

represents the biblical Isha or Eve ; but we know more of her than this. She has a favorite son, Tammuz or Adonis, who is murdered by his brother Adar ;* she mourns his death and teaches her daughters annually to weep for Tammuz, and she even descends into Hades to rescue him from the under world. This is the ancient Chaldean and Syrian version of the pitiful story of Cain and Abel, though, in the legend as we have it, there seems to be a confusion between the murdered Abel and the surviving Seth of the Bible. In any case, Ishtar is the mother of a deity or redeemer, and as such she is worshipped, and is regarded as having a control over the destinies of her children in the spirit-world.

Thus we learn that a story of sin and suffering, which in Genesis is merely a family tragedy, becomes the source of an infinity of brilliant and poetical myths ; that the promise of a redeemer for fallen man leads to the apotheosis of the first mother ; that under these myths and allegories was originally hidden that promise of a Saviour whose future coming was announced and celebrated by Jewish prophets ; that this blessed revelation became by gradual corruption and embellishment the nucleus of complex systems of idolatry ; that under it were hidden nature-worship, ancestor-worship, and the worship of humanity, the dealings of God with fallen man and the promise of a Redeemer. This may appear fanciful to some, but I think that an unbiassed study of the most recent results of investigation into ancient mythology will indicate its correctness. Let me now turn back to our original subject, and point out how remarkably such discoveries show the relation of the Bible to ancient history and archæology, as well as to the interpretation of physical nature.

The Bible, we are often told, was not intended to teach science. Certainly not ; revealed science would be an impossibility, and it is of the very nature of science to work out its own results from its own data ; but the fact that we have seen the human mind necessarily elaborating for itself a religion of nature and developing this into systems of idolatry, subversive of the true ends of religion, rendered it necessary that a revelation from God should take definite ground on this question. Hence we find at the outset that great fundamental doctrine of a beginning and a Creator, to which we have already referred.

But, starting from this doctrine, it follows that nature must be an ordered system or cosmos, not such a mere mixture and struggle of forces as might result from blind chance, or from the conflict of antagonistic demigods or spirits of good and evil ; hence we have an order of the construction of the universe, given most naturally in the similitude of working days, with a rest at the end, a great Sabbath which furnishes the precedent for the weekly rest of man. This order of creation further gives a good opportunity for showing the higher and lower planes on which natural things exist, and that while merely natural and all lower than man they have their relative ranks in the works of God, and this not at all in

* This, according to Sayce (Hibbert Lectures), is the oldest form of the legend