

Even the sixth on the list, *Burnun-ta-saa*, 'he who came forth from the great (water) receptacle,' is unprovided with it. The eight divine water-courses —the four 'eyes' and the four 'mouths'—are described as 'the 8 porters (*i.e.* gate-keepers) of the god Enki' (or Êa), the god of the Deep. Whether there be any significance in the fact that, in the great lists of gods, the great Babylonian river-god had four names—*(H)id* or *(H)it*, 'the River,' *(H)i(d)-gala*, 'the great river,' *(H)i(d)-silim*, 'the benefiting river,' and *(H)i(d)-lu-šub-gu*, 'the river which overthrows its bank' (?)—or not, remains to be decided. This deity had a special ship, 'the ship of the River-god' (*êlippi ilu Nâri*), which is mentioned between 'the ship of Êa,' and 'the ship of Merodach.'

THE SERPENT GOD.

This deity seems to have been called *Saḫan*, and, dialectically, *Šeraḫ*. He appears as one of the six *utukku*-genii of the temples Ê-kura (in Nippur?) and Ê-šara (possibly in the same city), and was one of the attendants of Ellila, the 'older Bel.' In another place the serpent-god is explained as being *Gu-silim*, 'the speaker of well-being'—perhaps the serpent tempter—the seducer with fair words. But if this be the case, the Babylonians did not regard him as a malignant divine personage, but rather of the nature of the evil spirit in Heine's lines:

> Ich rief den Teufel und er kam,
> Er war nicht hässlich, er war nicht lahm—
> Er war ein lieber charmanter Mann!

It is doubtful whether the ancients thought of their gods as being anthropomorphic—probably they did not; and the Babylonians would certainly not have desired their evil spirits to be recognizably so. For this reason, maybe, *gu-silim*, if really the serpent tempter, was thought of not as an evil spirit, but as a divinity.

Contributions and Comments.

Martha and Mary.

I.

CANON MORLEY STEVENSON's interesting comment on 'Martha and Mary' indicates the difficulty felt by many in the story of the sisters in Lk 10^{38-42}. But may not much of the difficulty be due to the way in which this one incident is nearly always fastened on without any regard to others in which Martha figures, so that grievous injustice has too often been done to a really fine character; and consequently too much meaning has been read into our Lord's rebuke? The popular conception of Martha is of a fussy, irritable, unspiritual sort of person, and one has come across sermons in which she is simply pilloried as a warning. But surely that is not the N.T. picture of her.

Martha is mentioned three times in the Gospels —once by St. Luke in the passage quoted (10^{38-42}), and twice by St. John.

(*a*) Jn 12^{2}. 'And Martha served . . .' at the supper in Bethany. Here again we see the busy hostess; but this time there is no censure for her service. Indeed, the way in which St. John mentions it almost suggests the reverse. Evidently Martha was a woman with a great gift for service. And Christ never despised nor deprecated that.

(*b*) Jn $11^{20ff.}$. Martha's place in the story of the raising of Lazarus reveals the spiritual side of her nature as not less real and deep than her sister's. It is to the 'practical' Martha, not to the 'spiritual' Mary, that Christ makes the great spiritual pronouncement, 'I am the resurrection, and the life': from her, not from Mary, came the great Confession, unsurpassed in spiritual insight and force even by Peter's at Cæsarea Philippi, 'I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.'

Granted, then, that there was ground for the rebuke—and in our Lord's actual words there is no such comparison between the sisters, as popular exposition loves to dwell upon—it is not fair to judge Martha by that alone. Is she not rather an example of what we have come to consider the very best type of Christian—a woman of great practical ability combined with deep spiritual perception, expressing her devotion in the way that came most naturally to her? Mary's devotion was of a different type; and our Lord's words were uttered in defence of that type against her sister's