

considerable skill and ingenuity. Clay was a material with which they must have been familiar from their original settlement in the country, and which, from the time when they first fashioned it into bricks, they must have perceived to be adapted also for other purposes. The clay used is of a coarse kind; it is mixed with chopped straw to give it cohesion; and it is roughly moulded by the hand into the required lamp or drinking vessel. In two or three respects only can it be said that the Babylonians of the first period exhibit more than a rudimentary acquaintance with the arts and appliances which go to make up what moderns understand by civilized life. Among these are especially the engraving of hard gems, and the manufacture of delicate textile fabrics. Hard stones, well cut, bearing upon them representations of human forms fairly rendered, belong to almost the very earliest period whereto the Babylonian monuments reach, and the figures upon these stones are clothed in dresses which are as elaborate as those of Nebuchadnezzar's age. It seems that the art of working gems, of cutting them into shape with a wheel or disc, and then engraving them with an iron implement dipped in emery powder, must have been a very early discovery of the Babylonian people; they must also, at a very remote date, have been able to weave linen, muslin, or silk of a very fine texture, and to construct dresses of these materials scarcely less elaborate than those worn in their palmiest days by the Egyptians and Assyrians.

The writer of the above quotation is a believer in evolution, and the article is written with the view to prove an extreme antiquity for the civilization of Babylon, Egypt, and Assyria. This will account for the appearance of inconsistency in the statements. After speaking of the Babylonians having only a rudimentary acquaintance with the arts, he declares that in some of the highest types of what moderns call civilization they were equal to the Egyptians and Assyrians in their palmiest days. The quotation is made that the reader may understand some of the things which the Jaredites were conversant with when they left their Babylonish countrymen, and to prove also that the most ancient settlers of America were not savages. Time works great and devastating changes upon all things human. What appears now as a heap of rubbish, or a dull mound, as unimportant as an ant-hill, was once a gorgeous palace, an imposing temple, or some other monument of dazzling architecture.

In proof of this we quote a few passages from page 425 of "Museum of Antiquities," giving an account of the "Explorations of Niebuhr and Rich."

"The immense mounds of brick and rubbish which marked the sites of Babylon and Nineveh had been used as quarries by the inhabitants of the surrounding country. The boundary (of Nineveh), which may be perfectly traced all round, now looks like an embankment of earth or rubbish, or small elevation, and has attached to it, and in its line, at several places, mounds of greater size and solidity. The largest of these is supposed to be the monument of Nimus. This mound has revealed the grandest and most stupendous remains of ancient Nineveh."

These heaps of earth and rubbish form the outside covering which time has spread over the ruins of the mightiest city of the old world.

Babylon, and her twin sister, Nineveh, once glorying in pomp and power, haughty and magnificent "that said in her heart 'I am' and there is none beside me" presents no more attractive features to the eye than the rounded earth of an ancient grave. In like manner the earth heaps, the uncouth and lonesome mounds, scattered upon the waste places, or hidden in the umbrageous solitudes of the forests of America,

entomb the grandeur, the magnificent and cunning works of the best and wisest men, the mightiest and most populous cities, the most polished and lofty civilization that has existed upon the earth. These statements may provoke a smile of incredulity, but their truth will yet be verified to the world.

The leading and primal idea of the import of sacrifice is that of voluntary outlay—the parting with something valued by the donor for a specific purpose. This motive seems to be imputed to the Deity by one of the sacred writers:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John, 3: 16.

The law of eternal justice requires an equivalent to be paid for what is received. The gist of the sacrificial system prescribed by Moses was this principle of compensation. It was designed to teach the Israelites that if they received a favor and blessing they must earn it; if they transgressed a law they must atone for it, or pay the penalty. In this plan the divine law of justice is magnified and in another honored. But this sacred and eternal law of sacrifice was seized upon by the wicked and degraded to serve selfish ends. A human being or some deified object was made to stand in place of the law, and these adopted gods received the honor and worship which belonged alone to the Creator.

The great charm of idolatry, and that which allured the masses to its disgusting orgies, was its indulgence of the gross and sensual passions of the flesh.

The service of the true God is never acceptable to Him unaccompanied with repentance, purity and righteousness; but these are conditions which the false gods never required of their devotees. The people attributed to their deities the weakness, passions and love of gratification common among mortals; and hence their religious worship tended to debase rather than to elevate. The gods were supposed to be pleased and flattered by the sacrifices made to honor them. The ancient idea of the nature of the gods was that they were the souls of illustrious characters, who had tabernacled in the flesh; that everything possesses a spiritual identity; and that the spirit of the animals, birds, and also the spiritual parts of vegetables and fruits immolated and offered in sacrifice ministered to the sustenance of the spirit of the dead person, just as the fleshly and tangible parts of things used for food sustain the body when living.

The notion concerning human sacrifices was that the spirit of the victim went into the service of the person or god to whom they were offered. This is said to be also the doctrine taught by Confucius, and that it is believed in by the Chinese of modern times. Hence the practice of the Chinese at the funerals of their people putting a roasted pig, chickens, and other eatables upon the grave, is that the spirit which inhabited these objects might be used by the soul of the dead person while upon the journey to the spirit world. It is in the nature of a sacrificial offering to their departed friend.

Accounts are given of similar ideas prevailing among some of the ancient American races.

The following is taken from page 267 of Pre-historic America, and is said of one of the Maya tribes of Yucatan:

"A deep excavation was dug in the center of the town and filled with water, an altar, reached by a flight of steps cut in the rock, rose at the very edge of the precipice. Trees and shrubs surrounded it on every hand, and perpetual silence reigned. In the days of Volan's first successors, in accordance with the instructions of the messenger of the gods, nothing was offered up but animals, flowers, or incense; but by degrees the people went back to the most revolting sacrifices. If they were threatened with any calamity, such as famine, or pestilence, the populace hastened to gather round the altar and to appease the anger of the gods with human victims. These victims were generally young virgins; they marched triumphantly to their fate, arrayed in rich apparel and surrounded by an imposing escort of priests. Whilst the fumes of the incense rose towards heaven, the priests explained to the virgins what they were to ask of the gods before whom they were to appear. Then when the incense was dying out upon the altar, they were flung down into the abyss, whilst the prostrate crowd went on offering up their ardent petitions."

We are not told who the gods were that were honored by these revolting sacrifices, but some were represented by men, others by animals.

On p. 304, we read concerning the early races of Central America:—

"Some time before his death, a chief pointed out those of his wives who were to follow him, usually about seven. One was charged with the care of his sacred emerald labret that the chief wore hung from his lower lip; another with that of his trinkets; a third was his cup-bearer. Two were destined to serve him, and to prepare for him food suitable to the rank which he was to retain in his new life. Those who could be most useful to him were chosen from among his slaves. When the victims of a higher sort were ranged round the funeral pile, one of the relatives of the deceased addressed them at length thanking them for the services rendered their master during his life, and urging them to serve him with the same fidelity in the new world they were both to enter. When the body of the chief was completely consumed the fire was put out, with the blood of the victims reserved for that purpose. The ashes, calcined bones, and fragments of ornaments were collected and placed in an urn, and this urn was placed at the feet of one of the gods."

It is no criterion that because a people may be rude and savage that they are indifferent to religion. History proves the opposite of this to be the truth. A writer quoted by the Marquis de Nadaillac, Pre. His. Am. p. 280, gives an account of an ancient race called Chichimecs, who were contemporary with the Toltecs. They seem to resemble in some respects the Lamanites. They wandered about completely naked, or wearing only the skins of beasts, they lived in caves, they divided their time between hunting the wild animals of the forest, and harassing their peaceful neighbors by open war, or stealthy raids for plunder. In war they were extremely ferocious and cruel. They put their prisoners to the most horrible torture; they made a practice of drinking the blood of their victims.

"Rude as they were, the Chichimecs had a religion. They adored the sun as the supreme god, and they also worshipped lightning, represented by the god Nixcoatl, (the serpent of the clouds), who, like the antique Jupiter, was figured with thunderbolts in his hands."

The religion of the most ancient Eastern nations comprised in its systems not only idolatry but secret works of darkness, and of murders, and other abominations. These secret combinations were had among the antediluvians, and revived among the descendants of Noah soon after the flood. In the very nature of the case no record would be kept of the workings of this satanic