

# The Two Babylons II. Section II.–The Mother and Child. Sub-Section I – The Child in Assyria

## Nimrod and Semiramis

- When the Tower of Babel came down, the worship of these two spread.
- In Egypt the two were called Osiris and Isis.
- Assyria – Assur and Ishtar.
- Babylon – Bel and Belit.
- Persia – Mithra and Anahita.
- Greece – Helios and Artemis.
- Rome – Apollo and Diana.
- Throughout the bible they are referred to as Baal and Ashteroth. In Acts 7:43, they're called Moloch and Remphan.



This is the continuation of the previous chapter, [The Two Babylons II. Objects of Worship Section I.–Trinity in Unity.](#)

While this was the theory, the first person in the Godhead was practically overlooked. As the Great Invisible, taking no immediate concern in human affairs, he was “to be worshiped through silence alone,” that is, in point of fact, he was not worshiped by the multitude at all. The same thing is strikingly illustrated in India at this day. Though Brahma, according, to the sacred books, is the first person of the Hindu Triad, and the religion of Hindustan is called by his name, yet he is never worshiped, and there is scarcely a single temple in all India now in existence of those that were formerly erected to his honor.



So also is it in those countries of Europe where the Papal system is most completely developed. In Papal Italy, as travelers universally admit (except where the gospel has recently entered), *all appearance of worshiping the King Eternal and Invisible is almost extinct, while the Mother and the Child are the grand objects of worship.* Exactly so, in this latter respect, also was it in Ancient Babylon. The Babylonians, in their *popular religion*, supremely worshiped a Goddess Mother and a Son, who was represented in pictures and in images as an infant or child in his mother's arms (figs. 5 and 6). From Babylon this worship of the Mother and the Child spread to the ends of the earth. In Egypt the Mother and the Child were worshiped under the names of Isis and Osiris. In India, even to this day, as Isi and Iswara; in Asia, as Cybele and Deoius; in Pagan Rome, as Fortuna and Jupiter-*puer*, or, Jupiter, the boy; in Greece, as Ceres, the great Mother, with the babe at her breast, or as Irene, the goddess of Peace, with the boy *Plntus* in her arms; and even in Tibet, in China, in Japan, the Jesuit missionaries were astonished to find the counterpart of Madonna and her child as devoutly worshiped as in Papal Rome itself; Shing Moo, the Holy Mother in China, being represented with a child in her arms, and a glory around her, exactly as if a Roman Catholic artist had been employed to set her up.

#### **SUB-SECTION I.—THE CHILD IN ASSYRIA.**

The original of that mother, so widely worshiped, there is reason to believe, was Semiramis, already referred to, who, it is well known, was worshiped by the Babylonians, and other eastern nations, and that under the name of Rhea,

the great "Goddess Mother."

It was from the son, however, that she derived all her glory and her claims to deification. That son, though represented as a child in his mother's arms, was a person of great stature and immense bodily powers, as well as most fascinating manners. In Scripture he is referred to (Ezek. viii. 14:) under the name of Tammuz, but he is commonly known among classical writers under the name of Bacchus, that is, "The Lamented one." To the ordinary reader the name of Bacchus suggests nothing more than revelry and drunkenness; but it is now well known, that amid all the abominations that attended his orgies, their grand design was professedly "the purification of souls," and that from the guilt and defilement of sin.

This lamented one, exhibited and adored as a little child in his mother's arms, seems, in point of fact, to have been the husband of Semiramis, whose name, Ninus, by which he is commonly known in classical history, literally signified "The Son." As Semiramis, the wife, was worshiped as Rhea, whose grand distinguishing character was that of the great goddess "Mother," the conjunction with her of her husband, under the name of Ninus, or "The Son," was sufficient to originate the peculiar worship of the "Mother and Son," so extensively diffused among the nations of antiquity; and this, no doubt, is the explanation of the fact which has so much puzzled the inquirers into ancient history, that Ninus is sometimes called the *husband*, and sometimes the *son* of Semiramis. This also accounts for the origin of the very same confusion of relationship between Isis and Osiris, the mother and child of the Egyptians; for, as Bunsen shows, Osiris was represented in Egypt as at once the son and husband of his mother; and actually bore, as one of his titles of dignity and honor, the name "Husband of the Mother." This still further casts light on the fact already noticed, that the Indian god Iswara is represented as a babe at the breast of his own wife Isi, or Parvati.

Now, this Ninus, or "Son," borne in the arms of the Babylonian Madonna, is so described as very clearly to identify him with Nimrod. "Ninus, king of the Assyrians," says Trogius Pompeius, epitomized by Justin, "first of all changed the contented moderation of the ancient manners, incited by a new passion, the desire of conquest. He was the first who carried on war against his neighbors, and he conquered all nations from Assyria to Lybia, as they were yet unacquainted with the arts of war." This account points directly to Nimrod, and can apply to no other.

The account of Diodorus Siculus entirely agrees with it, and adds another trait that goes still further to determine the identity. That account is as follows:— "Ninus, the most ancient of the Assyrian kings mentioned in history, performed great actions. Being naturally of a warlike disposition, and ambitious of glory that results from valor, he armed a considerable number of young men that were brave and vigorous like himself, trained them up a long time in laborious exercises and hardships, and by that means accustomed them to bear the fatigues of war, and to face dangers with intrepidity." As Diodorus makes Ninus "the most ancient of the Assyrian kings," and represents him as beginning those wars which raised his power to an extraordinary height by bringing the people of Babylonia under subjection to him, while as yet the city of Babylon was not in existence, this shows

that he occupied the very position of Nimrod, of whom the scriptural account is, that he first "began to be mighty on the earth," and that the "*beginning* of his kingdom was Babylon." As the Babal builders, when their speech was confounded, were scattered abroad on the face of the earth, and therefore deserted both the city and the tower which they had commenced to build, Babylon, as a city, could not properly be said to exist till Nimrod, by establishing his power there, made it the foundation and starting-point of his greatness. In this respect, then, the story Of Ninus and of Nimrod exactly harmonize. The way, too, in which Ninus gained his power is the very way in which Nimrod erected his. There can be no doubt that it was by inuring his followers to the toils and dangers Of the chase, that he gradually formed them to the use of arms, and so prepared them for aiding him in establishing his dominion; just as Ninus, by training his companions for a long time "in laborious exercises and hardships," qualified them for making him the first of the Assyrian kings.

The conclusions deduced from these testimonies of ancient history are greatly strengthened by many additional considerations. In Gen. x. 11, we find a passage, which, when its meaning is properly understood, casts a very steady light on the subject. That passage, as given in the authorized version, runs thus:—"Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh." This speaks of it as something remarkable, that Asshur went out Of the land Of Shinar, while yet the human race in general went forth from the same land. It goes upon the supposition that Ashur had some sort Of divine right to that land, and that he had been, in a manner, expelled from it by Nimrod, while no divine right is elsewhere hinted at in the context, or seems capable of proof. Moreover, it represents Asshur as setting up IN THE IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORHOOD of Nimrod as mighty a kingdom as Nimrod himself, Asshur building four cities, one of which is emphatically said to have been "great" (ver. 12); 'while Nimrod, on this interpretation, built just the same number of cities, of which none is specially characterized as "great."

Now, it is in the last degree improbable that Nimrod would have quietly borne so mighty a rival so near him To obviate such difficulties as these, it has been proposed to render the words, "out of that land he (Nimrod) went forth into Asshur, or Assyria." But then, according to ordinary usage of grammar, the word in the original should have been "Ashurah," with the sign of motion to a place affixed to it, whereas it is simply Asshur, without any such sign of motion affixed. I am persuaded that the whole perplexity that commentators have hitherto felt in considering this passage, has arisen from supposing that there is a proper name in the passage, where in reality no proper name exists. Ashur is the passive participle of a verb, which, in its Chaldee sense, signifies "to make strong," and, consequently, signifies "being strengthened," or "made strong." Read thus, the whole passage is natural and easy, (ver. 10), "And the beginning of his (Nimrod's) kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh." A *beginning* naturally implies something to succeed, and here we find it; (ver. 11), "Out of that land he went forth, being made strong, or when he had been made strong (asshur), and builded Nineveh," etc.

Now, this exactly agrees with the statement in the ancient history of Justin:

"Ninus *strengthened* the greatness of his acquired dominion by continued possession. Having subdued, therefore, his neighbors, when, by an accession of forces, being still further strengthened, he went forth against other tribes, and every new victory paved the way for another, he subdued all the peoples of the East" Thus, then, Nimrod, or Ninus, was the builder of Nineveh; and the origin of the name of that city, as "the habitation of Ninus," is accounted for, and light is thereby, at the same time, cast on the fact, that the name of the chief part of the ruins of Nineveh is Nimrod at this day.

Now, assuming that Ninus is Nimrod, the way in which that assumption explains what is otherwise inexplicable in the statements of ancient history greatly confirms the truth of that assumption itself. Ninus is said to have been the son of Belus or Bel, and Bel is said to have been the founder of Babylon. If Ninus was in reality the first king of Babylon, how could Belus or Bel, his father, be said to be the founder of it? Both might very well be, as will appear if we consider who was Bel, and what we can trace of his doings. If Ninus was Nimrod, who was the historical Bel? He must have been Cush; for "Cush begat Nimrod," (Gen. x. 8); and Cush is generally represented as having been a ringleader in the great apostacy. But, again, Cush, as the son of Ham, was Her-mes or Mercury; for Hermes is just an Egyptian synonym for the "son of Ham." Now, Hermes was the great original prophet of idolatry; for he was recognized by the pagans as the author of their religious rites, and the interpreter of the gods. The distinguished Gesenius identifies him with the Babylonian Nebo, as the prophetic god; and a statement of Hyginus shows that he was known as the grand agent in that movement which produced the division of tongues.

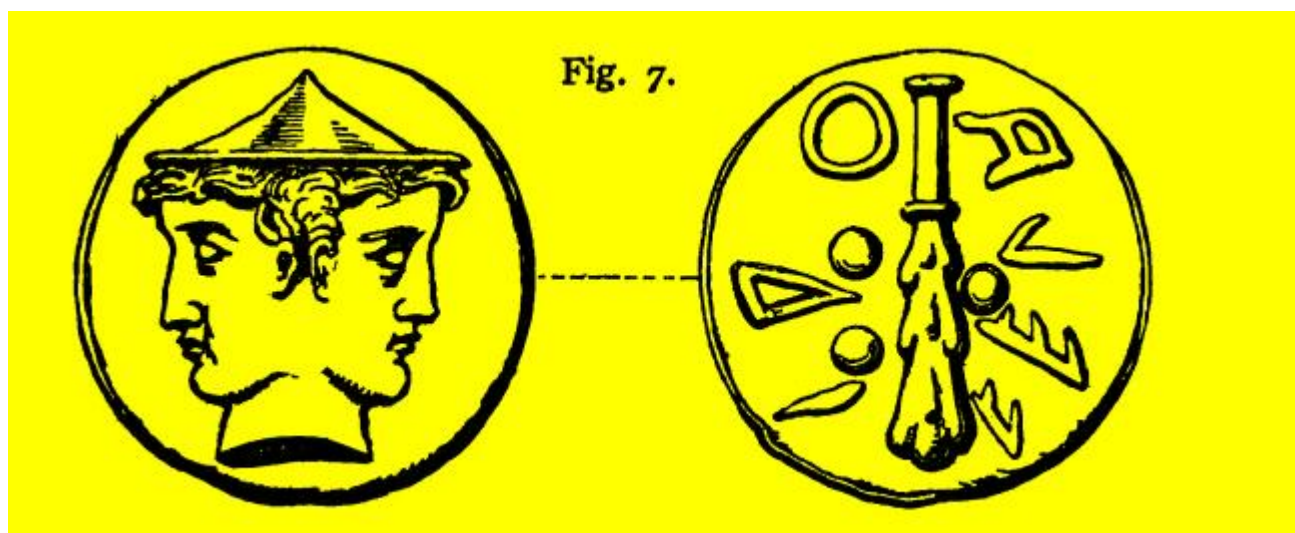
His words are these: "For many ages men lived under the government of Jove [evidently not the Roman Jupiter, but the Jehovah of the Hebrews], without cities and without laws, and all speaking one language. But after that Mercury interpreted the speeches of men (whence an interpreter is called Hermeneutes), the same individual distributed the nations. Then discord began."

Here there is a manifest enigma. How could Mercury or Hermes have any need to interpret the speeches of mankind when they "all spake one language"? To find out the meaning of this, we must go to the language of the mysteries. Peresh, in Chaldee, signifies "to interpret;" but was pronounced by old Egyptians and by Greeks, and often by the Chaldees themselves, in the same way as "Peres," to "divide." Mercury, then, or Hermes, or Cush, "the son of Ham," was the "DIVIDER of the speeches of men." He, it would seem, had been the ringleader in the scheme for building the great city and tower of Babel, and, as the well-known title of Hermes,—"the interpreter of the gods," would indicate, had encouraged them, in the name of God, to proceed in their presumptuous enterprise, and so had caused the language of men to be divided, and themselves to be scattered abroad on the face of the earth.

Now look at the name of Belus, or Bel, given to the father of Ninus, or Nimrod, in connection with this. While the Greek name Belus represented both the Baal and Bel of the Chaldees, these were nevertheless two entirely distinct titles. These titles were both alike often given to the same god,

but they had totally different meanings. Baal, as we have already seen, signified "The Lord;" but Bel signified "The Confounder." When, then, we read that Belus, the father of Ninus, was he that built or founded Babylon, can there be a doubt in what sense it was that the title of Belus was given to him? It must have been in the sense of Bel the "Confounder." And to this meaning of the name of the Babylonian Bel, there is a very distinct allusion in Jeremiah l. 2, where it is said "Bel is confounded," that is, "*The Confounder is brought to confusion.*"

That Cush was known to Pagan antiquity under the very character of Bel "The Confounder," a statement of Ovid very clearly proves. The statement to which I refer is that in which Janus "the god of gods," from whom all the other gods had their origin, is made to say of himself: "The ancients . . . called me Chaos." Now, first this decisively shows that Chaos was known not merely as a *state of confusion*, but as the "*god of Confusion.*" But, secondly, who that is at all acquainted with the laws of Chaldaic pronunciation, does not know that Chaos is just one of the established forms of the name of Chus or Cush? Then, look at the symbol of Janus (see fig.7), whom "the ancients called Chaos," and it will be seen how exactly it tallies with the doings of Cush, when he is identified with Bel, "The Confounder."



That symbol is a club; and the name of "a club" in Chaldee comes from the very word which signifies "to break in pieces, or *scatter abroad.*" He who caused the confusion of tongues was he who "broke" the previously united earth (Gen. xi. 1) "in pieces," and "scattered" the fragments abroad. How significant, then, as a symbol, is the club, as commemorating the work of Cush, as Bel, the "Confounder"? And that significance will be all the more apparent when the reader turns to the Hebrew of Gen. xi. 9, and finds that the very word from which a club derives its name is that which is employed when it is said, that in consequence of the confusion of tongues, the children of men were "scattered abroad on the face of all the earth": The word there used for scattering abroad is Hephaitz, which, in the Greek form becomes Hephaitz, and hence the origin of the well-known but little understood name of Hephaios, as applied to Vulcan, "The father of the gods." Hephaios is the name of the ringleader in the first rebellion, as "The Scatterer abroad," as Bel is the name of the same individual as the "Confounder of tongues."



Here, then, the reader may see the real origin of Vulcan's Hammer, which is just another name for the club of Janus or Chaos, "The god of Confusion;" and to this, as breaking the earth in pieces, there is a covert allusion in Jer. 50:23, where Babylon, as identified with its primeval god, is thus apostrophized: "How is the hammer of the whole-earth cut asunder and broken!"

Now, as the tower-building was the first act of open rebellion after the flood, and Cush, as Bel, was the ringleader in it, he was, of course, the first to whom the name Merodach, "The great Rebel," must have been given, and, therefore, according to the usual parallelism of the prophetic language, we find both names of the Babylonian god referred to together, when the judgment on Babylon is predicted: "Bel is confounded: Merodach is broken to pieces," (Jer. 50:2). The judgment comes upon the Babylonian god according to what he had done. As Bel, he had "confounded" the whole earth, therefore he is "confounded." As Merodach, by the rebellion he had stirred up, he had "broken" the united world to pieces; therefore he *himself* is "broken to pieces."

So much for the historical character of Bel, as identified with Janus or Chaos, the god of confusion, with his symbolical club. Proceeding, then, on these deductions, it is not difficult to see how it might be said that Bel or Belus, the father of Ninus, founded Babylon, while nevertheless Ninus or Nimrod was properly the builder of it. Now, though Bel or Cush, as being specially concerned in laying the first foundations of Babylon, might be looked upon as the first king, as in some of the copies of "Eusebius's Chronicle" he is represented, yet it is evident, from both sacred history and profane, that he could never have reigned as king of the Babylonian monarchy, properly so called; and accordingly, in the Armenian version of the "Chronicle of Eusebius," which bears the undisputed palm for correctness and authority, his name is entirely omitted in the list of Assyrian kings, and that of Ninus stands first, in such terms as exactly correspond with the scriptural account of Nimrod. Thus, then, looking at the fact that Ninus is currently made by antiquity the son of Belus, or Bel, when we have seen that the historical Bel is Cush, the identity of Ninus and Nimrod is still further confirmed.

But when we look at what is said of Semiramis, the wife of Ninus, the evidence receives an additional development. That evidence goes conclusively to show that the wife of Ninus could be none other than the wife of Nimrod, and, further, to bring out one of the grand characters in which Nimrod, when deified, was adored.

In Daniel xi. 38, we read of a god called *Ala mahozim*, i.e., the "god of fortifications." Who this god of fortifications could be, commentators have found themselves at a loss to determine. In the records of antiquity the existence of any god of fortifications has been commonly overlooked; and it must be confessed that no such god stands forth there with any prominence to the ordinary reader. But of the existence of a *goddess* of fortifications, every one knows that there is the amplest evidence. That goddess is Cybele, who is universally represented with a mural or turreted crown, or with a fortification, on her head. Why was Rhea or Cybele thus represented? Ovid asks the question and answers it himself; and the answer is this: The reason,

he says, why the statue of Cybele wore a crown of towers was, "because she first erected them in cities." The first city in the world after the flood (from whence the commencement of the world itself was often dated) that had towers and encompassing walls, was Babylon; and Ovid himself tells us that it was Semiramis, the first queen of that city, who was believed to have "surrounded Babylon with a wall of brick."

Semiramis, then, the first deified queen of that city and tower whose top was intended to reach to heaven, must have been the prototype of the goddess who "first made towers in cities." When we look at the Ephesian Diana we find evidence to the very same effect. In general, Diana was depicted as a Virgin, and the patroness of virginity; but the Ephesian Diana was quite different. She was represented with all the attributes of the Mother of the gods (see fig. 8), and, as the Mother of the gods, she wore a turreted crown, such as no one can contemplate without being forcibly reminded of the tower of Babel. Now, this tower-bearing Diana is by an ancient scholiast expressly identified with Semiramis. When, therefore, we remember that Rhea, or Cybele, the tower-bearing goddess, was, in point of fact, a Babylonian goddess, and that Semiramis, when deified, was worshiped under the name of Rhea, there will remain, I think, no doubt as to the personal identity of the "goddess of fortifications."



Fig. 8.



Diana of Ephesus.\*

\* From KITTO'S *Illustrated Commentary*, vol. v., p. 205.

Now there is no reason to believe that Semiramis alone (though some have represented the matter so) built the battlements of Babylon. We have the express testimony of the ancient historian, Megasthenes, as preserved by Abydenus, that it was "Belus" who "surrounded Babylon with a wall." As "Bel the Confounder," who began the city and tower of Babel, had to leave both unfinished, this could not refer to him. It could refer only to his son Ninus, who inherited his father's title, and who was the first actual king of the Babylonian empire, and, consequently, Nimrod.

The real reason that Semiramis, the wife of Ninus, gained the glory of finishing the fortifications of Babylon, was, that she came in the esteem of the ancient idolaters to hold a preponderating position, and to have attributed to her all the different characters that belonged, or were supposed to belong, to her husband. Having ascertained, then, one of the characters in which the deified *wife* was worshiped, we may from that conclude what was the corresponding character of the deified *husband*. Layard distinctly indicates his belief that Rhea or Cybele, the "tower-crowned" goddess, was just the female counterpart of the "deity presiding over

bulwarks or fortresses;" and that this deity was Ninus, or Nimrod, we have still further evidence from what the scattered notices of antiquity say of the first deified king of Babylon, under a name that identifies him as the husband of Rhea, the "tower-bearing" goddess. That name is Kronos or Saturn. It is well known that Kronos, or Saturn, was Rhea's husband; but it is not so well known who was Kronos himself. Traced back to his original, that divinity is proved to have been the first king of Babylon.

Theophilus of Antioch shows that Kronos in the east was worshiped under the names of Bel and Bal; and from Eusebius we learn that the first of the Assyrian kings, whose name was Belus, was also by the Assyrians called Kronos. As the genuine copies of Eusebius do not admit of any Belus, as an actual king of Assyria, prior to Ninus, king of the Babylonians, and distinct from him, that shows that Ninus, the first king of Babylon, was Kronos. But, further, we find that Kronos was king of the Cyclops, who were his brethren, and who derived that name from him, and that the Cyclops were known as "the inventors of tower-building."|| The king of the Cyclops, "the inventors of tower-building," occupied a position exactly correspondent to that of Rhea, who "first erected (towers) in cities." If, therefore, Rhea, the wife of Kronos, was the goddess of fortifications, Kronos or Saturn, the husband of Rhea, that is, Ninus or Nimrod, the first king of Babylon, must have been Almahozim, "the god of fortifications."

The name Kronos itself goes not a little to confirm the argument. Kronos signifies "The Horned one." As a horn is a well-known Oriental emblem for power or might, Kronos, "The Horned one," was, according to the mystic system, just a synonym for the scriptural epithet applied to Nimrod, viz., *Gheber*, "The mighty one." (Gen. x. 8), "He began to be mighty on the earth."

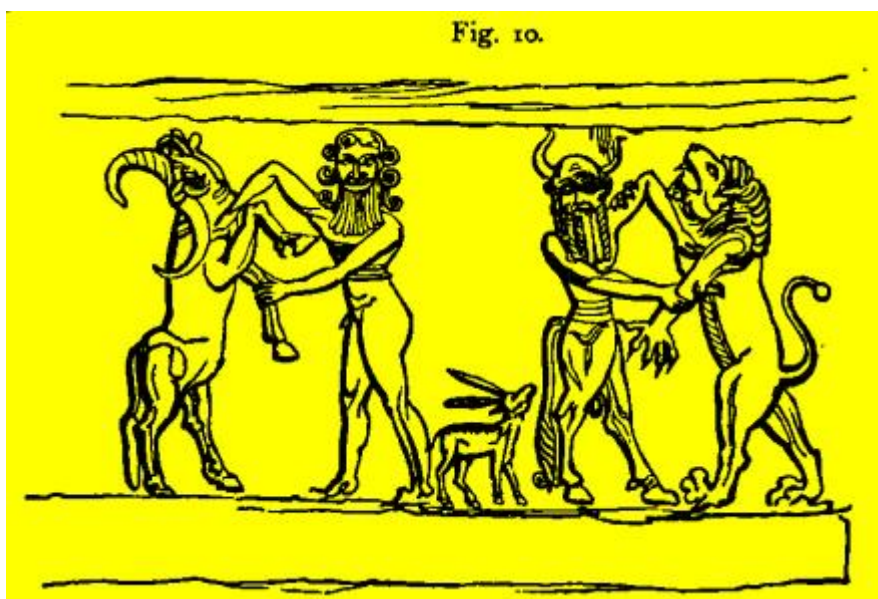
The name Kronos, as the classical reader is well aware, is applied to Saturn as the "Father of the gods." We have already had another "father of the gods" brought under our notice, even Cush in his character of Bel the Confounder, or Hephaistos, "The Scatterer abroad;" and it is easy to understand how, when the deification of mortals began, and the "mighty" Son of Cush was deified, the father, especially considering the part which he seems to have had in concocting the whole idolatrous system, would have to be deified too, and of course, in his character as the Father of the "Mighty one," and of all the "immortals" that succeeded him. But, in point of fact, we shall find, in the course of our inquiry, that Nimrod was the actual Father of the gods, as being the first of deified mortals; and that, therefore, it is in exact accordance with historical fact that Kronos, the Horned, or Mighty one, is, in the Classic Pantheon, known by that title.

The meaning of this name Kronos, "The Horned one," as applied to Nimrod, fully explains the origin of the remarkable symbol, so frequently occurring among the Nineveh sculptures, the gigantic HORNED man-bull, as representing the great divinities in Assyria. The same word that signified a bull, signified also a ruler or prince. Hence the "Horned bull" signified "The mighty Prince," thereby pointing back to the first of those "Mighty ones," who, under the name of Guebres, Gabrs, or Cabiri, occupied so conspicuous a place in the ancient world, and to whom the deified Assyrian monarchs covertly traced back the origin of their greatness and might.

This explains the reason why the Bacchus of the Greeks was represented as wearing horns, and why he was frequently addressed by the epithet "Bull-horned," as one of the high titles of his dignity. Even in comparatively recent times, Togrul Begh, the leader of the Seljukian Turks, who came from the neighborhood of the Euphrates, was in a similar manner represented with three horns growing out of his head as the emblem of his sovereignty. (Fig. 9)



This, also, in a remarkable way accounts for the origin of one of the divinities worshiped by our Pagan Anglo-Saxon ancestors under the name of Zernebogus. This Zemebogus was "the black, malevolent, ill-omened divinity," in other words, the exact counterpart of the popular idea of the Devil, as supposed to be black, and equipped with horns and hoofs. This name, analyzed and compared with the accompanying wood-cut (fig. 10), from Layard, casts a very singular light on the source from whence has come the popular superstition in regard to the grand Adversary.



The name Zer-Nebo-Gus is almost pure Chaldee, and seems to unfold itself as denoting "The seed of the prophet Cush." We have seen reason already to

conclude, that under the name Bel, as distinguished from Baal, Cush was the great soothsayer or false prophet worshiped at Babylon. But independent inquirers have been led to the conclusion, that Bel and Nebo were just two different titles for the same god, and that a prophetic god.

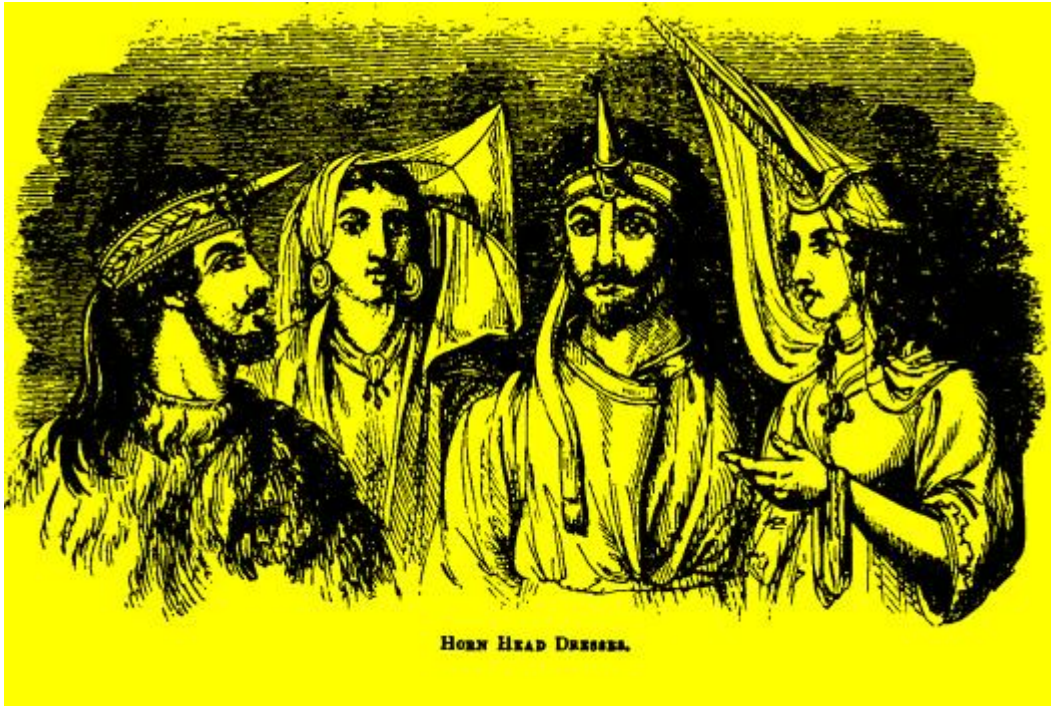
Thus does Kitto comment on the words of Isaiah xlvi. 1: "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoppet," with reference to the latter name: "The word seems to come from Nibba, to deliver an oracle, or to prophesy; and hence would mean an 'oracle,' and may thus, as Calmet suggests, ('Commentaire Literal,' *in loc.*) be no more than another name for Bel himself, or a characterizing epithet applied to him; it being not unusual to repeat the same thing, in the same verse, in equivalent terms." "Zer-Nebo-Gus," the great "seed of the prophet Cush," was, of course, Nimrod; for Cush was Nimrod's father.

Turn now to Layard, and see how this land of ours and Assyria are thus brought into intimate connection. In the woodcut referred to, first we find "the Assyrian Hercules," that is "Nimrod the giant," as he is called in the Septuagint version of Genesis, without club, spear, or weapons of any kind, attacking a bull. Having overcome it, he sets the bull's horns on his head, as a trophy of victory and a symbol of power; and thenceforth the hero is represented, not only with the horns and hoofs above, but from the middle downwards, with the legs and cloven feet of the bull. Thus equipped, he is represented as turning next to encounter a lion. This, in all likelihood, is intended to commemorate some event in the life of him who first began to be mighty in the chase and in war, and who, according to all ancient traditions, was remarkable also for bodily power, as being the leader of the Giants who rebelled against heaven.

Now Nimrod, as the son of Cash, was black, in other words, was a negro. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin?" is in the original, "Can the Cushite" do so? Keeping this, then, in mind, it will be seen, that in that figure disinterred from Nineveh, we have both the prototype of the Anglo-Saxon Zer-Nebo-Gus, "the seed of the prophet Cush," and the real original of the black Adversary of mankind, with horns and hoofs. It was in a different character from that of the Adversary that Nimrod was originally worshiped; but among a people of a fair complexion, as the Anglo-Saxons, it was inevitable, that if worshiped at all, it must generally be simply as an object of fear; and so Kronos, "The Horned one," who wore the "horns," as the emblem both 'of his physical might and sovereign power, has come to be, in popular superstition, the recognized representative of the Devil.

In many and far-severed countries, horns became the symbols of sovereign power. The *corona* or *crown*, that still encircles the brows of European monarchs, seems remotely to be derived from the emblem of might adopted by Kronos, or Saturn, who, according to Pherecydes, was "the first before all others that ever wore a crown." The first regal crown appears to have been only a band, in which the horns were set. From the idea of power contained in the "horn," even subordinate rulers seem to have worn a circlet adorned with a single horn, in token of their derived authority. Bruce, the Abyssinian traveler, gives examples of Abyssinian chiefs thus decorated (fig. 11); in regard to whom he states that the horn attracted his particular attention, when he perceived that the *governors of provinces* were distinguished by this

headdress.



In the case of sovereign powers, the royal head-band was adorned sometimes with a double, sometimes with a triple horn. The double horn had evidently been the original symbol of power or might on the part of sovereigns; for, on the Egyptian monuments, the heads of the deified royal personages have generally no more than the two horns to shadow forth their power.

As sovereignty in Nimrod's case was founded on physical force, so the two horns of the bull were the symbols of that physical force. And, in accordance with this, we read in "Sanchuniathon," that "Astarte put on her own head a bull's head, as the ensign of royalty." By and by, however, another and a higher idea came in, and the expression of that idea was seen in the symbol of the *three* horns.

A cap seems in course of time to have come to be associated with the regal horns. In Assyria the three-horned cap was one of the "*sacred emblems*," in token that the power connected with it was of celestial origin,—the three horns evidently pointing at the power of the Trinity. Still we have indications that the horned band, without any cap, was anciently the corona or royal crown. The crown borne by the Hindu god Vishnu, in his avatar of the Fish, is just an open circle or band, with three horns standing erect from it, with a knob on the top of each horn (fig. 12).



Fig. 12.



All the *avatars* are represented as crowned with a crown that seems to have been modeled from this, consisting of a coronet with three points standing erect from it, in which Sir William Jones recognizes the Ethiopian or Parthian coronet. The open tiara of Agni, the Hindu god of fire, shows in its lower round the double horn made in the very same way as in Assyria, proving at once the ancient custom, and whence that custom had come. Instead of the three horns, three horn-shaped leaves came to be substituted (fig. 13); and thus the horned band gradually passed into the modern coronet or crown with the three leaves ' of the fleur-de-lis, or other familiar three-leaved adornings.

Fig. 13.



Among the Red Indians of America there had evidently been something entirely

analogous to the Babylonian custom of wearing the horns; for, in the "buffalo dance" there, each of the dancers had his head arrayed with buffalo's horns; and it is worthy of especial remark, that the "Satyric dance," or dance of the Satyrs in Greece, seems to have been the counterpart of this Red Indian solemnity; for the satyrs were horned divinities, and consequently those who imitated their dance must have had their heads set off in imitation of theirs. When thus we find a custom that is clearly founded on a form of speech that characteristically distinguished the region where Nimrod's power was wielded, used in so many different countries far removed from one another, where no such form of speech was used in *ordinary life*, we may be sure that such a custom was not the result of mere accident, but that it indicates the wide-spread diffusion of an influence that went forth in all directions from Babylon, from the time that Nimrod first " began to be mighty on the earth."

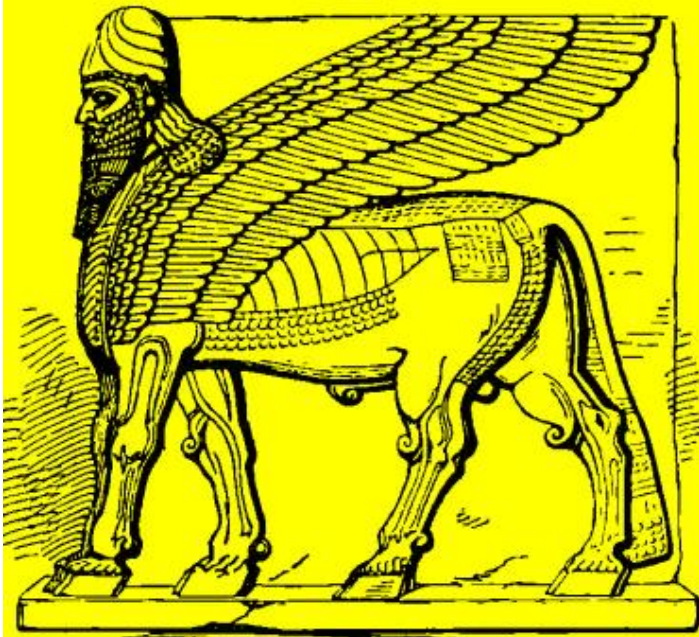
There was another way in which Nimrod's power was symbolized besides by the "horn." A synonym for Gheber, "The mighty one," was "Abir," while "Aber" also signified a "wing." Nimrod, as Head and Captain of those men of war, by whom he surrounded himself, and who were the instruments of establishing his power, was "Baal-abirin," "Lord of the mighty ones." But " Baal-aberin" (pronounced nearly in the same way) signified "The winged one," and therefore in symbol he was represented, not only as a horned bull, but as at once a horned and winged bull—as showing not merely that he was mighty himself, but that he had mighty ones under his command, who were ever ready to carry his will into effect, and to put down all opposition to his power; and to shadow forth the vast extent of his might, he was represented with great and wide-expanding wings.

To this mode of representing the mighty kings of Babylon and Assyria, who imitated Nimrod and his successors, there is manifest illusion in Isaiah viii. 6-8: "Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son; now therefore, behold the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and mighty, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory; and he shall come up over all his banks. And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over; he shall reach even unto the neck; and the STRETCHING OUT OF HIS WINGS shall FILL the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel."

When we look at such figures as those which are here presented to the reader (figs. 14 and 15), with their great extent of expanded wing, as symbolizing an Assyrian king, what a vividness and force does it give to the inspired language of the prophet! And how clear is it, also, that the stretching forth of the Assyrian monarch's WINGS, that was to "fill the breadth of Immanuel's land," has that very symbolic meaning to which I have referred, viz., the overspreading of the land by his "mighty ones," or hosts of armed men, that the king of Babylon was to bring with him in his overflowing invasion! The knowledge of the way in which the Assyrian monarchs were represented, and of the meaning of that representation, gives additional force to the story of the dream of Cyrus the Great, as told by Herodotus.

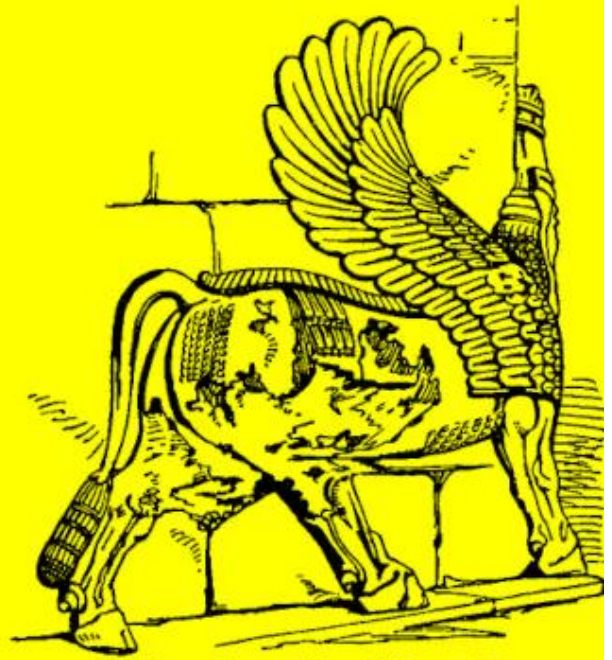


Fig. 14.



Bull from Nimrud. From VAUX, p. 236.

Fig. 15.



Bull from Persepolis. Ibid., p. 320.

Cyrus, says the historian, dreamt that he saw the son of one of his princes who was at the time in a distant province, with two great "wings on his shoulders, the one of which overshadow Asia, and the other Europe," from which he immediately concluded that he was organizing *rebellion* against him. The symbols of the Babylonians, whose capital Cyrus had taken, and to whose power he had succeeded, were entirely familiar to him, and if the "wings" were the symbols of sovereign power, and the possession of them implied the *lordship* over the *might*, or the armies of the empire, it is easy to see how very naturally any suspicions of disloyalty affecting the individual in question might take shape in the manner related, in the dreams of "him who might harbour these suspicions.

Now the understanding of this equivocal sense of "Baalaberin" can alone explain the remarkable statement of Aristophanes, that at the beginning of the world "the birds" were *first* created, and *then*, *after* their creation, came the "race of the blessed immortal gods." This has been regarded as either an atheistical or nonsensical utterance on the part of the poet, but with the true key applied to the language, it is found to contain an important historical fact. Let it only be borne in mind that "the birds" —that is, "the winged ones"—symbolized "the Lords of the mighty ones," and then the meaning is clear: viz., that men *first* "began to be mighty on the earth," and then, that the "Lords," or Leaders of "these mighty ones" were deified.

The knowledge of the mystic sense of this symbol accounts also for the origin of the story of Perseus, the son of Jupiter, miraculously born of Danaé, who did such wondrous things, and who passed from country to country on wings divinely bestowed on him. This equally casts light on the symbolic myths in regard to Bellerophon, and the feats which he performed on his winged horse, and their ultimate disastrous issue; how high he mounted in the air, and how terrible was his fall; and of Icarus, the son of Daedalus, who, flying on wax-cemented wings over the Icarian sea, had his wings melted off through his

too near approach to the sun, and so gave his name to the sea where he was supposed to have fallen. These fables all referred to those who trode, or were supposed to have trodden, in the steps of Nimrod, the first "Lord of the mighty ones," and who in that character was symbolized as equipped with wings.

Now, it is remarkable that, in the passage of Aristophanes already referred to, that speaks of the birds, or "the winged ones," being produced before the gods, we are informed that he from whom both "mighty ones" and gods derived their origin, was none other than the winged *boy* Cupid. Cupid, the son of Venus, occupied, as will afterwards be proved, in the mystic mythology the very same position as Nin, or Ninus, "the son," did to Rhea, the mother of the gods. As Nimrod was unquestionably the first of "the mighty ones" after the flood, this statement of Aristophanes, that the boy-god Cupid, himself a winged one, produced all the birds or "winged ones," while occupying the very position of Nin or Ninus, "the son," shows that in this respect also Ninus and Nimrod are identified. While this is the evident meaning of the poet, this also, in a strictly historical point of view, is the conclusion of the historian Apollodorus; for he states that "Ninus is Nimrod." And then, in conformity with this identity of Ninus and Nimrod, we find, in one of the most celebrated sculptures of ancient Babylon, Ninus and his wife Semiramis represented as actively engaged in the pursuits of the chase—"the quiver-bearing Semiramis" being a fit companion for "the mighty Hunter before the Lord."

Continued in [The Two Babylons II. Section II.—Sub-Section II. The Child in Egypt](#)

## **All chapters of The Two Babylons**

- [Introduction](#)
- [Chapter I. Distinctive Character of the Two Systems.](#)
- [Chapter II. Objects of Worship Section I.—Trinity in Unity.](#)
- [Chapter II. Section II.—The Mother and Child. Sub-Section I – The Child in Assyria](#)
- [Chapter II. Section II.—Sub-Section II. The Child in Egypt](#)
- [The Two Babylons II. Section II.—Sub-Section III. The Child in Greece](#)