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THE
CHURCHMAN

MAY, 1895.

ART. I.—THE ORIGIN OF GENESIS I. TO IX.

(Concluded.)

2. THE SABBATH.

NEXT to the Creation, we find in the Babylonian Sabbath another presumptive proof that the oldest documents in Genesis came from Babylonia.

"The Sabbath rest," says Professor Sayce, "was a Babylonian as well as a Hebrew institution. . . . In the cuneiform tablets the Sabbath is described as 'a rest to the soul,' and in spite of the fact that the word was of genuine Semitic origin, it was derived by the Assyrian scribes from two Sumerian words, *Sa* and *bat*, which meant respectively 'heart' and 'ceasing.'" . . . An old list of Babylonian festivals and fast-days tells us that on the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, and 28th days of each month the Sabbath rest had to be observed. "The king himself," it is stated, "must not eat flesh that has been cooked over the coals or in the smoke; he must not change the garments of his body; white robes he must not wear; sacrifices he must not offer; in a chariot he may not ride." Even the prophet or the soothsayer, on whose reading of the future the movements of armies were dependent, was not allowed to practise his art—"to mutter," as it is termed, "in a secret place."

The law of sevens, or of weeks, was as much observed by the Babylonians, in other things also, as well as in the weekly Sabbath, as it was by the Hebrews.

As in the case of creation, so also in that of the Sabbath, the differences are more striking than the resemblances between them.

(1) The Hebrew Sabbath is divorced from all connection with astronomy and polytheistic worship. (2) The days of

the week are not distinguished from one another, as they are by the Babylonians, by being consecrated to planets or planetary deities. (3) The Hebrew Sabbath was not dependent on the changes of the moon; and the unexplained Babylonian Sabbath on the 19th of the month was unknown to Israel. (4) In the place of the astronomical reasons which presided over the institution of the Babylonian Sabbath, two reasons are given for its observance by the Hebrews—God's rest from Creation, and God's having delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm. (5) We need not say that the Babylonians had no idea of the Sabbath as God's first gift to man, as a sign that the true Israelites are made partakers of God's rest, and that a *Sabbatismos* remaineth for the people of God. A cult, which knew not that there was a God, could not have seen in their Sabbath a seal of a covenant between God and themselves.

3. THE FLOOD.

Space only permits us to say a very few words on the resemblances and differences between the Babylonian and Hebrew accounts of the Flood.

Babylonian Account of the Flood.

“When Xisuthros, the son of Obartes, had reigned 108,000 years in the city of Shurippak, on the banks of the Euphrates, it came to pass that men offended the gods by their wickedness; they lost the habit of offering sacrifices to the gods, and thus brought their wrath upon themselves. All the great gods, by the advice of their counsellor, Bel, the warrior, determined to destroy all mankind by a flood. Ea, moved by pity, was anxious to save his servant, Xisuthros; but was too much afraid of the other gods to warn him openly. So Ea confided the secret to a hedge of reeds, and the hedge warned the king of the approaching deluge and commanded him to build a ship. Xisuthros fears the mockery of his subjects, and he bids him deceive them with a lie. Xisuthros builds the ship, and fills it with his gold and silver, and all that he had of the seed of life of every kind. For a whole day the hurricane raged, and blew violently over the mountains and over the country; the tempest rushed upon men like the shock of an army, brother no longer beheld brother, men recognised each other no more. In heaven the gods were afraid of the deluge; they betook themselves to flight, they clambered to the firmament of Anu; the gods, howling like dogs, cowered upon the parapet. Ishtar wailed like a woman in travail; the lady of life, the goddess of the beautiful voice, cried out: ‘The past returns to clay. . . . These to whom I have myself given birth, where are

they?' The gods wept with her over the work of the evil genii, whom they had let loose. It was not pity only which made their tears to flow; there were mixed up with it fears for the future.

"Mankind being destroyed, who would make them offerings? Six days and nights the wind continued, the deluge and the tempest raged. The seventh day the storm abated and the deluge ceased. At the end of the twelfth day the mountain of Nisir stopped the ship. For six days the ship rested on the mountain of Nisir. On the seventh day Xisuthros sent forth a dove; the dove, finding no place to alight upon, came back into the ship. He let go a swallow; the swallow also returned to him. He took a raven and let it go; the raven went, and saw that the water had abated, and came near the ship, flapping its wings, croaking, and returned no more. Xisuthros sent forth the inhabitants of the ship to the four winds, and made an offering to propitiate the gods. He set up seven and seven vessels, and placed there sweet-smelling rushes, cedar-wood, and storax. He re-entered the ship, to await there the effect of his sacrifice.

"The gods, who no longer expected such a windfall—the gods sniffed up the odour, the gods sniffed up the excellent odour, the gods gathered like flies above the offering."

"Bel alone takes no pleasure in the repast. He now, for the first time, finds out that all mankind have not perished in the flood, and is filled with rage. But Ea, no longer afraid to acknowledge what he had done, sharply reproves Bel for the foolish advice he had given. Bel is so mollified by the words of Ea, that he goes into the ship and blesses Xisuthros and his wife. In fine, Xisuthros is deified, and carried by Ea over the impassable river, into the sunlit island, where flourishes the tree of life, and where the spring of life pours forth its revivifying waters."¹

The differences between the above and the Hebrew narrative of the deluge are so manifest that they need little or no comment. One point only is worthy of notice. Both narratives agree in stating that the wickedness of men was the cause of the Flood. But in the Babylonian account their sin consisted in neglecting to offer sacrifice; in the Hebrew in their neglect of mercy and judgment. The Babylonians knew not the meaning of the words, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." Both agree in testifying to the fact that there was a deluge.

The resemblances between them are, though few in number,

¹ The above is taken from Professor Maspero's "Dawn of Civilization."

quite sufficient to prove the Babylonian origin of the Hebrew account of the Flood, just as clearly as the same has been proved above for the Hebrew narratives of the Creation and the institution of the Sabbath day. We will only mention two of them. First, the sending forth of a dove and of a raven in both; and secondly, compare Gen. viii. 21 with Professor Sayce's rendering of verse 45 of the Chaldean poem, "The gods smelt the savour, the gods smelt the sweet savour."

With regard to all three—viz., the comparison between the accounts of the Creation, the Sabbath, and the Flood—we may quote Professor Sayce's words in reference to the first of the three: "The resemblances and the differences between the Biblical and the Babylonian accounts are alike striking. The polytheism which underlies the one with the thinly-veiled materialism which overlies it, is not more profoundly contrasted with the devout monotheism of the other than is the absolute want of mythological details in Genesis with the cosmological myths embodied in the cuneiform poem. *We pass, as it were, from the Iliad to sober history.*"

But we object to the comparison. We pass, rather, from the sober history of the inspired writers of the Old and New Testament to the fabulous stories of patriarchs and prophets in the Jewish Talmud, and of our Blessed Lord in the Apocryphal Gospels. It was from such fables and traditions of men that Mohammed derived all the knowledge (or, rather, ignorance) that he possessed of the lives of the Old Testament saints and of our Lord. It was with these that the Jewish rabbis and Christian monks, with whom he came in contact, filled his mind, and it was these alone which he incorporated in his Koran.

To take one instance. There lies before me, on my study table as I write, a book in the Arabic language, called "'Anter." It contains more matter than the books of Genesis and Exodus. Its contents are the persecutions of Abraham by Nimrod. The chief of these was that Nimrod made a fire four miles square; that, instructed by Satan, he invented a catapult, out of which he shot the Father of the Faithful into the midst of the fiery furnace; that the angel Gabriel descended into the fire along with the prophet, and changed it into a garden of roses. This fable was deduced by the Jews from three letters in Gen. xi. 31, אֵר, אֵר. It was incorporated by Mohammed in the Koran, and out of it have issued whole books of fabulous stories about Abraham and Nimrod, like the one now before me. On one occasion a Jewish rabbi in Ispahan stated, in my presence, to a Mohammedan gentleman that the story of Nimrod throwing Abraham into the fire was in the Book of Genesis, and on my challenging him to produce it, he quoted the above

verse, "And Abraham went up out of Ur of the Chaldees," adding, Ur means, in the Hebrew language, "fire."

It being admitted, then, as we think it must be by every unprejudiced student of "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments," that the first twelve chapters of Genesis had their origin in Babylon, can any probable suggestion be made as to the author of them? There certainly is no name mentioned in ancient history to whom the authorship of them could be ascribed, except that of the friend of God, the Father of the Faithful, the patriarch Abraham. Of course, we do not mean to suggest that the very words in which we now have them are the words of Abraham.

We cannot agree with the learned professor in thinking that the mention of an olive-leaf, as that which was brought back by the dove, is any proof that the writer was not a native of Babylon. For though the olive does not grow in the plain of Shinar, it was on some part of the mountains of Ararat that the ark rested, and no other tree could have been thought of so suitable as the olive. He deduces another proof of its having been written in Palestine from the mention of "Gopher wood." But on what grounds? "About the kind of tree meant by Gopher wood, the greatest diversity of opinions prevails among the old translators and interpreters" (Fuerst). Again, a Babylonian writer would not have mentioned November as the month in which the rain which caused the Deluge began! Why not? I have ridden under torrents of rain in the plains of Babylon in November, December, and January, just the time when the account of the Flood in Genesis says that "the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights"—from the seventeenth of November to the twenty-seventh of December.

JEHOVISTIC AND ELOHISTIC DOCUMENTS.

Up to the present time the critics have divided the Pentateuch into Jehovistic and Elohist documents. Another analysis of its contents is now proved to be necessary, which appears likely to throw the old one into utter confusion. "The analysis which has given us a Jehovist, and an Elohist, and a priestly code, must be supplemented *or replaced* by an analysis of the Book of Genesis into Babylonian, Canaanite, and other similar elements. The author of the fourteenth chapter must be the same as the author of the history of the Fall or the rise of the power of Nimrod. The accounts of the Creation and of the Flood, moreover, have shown us that Babylonian documents underlie alike the Elohist and the Jehovistic narratives. It is only in the treatment of them that the narratives differ from one another.

THE ARCHÆOLOGIST, THE PHILOLOGIST (OR HIGHER CRITIC),
AND THE THEOLOGIAN.

Of the first two of these, Professor Sayce writes: "It is as historians, and not as theologians, that we must investigate the records of the Old Testament, if we would obtain results that will satisfy the great mass of reasoning men. With questions of inspiration and the like, we have nothing to do. As long as our researches are historical and archæological, the Scriptures of the Old Testament must be for us merely a fragment of that ancient Oriental literature, other fragments of which are being exhumed from the mounds of Babylonia, of Egypt, or of Assyria. . . . We cannot grant the benefit of an argument to the author of the Books of Chronicles which we deny to Holinshed, or Geoffrey of Monmouth."

This is true to a certain extent, especially when the reasoning men are unbelievers; but as it would be most unscientific for the philologist to pay no heed to the arguments of the archæologist, and *vice versâ*, or for the theologian to pay no heed to either, so would it be equally unscientific for the others not to give heed to what the theologian has to say on the subject. If the Book of Genesis is a fragment of that ancient Oriental literature, it is also a fragment of that wonderful library of books called the Bible. No true scientist can deny that the books of the Old and New Testament form together *one book*, as no other fragments of ancient literature do; that there exists a wonderful solidarity in them, and that there is a manifest design pervading them all which does not exist in any other similar number of books taken together. To examine any one of them alone by itself, without paying any attention to the bond which binds them all together into one whole, is as unscientific as it would be to examine one of the satellites of Jupiter, and pay no regard to its connection with the other bodies which are joined to it as members of the solar system. Some of the phenomena with which the theologian has to do are just as much matters of history, patent to every inquirer after truth, believer or unbeliever, as are the discoveries of the archæologist or philologist.

The influence for good which the Bible has exercised over all nations and peoples by whom it has been honoured and read, is proved by a comparison with all other lands, Mohammedan or pagan. The western scientist will hardly try to get over this fact, as Mohammedan Ulema have often attempted to do in controversy with the writer. "Oh, yes!" they say, "we allow all that; but it is quite accounted for by the words of our prophet, 'The world is the garden of the unbeliever, and the prison of the believer'—you Christians have this

world, we have the next." The Bible professes to "Have promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"; and history has proved the truthfulness of its claim.

Again, the sun and centre of the Bible is the appearance in the New Testament of the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. That the character of Jesus of Nazareth is unique, not only in His own, but in every age, is an undeniable historical fact. It is also a fact that He asserted, not only in the days of His *kenosis*, but still more emphatically after His *anastasis* (see St. Luke xxiv. 25-48), that the Old Testament was the inspired Word of God. Moreover, when almost every book of the Bible claims to be the Word of God, and so high an authority as Jesus of Nazareth puts His seal to its claim, surely it is most unscientific not to inquire whether its subject-matter is in accordance with such a claim. Now, it is a historical fact that whereas not only Genesis, but the whole Bible, presents the most striking contrast to the Babylonian accounts of the Creation and the Deluge—in the entire absence from it of the polytheistic, materialistic and mythological details with which they are filled—all other religious systems and books resemble the Babylonian in these very particulars. At the time when Jesus of Nazareth laid the foundations of the Christian religion in Judea, there was not a single people except the Jews, nor a single religious system or book except Judaism and the Old Testament, which professed any intelligent knowledge of the existence even of one Personal God, or of creation or revelation.

This belief in one Personal God, the Creator of heaven and earth, who spake to men by prophets, is the distinguishing characteristic of every book of the Old Testament. Two thousand years ago it was held only by the inhabitants of Palestine, a country not much larger than Yorkshire; but from the time of Jesus of Nazareth, and entirely by means of the dissemination of the Bible at His command, it has become *the fundamental faith* of 600,000,000 persons. There are now 450,000,000 Christians, 150,000,000 Moslems, and at least 8,000,000 JEWS, and this is the first article of the creed of all three alike. Moreover, the Jew, the Christian, and the Moslem, not only agree in worshipping one God, but they agree in worshipping Him as *the God of Abraham*; all three trace their faith in God to Abraham, and all three have received all the knowledge of God that they possess from the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. And there is no other people or religion to the present day which has any intelligent knowledge of a God except these three.

Thus we see that profane, as well as sacred, history testifies to the fact that "the world by wisdom knew not God." They

not only did not know God, but they knew not for certain whether there was a God or not. Whence, then, has the world found out that there is a God, and how is it possible to know Him? We answer fearlessly, By inspiration, and by inspiration only. We humble seekers after truth acknowledge the debt of gratitude which we owe to the archæologist and the philologist; and after we have heard all they have to tell us, we turn to the theologian also, and we ask him what he has to say; and he says: "Study the subject-matter of the first three chapters of Genesis, the oldest document in the Bible, and you will find in them alone that which the world has been seeking for, but to which it never could by its wisdom attain. You will find in them not only the knowledge of God, but you will learn from them at least fourteen of the most essential elements of the Christian faith. You will find in them the unity of God, the personality of God, the Trinity in unity, creation, revelation, the goodness of God and of all His works, the Fatherhood of God, the superiority of man over all animals, the equality of the sexes and races of mankind in God's sight, the institution of the Sabbath (God's first gift to man), the institution of holy matrimony, the ideal nature of sin and its fruits—shame and separation from God—its cure 'through a bleeding Victor and a conquering Victim,' and included in these last three, the personality of Satan. Thus, if the tablets of Tel-el-Amarna and the cuneiform monuments of Assyria and Babylon prove the Babylonian origin of these most ancient documents, we believe that their subject-matter proves far more conclusively that they have a far higher origin; that their true birthplace is in heaven; that they must be 'received, not as the word of men, but as they are in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in all who believe.'"

ROBERT BRUCE, D.D.



ART. II.—THE INNER MISSION OF GREAT BRITAIN.

IT is exactly twenty years ago to-day, September 11, 1893, since I read a paper in Nottingham on "The Inner Mission of Germany and its Lessons to Us." The title "Inner Mission of the Church" had very profoundly impressed me, as setting forth, in contrast to the *foreign* or *outer* mission of the Church, its mission *within* the land in which it is planted, and as bringing into vivid relief and definite vision the immediate and practical work of the Church among all the people of that land. The object of the Inner Mission, accordingly, is that the