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IS THE BOOK OF JONAH HISTORICAL?

II.

Arguments urged against the historical character of the Book.

BY THE EDITOR.

Doubt as to the truth of the events related in the Book of Jonah dates far back. It has always been difficult for men to believe in the reality of these events. There has existed a popular and a scholarly prejudice against the historical character of the Book. Every possible resource has been exhausted, every possible form of conjecture has been put forward in order, somehow, to relieve the student of the necessity of accepting the narrative as an historical one. A common sentiment seems to have been, *call it anything,—but history*. Attempts have been made to explain it as connected with certain Classical legends; as derived from an Assyrico-Babylonian myth; as having, perhaps, an historical germ, but as being largely fictitious; as being written to explain the mistaken meaning of an old song; as a part of a larger book of prophetic narrations, but full of alterations and transpositions; as a mere fiction, a parable, an historical allegory, or a dream; as a prophetic aftergrowth, a sort of apocryphal composition. The result of much of this work, however worthy the purpose which prompted it, has been not only to destroy the credibility of the Book, in the minds of many, but also to make it an object of ridicule and contempt. From no standpoint has the Book escaped attack. It would be difficult, now, to think of any possible objection that might be urged, to which attention has not already been called by those who have discussed the subject. It is certainly true, that had the objections been as unanswerable, as they have been numerous, long since would the "twelve" Minor Prophets have been reduced to "eleven."

Notwithstanding the number and variety of these objections, it is possible, we think, for our present purpose to classify them under four heads:* (1) Lack of historical particulars; (2) Superabundance of the miraculous element; (3) The improbability of Nineveh's repentance; (4) The incredible nature of Jonah's behavior.

I. LACK OF HISTORICAL PARTICULARS.

In a well-authenticated historical narrative there is always to be found a number, greater or less, of historical particulars, which serve as indirect proof of the truth of the narrative. The Book before us, it is claimed, exhibits but *few* of these particulars. Attention is called to the fact that the writer nowhere informs us as to the location of Jonah's abode; the spot where he was cast upon dry land; his fate after the severe rebuke administered to him by Jehovah; or the subsequent relation sustained by him to the Ninevites. Would these points have been passed by in a genuine narrative? Again, according to Bleek, "it appears surprising on the hypothesis of the historical character of the Book, that the name of the Assyrian King in whose time all this took place, who also was converted with such earnest repentance to the confession of the true God, is not mentioned in it, nor anything else stated as to him personally, which in an historical event would certainly have been of great interest." And further, is it not strange that no mention whatever is made of that long, wearisome journey to Nineveh? Another point urged with great force is with reference to the hymn which purports to have been composed by Jonah while in the bowels of the fish. We may believe that he was swallowed, and that, by divine assistance, he remained alive in the fish's belly three days and three nights; but is it to be supposed that, while in this position, the prophet was in a conscious condition, or, if conscious, that, under such circumstances, he could give utterance to such thoughts as those which find expression in the hymn recorded in this Book? The hymn is not a prayer for deliverance, but a song of thanksgiving after deliverance; yet it is clearly stated that this song was composed while the author was yet in the fish's belly, and that the command to vomit him upon dry land was not given until the song had been uttered. It is claimed, in a word, that the story is greatly lacking in clearness and perspicuity, in precision of statement, and, indeed, in all the minute details which are necessarily connected with genuine history. But, if the Book of Jonah is unhistorical, because it is *incomplete*, where may we find in either Old or New Testaments, matter that is historical? If the historical character of a given production is made to

* A brief statement of these points is given in *The Bible Commentary*, pp. 581, 582.

depend upon the fullness of its treatment, upon the "completeness in all external circumstances which would serve to gratify curiosity rather than to help to an understanding of the main facts of the case," we shall be compelled to look on every side, and that too with exceeding care, to find writings, either classical or biblical, which may safely be regarded as historical. When found, the decision will be rendered according to the greater or less degree of completeness. This book will be regarded as more historical than that, because, whatever may be the aim and style of the writer, it is more complete. The historical value of a book will depend upon the number and size of the pages.

Now, one must be lamentably ignorant of biblical style and method, if he has not learned that everywhere in Bible history the historian omits, not from oversight, but intentionally, those items of detail which either do not directly bear upon the subject under treatment, or have no connection with the great religious teaching involved in this subject. It is needless to cite examples of this peculiarity. Nor need it be called a peculiarity, for it would have ill become sacred writers, commissioned to do a definite work, to have stopped at this point or at that and to have inserted a paragraph in order that such criticism as that under notice might be avoided. By this test no history can be shown to be history, while much literature that bears upon the very face of it the marks of fiction, could be proven historical. In our opinion this lack of historical particulars not only is no objection to the historical character of the Book, but may even be regarded as going far to prove this historical character. It is much more likely, we think, that Moses was the author of the form of the *Ten Words* as given in Deuteronomy as well as of that given in Exodus, than that the former was the work of a different writer, because of the variations which we find. A different writer, under such circumstances, would have taken scrupulous pains to present an exact copy, for fear of detection. So here, a writer endeavoring to palm off fiction for history, would have been careful to omit none of those details which might naturally have been expected. The narrative would have been complete to a fault. It is worthy of note at this point, as mentioned in the former paper, that the book may be strictly historical, and yet not be first-rate history. That is, every event narrated in it may actually have taken place, and yet the occurrence of these events may not have been recorded as history. A story selected solely to convey some great religious truth, although it may have been a true story, would scarcely be called history. It may also be remarked that the task of replying *seriatim* to the points raised in this connection, falls to the commentator, and not to the writer of a general article.

II. SUPERABUNDANCE OF THE MIRACULOUS ELEMENT.

An abundance of the supernatural element is certainly to be found in the Book of Jonah. That this is a *super*-abundance is not so certain. The miraculous seems to be introduced at every step in the story, in Jehovah's stirring up the storm, in the lot falling upon Jonah, in the conduct of the ship's crew under the influence of the event, in the appointment of the great fish, in the prophet's remaining three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, in his being vomited upon dry land, in the effect of Jonah's prediction upon the Ninevites, in the provision of the plant, in its destruction by the worm, and in God's sending the sultry east wind. Nowhere else in Scripture within the same space will more of the supernatural be found. Of those who object to the historical character of Jonah, some believe in the possibility of miracles, others do not. If it is conceded that no such thing as a miracle has ever been wrought, that, indeed, there is no such thing, then, as a matter of course, this Book is, in the highest sense, legendary or mythical. But if this is true of Jonah, in what estimation shall we hold the remaining books of the Bible, all of which contain more or less of the miraculous element? Clearly, therefore, with those who deny the possibility of the miraculous, the question to be considered is, not that of the historical character of Jonah, but one more fundamental and far-reaching. An argument which, if valid, would sweep away the entire Bible, need not be taken up here. In accepting the possibility of the miraculous, we take away any common ground on which a discussion can be carried on with this class of critics.

But there are many who grant the possibility of miracles yet reject the historical character of the Book, because of the miracles which it records. Their reasoning is this: Miracles have been wrought, but *only* when they were absolutely necessary to the accomplishment of a certain plan. It is only upon special and extraordinary occasions, and with a special and extraordinary object in view, that the Almighty thus manifests his power. In the Divine economy there is never a profusion of miracles, nor any more of miraculous agency than the circumstances of the case absolutely demand. Further, much of the so-called miraculous is but an oriental coloring of the natural. A miracle, therefore, must not be accepted as such until there has been removed all possibility of explaining it as a natural event, perhaps highly colored, and until we can see that some great and special end was to be gained by it. It is more easy to explain the Book of Jonah as a legendary, or fictitious narrative, with, perhaps, an historical substratum, than to believe in the actual occurrence of so many and so

varied miraculous events, for which, upon the whole, there seems to be no reasonable explanation. There is undoubtedly much that is plausible in this view. That miracles were not wrought except under the most extreme circumstances, and that much of what is commonly regarded as miraculous may be explained upon purely natural grounds are facts theoretically conceded, but practically lost sight of in exposition. In reference to the case in hand, we may briefly summarize:

(1) It is necessary in this Book, as well as at all times, to distinguish sharply between the providential and the miraculous. Much of the former element is mistaken for the latter.

We must keep in mind that a larger portion of that which is regarded as miraculous in this story may have been, and, in fact, was the result of natural causes. If, in the case of the fish referred to, we recall that the word in the original is an indefinite one, and does not necessarily mean *whale*, the throat of which is said to be too small to admit even the smallest man, and that the Mediterranean abounded in fish of a size sufficient to swallow men, we are not under the necessity of supposing that the fish in question was created particularly for the purpose which it served. That the fish was present at the exact moment was in no respect miraculous. The miracle, however, consists in the fact that, under such circumstances, Jonah was preserved alive. For our own part, we see no miracle in the rising of the tempest, the designation of Jonah by lot, in the conversion of the ship's crew, or in that of the Ninevites, in the destruction of the plant by the worm, or in the sultry east wind. These events, we are persuaded, may be explained upon purely natural grounds, and paralleled by events which occur in the experience of every one. They are events which took place in accordance with the providence of a higher power, but are in no sense miraculous. The rapid growth of the plant, if we interpret literally the expression *son of a night*, would be miraculous, although it was a plant which, in its nature, possessed the qualification for rapid growth, and so the miraculous element would consist simply in the quickening of a condition already existing; but it may be doubted whether the literal interpretation is to be followed. If our interpretation is a correct one, the superabundance of miraculous element is reduced to one, or, at the most, two manifestations of it.

(2) If the miracles recorded in *this* Book are to be rejected unless we can see a special object in the mind of their Author, and unless this object could be gained by no other means, we must apply the same rule to all miracles. But who will dare thus to question the motives of a Higher Being? Who will presume to assert that, because *he* cannot comprehend the purpose of a certain miracle, the miracle did not

occur? In this connection words of Prof. Stowe may profitably be cited :

The God of nature is quite as unsearchable in his ways as the God of the Bible in his; and does his work by as great and apparently as capricious a variety of methods. If any one can tell us why the God of nature accomplishes the same end by such a variety of means, then we can tell him why the God of the Bible chose to save his prophet by a living creature, which had been born spontaneously in the course of nature, rather than by a sailing vessel built by the hands of men. God, both as exhibited in nature and in the Bible, even seems to love variety for variety's sake, and many times to put forth creative energy in the strangest forms for the very purpose of showing his creatures what he can do, and by what a variety of means he can accomplish his designs.

But there is generally a discoverable propriety, an appropriateness, in God's adaptation of means to ends, both in nature and revelation. When properly understood, these adaptations appear neither capricious nor grotesque. As to the story of Jonah—in a simple and rude age, in a community of sailors and fishermen, in a country where destructive monsters of the deep had for ages been the terror and often the ruin of the sea-shore settlements, what could be better fitted to impress the people with a fear of the awful power of God, to give them a vivid conception of the tremendous energy of his primitive justice, and the impregnable security of his protective favor, than this very fact which has often been turned to ridicule, by irreverence, shallowness, and self-conceit? The most dreaded enemy they knew, that their imagination could conceive, which had from time immemorial been the terror of their fathers, was so restrained and controlled by God as to be made the pliable instrument of gentle punishment and perfect safety to his disobedient prophet.

III. THE IMPROBABILITY OF NINEVEH'S REPENTANCE.

A city of 600,000 inhabitants is represented as repenting "in sack-cloth and ashes." This repentance was brought about within an exceedingly short time; it extended through all classes of society from the king down to the most humble citizens; it was accomplished through the agency of a *foreigner*. Add to this, (1) that the repentance seems to have been accompanied by no permanent results, since the narrative does not record that either king or people confessed the true God; (2) that, from the narrative, it cannot be inferred that Jonah took any steps to further the knowledge of the true God among the people; (3) that no allusion to the event can be discovered either in later Assyrian history, or in the writings of the later prophets Isaiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, who prophesied against Nineveh,* and (4) that neither the name, nor any personal mention is made of the Assyrian

* Bleek says: Had these men been at all acquainted with the fact, that an older Israelitish prophet had been ministering there in so powerful, and for the moment so successful a way, we should surely expect that they would have referred to it in some of their prophecies. *Introd.* II., 183.

King, who himself is said to have repented,—and we have, according to Bleek, the strongest argument which can be urged against the historical character of the Book.

It is not necessary to suppose that all the people of Nineveh repented. Some of the citizens, hearing Jonah's proclamation, in fear of the doom pronounced, turn from their sins and put on sackcloth. These were of different classes. The number need not have been large. It may have included only those of a single district. The news, however, reaches the king, and at his command all are required to fast and be covered with sackcloth. We may believe that in the case of the great mass of the people, as in the case of the beasts, there was only the outward semblance of repentance, and that this was due to the king's edict. The change wrought in those who did repent, will better be comprehended, says Keil, "if we bear in mind (1) the great susceptibility of Oriental races to emotion, (2) the awe of one Supreme Being which is peculiar to all the heathen religions of Asia, and (3) the great esteem in which soothsaying and oracles were held in Assyria from the earliest times." That the change of mind was produced by a *foreigner*, is in favor of the probability of the narrative, not against it. "The appearance of a foreigner, who, without any conceivable personal interest, and with the most fearless boldness, disclosed to the great royal city its Godless ways, and announced its destruction within a very short period with the confidence so characteristic of the God-sent prophets, could not fail to make a powerful impression upon the minds of the people, and this would be all the stronger if the report of the miraculous working of Israel had penetrated to Nineveh."*

That the repentance of the Ninevites was not a lasting one, and that it was not accompanied by permanent results, does not go to prove that it never took place. It was a "waking up out of the careless security of a life of sin, an endeavor to forsake their evil ways." Their turning from sin, while not repentance in the New Testament sense, was a *repentance* sufficiently marked to justify God in withholding the evil which he had threatened. It is not only to those who are genuinely converted that God manifests his grace.

The lack of zeal manifested by Jonah in not pushing to the utmost the advantage which he had gained, is explained by the narrative itself; he was greatly displeased, and very angry that God had seen fit to turn from his wrath. In such a state of mind, what else could have been expected of him?

While reference to this event from the monuments would gladly be

* Keil, Commentary *in loc.*

welcomed, and allusions to it in the later prophets might naturally have been expected, the absence of both may be explained. Moreover, the argument *e silentio*, while a powerful one, is far from being in itself conclusive. It carries, in most cases, more weight than properly may be accorded to it. The fact that no mention is made of the King's name, is to be classified with other omissions noted above. It is sufficient to say that the mention was not necessary to the immediate object in the mind of the writer. This event, therefore, if its coloring and details can be shown to be in accordance with the times and the circumstances, instead of being used as an objection to the historical character of our Book, may be regarded as one of the strongest arguments in its favor.

IV. THE INCREDIBLE NATURE OF JONAH'S BEHAVIOR.

Jonah was Jehovah's prophet, yet he tried to flee from Jehovah's presence. He was sent upon an important errand to a heathen city, yet was angry and displeased with God because that errand proved successful. Jehovah shows himself to be a gracious God, and merciful, yet Jonah prays that his life may be taken away, because under the circumstances death is preferable. Though a man of God, his conduct is marked throughout by self-conceit, hostility to Nineveh, and disobedience to God's commands. This representation of his character and behavior, exaggerated by those who would bring him into the greatest possible discredit, is urged against the credibility of the Book.

By those who suppose Jonah himself to be the author of the Book, the whole narrative is taken as a confession, and with reason do they regard favorably a man who is willing to represent himself in such a light. But whether or not Jonah himself wrote the Book, there are a few considerations which at this point deserve at least brief attention:

(1) It is questionable, whether at this early period there prevailed widely the idea that Jehovah was the God of all nations. This, to be sure, was the teaching of Moses, and many, doubtless, believed it, but the mass of the people, we are persuaded, while worshipping Jehovah, "believed also in the existence and agency of the surrounding pagan gods." The phrase *from the presence of Jehovah*, must be given a meaning consistent with its general usage. It must, at the least, be interpreted that Jonah was trying to escape from that country in which God was accustomed to manifest himself. Now it is common to introduce in this connection Ps. CXXXIX., 9-12, which portrays vividly the doctrine of God's omnipresence. We may safely believe, however, that this Psalm was the production of an age centuries later than that of

Jonah. Without attempting any forced explanation of this expression, let it be accepted with its face-meaning, and let us transport ourselves to the age when Homer was an old man, when Lycurgus was promulgating his laws; to a civilization, or rather to a semi-barbarism one hundred years before Romulus, four hundred years before Herodotus. At such an age, among a people for the mass of whom idolatry was the rule, and pure worship the exception, are we to be surprised at finding, even in a prophet, a disposition of mind which is characteristic of a large number of the professed worshippers of to-day?

(2) In estimating Jonah's attitude towards Nineveh, we must remember that his native district, the northern part of Israel, had been continually exposed to the inroads of foreigners, and, among these, the Ninevites; and that there was undoubtedly before his mind the fear that Israel was to be rejected on account of her sins, and that Nineveh, to whom he is sent with a message of mercy, may be chosen in her stead. To him the repentance of the Gentiles signified the ruin of the Jews. Naturally enough, moved by national prejudice, he would seek to avoid the doing of that which would delay the destruction of Nineveh.

(3) Nor was his reputation as a prophet a matter of the least concern to him, and situated, as he was, in a strange city, without protection, exposed by God himself to disgrace, his enemies saved, himself dishonored, "why should he not be distressed, the poor hypochondriac, and pray to die rather than live?" And later, when he has retired from the city, and is scorched by the burning sun, and when the protection which had been prepared for him is destroyed, and the sirocco of the desert causes him to faint with heat, despised by men, forsaken by God, is it not natural that he should long for death? "Inspiration changed no man's natural temperament or character. The prophets, just like other men, had to struggle with their natural infirmities and disabilities, with only such Divine aid as is within the reach of all religious men. The whole representation in regard to Jonah is in perfect keeping; it is as true to nature as any scene in Shakspeare, and represents hypochondria as graphically as Othello represents jealousy or Lear madness."

We have examined as fully as the space at our disposal would permit the general arguments urged against the historical character of the Book of Jonah. While each of these arguments contains much that is plausible, there is nothing for which an unprejudiced reader may not account, if he will but consider fairly and liberally all the facts in the case.

THE ASSYRIAN LITERATURE AND THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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The study of the Assyrian language and literature has come to be of no little importance for the complete and correct interpretation of the Old Testament. The language, as one of the Semitic family, furnishes, in its ancient forms and its older constructions, valuable aids for the more perfect solution of questions in Hebrew Grammar, and especially in Hebrew Lexicography. It is self-evident that the correct solution of these questions is intimately related to a true interpretation of the Old Testament.

The Assyrian literature is even more valuable to the interpreter. Containing, as it does, history, or, if we must so designate the entire contents, legends, which evidently are of the same origin as the accounts of the creation and the deluge in Genesis, it cannot but aid us, whatever views we may have of the origin or the nature of the cuneiform records, in forming a correct conception of the true origin, nature, and meaning of the first part of Genesis. For it seems to be a settled fact that the cuneiform records existed in a written form as early as 2000 B. C. But the view one holds of the first few chapters of Genesis, will largely determine his conception of the nature and meaning of the entire Old Testament; and as well of the Old Testament religion, and, indeed, of Christianity itself. It is clear, therefore, that the progress and results of the labors of the students of the Assyrian literature cannot safely be overlooked by the interpreter of the Old Testament.

Hence, it may not be amiss to present to the readers of the OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT a specimen of the work that is now doing in Germany in the department of Assyriology, which will both give a good idea of the Assyrian literature, and furnish at least a hint of its value for Old Testament interpretation, and of the method in which it may be used in the service of this interpretation. To this end, there is given below a translation of a lecture delivered at the University of Goettingen in December, 1880, on the cuneiform account of the deluge, by Dr. Paul Haupt. Dr. Haupt, although yet a young man, is one of the most distinguished students and teachers of Assyriology in Germany; and has recently been appointed Professor of Assyriology in the University of Goettingen. He was also lately elected Professor of the Semitic Languages in Johns Hopkins University in our own country, and began his work, in the latter University, in September of the present year.

The lecture which is here translated, has been published in book form by J. C. Hinrichs of Leipzig. The book contains, besides the lecture itself, a body of valuable notes, and an autograph representation of a portion of the original text. It can be procured through the *Old Testament Book Exchange* for about 50 cents. The present translation is made under the sanction and by the express permission of both Dr. Haupt and his publisher, to whom the writer would return his hearty thanks for their kindness. The notes, as not necessary for the present purpose, are, with the exception of one or two foot-notes, omitted. The lecture itself, with the single omission of a few lines from Dr. Haupt's remarks on the relation of the cuneiform to the Biblical account of the deluge, is published complete. The omission just noticed is indicated, in the proper place, by a foot-note. This is the first complete translation of this lecture which has been given in English, at least with the sanction of Dr. Haupt and the publisher. There appeared in the *Nineteenth Century*, early in 1882, in an article by C. H. Wright, an account of Dr. Haupt's work, and a *resume* of the lecture; but even this article did not present a complete translation of the lecture. The writer has also had the personal co-operation and aid of Dr. Haupt in introducing modifications and corrections into so much of the lecture as contains the translation of the eleventh tablet, i. e., the account of the deluge. These corrections and modifications are due partly to Dr. Haupt's further study of the subject, and partly to the discovery of new fragments of the Assyrian tablets, which have enabled him to perfect his translation. The readers of the OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT have Dr. Haupt's own authority for the statement that the present translation of the eleventh tablet as here given, is the most perfect and complete that has ever been published together in any language. It has before been published by Dr. Haupt himself, of course, in German, but never in any single work.

The account of the contents of the other tablets of the poem has been allowed to stand as it is in the lecture. At the time the lecture was delivered, Dr. Haupt had not had the opportunity personally to study the original Assyrian text of this part of the poem, but relied upon Smith's English translation of this text. Since that time, however, Dr. Haupt has spent some months in the British Museum, occupied in the study and the careful copying of this text as it stands upon the clay tablets which are there preserved, and is now engaged in preparing for publication the entire text of the Nimrod epic, with the exception, naturally, of the text of the eleventh tablet. The work in which this text will be presented, will contain autograph copies of the original, a transliteration, and a translation in German; and the first

part is to appear in the present year. On this account, Dr. Haupt consents to allow the first part of the lecture to remain as it was delivered.

The modifications and corrections, made in the account of the deluge, are all enclosed in brackets, and indicated by S. B., the writer's initials. In the same way, are indicated the very few additions which the writer himself has ventured to make to the text of the lecture. Dr. Haupt himself has changed the form or the orthography of some of the Assyrian names; and these changes from the text of the lecture have been introduced without indicating them, as their indication, for the present purpose, would be superfluous.

The translation by Dr. Haupt of the eleventh tablet of the Nimrod epic, together with notes and a vocabulary, has also appeared as an excursus in Schrader's "Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament"; and reference to this edition of his translation will be made in what follows. Dr. Haupt's work has also been utilized, with his own co-operation, in a work now in course of publication by Dr. Eduard Suess, entitled "Das Antlitz der Erde." The first part of this learned work is occupied with a discussion of the "Movements in the Rock-crust of the Earth;" and, among them, the author puts the deluge. His theory of the deluge may be seen from the following quotations. He says, at the close of his discussion, which is founded on the Biblical account, and the cuneiform account, of the deluge, and on the accounts of what he conceives to be similar phenomena in modern times, "The results may be summed up as follows:

1. The phenomenon known by the name of the deluge, happened on the lower Euphrates, and was united with an external and devastating submersion of the lowlands of Mesopotamia.
2. The essential cause was a great earthquake in the region of the Persian Gulf, or south of it, which had been preceded by several slight shocks.

It is very probable that, during the period of the heaviest shocks, a cyclone moved northward out of the Persian Gulf.

4. The traditions of other peoples in no way justify the claim that the deluge extended beyond the regions of the lower Euphrates and Tigris, and still less that it was universal."

So much of this author's work as relates to the deluge, has been published in a separate form under the title "Die Sintfluth" (G. Freytag, Leipzig, 1883). Reference will be made to this work in what follows.

THE CUNEIFORM ACCOUNT OF THE DELUGE.

BY DR. PAUL HAUPT,

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[An inaugural address delivered by Dr. Paul Haupt at the University of Göttingen, Dec., 1880.]
Translated by S. Burnham.

That the old Babylonians were acquainted with a myth of a flood, which resembles, in the most striking way, even in details, the two accounts of the deluge contained in chaps. VI.-IX. of Gen., which have been worked over by an editor into one story, and which especially resembles the so-called Jehovistic account, was known long ago from the fragments of a history of Babylon which was written in Greek by a Chaldean priest named Berossus in the reign of Antiochus Soter, between 280 and 270 B. C. According to the extracts from this work, which have been preserved for us in Alexander Polyhistor and Abydenus, the course of events connected with this great flood, was as follows:

"Kronos made known in a dream to the tenth king of Babylon, Xisuthros, or Sisithros, that, on the fifteenth of the month Daesios, there would occur great rains, and all mankind would be destroyed by a great flood. He commanded him to bury in Sippara, the city of the sun, all the records of antiquity engraven on stone, to build a ship in which he should embark with his family and his nearest friends, to provide for himself food and drink, and to take with him in the ship the birds and the four-footed beasts. Xisuthros obeyed; built the ship, 9000 feet long and 2000 feet wide; gathered every thing together as he had been commanded; and embarked in the ship with his wife, and his child, and his nearest friends.

When the flood had poured in, and then immediately ceased, Xisuthros sent out some birds to see if they could discover land anywhere, which had already emerged from the water. But, as they found neither food nor resting-place, they came back to the ship. After some days, Xisuthros sent them out a second time, and they returned with mud upon their feet. But, when he sent them out for the third time, they did not return again. Then Xisuthros knew that the earth had become dry again. He made an opening in the ship, and saw that it was stationary upon a mountain. Then he disembarked with his wife, his daughter, and his helmsman; erected an altar; offered a sacrifice; and disappeared, together with the others who had disembarked with him. When the others, who had remained in the ship, sought for him, and called him by name, they heard a voice from the skies, telling them that they should lead a godly life; that he, on account of his piety, had been taken away to the gods, and that his wife, his daughter, and his helmsman had been made sharers in this honor. The land where they were, they were told, was Armenia; and they were bidden to return from here to Babylon, and to dig up the writings buried at Sippara.

When they heard this, they offered sacrifices to the Gods, returned on foot to Babylon, dug up the holy writings, founded cities and temples, and built again Babylon. Of the ship, however, there are still remains in the mountains of Kardua in Armenia. Many people scrape the bitumen from these, and use it as a protection against sickness."

The points of resemblance between this Babylonian account of a flood, and the Jehovistic portions of the Biblical account of the deluge, are very striking. So

much so that it was long in doubt whether this flood-legend originated in Babylon before the time of the exile or not. But, in the autumn of 1872, George Smith, the assistant in the Assyrian department of the British Museum, a man whose too early death is much to be lamented, had the good fortune to discover, upon an Assyrian clay tablet, from the royal library of the king Sardanapalus, the cuneiform account of the deluge, by which the independence and genuineness of Berossus's account of a flood was strikingly confirmed.

Smith found, in the collection of the British Museum, the half of a whitish-yellow clay tablet which, according to all appearance, had originally been divided on each side into three columns. In the third column of the front side, he read the words: "On the mountain Nizir, the ship stood still. Then I took a dove out, and let her fly. The dove flew hither and thither; but, since there was no resting-place there, she returned back to the ship." He recognized at once that he had here discovered a fragment of the cuneiform account of the deluge. With unwearied patience, he set himself at the task of seeking for other fragments among the thousands of pieces of Assyrian clay tablets, which are stored away in the British Museum. His efforts were crowned with success. He found, indeed, no piece which furnished the missing part for the tablet first discovered; but, instead, fragments of two other copies of the cuneiform account of the deluge, which completed the text as was desired, and furnished also several important various readings.

One of these duplicates, which consists of sixteen small pieces put together, contained the common subscription, "The property of Sardanapalus, the king of hosts, the king of the land of Assyria;" and also the statement that this account of the deluge was the eleventh tablet of a series. Several fragments of this series Smith had already noticed in the collection of the British Museum. He put together, with incredible pains, all these fragments; and found that the account of the deluge was only the episode in a great heroic poem which celebrated the deeds of an old king of Erech in twelve cantos consisting altogether of about 3000 lines.

The name of this hero is written in ideographs, the phonetic signification of which would give the reading *Izdubar*, somewhat as the phonetic value of the ideographs which form the name Nebukadnezer, in Assyrian Nabû-kudurri-usur, is An-pa-ša-du-sis. Different interpretations of the name have been attempted. A. H. Sayce has lately expressed, in a letter to me, the ingenious conjecture that the name is to be read as being originally *Kîbir*, the dialectic Sumerian form of the Akkadian *gibil*, "fire." This is nevertheless as yet very doubtful. So much, however, is clear, that *Izdubar* is identical with *Nimrod*, whose deeds are still preserved in the mouth of the people in the lands of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and of whom the Bible, in the table of nations in Genesis, says, "And Kûsh begat Nimrod. He commenced to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Therefore it is said, he is a mighty hunter before the Lord like Nimrod. And the beginning of his kingdom was Bâbel, Erech, Akkad, and Kalneh, in the land of Sinear (that is Sumêr). From this land, he went forth to Assyria, and founded Nineveh, Rehôbôth 'ir, Kelaḥ, and Resen, which lies between Nineveh and Kelaḥ. These (four together) form the great city (Nineveh)."

So far as the contents of the Babylonian *Nimrod Epic* are concerned, which is of the highest importance for the right understanding of both the cuneiform and

the Biblical account of the deluge, these may be briefly stated as follows. The fragments which are preserved (unfortunately, the first part is completely gone) begin with a description of the sufferings which the city of Erech, at that time the chief city of South Babylonia, had to endure under the tyranny of Elamitish conquerors. Erech had formerly been ruled by Dumuzi, or Tammúz, the Babylonian Adonis; and, after his death, his wife Istar, or Astarte, the Babylonian Venus, had received the sovereignty. She, however, had not been able to withstand the invaders, or, as the cuneiform tablet says, "to raise her head before the enemy." Then appears Nimrod, who was already known far and wide as a mighty hunter, upon the scene. His family belongs to the Babylonian city Marad. His ancestor is Šamaš-napištim, whose surname is Adra-ḥašis, or Hašis-adra, the Xisuthros of Berossus. In Erech, he has a wonderful dream. The stars of heaven fall upon the earth and strike upon his back. A terrible being stands before him, provided with claws like a lion.

Nimrod is deeply moved by this vision. He questions all the wise men and seers, and promises to them rich rewards; but no one is able to interpret the dream. Then he hears of a seer who is greatly renowned on account of his "wisdom in all things, his knowledge of all that is apparent and hidden," who dwells, however, far from men in a lonesome wilderness in a cave among the beasts of the woods. "He ate his food by night with the gazelles, he kept company by day with the beasts of the field, he delighted his heart with the worms of the water." The name of this wonderful being, who, in the representations on the old-Babylonian cylindrical seals, is always set forth with horns upon his head, and with the feet and the tail of a bull, is Ēabānī, that is "Ēa (the god of the water deeps and of unfathomable wisdom) is my creator." At first, the sun-god Šamas, the protector of Nimrod, attempts to induce him to come to Erech, and to interpret the dream of Nimrod. Then Šā'idu, "the hunter," goes to him, but in vain. Finally Nimrod recommends to Šā'idu to take with him the two women Šamḥatu and Harimtu, that they may win Ēabānī over. At first, Šamḥatu comes to him, and then Harimtu, and "before their words," reads the fourth column of the third tablet, "fled away the wisdom of his heart, and vanished." He consents to go to Nimrod; but he determines to take with him a powerful *mandīnu*, a lion of the desert, in order to put to the test the power of the much praised hero. Great festivals are arranged in order to celebrate the coming of the wise seer. Nimrod slays the lion; and thereupon Ēabānī makes a covenant of friendship with him, and becomes ever after his inseparable companion.

What follows is, unfortunately, very much mutilated; but, out of the fragments hitherto found, it can be at least discovered that Nimrod and Ēabānī form the determination to slay the Elamitish tyrant Humbaba. They force their way into the palace of the king, who in a *kišat êrini u surmêni*, "in a wood of cedars and cypresses," had established his residence; and free Babylonia from the yoke of the foreign dominion of the Elamites. With this, closes the fifth canto of the epic.

The following tablet, the sixth (K. 231 in the collection of the British Museum) is, with the exception of the eleventh containing the episode of the deluge, the only one of which the original text has as yet been published in the London work on the inscriptions. I will, therefore, allow myself to give the story somewhat more fully at this point, and to seek at the same time to illustrate to some extent the modes of expression used in the poem.

After that Nimrod had killed the tyrant Humbaba, and had put the crown of

Erech upon his own head, he rose to the summit of power, so that even the goddess Istar sought to win his love.

"To the favor of Nimrod raised the majesty of Istar her eyes." 'Nimrod,' said she, "be my husband. Thou shalt be my husband, and I will be thy wife. I will make thee ride in a wagon of gold and precious stones. Kings, Princes, and Lords shall be subject to thee, and kiss thy feet."

Nimrod, however, rejected her hand. "Thou didst love Tammûz," said he, "over whom they mourn year by year. Thou didst love the eagle, and then didst break his wings. Now he sits in the forest, and cries, O my wings! Thou didst love also the lion, full of power; thou didst love a horse, courageous in battle; also Tabula, the shepherd, and Isullânu, the gardener of thy father; but all thou didst poorly reward. If now thou lovest me, it will happen to me as to them."

"When Istar heard this,
Istar was angry and ascended to Heaven.
Then appeared Istar before the face of Anu her father and
Before the face of Anatu her mother, and said,
My Father, Nimrod has insulted me."

With this ends the second column. In the following column, the angered goddess prays her father to create a divine bull and to send him against Erech. Anu grants her request; but the monster is killed by Nimrod and Êabânî. Êabânî seizes him by the horns and the tail, and Nimrod deals him the deadly blow. Then Istar mounts the wall of Erech, and utters a terrible curse. "Woe to thee, Nimrod" she calls, "woe to thee!" As Êabânî, however, hears these words of the goddess, he cuts off the member from the divine bull, and throws it in her face. Then Istar assembles her attendants, the Šamhâti and the Harimâti; and they made a lamentation over the member of the divine bull. But Nimrod has the bull brought, by his comrades, before the sun-god *Samas*; and consecrates to him the monster. Then they washed their hands in the Euphrates, took the road to Erech, and returned thither again.

The offense against the gods was at once followed by its punishment. Anatu, the mother of Istar, snatches away Êabânî by a sudden death, and smites Nimrod with sickness. Tortured with pains, and tormented by frightful dreams, the hero determines to go in search of his ancestor Šamaš-napištim, Hasis-adra, the son of Ubaratutu, the far-off one, who leads, "at the mouth of the streams," an immortal life, in order to ask him how he can find healing. He sets out on this journey, and comes to the scorpion-men, gigantic monsters with a double shape, who watch the sun at its rising and setting. Their feet rest in hell while their heads touch the lattice-work of heaven. One of the scorpion-men shows him the way to the land where dwells Hasis-adra, who has been carried away to the gods; and Nimrod continues his weary wanderings. He travels through a wide extended unfruitful desert of sand until he comes to a wonderful grove, the fruit of whose trees is precious stones, and which is guarded by the two nymphs Siduri and Sabitu. Finally he comes to a body of water, and finds there the ferryman Amêli-Êa,* i. e. "Servant of Êa." They embark together in the vessel, and Amêli-Êa steers towards the "Waters of Death." After a long voyage, they come to the far-off land at the mouth of the streams, where Hasis-adra dwells; and he now relates to Nimrod his deliverance from the great flood. This account

* [In the lecture, this name appears as Urubel. The form here given is Dr. Haupt's later transliteration of the cuneiform characters.—S. B.]

of the deluge fills the first four columns of the eleventh tablet of the poem. Hasis-adra then makes known to Nimrod also the oracle of the gods in regard to the way in which he can be freed from the curse which rests upon him. Amêli-Ēa takes the hero, and bathes him in the seas, and thus the curse is washed away. Then Nimrod embarks again in the vessel with the ferryman, and returns healed to Erech. Here he raises again his lamentations over his deceased friend Ēabâni, until at last the god Ēa hears him, and commands his son Merodach to lead back the shade of the seer from the under-world, and to suffer him to ascend to the land of the blessed, where the fallen heroes dwell, "lying on the beds of rest, and ever drinking pure water." With this, closes the poem.

Sir Henry Rawlinson, the "Father of Assyriology," was the first to point out (in a very sagacious article in the *Athenæum* of Dec. 7, 1882) that the twelve cantos of the poem evidently symbolized the course of the sun in the heavens, and that each tablet corresponds to a month in the year, reckoned according to one of the signs of the Zodiac. This view was afterwards farther developed by François Lenormant in his book "Les premières civilisations," and by A. H. Sayce in his suggestive lectures on "Babylonian Literature." Smith has expressed doubts about the correctness of this view. But it can scarcely be only accidental that, for example, Ēabâni, the wise bull-man, appears upon the scene in the second canto, to which the second month Iyyar, i. e. April-May, and, in the zodiac, the sign of the bull, corresponds; especially, since the name of the second month, in the old Sumero-Akkadian language, reads *iti guda shidi*, i. e., in Assyrian, *araḥ alpi ikari*, "the month of the righteous bull." Or that, farther, Nimrod makes a covenant of eternal friendship with Ēabâni in the third canto, to which the month Sivan, May-June, and, in the zodiac, the sign of the twins, corresponds; that Nimrod falls sick in the seventh canto, the month Tishri, September-October, when the sun begins to be less powerful; that he meets with the scorpion-men on the following tablet, the eighth, which corresponds to the month Marcheshvan, Assyrian *Araḥšamna*, (New-Babylonian *Araḥsavna*), i. e., "the eighth month," and in the zodiac, to the sign of the scorpion; that, finally, the account of the deluge is given in the eleventh canto, which corresponds to the eleventh month Shabaṭu, which is consecrated to the god of storms and rain, Rimmôn, and answers to the eleventh sign of the zodiac, the Water-bearer. In addition, it may be noticed that this month, in Sumero-Akkadian, has the name *iti asa ségi*, or, in Assyrian, *araḥ arrat zunni*, "month of the curse of rain,"—we should say, "month of the sin-flood (Suendfluthmonat)."

I pass now to notice somewhat more particularly the account of the deluge, which is for us, indeed, the most interesting part of the whole epic. This eleventh tablet, which now exists in three copies, is the best preserved of the whole series. Only the beginning was very much mutilated. Hormuzd Rassam, it is true, two years ago, brought from Mesopotamia a little half-burnt fragment which purported to be the beginning of a fourth deluge tablet, and contained the important statement that the city Surippak, for which Berossus has Larankha, lay on the Euphrates; but, nevertheless, it had not been possible up to this time to translate the first twenty lines in a satisfactory way. Happily, there came to the collection of the British Museum a little while ago a small piece of a Babylonian clay tablet, on which this very beginning of the text is contained, nearly perfect. Mr. Theophilus G. Pinches, the successor of Smith in the British Museum, had the goodness to send me, some days ago, a copy of this fragment. I am able, there-

fore, to give here, for the first time, the beginning of the cuneiform account of the deluge, true to the original.

"I will relate to thee, Nimrod," begins *Hasis-adra* his account, "the story of my deliverance, and I will also make known to thee the oracle of the gods. Thou knowest the city of *Surippak*, which lies on the bank of the *Euphrates*. This city was very old when their heart impelled the gods therein to cause a deluge,—all the great gods, their father *Anu*, their counsellor the warlike *Bêl* their throne-bearer *Adar*, their guide *Ënnugi*. The Lord of inscrutable wisdom, the god *Êa*, was, however, with them, and announced to me their decision. 'Man of *Surippak*, son of *Ubaratutu*,' said he 'leave thy house, and build a ship.' [According to Dr. Haupt's later discoveries, the words "and save all the living things thou canst find," should be added here.—S. B.] 'They intend to destroy the seeds of life. Therefore, do thou preserve alive seeds of life of every sort, and bring them up into the ship.*

Then built I the ship, and furnished it with food. I divided its interior into †= . . apartments; I looked after the seams, and filled them up. I poured three sars of bitumen over its outside, and three sars of bitumen over its inside.‡

All that I possessed, I gathered together, and brought on the ship, all my gold, all my silver, and seeds of life of every sort, all my male servants and all my female servants, the cattle of the field, the wild beasts of the field, also my nearest friends,—all these I brought on board. When at last the sun-god brought on the appointed time, then said a voice, 'At evening will the heavens rain destruction. Embark in the ship, and shut thy door. The appointed time is come,' said the voice, 'at evening will the heavens rain destruction,' With anxiety, I awaited the going down of the sun on this day, the day on which I was to commence my

* [For what next follows in the lecture, the following later translation, made by Dr. Haupt from fragments discovered by him in the British Museum in May, 1882, ought to be substituted, and is, therefore, here given in its place. The German original has been published by Dr. Haupt in his work, "The Akkadian Language" (Asher & Co., Berlin, 1883).—S. B.]

† The ship which thou shalt build, *x* [the characters indicating the number are illegible.—S. B.] cubits in length its measure, and *y* cubits the extent of its height and breadth. Do not launch it into the sea.'

‡ As I heard this, I said to *Ea* my Lord, [thy command,] my Lord, which thou hast thus made known, I will perform, I will accomplish. But the dwellers in the city, the people and the elders, will [flock together].'

Then *Ea* opened his mouth, and spoke. He said to me his servant, 'Then shalt thou thus say to them: 'I know that *Bel* is hostilely disposed towards me. I cannot remain in this city; in *Bel's* province, I cannot raise my hand. But I will not go down to the sea, but remain by *Ea's* my Lord. But the heavens will rain down upon you a mighty flood of water; [men,] birds and cattle will [perish]. Only the fishes' [what follows is badly mutilated.—S. B.]

There is also a short passage of the lecture omitted from the translation at this point. This omission is made because the omitted portion, as Dr. Haupt says in his excursus (p. 3) in *Schrader's* "Die Keilinschriften u. d. Alt. Test.," "probably does not belong to a copy of the eleventh tablet of the *Izubar* legends [in other words, the *Nimrod Epic*.—S. B.], but rather to a text which is related to this as 'the Journey of *Istar* to the Infernal Regions' (comp. *Smith, Chald. Genesis*, p. 198) to the seventh tablet of the epic."

This omitted portion reads as follows:—S. B.

"*Ea*, however, ordered me to carry out his commands, and said to me his servant, 'Shut not the door of the ship behind thee before the time comes in which I shall bid thee. Then embark, and take on the ship thy stores of grain, all thy possessions and goods, thy family, thy servants and maids, and thy nearest friends, The cattle of the field, the wild beasts of the field, will I myself send to thee, that they may be hidden behind the door of the ship.'"

† [The characters are here illegible.—S. B.]

‡ [This paragraph is but a partial translation. The text is very imperfect here.—S. B.]

voyage. I was afraid, but I embarked in the ship, and closed my door, to shut up the ship. To *Buzurkurgal*, the helmsman, I entrusted the mighty structure and its load.

Then arose *Mû-šeri-ina-namâri* from the base of the heavens, a dark mass of clouds, in the midst of which the storm god *Rimmôn* made his thunder crash, while *Nebo* and *Sêrru* rush upon one another. The throne-bearers* stride over mountain and valley; the mighty god of plagues sets free the whirlwinds; the god *Adar* causes the canals continually to overflow; the gods of the great (subterranean) water bring up mighty floods, and make the earth shake with their might; the storm god's sea of waves mounts up to heaven; all light was changed to darkness.

Brother cares no more for brother; men trouble themselves no more about one another. In heaven itself, the gods are afraid of the deluge. They flee up to the (highest) heaven of the god *Anu*. As a dog upon his bed, crouch the gods on the lattice of heaven.

The goddess *Istar* shrinks as a woman in childbirth; the majestic goddess cries with a loud voice, 'Thus then is all changed to mud, as I prophesied to the gods. I have foretold to the gods this disaster, and made known the war of destruction against my men. But I did not bring forth my men for this, that they might fill the sea as the young of fishes.'

Then wept the gods with her over the spirits of the great (subterranean) water. Weeping they crouched upon one spot, and pressed their lips together. Six days, and seven nights, maintained wind, flood, and storm their mastery. But, on the seventh day, subsided the deluge, which, like a mighty army, had fought a battle. The sea retired to its bed, and storm and flood ceased.

But I looked † over the sea, loudly lamenting that the dwellings of men had been changed into mud. Like the trunks of trees, floated the corpses about. An air-hole had I opened; and, as the light of day fell upon my countenance, I recoiled, and sat down weeping; my tears ran over my face.‡

But, when the seventh came, I took out a dove, and let her fly. The dove flew hither and thither; but, since there was no resting-place there, she returned again to the ship. Then I took a swallow out, and let her fly. The swallow flew hither and thither; but, since there was there no resting-place, she returned again to the ship. Then I took a raven out and let him fly. The raven flew away; and as he saw the decrease of the water, he again came near wading carefully through the water; but he returned not again.

Then I let all out towards the four winds. I offered a sacrifice, and erected an altar on the summit of the mountain. I also set up seven *Adagur*-vessels, and spread out under them reeds, cedar-wood, and lightning-plant. The gods breath-

* [According to *Suess* ("Antlitz der Erde"), the water-spouts of the cyclone.—S. B.]

† [The word used in the lecture is *voyaged*. The word here given is a later translation by *Dr. Haupt*.—S. B.]

‡ [For what next follows, *Dr. Haupt* has given in *Suess*, "Das Antlitz der Erde" (p. 49) a later and better translation. This here follows in place of the passage in the lecture.—S. B.]

"I looked upon in all quarters (or, wherever I looked) a fearful sea. Towards the twelve abodes of heaven, (i. e. in all directions,) no land. Without purpose, the ship drove towards the region of *Nizir*. Then a mountain of the region of *Nizir* held the ship fast, and let it go no farther on high. On the first, and on the second day, the mountain of *Nizir* held the ship fast, and let it not etc. (Also) on the third and the fourth day, the mountain etc. (In the same way,) on the fifth and the sixth day, the mountain etc."]

ed in the odor, the gods breathed in the sweet odor, Like flies, crowded the gods around the sacrifice.

Upon this, came the majestic goddess (Istar), and raised on high the great bows which her father the god of heaven, Anu, had made. 'Evermore will I remember this day,' said she; 'I will not forget it. All the gods may come to the altar; only Bêl shall not come to the altar, because he rashly caused the deluge, and gave my men to destruction.'

As then the god Bêl drew near, and saw the ship, he was startled. He filled his heart full of anger against the gods and the spirits of heaven. 'No soul shall escape,' cried he 'no man shall remain alive from the destruction.'

Then opened the god Adar his mouth, and spoke. He said to the mighty Bêl, 'No other than the god Ea has contrived this. Ea knew (about our determination), and has told him all.'

Then opened the god Ea his mouth, and spoke. He said to the mighty Bêl, 'Thou art the god Adar his mouth, and spoke. He said to the mighty Bêl, and caused the deluge? Let the sinner suffer for his sins, the evil-doer for his deeds; but be gracious to him, that he may not be destroyed, pity him, that he may remain alive. Instead of again causing a deluge, let henceforth lions and hyenas come, and diminish the number of men, let a famine arise, and depopulate the land, let the god of pestilence come, and destroy the men. I have not informed Adrahasis of the determination of the great gods; I only sent him a dream; thus has he learned the determination of the gods.'*

Then Bêl came to his senses; entered into the ship, seized my hand, and raised me up; he raised up also my wife, and laid her hand in mine. Then he turned to us, put himself between us, and uttered the following blessing: "Hitherto was Šamaš-napištim a mortal man; but now he is, together with his wife, raised to the gods. He shall dwell in the far-off land at the 'mouth of the streams.'" Then he led me away, and gave me a home in the far-off land at the 'mouth of the streams.' Thus ends the episode of the deluge in the Babylonian Nimrod Epic.

It yet remains for us finally to speak of the relation of this account to the two Biblical accounts of the flood. The time does not allow me to treat this important question thoroughly. I must limit myself to making some brief suggestions.

A well known French Assyriologist has made the claim that the Babylonian and Biblical accounts of the deluge only harmonize in the items of the building of the vessel, the sending out of the birds, and the end of the submersion.

I cannot agree with this view. It seems to me that the two accounts have as much similarity to one another, as could be in any case expected. The variations which we meet, cannot seem striking; they are, for the most part, founded in the difference between the two lands and peoples. Here belongs especially the strong monotheistic coloring of the Biblical account, as opposed to the Babylonian polytheism. So also the account, in the cuneiform story of the deluge, concerning the building of the vessel, reveals, in every line, a people given to navigation. Here we read of an *êlippu*, a real ship, which is entrusted to a *malaḥu* [Heb. מֵלֵךְ.—S. B.], a helmsman. In Genesis, on the contrary, the expression אֲנִיָּה is purposely avoided; because, according to the opinion of the author, ship-building, at the time of the flood, was not yet known. Noah receives, therefore, only the

*Only in consequence of his great piety was he able to understand this divine message. A wicked man would not have been able to interpret correctly the dream.

command to make a *תִּבְרָה*, a box. No trace is found, moreover, as it is natural to think, of the distinction of the Jehovist between pure and impure beasts. Also the measurements of the vessel do not harmonize in the Biblical and the Babylonian account, with both the cuneiform account and that of Berossus. Finally, there appears in the deluge episode in the Nimrod epic, together with the dove, Assyrian shummatu, and the raven, Assyrian âribu, the swallow also, Assyrian shinûntu.

Yet these are all only insignificant differences, which are of very little account.

More important is the difference in the statements concerning the duration of the flood. In the Elohist, the event lasts, on the whole 1 moon-year and 11 days, therefore just 365 days, a complete sun-year; in the Jehovist, 61 days; according to the cuneiform account, on the contrary, the flood rages for 7 days, and decreases for 7 days, lasts, therefore, on the whole, only 14 days. But even this variation cannot weigh very much, when contrasted with the perfect similarity which prevails in the two accounts, both in reference to the succession of the single items, and in regard to the details themselves, even to the forms of expression. If we keep before our eyes the fact that, in both accounts, the flood is conceived as a divine punishment, that, in both, the building of the vessel is exactly described, that a period of seven days is set forth, that the closing of the door is expressly made prominent, that the thank-offering after the flood is favorably received, that, in both, at the end, the divine promise is also given that henceforth there shall never come a deluge again, it will be perfectly clear that one account has been taken from the other. But, on account of the great age of the Babylonian account, which existed in a written form at least 2000 years before Christ, a borrowing from the Hebrew is impossible. There remains, therefore, only the possibility that the Hebrews took with them the legend at their emigration from Ur in Chaldæa, or that they first came to know it during the exile in Babylon.*

A final judgment on this question can only be given after we have the Babylonian originals of the rest of the ancient history in Genesis. As yet we possess, besides the account of the deluge in the Nimrod epic, only five fragments of the Babylonian account of creation, which exhibit different points of resemblance to the Elohist account of creation. Especially worthy of notice is it that here too, after each work of creation, is added *ubaššimû ilâni*, "the gods had done well." These tablets which, after the beginning of the first, "There was a time when neither the heaven above, nor the earth beneath, existed," bear the name "Series there was a time when above" have nothing to do with the Nimrod epic. The latter is, as has been already said, written upon twelve broad three-column tablets; the account of creation, on the contrary, on long small tablets, which contain on each side only one column.

Much work is still to be bestowed on this subject. Assyriology has as yet, unfortunately, only very few adepts to show; and, of these, again, only three or four are earnestly busied with the study of these texts. If fresh powers do not enter into this field of labor, much must for a long time to come remain unsolved. It is a difficult department, from which the most are frightened away by the mere complicated system of the characters, which, besides the numerous ideographs, makes use of 240 syllable signs. But every one who has overcome this difficulty, and devotes his powers to this new science, can be certain to find a rich reward for his pains.

[A short passage of the lecture is omitted at this point.—S. B.]

RUTH AND THE NEW CRITICISM.

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The brevity of the book of Ruth, and the almost idyllic character of its contents, might very naturally lead us to overlook it as having any practical bearing upon the discussion that is now agitating the Christian Church. At the same time, the divine Author of the Scriptures was not without a purpose in permitting its insertion into the canon; and in studying it we may well address to it the question directed by Mordecai to Esther, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

The date of the composition of the book of Ruth must remain a conjecture. The genealogical table with which it closes leads us to assign to it a date as late as, if not later than that of David. It may have fallen from the pen of the Psalmist although it is probable that some after writer has the merit of its authorship. The events recorded in it, however, cannot be assigned to a later date than the closing year of the fourteenth century before our Lord. They transpired, as the book itself informs us, in the time of the judges. For this reason the LXX. took the book from its setting after Canticles in the Hebrew Scriptures and arranged it as we have it in the English version between Judges and Kings.

The picture which we have here is of that time, therefore, in which Israel was in a state of insecurity and instability, for such was the character of the period known as that of the Judges. Instead of utterly destroying the Canaanites the children of Israel put them to tribute, and by disobedience to Jehovah, who had commanded extermination, wrought their own misery. At this time it was that the Moabites under Eglon, taking advantage of their weakness, smote them and brought them into subjection. Their bondage lasted eighteen years, after which God raised up the left-handed Ehud, who smote Eglon, delivered Israel and subdued Moab. Then "the land had rest fourscore years." This was probably the period during which occurred the events recorded in Ruth. Such were the relations between the two people, that Israelites felt perfect security in migrating to and residing in the Country of Moab, (Ruth I, 1) while intermarriage with the daughters of Moab seems to have produced as little trouble of conscience as the intermarriage with the daughters of the Canaanites and Philistines had done.

Now we are asked by the "advanced" critics to believe that

the laws in the Deuteronomic and Levitical Codes as they distinguish them, are the result of the progressive development in religious ideas of the people of Israel. As to the former, we are told by Prof. Robertson Smith that "it was not known to Isaiah and therefore the reform of Hezekiah cannot have been based upon it." (The Old Testament in the Jewish Church, p. 354.) As to the latter, the same writer informs us that there is evidence to fix its date "later than Ezekiel," (p. 375).

But the book of Ruth contains certain circumstantial evidence to the existence of ordinances, found in at least one if not both of these codes, prior to the time of the Kings. True, it may be said that the observance of a custom does not presuppose the existence of a law. But we reply that such an observance is far stronger evidence for a law's existence than non-observance is for a law's non-existence, which is the first principle of the "Higher Criticism." Indeed, reasoning from the stand-point of that criticism we might demand that the existence of a law be granted as an historic fact wherever there is the general observance of a custom.

Now the book of Ruth contains evidence of an acquaintance with what is known as the Levirate Law, and not only of an acquaintance with it but also of a conviction of its binding force. That law finds expression in Deut. XXV., 5, *sqq.*, an acknowledged part of the Deuteronomic Code. "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger; her husband's brother (*marg.* next kinsman) shall go in unto her and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be that the first-born which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel." Such was the Law. It is well that attention be called to the fact that the word "brother" as found in the Law is not to be construed literally. It embraces the idea of kinsman. This is evident from the fact that in Deut. XXII., 2 the term is used in regard to one not known by another, and in the book before us (IV., 3) Boaz speaks to the "kinsman nearer than" himself to Ruth, of "our brother Elimelech."

Acquaintance with this Law is indicated in the words of Naomi to Orpah and Ruth (I., 11-13) as well as in those of Boaz to the kinsman (IV., 5) and also in the whole history, of which these words form but a part. What had been apparently, to say the most, an occasional custom in the days of the patriarchs (Gen. XXXVIII.) was become in the time of the Judges an authoritative institution. It is an interesting fact that the elders of Bethlehem, in giving Boaz their best wishes

when he was about to take Ruth to be his wife, alluded to the history in this chapter referred to above as testimony to the blessing of God consequent upon obedience to the Levirate Law. Now where we find an occasional act thus becoming an authoritative custom, are we not warranted in inferring the existence of an ordinance giving legal sanction to the act? And if we find such an ordinance in the midst of a code whose other statutes bear evidence of equal antiquity, are we not warranted in concluding the co-extensive authority of the entire code?

But there is still further evidence in the book before us of an acquaintance with such a law. In Deut. XXV., 7-10, we read: "And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife, go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak unto him; and if he stand to it and say, I like not to take her; then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed" (lit., the loosed of the shoe). Here then we have the object of the Law brought out in the clauses "to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel," and "build up his brother's house." Compare with this the language of Boaz to the elders (Ruth IV., 10) "to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of the place." In the Deuteronomic Law we have also an injunction as to the method of dealing with the recusant individual who does not take pleasure, as the Hebrew has it, in performing the duty of *Yabham* or next of Kin. In Ruth IV., 7, 8) we find substantially an argument with this injunction. The next of kin having refused to take Ruth to wife, in the presence of the elders, at the gate of the city, (*cf.* Deut. as quoted above) plucked off his shoe and gave it to Boaz. Here is a variation from the original command but only in part. Boaz appeared in the stead of Ruth, which may be accounted for by the fact that she was a Moabitess, and as such would not be able to urge her claim with equal assurance of success as through a mediator of recognized standing; and the pulling off of the shoe seems to have the significance of renunciation and not of retaliation. But the variation is comparatively insignificant. The interesting fact is that the two acts are associated, the refusal to act the part of a kinsman, and the removal of the shoe, and

that in the presence of the elders, at the gate. Again we ask, Do not these various precautions and ceremonies indicate the existence of an ordinance by which they were made, to a certain extent, obligatory? And inasmuch as we find such an ordinance, in a code which the great majority of critics and students generally have been compelled to believe upon internal, as well as external, evidence, older as a literary composition than the fourteenth century before Christ, are we not warranted in the conclusion that the entire code was operative during that century?

It is worthy of remark in this connection that Jewish tradition of the time of our Savior ascribed the literary authorship of this law to Moses. The Higher Criticism cannot by any wiliness of casuistry escape the force of the words in Lk. xx., 28 "Master, Moses *wrote* unto us, If a man's brother die, etc." They are the record of a popular conviction, consequent upon careful tradition.

But once again, the book of Ruth bears evidence to an acquaintance with the law of a *goel*, or redeemer, during the time of the judges. In Lev. xxv., 15 we read "If thy brother be waxen poor and have sold away *some* of his possession and if any of his kin come to redeem it (lit., his *goel*, or redeemer, who is next to him, shall come) then shall he "redeem that which his brother sold" (lit., the sale of his brother). Compare with this law, accepted as a part of the Levitical Torah by the Higher Critics, the historic statements in Ruth. "And he (Boaz) said unto the kinsman, (Heb. *goel*), Naomi that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: and I thought to advertise thee (lit., I said I will open thine ear) saying, Buy it before the inhabitants and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if thou wilt not redeem *it*, then tell me that I may know; for *there is* none to redeem it beside thee: and I *am* after thee. And he said, I will redeem it." (IV., 4.)

There are several facts worth noting here. *First*. Boaz would not redeem the property of Naomi until he had first "advertised" the nearer *goel*. What restrained him from so doing? He recognized a superior right as belonging to another. Whence came that right? Does his act indicate a mere popular custom or the restraining influence of law? Unquestionably the latter. His summons to the elders indicates the fact that he recognized a well-known prior claim to his own, and that he willingly would have yielded, however the result might have conflicted with his desire. *Secondly*, the *goel* recognized the redemption as his duty and assented to it until he found that it involved acquiescence in the Levirate Law, in other words, that in tak-

ing the property he must take the wife.' This would have interfered with his inheritance, so that he demurred. How came he to recognize the redemption as a duty, had there not been the obligation of law in it?

Thus it is that the short history of the book before us gives its evidence to the existence both of a Levitical and a Deuteronomic code previous to the later quarter of the 14th century before Christ. It is but confirmatory; for the whole Bible, both Old and New Testaments, bears evidence to the truth of the traditional belief of the Church in regard to its first books. It is little enough to say that some regard should be paid to the almost unanimous consent of the most diligent students of the Word of God in all ages; and that charges of ignorance should be withheld until "new" suppositions have an approximately unanimous consent.

→GENERAL NOTES.←

The Aramæan Portion of Daniel, a translation.—Of the Book of *Daniel* the first chapter is written in Hebrew, together with three and a half verses of the second chapter; then everything is in Aramæan till the end of the seventh chapter; after which the Hebrew recurs to the close of the twelfth and last chapter. We are instantly forced to ask the question, Why this alternation? The subject matter does not explain it. It is not a distinction between historical and prophetic, for of the six historical chapters one is Hebrew and five Aramæan, and of the six prophetic chapters one is Aramæan and five Hebrew. It is possible that two or three different authors who composed in different languages have been put together by an editor, but this is not probable; for the first chapter, in Hebrew, is a natural introduction for what follows in Aramæan, and the break between the two occurs in the middle of a story. I prefer, then, with Lenormant, to hold that the whole book was originally written in Hebrew, and that it was afterwards translated into Aramæan. At a later period the Hebrew of the six chapters following the first was lost, and the editor put the Aramæan in its place. We thus have a book composed in part of its original Hebrew, and in part of the Aramæan translation, or targum, of the original which has been lost. It is incredible that any single writer would have purposely composed a single book in two languages. If, however, when it was adopted at a very late period, as we know, into the canon, the editor, or scribe, or Sanhedrim was unable to find the entire Hebrew, it would have been natural to put the equally familiar Aramæan in its place, and thus complete the book. The Gospel of *Matthew* is another example of a book originally written in one language but presently lost in that language, and finally current only in a translation.

Besides, this theory explains satisfactorily the difficulties, otherwise not easily surmountable, which rationalistic writers bring against the historical character of *Daniel*. Chief among these is the use of Greek words, which could not have been

in vogue much before the time of Alexander and the Macedonian invasion. Of the six kinds of musical instruments, translated "cornet, flute, harp, sackbutt, psaltery, and dulcimer," in the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, four are pure Greek; and at the time of Daniel, Greek had not at all invaded the East: it was still an Ionian language. But if the Aramæan is a translation of an early Hebrew text, we escape the difficulty entirely of which so much has been made. Indeed, there is a pretty plain indication in the text that we have to do with a translation. Thus, where the transition comes from the Hebrew to the Aramæan we read, "Then the Chaldeans said unto the king in Aramean," as it is generally translated. But the word 'Aramæan' is a parenthesis to indicate that we now pass to a passage in that language: it should be read, "And the Chaldeans said to the king, [Aramæan text] O King, live for ever." The fact is that the Chaldeans did not speak in Aramæan (or 'Syriac' as our version has it), but in Assyrian, a wholly different language, and the current version makes a serious difficulty which we avoid if we understand that the Aramæan is a later version. We find the same word 'Aramæan' employed to introduce a passage in that language in *Ezra*, where the received version says of the adversaries of the Jews who wrote to Cyrus: "The writing of the letter was in the Syrian tongue and interpreted in the Syrian tongue"—which makes pure nonsense. The translation must have been in Persian; and we should read, with the gloss in parenthesis: "And in the days of Artaxerxes, wrote Bishlam, Mithredates, Tabeel, and the rest of his companions unto Artaxerxes, King of Persia; and the text of the letter was written in Aramæan and accompanied by a translation, [Aramæan text]"—the letter following in Aramæan, as stated.

The Aramæan portion of *Daniel* being a translation has the same faults of translation that the Septuagint has, some of which are easily corrected. Thus, we have Nebuchadnezzar for Nebuchadrezzar, Abednego for Abednebo (servant of Nebo), Belshazzar for Belsharazzar, and very likely Meshach for Mesha-Marduk. There are some copyists' errors in the Hebrew as well as in the Aramæan chapters, one of which, in ch. II., 1, makes Daniel in the *second* year of Nebuchadnezzar, before he had time fairly to get into the Chaldean school as a boy, to be already a learned interpreter of dreams.

We may add to this the error in ch. IX., 1, where Ahasuerus is put for Cyaxares. The sacred text is no more kept miraculously free from such copyists' errors than are the works of classical writers. No one would think of making the copyists' blunders in Herodotus an argument against its authenticity. No more should such an error be made an argument against Scripture, certainly not against the Book of *Daniel* which came very late into the canon, as its place in the Hebrew Scriptures indicates.—*William H. Ward, D. D., in the Journal of Christian Philosophy.*

The Occurrence of the Divine Names in Genesis.—In the fourth and fifth chapters of Genesis there is a fair occasion for testing the theory that by the use of one or other of the divine names one can trace the separate authorship of the component parts of the first book of the Bible.

In the fourth chapter we find the name Lord used throughout with one signal exception. This occurs in the twenty-fifth verse, where Eve says: "For God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel." In the fifth exactly the reverse is seen. Here the name God is used throughout with one signal exception. This is

in the twenty-ninth verse, where Lamech is represented as saying: "This one shall comfort us. . . . because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." How is it possible to doubt that the two names are used interchangeably, and that the variation has no reason save in the taste of the writer? Unquestionably both were known to him and both represented the same Being.

The explanation of this matter given by Hupfeld, Lenormant and others, is that the genealogies in these two chapters were originally the one altogether Jehovistic and the other altogether Elohistie, but the final editor suppressed a portion of each so as to establish a concordance between them. Wellhausen says that in the fifth chapter the thirtieth verse followed the twenty-eighth, and the twenty-ninth is an interpolation; and he offers the same explanation of the latter part of the twenty-fifth verse of the fourth chapter. To all these theories and to any others of the like kind, there stands the insuperable objection that they mangle the sacred text without any good reason. They first construct their plan of the authorship, and then manipulate the facts to suit themselves, which is just as unscientific as it is irreverent. We have the narrative in Genesis, and we have no collateral sources of information whatever. Now, this narrative may be accepted or it may be rejected, but no man has a right to adopt one part and repudiate another, for both stand upon precisely the same authority. The oft-repeated statement of a succession of editors each revising the work of his predecessor is nothing but a conjecture, and a conjecture with nothing to sustain it. There are no traces of tribal or national partialities at work. The Jews had too much reverence for their sacred records to allow any manipulation of them.

Besides, the whole appearance of the early portions of Genesis favors the common view that they are ancient records put together by Moses in order to show the basis of the great redemption to be wrought out through Israel and Israel's seed. Had these scanty narratives been worked over again and again, as we are told, surely the obvious gaps that exist would have been filled, the Elohistie and Jehovistic portions would have been separated throughout, or interblended more copiously, and the entire book would have but one coloring from beginning to end. It is insisted, therefore, that the fragmentary character of the document, and its likeness to an ordinary *Collectanea*, are the very features which, instead of confirming the notion of a divided authorship, followed by successive revisions, rather establish the traditional opinion that Moses took the details which came down from the patriarch, and under divine guidance wove them into the consecutive history we now have.—*Talbot W. Chambers, D. D., in The Pulpit Treasury.*

➤ EDITORIAL NOTES. ◀

Bibliolatry.—It is the opinion of many that the Bible has come to be treated as an idol, a fetich, by the great majority of those who accept it as their rule of faith and life. It is conceded by this class that the Bible contains that which entitles it to reverence, but "in trying to express the reasons for this reverence," it is said, "men have over-stated and misstated the nature of these books. The symbol has been identified with the reality;" and so there has arisen an irrational reverence, which may be styled *Bibliolatry*. These philosophers go on to state that as a consequence of this *Bibliolatry*, or irrational reverence, there is to-day a great lack of reasonable reverence. We suppose that the truth of this asser-

tion depends largely upon the meaning assigned to the word under notice. That a majority of those who intelligently believe in the Bible and in its teachings have for it a blind and irrational reverence may well be questioned. There are some, however, of whom this may be said. One who feels that he cannot believe in a Bible of whose every word and letter he is not certain might be classed here. With such an one, the form assumes an undue prominence, while the meaning is overlooked. To believe the sacred text may contain a copyist's mistake, or an unauthorized interpolation, or a numerical error is, in his estimation, blasphemy. The assertion that Moses did not prophetically write the last chapter of Deuteronomy, that Samuel was not the author of the books which go by his name, that David did not write the seventy-second Psalm, is rank heresy. Now, this class of people, and it is not a small one, we believe, may be classed as Bibliolators. They may fairly be said to worship the Bible. Some of them are prepared to affirm the inspiration of the English version. It is remarkable, likewise, to what great length their *faith*, as they call it, will extend in matters of interpretation. The most difficult and unnatural explanation of a passage is always to be preferred, inasmuch as the glory of God is thereby seen more clearly. These interpreters find miracles where none were intended. Indeed, they find everything everywhere, and anything anywhere. They are, it is true, Bible-worshippers; they are also Bible-destroyers. They have an irrational reverence for the Divine Record, and at the same time a rationalism, than which none is more irreverent. If the Holy Writ has been brought into disrepute, these have done it. But are all Bible believers to be placed in this class? Is it legitimate for one who is opposing christianity to form his estimate of it from that corrupt form known as Romanism? Because some of those who have done most in the field of "higher criticism" are skeptics, shall all who work in that field be suspected and denounced? And because some cling idolatrously to the letter of the Word and entertain for it a superstitious regard, is it right that all should be judged by these? Nor may we say that he who believes the Bible to be the word of God, rather than that it contains that word, is to be classed as a Bibliolator. There is abundance of evidence to show that there has never existed a more rational reverence for this Book, than exists at the present time.

Hebrew in Colleges.—One indication of a growing interest in Old Testament study is the fact that an impression is coming to prevail more widely as to the advisability of making Hebrew a college-study. There are many and strong arguments to be urged in favor of this movement. There are many influential educators who favor it. Much has been done lately to call attention to the subject by Dr. John P. Peters, of New York City. It will not be without a struggle that the already crowded curriculum of our Colleges will admit a new department, even as an optional one. The most serious obstacle, as it seems to us, in the way of its admission, is the lack of men who are able to give competent instruction; but this obstacle in time can easily be removed. Two things are certain, the growing importance of Semitic studies demands that an opportunity be afforded for more time to be spent upon them by theological students, than the present arrangement of theological Seminaries will allow; and these studies are no longer to be pursued by students of divinity only. There are many others who, for various reasons, desire to pursue investigations in this department.

→BOOK NOTICES.←

[All publications received, which relate directly or indirectly to the Old Testament, will be promptly noticed under this head. Attention will not be confined to new books; but notices will be given, so far as possible, of such old books, in this department of study, as may be of general interest to pastors and students.]

JEWISH NATURE WORSHIP.*

The author of this pamphlet holds the view, that "a recognition of the independent principles of the male and female natures appears to underlie all systems of religion belonging to a primitive people." This was suggested by the operations of nature. The egg first suggested a creative principle, but afterward it was learned that this was only a passive principle. After briefly describing Hindoo Phallic worship, Egyptian worship, Phœnician Baal and Astarte-worship, traces of Phallic worship among Greeks, Romans and Americans, he takes up the ancient Jewish worship. *Elohim* includes the idea of *strength*, thus representing the masculine power, and also of *belly*, thus representing the recipient or productive principle. *El-Shaddai* means *strong-breasts*, thus containing both a masculine and feminine idea. The author finds evidence of Phallic worship in the second commandment, in 1 Kgs. xv., 13; 2 Chron. xv., 16; Jer. xi., 13; Hos. ix., 10. The greatest merit the book may be said to possess is its shortness. The etymological investigations are without foundation. That much of ancient pagan worship may be traced to the hermaphrodite or masculo-feminine principle is true; there is danger, however, of carrying this principle too far.

A HAND-BOOK OF THE ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.†

This book, as its author himself tells us, is an "account of the common English Version, from its first rude beginnings in Anglo-Saxon times, through all the changes it has undergone, to the form in which more than seventy millions of people diffused over the globe, now claim it as their common inheritance and joint possession." In their order are taken up, explained and illustrated the following: (1) Anglo-Saxon Versions; (2) Earliest English Versions; (3) The Wicliffe Versions; (4) Tyndale's Version; (5) Coverdale; (6) Matthew's Bible; (7) Taverner's Bible; (8) The Great Bible; (9) The English Bible during the last five years of Henry VIII., and under the Reigns of Edward VI. and Mary; (10) The Genevan Bible; (11) The Bishop's Bible; (12) The Rhemes New Testament and Douay Bible; (13) The Authorized Version; (14) The Westminster Version of the New Testament.

We can conceive of no work which would demand more careful scholarship. On every page may be found the results of extended investigation. It is a book for close study, with Bible in hand. A mere perusal will not answer. The quality of the work no one can question. It will have a permanent value to all readers of the English Bible.

* *Jewish Nature Worship*. The Worship of the Reciprocal Principles of Nature among the Ancient Hebrews. By J. P. McLAREN. Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co. 1883. Pp. 22. Price, 25c.

† *A Hand-book of the English Versions of the Bible*. With copious examples illustrating the ancestry and relationship of the several Versions, and comparative tables. By J. I. MOMBERT, D. D. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 900 Broadway, cor. 20th st. 1 vol. 8vo, pp. 509.

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