

this or not. If the question is vital, I do not think it would take me long to find an expert on the subject whom I might ask, or myself to consult books by real scholars in that field. I do not think, however, that this question is particularly important, if we realize the fact that, many centuries before Roman Catholic missionaries visited Japan, Nestorian missionaries had carried Christianity clear across Asia. There were at one time hundreds of Christian churches all through China, before severe persecution wiped them out. This fact has been largely forgotten, but in recent years scholars have patiently gathered many scattered bits of undeniable evidence in relation to it. A friend of mine is at present occupied in writing a book on that very subject.

Since Christianity was widespread throughout Asia long before the Roman Catholic missionaries went to Japan in the 16th century, it would not be at all strange if such elements as the madonna and child should have been taken over from it. I doubt, however, that such a worship has played any outstanding part in the leading religions of Japan or of any other country of eastern Asia.

Your first question reads: 1) "How do we *know* the Hebrew Scriptures were not derived from Babylonia? Can we prove it?"

I have spent hundreds of hours reading Babylonian literature in the original Cuneiform script. Anyone who has done so is in a position to say at once that the points of similarity between the Hebrew Scriptures and the Babylonian literature are comparatively rare. The differences are so great that no real scholar would make such a blanket statement as to say that the Hebrew Scriptures were derived from the Babylonian literature. Most non-Christian scholars today would say that certain things in the Hebrew Scriptures were derived from Babylonia, but the particular things that they would point out would be a comparatively small part of the whole.

The Bible tells us that Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees, and went from there to Haran, another great center of Akkadian culture, where he stayed for many years. Thus his whole background was one of "Babylonian" culture. There were frequent contacts between Israel and Mesopotamia all through the later history. It is natural to expect to find many interrelationships between Hebrew and Babylonian culture and much use of Babylonian names and Babylonian expressions. Mesopotamian