

The account of the Creation by the Shemitic North Babylonians began as follows:—

"At the time when up above the heaven was not yet named, and when the plain below yet bore no name, then the waters of heaven, the old original beginning, their parent; and also chaos, abyss-foundation, the mother of them all; they swirled and eddied with their billows in one, when as yet no stalk of corn had been cut down; as yet not a single reed sprung up; at the time when none of the gods were yet created, no name yet given, no destiny yet fixed, then were the gods of Chaos created, they, the evil spirits of Lachum and Lachamu, were brought forth, till they grew up. The host of heaven and the host of earth were created. Long, long were the days; the gods Anu, Bel, and Ea were created."

It will be noted that here we have a trinity of gods, the same trinity as the Sumerians, one of the three a son. The account then goes on to say that when the gods had been created they directed Bel, or Merodach (the Semitic sun god of North Babylon), to proceed to combat with Ti-āmat, the ancient water of chaos, with her monsters, because they had rebelled against the gods above, and had to be conquered or humbled to prevent universal ruin. Then this combat is beautifully described, and when "the dragon of the sea," Ti-āmat, has been overcome the work of creation is proceeded with as follows: "Then the Merodach cleft Ti-āmat in twain; without pity, like a figure of clay half of her he took and with an arch he roofed it over, pushed a bar in front thereof, and placed a guard thereby, and commanded the waters that they should not burst forth. Then traversed Merodach the heavens and looked down upon the regions below, and came towards the ancient waters, the dwelling of the god Ea. And the lord measured the greatness of the ancient waters, and the exalted one built like to the ancient waters (the temple of) Ischirra; yea, the exalted one built Ischirra, which he constructed as the vault of heaven, at the time he settled Anu, Bel and Ea, even there in their abodes." (That means as constellations).

The most interesting member of the trinity in this account also is the god Merodach, or Bel.

We have seen that the actual creator, according to earliest Sumerians, was Gi-lamma, called also Girra-Dugga, and the later Dugga, son of the great and beneficent Earth god EA. When the Shemites arrived in Mesopotamia they brought with them Shamash, the sun god. It appears they, to a large extent, adopted both the civilization and religious ideas of the much more enlightened Sumerians. Mirri-Dugga was thus gradually converted into Marduk—the Merodach—of the Hebrews; and to