

**THE CREATION-STORY OF
GENESIS I:
A SUMERIAN THEOGONY
AND COSMOGONY**

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The Creation-story of Genesis I: A Sumerian Theogony and Cosmogony by Hugo Radau

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HUGO RADAU

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THE HISTORY OF RELIGION

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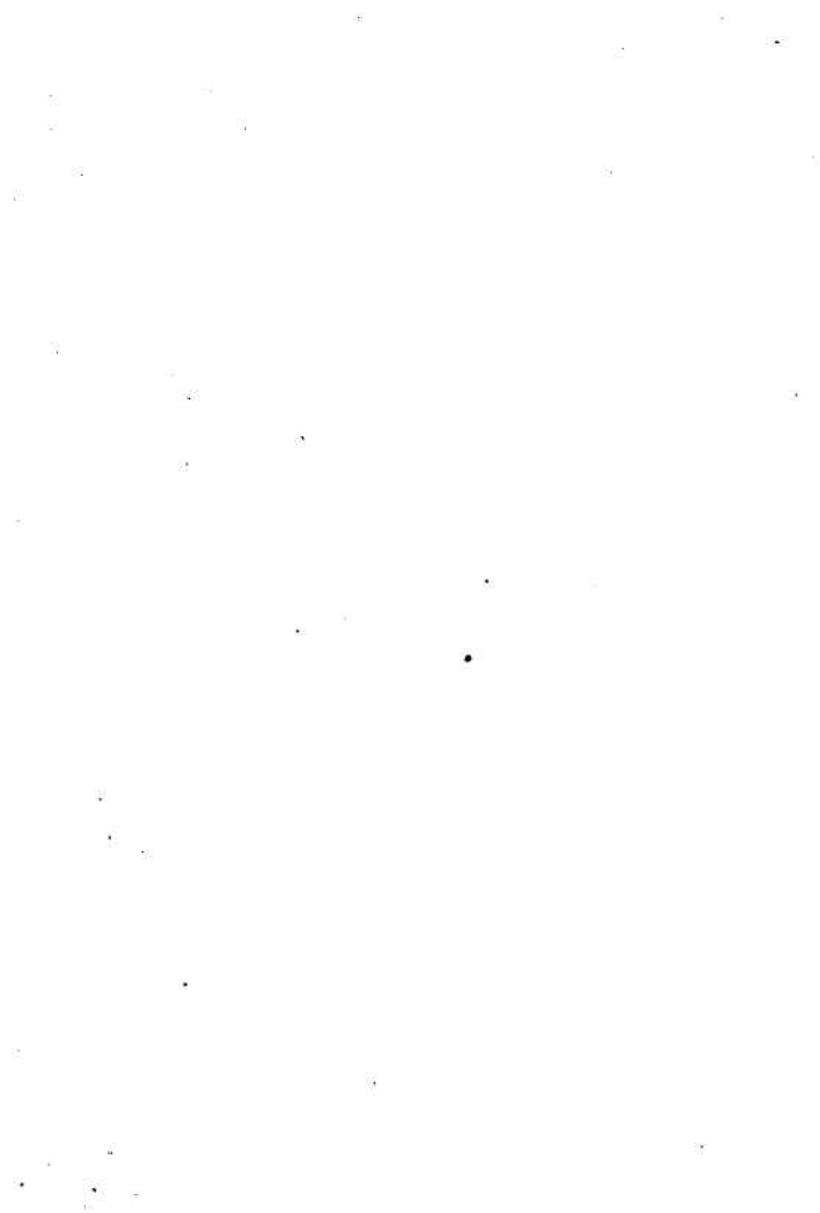
The
Creation-Story of Genesis I.

Sumerian Theogony and Cosmogony

By
DR. HUGO RÁDAU

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1908

TO
MISS NELLIE I. MADER
AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR



PREFACE.

THE Right Rev. D. S. Tattle, Bishop of Missouri, in delivering a sermon before a body of theological students on "How to make the people contribute liberally towards the support of the Church," remarked: "You must milk the cows! The more and the oftener you milk them, the more milk they will give." Although somewhat vulgar, yet the simile fits the case exactly. The same is true of the study of the Bible. The more we study it, the more we draw from it, the more it will yield: milk of life,—both for the soul and the brain! The same idea was also expressed by Dr. Martin Luther who compared the Bible to a beautiful and fruitful tree. The more and the oftener we pluck its fruit, the more it will give us.

But not everybody knows "how to milk," nor does everybody know "how to pluck the fruits." If done carelessly and thoughtlessly, the "milking" as well as the "plucking of the fruit" may become dangerous,—we may fall from the tree! If there are some who thus fell from the tree while trying to pluck its fruit, who will dare to say that it was the tree's fault that "the plucker" fell down? Was it not, on the contrary, the plucker's own carelessness, his own fault?

Exactly so it is with the "*Higher Criticism*." Higher criticism, if thoughtlessly and carelessly applied to the Bible, will and must be hurtful: not for the Bible, however,—for it will remain undaunted,—but for him who aspires to be a "higher critic." And how many there are who want to be what they cannot be: higher critics! A true higher critic's aim is *not to destroy* the Bible, but to UNDERSTAND it,—understand it *historically*. Thus he will apply the higher critical methods as given by "*history*." *In history the divine will is carried out*. The Bible when thus "read in the light of history" will yield fruits of which nobody ever dreamed,—fruits ripened in ages past and saved for our present times to gather.

Indeed, the Bible is a wonderful tree with manifold fruits: tiny shoots have been engrafted on it from time to time by different gardeners,—shoots taken from other trees raised on foreign soil. These gardeners belonged to a people that was not surrounded by a "Chinese Wall," nor were they blind, deaf, or dumb. They had eyes and saw, ears and heard, mouths and spoke. And what they saw and

heard and spoke they deposited in the Bible. Thus it becomes at once the task of the "higher critic" to trace these little shoots to their original soil and to inquire from whence they were taken and by whom and at what time they were engrafted. And if we find that this or that little shoot was taken from North or South Israelitic soil, from Egyptian, Babylonian, or Persian soil,—does the tree lose thereby its wonderful beauty? Shall we not, on the contrary, admire it all the more? And to have traced with the help of "little clay tablets" one of these tiny shoots to its native soil is the joy of the author.

The greater part of the following pages appeared in *The Monist* for July, 1902 (Vol. XII., pp. 568-625). It was found necessary in order to explain certain "attributes" of the gods to touch shortly upon the Sumerian cosmology. Also the Old Arabian pantheon has been taken in by way of "corroboration." Jensen's *Kosmologie* and Jastrow's *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* were not accessible to the author, and therefore could not be quoted.

It only remains for the author to thank most cordially Dr. Paul Carus and Mr. T. J. McCormack, editors of *The Open Court* and *The Monist*, not only for their many valuable suggestions and corrections when preparing the MS. for the press, but also for the promptness with which it has been printed.

HUGO RADAU.

WATERLOO, ILL., JUNE, 1902.

THE CREATION-STORY OF GENESIS I.

A SUMERIAN THEOGONY AND COSMOGONY.

MYTHS IN THE BIBLE—is a subject which has recently received the greatest attention from Biblical scholars. Professors Gunkel¹ and Zimmern² have investigated the subject in its various aspects, and Dr. Paul Carus³ has discussed it so thoroughly that hardly anything is left which has not been adverted to by them. The following investigation is based upon a direct study of the ancient Babylonian inscriptions, though the results reached by my predecessors and a thorough acquaintance with their method of investigation is presupposed here. For the sake of completeness, however, I may be permitted to recapitulate in a few words the chief data brought out by their investigations, confining myself here to the myth of the first chapter of Genesis.

The original account of Gen. i. must have contained the so-called Jahveh-Tehom myth found in other parts of the Old Testament. This myth represents Jahveh as fighting with a dragon, called either Rahab or Leviathan or serpent. Jahveh overcomes this dragon, divides it and forms out of the two halves "the waters that are above the firmament" and "the waters that are below the firmament." The Biblical dragon has been identified with the

¹ *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*. Göttingen, 1893. Also his new *Commentary on Genesis* (the *Introduction* has been published by the Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago).

² "Biblische und Babylonische Urgeschichte" in *Der alte Orient*, Vol II., Heft 3. Leipzig, 1901.

³ "The Fairy-Tale Element in the Bible," in *The Monist* for April and July, 1900.