

THE
PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

No. 39.—July, 1889.

I.

DR. SHEDD'S SYSTEM OF THEOLOGY.

IN the three brief pages of reference to American theology, with which Dorner concludes his *History of Protestant Theology*, that eminent author informs us that, so far as he is able to survey it, theology on this continent "has as yet no connected literary history." We are gravely told that "the numberless parties" existing here, mainly engaged in external labors and conflicts, "have not as yet been able to do much for the advancement of theological science." Yet the hope is expressed that by "the introduction of English and Scotch, and especially of German theology, now abundantly taking place, and transporting into the country many elements of culture," theology may hereafter attain among us not merely a recognizable existence, but also "a new and even an independent form and combination"—a form and combination which somewhere in the future, provided these favorable conditions continue, "may in many respects resemble the theological development of the Church in the first centuries." But at present, in the estimate of Dorner, "America is as yet merely on the threshold of its theological existence."

But what shall be said of a history of Protestant theology written within twenty years which makes no mention whatever of that remarkable anthropological controversy, involving many of the most fundamental principles in evangelical Protestantism, which agitated not only New England but the whole country during the latter half of the eighteenth and the first decades of the present century—a controversy which gave to the Protestant world the treatises of Edwards on Original Sin and the Freedom of the Will, and a large

IV.

THE BABYLONIAN FLOOD-LEGEND AND THE HEBREW RECORD OF THE DELUGE.

IN the autumn of 1872 Mr. George Smith, while at work in the British Museum examining the clay tablets which had been exhumed at Nineveh, read, on a large fragment which he picked up, the words: "The mountain of Nisir stopped the ship. I sent forth a dove and it left. The dove went and turned, and a resting-place it did not find, and it returned." Perceiving at once the resemblance to the story of Noah, he began a search to find the remainder of the tale—a search which he prosecuted unweariedly for two years, not only among the thousands of broken tablets in the Museum, but also, through the liberality, first, of the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*, then of the trustees of the Museum, on the site of ancient Nineveh itself. Success crowned his efforts. Two years after the discovery of the first fragment he had secured portions of three distinct copies of the tale, had established an almost complete text, and had produced a fair translation. Since his lamented death several additional fragments have happily come to light to add to the completeness of the text and to assist in its interpretation.

The story, as the tablet on which it is recorded itself states, forms the eleventh episode of a national epic in celebration of the deeds of Izdubar, king of Erech, supposed by many to be the Nimrod of the Hebrew Scriptures. The great hero of the tale, having been at length smitten with a torturing disease on account of his insolence toward the gods, resolved to seek his ancestor, Adrahasis, who had been translated to the gods, was then dwelling "at the mouth of the rivers," and had knowledge of life and death. After a long and toilsome journey he finally reached the desired locality, and Adrahasis stood before him—a man of a generation long past, yet with the freshness and vigor of youth. Astonished Izdubar exclaimed: "How camest thou, Adrahasis, to see life amid the gods?"

"I will open to you, Izdubar," replied Adrahasis, "the history of my deliverance, and also the oracle of the gods [with reference to the cure of your disease] will I declare. You know the city of Surippak, which stands on the Euphrates? That city was

old when the gods who dwell therein were moved at heart to bring about a flood. The god Ea, however, deliberated with them, and he revealed unto me their purpose [by means of a dream (l., 177)]. 'Man of Surippak, Son of Ubaratutu,' said he, 'tear down the house,* build a ship, despise property, and preserve life. Bring into the ship seed of life of every kind. As for the ship which thou shalt build, 600 cubits shall be its length, 120 cubits each its breadth and height; provide it also with a covering (to protect it) from the ocean.' I paid attention and said to god Ea: 'O my lord, that which thou hast commanded, I will respect by carrying out.'

On the morrow [preparations were begun]. On the fifth day I laid the framework—120 cubits its height, 120 cubits the extent of its upper part. Its interior I divided; defects I made good. Three sars of bitumen I poured over the outside, and likewise three sars of bitumen over the inside. When the ship was completed I gathered together all that I possessed, and took it on board—silver, gold, and seed of life of every kind; all my men servants and maid-servants, the cattle and the beast of the field, and the artisans.

When the sun-god had at length brought around the appointed time, a voice (?) spake: 'In the evening the heavens will rain destruction. Enter into the ship and shut the door. The set time has come, in the evening the heavens will rain destruction.' During the day I trembled. I entered the ship, closed the door to shut it in, and committed the immense structure, with its cargo, to Puzur-Sadu-rabu, the pilot.

At length the female Mû-sêri-ina-namâri arose, a dark cloud ascending from the horizon. In the midst thereof the storm-god rolled the thunder, while the gods Nebo and Sarru marched on before. The spirits who bear the throne went over hill and dale, the mighty pest-god tore loose the whirlwind, the god Adar caused the streams to overflow their banks, the storm-god raised billows which reached to heaven, and all light was turned to darkness. As for men, none regarded his neighbor, people had no care for each other.

The gods also were terrified at the flood, sought refuge, ascended to the heaven of god Anu [the heaven of heavens], and crouched at the wall like a dog in his lair. Then the goddess Istar, like a woman in travail, cried out—the sublime goddess called with loud voice: 'Mankind which was, is become mud, the very evil which I foretold in the presence of the gods and just as I foretold it to them. A war for the annihilation of my people I declared it to be. I brought forth men, but not that like the fry of fish they should fill the sea.' The gods, together with the spirits of the subterranean regions, wept with her, sitting in a place together in tears, their lips covered, fearing the future.

Six days and seven nights, † wind, storm, and rain prevailed; on the seventh day the rain abated, the flood rested from the struggle in which, like a woman in travail, it had writhed, the sea withdrew to its bed, and the violent wind and the flood ceased.

I looked on the sea, weeping loudly that the dwelling-places of man were become mud; that like beams, one man as another floated about. I opened a window; and, as the daylight fell upon my face, I shrank back and sat down weeping; over my cheeks the tears coursed, for I beheld in every direction a wide expanse, sea; a bit of land, however, rising to the height of 12 measures.

To the country of Nitsir the ship took its course. A mountain of that land stranded the vessel and kept it from moving farther. On the first day and on the second day the mountain held the ship, on the third day and on the fourth day likewise, on the fifth and sixth days likewise. When the seventh day came I released a dove (?). The dove flew hither and thither; there was no resting-place, so it returned. Next I sent forth a

* In order to obtain building materials?

† So text of Delitzsch. See, however, *Expositor*, September, 1888, p. 236-37; where true text is said to be *Vi ur-ra u mu-sha-a-ti*, six days and nights.

swallow. The swallow also flew hither and thither, and, as there was no resting-place, returned. Then I sent forth a raven. The raven flew away and, when he saw that the waters had fallen, he approached, alighting but not returning.*

I then sent forth [all the animals] to the four winds. On the summit of the mountain I poured out a libation and offered a drink offering.† I set vessels by sevens, and underneath them spread sweet cane, cedar, and (lightning) herbs. The gods smelled the savor, and like flies gathered about the offerer.

When the goddess Istar arrived, she raised aloft the great bows [as some translate the word] which the god of the sky had made for her adornment (?)—these gods had a crystal ornament—and said : † ‘ Never will I forget these days, I will think of them and to eternity not forget them. Let all the gods come to the libation except Bêl, for he inconsiderately caused the deluge and consigned my people to destruction. But Bêl came also ; and, when he saw the ship, was filled with wrath against gods and angels. ‘ What soul has escaped ? ’ he cried ; ‘ not a man shall survive the destruction. ’ Then god Adar opened his mouth and spake to the valorous Bêl : ‘ None other than god Ea has done this thing. Ea knew [of our purpose] and [hath revealed] all. ’ Ea also opened his mouth and said to the valorous Bêl : ‘ Thou art the valorous chieftain of the gods. Why, why hast thou acted without reflection and caused the flood ? On the sinner lay his sin, on the evil-doer his evil deeds. Desist [from wrath] that he be not cut off ; be gracious also. Instead of causing a flood, send the lion and the hyena, famine and pestilence, and let them diminish men. And as for me, I did not reveal the purpose of the great gods ; I sent Adrahasis a dream and he perceived § the purpose of the gods. ’

Then Bêl became reasonable, went up into the ship, grasped my hand and lifted me up. He led up my wife also, and made her kneel at my side. Then turning to us he placed himself between us and blessed us, saying : ‘ Heretofore Adrahasis was a [mere] man ; now let him and his wife be exalted to equality with the gods, and let him dwell afar off at the mouth of the rivers. ’ Thereupon they took me away and placed me afar off at the mouth of the rivers. ” †

As is well known, Berosus, priest of Bêl in Babylon and a contemporary, according to Eusebius and Tatian, of Alexander the Great, also wrote an account of a flood. According to the extract which Eusebius made from the writings of Alexander Polyhistor, the statement of Berosus was to this effect :

“ The tenth king of the Chaldeans was called Xisuthrus. In his day happened a great deluge. The god Cronos appeared to him in a dream and said that on the fifteenth day of the month Dæsius mankind would be destroyed by a flood ; bade him therefore to engrave a history of the beginning, procedure, and conclusion of all things and deposit it in Sippara, the city of the sun ; to build a ship and embark with kith and kin ; to convey on board moreover food and drink, and drive in animals both winged and four-footed ; and having made all things ready, to sail away ; if asked whither he is sailing, to say, ‘ To the gods ; to pray for the good of mankind. ’

He did not neglect the admonition, but built a vessel five stadia in length and two in

* Or, the raven flew away and saw the abatement of the waters ; [thereupon] he eats, alights carefully, but does not return.

† Or possibly, built an altar (Haupt).

‡ That the speaker is Istar is proved by the phrase “ my people. ” Compare her previous address.

§ Being able to do so because pious (Haupt).

|| Such is essentially the cuneiform story. As here reproduced, it is slightly abridged ; chiefly, however, by the omission of mutilated lines and of sentences whose translation is still uncertain.

breadth ; put into it everything which had been ordered and took on board his wife, his children, and his kinsfolk.

The flood having occurred, as soon as it abated Xisuthrus sent forth certain birds ; but they, not finding food or any place where they might alight, returned to him to the vessel. After some days* Xisuthrus again dismissed the birds, and they now returned to the vessel with their feet muddy. Having sent them forth the third time, they came no more to the ship ; whence he judged that land had appeared. He then pushed apart a portion of the covering† of the vessel and, seeing that the ship was stranded on a mountain, left it with his wife and daughter and the pilot. He then worshipped on the earth ; built an altar and sacrificed to the gods. Afterward, with those who had come out of the vessel with him, he disappeared.

When those with Xisuthrus did not return, they who had remained in the vessel quitted it and sought him, calling him by name. Xisuthrus himself, indeed, appeared to them no more ; but a voice came from the air admonishing them, as a thing necessary, to be religious ; for on account of his piety he is on his way to dwell with the gods, and his wife and daughter and the pilot partake of the same honor. He told them, moreover, to return to Babylonia, and, as decreed, recover the writings from Sippara and give them to mankind ; moreover, that where they now are is the land of Armenia. When they heard these words, they offered sacrifices to the gods and journeyed on foot to Babylonia.

Of this ship which was stranded in Armenia, a portion still remains in the Gordyæan Mountains of Armenia ; from it people get bitumen, which they scratch off and use for averting evil."

The question of the relation of the subject-matter of the cuneiform tale to the story related by Berosus may be dismissed with a word. Beyond question the two accounts relate to the same event. Each tale originated (as will presently be proved) in Babylonia, each tells of a flood in Babylonia, each dates it in the earliest ages, each describes similar occurrences and in similar order, and in each the names of the hero and his father are etymologically the same ; for, as Smith pointed out, Xisuthrus is but the Grecized form of the cuneiform Adra-hasis, the component parts being transposed ;‡ while Ôtiartes or Opartes corresponds to the cuneiform Ubara-tutu.

But the relation of the cuneiform account to the story told by Berosus is of small interest compared with the question of its bearing on the criticism of the Hebrew narrative.

Preliminary to such an investigation, it is necessary to know (1) the relation of the subject-matter of the cuneiform account to the del-

* According to the extract which Eusebius takes from Abydenus, Berosus stated that the birds were sent forth on the third day after the cessation of the rain, and the second time after other three days.

† Properly, stitching ; that which is stitched or united ; hence a covering of cloth or skin as being stitched together, in distinction from a roof of planks. Cp. the Hebrew word in Gen. viii. 13, elsewhere used for the covering of skins wherewith the tabernacle was roofed.

‡ TSBA, 1874, pp. 531-33 ; Haupt, *Sintfluth*, S. 23, Anm. 7 ; KAT, 2te Auf., S. 65 f.).

uge recorded in Genesis ; (2) the date and origin of the cuneiform account ; and (3) the character of the cuneiform story.

In regard to the relation of the subject-matter of the two accounts, it is noticeable that the names of the leading persons are respectively different—so different as to defy identification. The name Noah bears no outward resemblance to Xisuthrus ; and Ubara-tutu, or, translated into Assyrian, Kidin-Marduk—*i.e.*, Servant of god Mero-dach, none to Lamech. Moreover, the men themselves are differently described. Xisuthrus belongs to a line of kings, Noah to a line of men represented simply as fathers of families. Nevertheless, here is a striking coincidence ; according to Berosus, Xisuthrus, the hero of the flood, was the tenth antediluvian king of Chaldea ; and in the Bible, Noah is the tenth antediluvian patriarch (Gen. v. ; 1 Chro. i. 1-4 ; Jude 14).*

The home of the hero may be the same according to both accounts. The cuneiform tablet expressly states that it was Babylonia. Adra-hasis or Xisuthrus was a native of " Surippak, a city situated on the Euphrates," whose patron deity was the Babylonian god Ea (II. R. 60, 20 a, b). The same locality is indicated by Berosus, who states that Xisuthrus was a Chaldean, the last of the ten antediluvian kings of Chaldea and the son of a king from the city of Larancha ; that before entering the ark, he buried a written record of the world's history in the city of Sippara in Babylonia ; and that after the subsidence of the waters, the ark having landed in Armenia, he ordered his companions to *return* to Babylonia, which they did, and again founded Babylonia. In the Hebrew account, as is well known, the residence of Noah at the time of the flood is left indefinite. But since no migration of mankind from the neighborhood of the Tigris and Euphrates (Gen. ii. 14) is recorded, the region watered by these streams is suggested as still the place of his abode ; likewise, if no stress be laid on possible changes in the face of the earth wrought by the flood, Noah's use of pitch in the construction of the ark suggests the bitumen pits of Babylonia. While therefore the Hebrew narrative makes no definite mention of Noah's home, its indirect references harmonize with the statements of the Babylonian story and admit the possibility that Babylonia was the locality whence Noah sailed.

Each of the three narratives contains a description of the vessel, the Hebrew and cuneiform records devoting large space thereto, whereas Berosus mentions but few features, and these for the most

* For comparison of the names of the ten antediluvian kings of Chaldea with those of the ten patriarchs, see Delitzsch, *Paradies*, S. 149.

part incidentally. Now in this description, in reporting the dimensions of the ship, no two accounts agree. According to Berosus, its length was more than three thousand feet (almost five times that of the "Great Eastern"), and its breadth more than twelve hundred. On the cuneiform tablet (l. 24) the length is given as 600 cubits; the traces which remain at least "lend themselves very well to the ideogram for . . . 600." The width and height were equal, each being 120 cubits.* The ship of the inscription was thus in rude outline a rectangular parallelepiped. The Hebrew, on the other hand, assigns but three hundred cubits to the length, and makes the width fifty and the height thirty cubits. In other words, if the same measure is to be understood by cubit, the ship of Adrahasis was twice as long as the ark of Noah, more than twice as wide, and four times as high.

Possibly, however, there is no discrepancy between these two records as to length. Since the Babylonian "u," commonly rendered cubit, equalled 27 centimetres (PAOS, 1888, p. XC.), the length of the vessel was 531 feet. The Hebrew cubit is judged to have been a fraction over 1 foot 9 inches, which would yield 547 feet for the length of the ark. According to this reckoning, the length of the vessel is the same in both cuneiform and Hebrew accounts. But the proportions for the entire ship are different; the ship of the inscription being a little wider and twice as high as the ark.

But in whatsoever respects the cuneiform and Hebrew records may agree or disagree as to the dimensions of the vessel, their description of its origin and general structure seems to be similar. According to each, the ship was built by divine direction and according to a divinely furnished plan, was divided into compartments (l. 59), provided with a door (l. 84 and 89) and window (l. 129), pitched within and without with bitumen (l. 62-3), and roofed over to protect it from the sea (l. 26; cp. Gen. viii. 13). And yet how different the vessels still! The ark (to judge from the name) was apparently a sort of raft, with sides and a covering which was not wooden, and drifted about uncontrolled on the waters; whereas the cuneiform represents the vessel as a "ship" which a pilot guided on its course.

In this vessel certain men and beasts were to find safety. But here again the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts disagree. There is a marked difference in the *personnel*. Noah went into the ark, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him (Gen. vii. 7),

* Haupt, PAOS, 1888, p. XC.

“ that is, eight souls” (1 Pet. iii. 20) ; but Xisuthrus takes with him, according to Berosus, not only his wife and children, including a daughter, but also his kith and kin generally, and in addition a pilot ; or, following the cuneiform report, his wife (of children not a word is said), his men-servants and maid-servants, the artisans and a pilot.

But this divergence between the accounts, great though it be, is of no validity as an argument against the similar origin and ultimate identity of the Hebrew and Babylonian reports. For, in the first place, the difference is but a difference in detail and conception ; the Hebrew and Babylonian narratives agree in that the hero was authorized to save not himself alone, but his household as well. In the second place, the reports transmitted by the two peoples agree in a characteristic feature and essential idea ; according to both the man was commanded to take with him on board living creatures of every sort, or, in the phraseology of the inscription, “ seed of life of every kind ” (l. 22 and 79) ; and according to both, the purpose, which is the essential idea of the story, was to “ keep seed alive ” on the earth (Gen. vii. 3 and line 21).

The two accounts evidently differ furthermore as to the duration of the flood ; for while the Hebrew writer represents the storm as raging forty days, the cuneiform account allows but seven. Data for further comparison are wanting.

The accounts also disagree as to the landing-place of the vessel. The mountains of Ararat is the locality assigned by the Hebrew writer ; a name that of old—certainly as far back as the period of the Assyrian Empire—belonged to the plain of the Araxes. But the vessel of Adrahasis stranded on Mount Nitsir. In the ninth century before Christ a mountain was known to the Assyrians by this name. It stood east of the little Zab River ; 300 miles indeed south of Ararat, but yet in the same mountainous region. Berosus fixes upon still a third locality, one of the Gordyæan Mountains,* which lie east of the Euphrates, near the river. It is almost equally distant from Ararat and Nitsir, but still in the same general region of country.

Thus, as stated, the accounts are at variance with each other as to the duration of the flood and to the landing-place of the vessel. Nevertheless, of themselves and alone, these contradictions would not form a valid objection to identifying the subject-matter of the

* Now called the Djudi Mountains. According to Smith : “ The present tradition of the country places the mountain of the ark in the Jebel Djudi, opposite Djezireh ” (Assyr. Disc., p. 217).

Hebrew and Babylonian stories. They may be but different versions of the same tale; for the report of Berosus and the cuneiform tablet are certainly descriptive of the same event, and yet even they disagree in both these points.

The mission of the birds is the picturesque incident of each tale. Noah sent forth a "raven, which went to and fro until the waters were dried up from off the earth." But only the Hebrew narrator records the mission of this raven, neither Berosus nor the inscription mentioning any bird which, sent forth first of all, did not return. After seven days (as may be gathered from viii. 10) Noah sent forth a dove, which "found no rest for the sole of her foot and returned to the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth." Berosus relates that several birds were sent forth, which, "finding no food nor any place where they might alight, returned to the vessel," for "round about was a gaping sea." The tale, as told by the inscription, is nearer the Hebrew story. On the seventh day after the vessel stranded, Adrahasis released a dove, which, finding no rest for her foot, returned. Here certainly the testimony remarkably concurs. After another seven days Noah again sent forth the dove, which returned in the evening with an olive leaf in her mouth. In parallelism with this Berosus says that, some days after the first release of the birds, Xisuthrus again sent them forth, and that they returned with muddy feet. According to the inscription, Adrahasis dismissed this time a *swallow*, which, finding no rest, like the dove returned. Finally, after another seven days, Noah again sent forth the dove, which did not return. Berosus relates that Xisuthrus made a third trial with the birds, and that they did not return. The inscription states that Adrahasis finally released a raven, which, perceiving that the waters had decreased, did not return to the ship. What shall we say to these things? The employment of the birds for the purpose of discovering whether the earth was again habitable or not is unique. In comparison therewith the differences of detail in narrating the incident lose significance. Undeniably there exists between the Hebrew and Babylonian stories a common and essential feature.

But this fact, important though it be, by no means defines the relation of the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts. Before that relation can be fully determined, the stories must be compared in respect to two other events. The first is the adoration paid by the saved for their deliverance. On leaving the vessel an offering was made. All accounts agree in that; they differ, however, as to the kind of offering. The Hebrew writer says: "Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and

offered burnt offerings on the altar." With this statement of the Hebrew narrator Berosus agrees, saying that Xisuthrus, having erected an altar, offered sacrifices to the gods. But the Babylonian tradition in its other form, as transmitted by the cuneiform tablet, makes no mention of sacrifice, stating only that Adrahasis poured out libations.

The remaining event in which the two accounts are to be compared is that occurrence which has ever lent radiance to the Hebrew story, and gloriously culminates an episode in the history of salvation—the bow in the cloud. Of it the cuneiform account, *as it stands*, contains no mention. Neither does the story as told by Berosus.

A passage of the inscription is, it is true, commonly translated thus: "When the goddess Istar arrived [at the place of offering], she raised aloft the great bows which the god Anu had made."

Now the goddess Istar was patron of the hunt, and is called "The Archeress" (V. R. 9, 9-10). Moreover, the ideogram which is used defies translation. True, it does not mean bow at all; but it would have that signification if a single additional punch had been made with the stylus in the clay—an oversight of the copyist, perhaps. Furthermore, the objects which the goddess raised on high are said to have been made by Anu, the god of the sky; a beautiful, picturesque, apt description of the origin of the iris arch as it glows forth and spans the canopy of heaven, appearing the very handiwork of the sky. And why should not Istar be represented as raising more than one bow aloft? Do not two rainbows often fill the heavens with glory at the same time?

But however plausible and attractive this theory may be, it must obviously be received with caution. (1) The *rainbow* is not known to have been an attribute of Istar, the archeress. (2) It necessitates the assumption of a copyist's error. (3) The sign actually used is familiar in several significations; and though none of its known meanings yields sense in the passage before us, a meaning yet to be discovered may suit the context. (4) Again, suspicion is cast upon the translation of the sign as "bow" by the next statement of the text, "these gods have crystal ornaments (?);" a statement which is apparently parenthetical, made in explanation of the objects possessed by Istar. (5) Finally, the Hebrew narrator does not state that at the *time of Noah's sacrifice*, after the subsidence of the waters and months after the cessation of the rain, a bow spanned the heavens.

Out of this mass of agreements and disagreements there may be gathered the incidents common to the two accounts. They are these:

By reason of man's wickedness,* God decreed the destruction of all flesh, both man and beast, by a flood. The divine purpose was revealed to one mortal. This man was instructed to build a vessel of certain dimensions and according to a divinely given plan, to pitch it within and without with bitumen, to stock it with food (Gen. vi. 21 ; cp. l. 41 of Smith's text, Haupt, l. 42), to take into it with him his wife and family and likewise living creatures of every kind, not only domestic animals, but also wild beasts and birds (cp. Gen. vii. 14 ; l. 43 of Smith ; l. 81 and 140), in order "to keep seed alive upon the face of the earth." The man did so (Gen. vi. 22 and l. 41-76, where the execution of the command is related in detail). When the advent of the deluge drew nigh, the man was divinely warned now at length to gather his family and the animals together and to enter the ark, for the set time of the rain is at hand. Again the man obeyed and entered the vessel. On the same day (Gen. vii. 11 and 13 ; l. 87 seq.) from the clouds of heaven torrents of rain fell and the fountains of the great deep were broken up (cp. l. 98 and 101). The flood prevailed, and mankind was destroyed. After some time the storm ceased, the waters began to assuage, and the sea to withdraw to its bed. The ship at length stranded on a mountain, and, round about, the mountain-tops became visible (order differs in the two accounts). After waiting some days the man, in order to inform himself of the state of the water, began to send forth at intervals various birds (of which both accounts mention the raven and the dove), and at length learned that the waters were abated. The inmates of the vessel, both man and beast, having gone forth, gratitude for deliverance was manifested by a thank offering. And the Lord (or, in the Babylonian phraseology, the gods) smelled a sweet savor, and the Lord said : "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, . . . neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood." According to the Babylonian story, in the assembly of the gods, Ea pled with Bêl, saying : "[Hereafter] on the sinner lay his sin, on the evil-doer his evil deeds. . . . Instead of causing a flood, send the lion and the hyena, famine and pestilence, and let them diminish men."

Here, then, are the facts, and in reason they admit of but one conclusion. Stated in twofold manner this is :

1. The theme of the two accounts is the same ; the cuneiform and the Hebrew records describe the same event.

2. The Hebrew narrative, at least as a whole, has not been derived from the cuneiform ; the accounts are *independent save in their*

* So apparently the Babylonian, l. 170.

common origin. For, be it observed, the Hebrew story is not simply the cuneiform tale stripped of its polytheism, but a variant version ; for even after the removal of the polytheistic elements, the stories conflict. They contradict each other in the episode of the birds, as to their number, their kind, and the actions whereby the clew to the condition of the waters was furnished to the inmates. Moreover, whereas according to the Hebrew writer there were but eight persons in the ark, by whom the earth was re-peopled after the flood ; the cuneiform account reports that Adrahasis took on board with him his servants male and female, the friendly artisans and a pilot. Furthermore, the two accounts had a nationally separate existence, the one in Assyria, the other in Palestine ; both the cuneiform inscription and at least that portion of the Hebrew story most divergent therefrom admittedly antedating the exile. There certainly, therefore, lie before us two *independently transmitted* traditions of the same event.

With much less argumentation, the date and origin of the cuneiform account may be established. It belongs, *even in its present form*, to a period earlier, and probably very much earlier, than the seventh century B.C. The colophon impressed on the clay states that the tablet was the property of king Asur-bani-pal (Lesestücke, 3te. Aufl. S. 109, Z. 295). He reigned from 668 to 626 B.C. It is furthermore declared to be a copy of an older tablet (Z. 293) ; but the date of the original is not stated, and cannot be definitely determined.

It is certain, however, that the epic, of which the story of the deluge is an episode, came *in its present form word for word* from Sumir-Accad ; a fact established by the discovery of a bilingual list of words, gotten up to aid in translating this very poem from the Sumerian dialect of the early Babylonian language into the Assyrian (V. R. 21, No. 3 and 4 ; Delitzsch, Paradies S. 155). It is almost certain, moreover, that the epic was *cast into its present literary form* in Accadia and not elsewhere ; the scenes are laid in that land, and the several books of the poem have been so arranged that the subject-matter of each corresponds to the Accadian names of the months.* How early the story existed in Accadia in the form in which it appears on the tablet remains uncertain. But, at any rate, the essentials of the tale were current centuries before Asur-bani-pal's day. The appearance of Izdubar in engravings on

* As the Accadian months took their names from the signs of the Zodiac, the last statement may lose some force as an argument.

gems and signet-cylinders of the early Chaldean period, two or three thousand years before Christ, indicates this ; and for the existence of the story of the deluge in special, testimony is afforded by the Accadian name of the city of Surippak, where Adrahasis, the hero of the flood and builder of the vessel, lived. It is called Ship-town (I. R. 46, 1), a name which appears on monuments of the sixteenth century B.C. and earlier (Smith, *TSBA*, 1874, p. 589 ; *Assyr. Disc.*, p. 212). As confirmatory testimony it may be mentioned that the god Ea, who revealed to Adrahasis the coming flood and ordered him to build the vessel and protected him and his companions against the anger of Bêl, was worshipped in this Ship-town as a patron deity of the city (II. R. 60, 21).

The story of the flood, then, as told on the cuneiform tablet of the seventh century B.C., was carried to Assyria in that very form from Babylonia, and in its essential features is traceable to the early Chaldean period.

It still remains to notice the literary character of the cuneiform account. In form it is, as has been said, poetical, being part of the national epic of Accadia. As to its contents, while it has mythological features, it is not a myth. A myth is an imaginary tale, with no foundation of fact ; the Babylonian story relates history. For its historical character it may be said :

1. Speaking rationalistically, the Babylonian tale, so far as common with the Hebrew record, contains nothing incredible save the one matter of God's personal participation. It describes a physical disturbance for which the alluvial plain of Babylonia is adapted (*Stüss*, *Die Sintfluth*), and narrates an escape which in itself is probable.

2. The ancient Semitic peoples, both Hebrew and Babylonian, regarded the story of a flood, whereby all men except one family were destroyed, as historically true. They refer to it as a crisis in history. The Hebrews, and in portions of their writings which the divisive critics declare to be pre-exilic, describe it as a turning-point in human affairs, the beginning of a new race. Berosus devoted the second book of his Babylonian history to the ten antediluvian kings of the Chaldeans, considering the flood to mark the close of the first period of the history of mankind. Likewise an Assyrian writer, recording a list of ancient kings, divides them into two groups by the words : " These are kings who came after the flood."

3. Confirmation of the historical character of the Semitic tradition is afforded by the existence of similar stories among other races ; of special importance being the Aryan tradition in India to the effect that a man, saved from the waters of a world-wide deluge in a vessel

which finally landed on a northern mountain, became the progenitor of the new race of men.

4. It is improbable that without such a catastrophe a tale should arise of such extensive influence upon human thought. Hence, it is almost universally recognized that a foundation of fact underlies the Babylonian story of the flood. But while the cuneiform account treats of an historical event, it yet elaborates facts into marvels; ceasing to be history and becoming legend. Nevertheless the legendary element is small. Expunge the mythological language, and a tale remains in the main soberly told.

The results thus far yielded by the discussion are that the cuneiform story is a legend; a legend which *in its present form* originated in Babylonia an unknown length of time before the seventh century B.C., and in its *fundamental features* goes back to early Accadian days; a legend furthermore which treats of the same event as the Hebrew record. It is now pertinent to inquire what light this Babylonian story throws upon the related Hebrew narrative.

I. The Babylonian tale testifies that the Hebrew record of the deluge came not by direct revelation, but by tradition transmitted through the fathers. Herein the testimony of the Babylonian story is merely confirmatory. In historical matters direct revelation is contrary to the divine method. Human events do not need subsequent supernatural disclosure. The history of salvation was handed down from father to son.

It becomes pretty plain also that Abraham brought this tradition, or at least its outline, with him to the land of Canaan. The leaders of the Israelites may indeed have heard the story from the Egyptians also, Moses and perhaps Joseph being at court and in learned circles when intimate relations had already been established between Egypt and Babylonia. Yet before their day, and long before Abraham crossed the river, the rudiments of the story were current in the Lower Mesopotamian plain. It is incredible that an intelligent resident of Ur of the Chaldees should have been ignorant of an event which had already stamped itself indelibly on the geography, history, art, and religion of Babylonia.

The traditional character of the flood narrative aids in determining the true conception which is to be entertained of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. In that writing itself, elsewhere in the Old Testament and also in the New, the authorship is ascribed to Moses; but at times he edited the traditions which he received from the fathers. He was not an eye-witness of every event which he describes. Hence, in a sense and in a limited degree, he was author as a modern writer is author of a work on ancient history. This fact

readily explains some of the peculiarities of style noticeable in the book of Genesis.

The ascription of traditional character to the Hebrew account of the deluge does not impugn its accuracy. It is true that a tradition often undergoes alteration in transmission from mouth to mouth. It is true that this very story of the flood suffered change, as the three variant forms thereof which have been before us, to say nothing of others, amply illustrate. Nevertheless, as Max Müller has shown (*Sans. Lit.*, p. 500), narratives have been orally transmitted from generation to generation without modification of form or content.

II. This brings us to another topic. The divisive critics affirm, as is well known, that two accounts are interwoven in the Hebrew narrative of the flood. They essentially agree among themselves to which of the two earlier tales each several part of the composite story belongs; and they agree also that the existence of two component tales is established by difference of style, repetitions, contradictions, anachronisms. As the theory of division is not restricted to the flood episode, but embraces the Pentateuch and Joshua; and as it rests primarily upon the claim of minute internal differences, the question must be decided by detailed literary examination of the six Hebrew books. Little aid is to be derived from external sources. Small, therefore, though the contribution of the cuneiform tale to the inquiry must necessarily be, let its testimony be heard.

Certain incidents related in the tradition of the flood were of old current in Israel. "Noah is mentioned in Ezekiel xiv. 14, 20, and also in Deutero-Isaiah, liv. 9, as a personage long familiar to the people Israel" (*Schrader, KAT. 2te Auf. S. 54*). The Jehovistic version is admittedly pre-exilic. Equally early are considered the account of the ark's landing and of the bow in the cloud (*Wellhausen, Proleg., S. 328-29*). The only *incident* of the Hebrew tale not yet accounted for is the introductory scene of the priestly version, where the command to build the ark is given, the reason for its construction stated, and the plan furnished. Now the priestly writer dealt with traditions long current among his people, though he is said to have "purified" them. This incident, then, as an incident, and apart from the literary form in which it is narrated, was naturally a part of the current tale. Again, *a priori*, the command to build the ark logically belongs to a narrative of the flood, and would scarcely have been wanting in the Israelitish tradition. Finally, and to the same effect, is the opening sentence of chapter seven, a portion of the "mutilated" Jehovistic version. It is improbable that to the statement that the Lord determined to

“destroy man from the face of the ground, . . . but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (vi. 7, 8), there was abruptly added : “And the Lord said unto Noah, ‘Come, thou, and all thy house into the ark.’” The wording of this sentence seems to imply that the Jehovistic narrative in its complete form had previously mentioned a command to build the ark, and contained some description thereof. The evidence is strong that, while the Jehovistic account is admittedly pre-exilic, all the additional incidents found in the priestly version were likewise known in Israel before the exile, and probably included in the Jehovistic narrative itself. The story of the flood may have been repeated by the Israelites, as by people of to-day, in a variety of forms and in diverse literary styles ; but however that may be, the Hebrew record, not as parcelled out to different writers, but only in its present so-called composite form, tells *all the incidents of the flood as known of old in Israel*.

Furthermore, the Hebrew record in its present form corresponds, save probably in the one matter of the rainbow, incident by incident with the cuneiform account. The incidents of the Hebrew tale were known in pre-exilic times ; the cuneiform record dates in its present form from a period anterior to the seventh century. Here, then, is evidence that the tradition of the flood had a definite content before the separation of the two peoples ; evidence also that the incidents of the Hebrew tale were not of Israelitish device, but belonged to the primitive tradition ; evidence that the story, with its present material and present arrangement, is the old tale as it came in with Abraham and as it lived from generation to generation in the mouth of the people.

It may be added that such details of description as the mention of bitumen, of periods of seven days, and of altar and sacrifice are appropriate in a Babylonian tradition of Abraham’s day : that “the boundary line between clean and unclean animals is marked by nature,” and their classification in a general way, according to this principle, is admitted by critics to have existed out of Israel and before Moses : that as for the olive, while it has never been a tree of the Babylonian plain, Strabo testified to its occurrence in Armenia ; it is supposed to be indigenous in Northern India and other temperate Asiatic regions (Marsh, in Johnson’s Cyclopædia) ; in its varieties it is now found “from the basin of the Mediterranean to . . . New Zealand ;” and “the wild olive extends eastward to the Caspian, while, locally, it occurs in Afghanistan” (Encycl. Britan.). Not only, then, is there evidence that all the incidents of the flood found in the present Hebrew record were familiar to Abraham, but

there is justification for the assumption that the salient features of the present description also existed in his day.

It is asserted by the divisive critics, that the storm which produced the deluge is recorded twice in two successive verses of the seventh chapter. It is there written: "The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened; and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." It is urged that here two literary styles are apparent: one vivid and poetical, the other the calm recital of prose; that the descriptions are furthermore contradictory, the one representing the deluge as caused by rain only, the other by the outburst of subterranean waters also. An answer to this argument is not far to seek. No ordinary rain of forty days caused the flood; the water *poured* from the clouds; streams overflowed their banks; the sea, disturbed perhaps by earthquakes, rolled its waves upon the land. To tell this tale it does not suffice to speak of a rain. Adequate description requires the writer to say, using Oriental imagery, that the windows of heaven were opened and the fountains of the great deep broken up. To tell how long the storm lasted, speaking no longer as a spectator, but as a statistician, he adds: "And the storm was upon the earth forty days and forty nights."

The cuneiform tale confirms this view, utterly depriving the critical argument of force. Describing the raging of the storm as a spectator, the Babylonian writer is picturesque and vivid. "The female, Mû-sêri-ina-namâri," he says, "rose from the horizon, a dark cloud; in the midst thereof the storm-god rolled his thunder; while in front marched Nebo and Sarru: the god of pestilence tore the whirlwinds loose; god Adar caused the canals to overflow; the billows of the storm-god reached to heaven; all light was turned to darkness." But when he comes to state how long the storm lasted, he adopts very different language, saying: "Six days and seven nights wind, flood, and storm prevailed; on the seventh day the flood, which had struggled like a woman in travail,* abated; the sea withdrew to its bed, and storm and flood ceased."

It is contended, however, that not here only, but throughout the Hebrew account, two conceptions of the flood are represented. Again the cuneiform tale offers a suggestive parallel. In the Hebrew record, the first mention of the deluge is in the portion ascribed to the priestly writer; God forewarns Noah that a destructive flood of waters is impending, but reveals not whether by rain or by tidal wave or by both. In the cuneiform tale, the approaching destruc-

* The translation of the relative clause is doubtful.

tion of man is foretold, and Adrahasis bidden to *build a boat*. The catastrophe accordingly was to consist in a flood of *waters*; but whether in the form of rain from heaven, or freshet from the northern mountains, or inflowing sea is not disclosed. But when the set time draws nigh, the prophecy becomes definite and foretells rain. God warns Noah to enter the ark—the other writer, according to the divisive critics, relates this—saying: “Yet seven days and I will cause it to rain upon the earth.” Likewise the cuneiform account (a change of authorship is not thought necessary), as the time approaches, becomes definite. “In the evening,” spake a voice, “in the evening shall the *heavens rain* destruction.” When the storm breaks both writers, as already shown, become vivid in language, using familiar imagery. Finally in retrospect, according to the Hebrew record, God promises not to again cut off all flesh by the waters of a flood; while, according to the inscription, the god, Ea, pleads that a *flood* may not again destroy mankind.

Surely, in view of the absolute similarity which obtains between the cuneiform inscription and the Hebrew record, in their description of the flood, no critic is authorized to say that the language of the Hebrew record is *on this subject* contradictory, and indicative of two writers with different conceptions. The testimony of the cuneiform tale while, as already stated, insufficient of itself to disprove the divisive hypothesis, weakens the evidence adduced for two accounts.

III. The exegetical importance of the Babylonian tale is small, its legendary character, as well as the tendency sometimes apparent in it to embellishment, rendering it an untrustworthy guide. Occasionally, however, it is suggestive, as when it fixes upon a “mountain of the land Nitsir,” and not upon “the mountains of Ararat,” as the landing-place of the ark; for the mountain known in Asur-nasir-pal’s day as Nitsir stood hard by the district called Urtû. Originally the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts were one, and of course indicated the same locality; the question is justly raised whether the like-sounding words Urartu (Ararat) and Urtû (the *t* in each is teth) have not afterward become confounded.

JOHN D. DAVIS.