

St. John x. 1-10.

'He that entereth not by the door.'

EXPOSITORS in general (Godet is an exception) understand this passage to relate primarily to the ministry of the Christian Church, and consider that our Lord is here laying down the necessity of a valid commission for the ministry. To me, it seems that His words refer primarily to the Jewish ministry.

He is addressing the Scribes and Pharisees, His enemies. Surely it is unlikely that He should unfold to them the rules of the ministry in the Church He was about to found. It would be of no profit to them to know these rules, for the first condition under which they would profit was wanting to them, *i.e.* faith in Him as the Christ. And I cannot but think that when the Evangelist (v.⁶) says that they did not understand His words, he means to convey a hint that they might have been expected to understand Him because He was talking of things within human knowledge.

Our Lord's object here, as always, was to bring men to believe in Him. These men declared He took too much on Himself. His answer is, that God sent Him. He claimed to be the Shepherd, but He had entered in by the door. He had been lawfully called and sent. They all knew that in His discourses He was careful to point out that He did not seek His own will and His own glory, but the will of God and the glory of God.

And who were the men that dared find fault

with Him? They were supporters of the grossest abuses, of fraud and violence, of thieving and robbery.

The Roman authorities had dealt profanely with the sacred office of High Priest. They had deposed some High Priests, and thrust others into their place, according to their own will. Valerius Gratus, the predecessor of Pontius Pilate, had been particularly high-handed in this respect. And it can scarcely be supposed that the men who thrust themselves or allowed the Romans to thrust them into sacred offices, were guiltless. Our Lord calls such men thieves and robbers, and even without His authority we should believe they deserved such condemnation.

'The sheep did not hear them.' Mark the aorist tense. Our Lord states an historical fact. When He speaks of the sheep, He means the humble and devout servants of God. Of course, such as these would be shocked at profane dealing with God's law and God's high priesthood. No wonder if they refused to recognize as lawful high priests, men who had been violently thrust into the office. No wonder if they refused to 'hear' such men.

It seems to me that this explanation clears up many difficulties. I am far from denying that there is a secondary reference to the Christian ministry, but I cannot help thinking that Christian expositors have been so intent on drawing a lesson for their own times that they have overlooked the primary reference to the Jewish ministry of our Lord's time.

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The Archaeology of the Book of Genesis.

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Chapter viii.

viii. 1. Here we have another tacit contradiction of the Babylonian story with its implied polytheism. In the latter the Deluge begins with the 'raging' of Hadad, the god of the wind: 'the raging of Hadad reached unto heaven, all that was light to darkness was turned,' and in the description of the catastrophe the wind accordingly holds the first place: 'six days and nights marched the wind

(and) deluge; the storm (*mekhu*) swept the land.' The cessation of the rain meant the cessation of the wind: 'the sea grew calm; the evil wind was lulled; the deluge ended.' The Hebrew writer, on the contrary, makes the wind put an end to the deluge, and further emphasizes the fact that this wind was no independent divinity, but was sent by Elohim. The wind (Ass. *sāru*), it must be

remembered, was for the Hebrew writer no 'evil' minister of Tiamât, but 'the breath of Elohim'; see Gn 1² 6³. Possibly in the verb *yizkôr* with which the verse begins there is a reminiscence of the phrase which introduces the Babylonian story: *Utu-napistim ana sasu-ma izakkara*, 'Utu-napistim says to him.' The verb which signifies 'to remember' in Hebrew means 'to speak' in Assyrian.

2. The verb *sakâru*, which is used here (in a Hebrew dress) of 'stopping' the fountains of the deep, was the technical Assyrian word for 'damming up' a canal or stream. From it was derived *sikkuru*, 'a bolt.' In the Epic of the Creation, Bel-Merodach is said to have 'bolted' the upper half of Tiamât so that the waters above the firmament should not 'issue forth,' and also to have fixed 'bolts' on the right and left sides of the doors of the visible universe. It will be noticed that Tehôm is again used as a proper name without the article. The Assyrian original was *naqbê Tiamâti yussakkira*. The verb *kalû*, which is used by the Hebrew writer of 'the rain from heaven,' is used in the Babylonian story of 'the Deluge' (*abubu iklu*, 'the deluge ended'), which, however, was a storm of rain and not a tidal wave.

3. This verse is purely Hebraic and shows no trace of an Assyro-Babylonian original.

4. In the Babylonian version, *ana sad Nizir itemid elippu*, 'at the mountain of Nizir rested the ark.' Nizir, according to Assur-natsir-pal, lay to the north-east of Assyria, but the Babylonian map which I have published in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES makes it clear that the mountain on which the vessel of Utu-napistim rested was Jebel Judi (correctly described by Berossus as in the Gordyæan mountains). The tradition that this was the scene of the descent from the ark still lingers on the spot, and Nicolas of Damascus asserts that the remains of the ark were still to be seen on the summit of Mount Baris.¹ From Jebel Judi northward to Van the country was known to the Assyrians as Urardhu or Ararat, the Mount Ararat of modern geography lying far to the north of it. Consequently the Biblical account of the Deluge which states that the ark rested 'on the mountains of Ararat'—which, of course, means 'on one of the mountains of Ararat'—agrees exactly with the Babylonian account. For the reason why the name of Nizir was dropped, see note on 7¹⁹.

¹ Müller, *Fragm. Hist. Græc.* iii. p. 415, fr. 76.

5, 6. According to the Babylonian story only seven days elapsed between the grounding of the ark and the sending forth of the birds. The Hebrew writer makes 'the tops of the mountains' to have been first on the first day of the 10th month, *i.e.* in the middle of June when the summit of Hermon becomes clear of snow. The '40 days' which follow represent an indefinite period needed for filling up the rest of the space of a year that, according to the Hebrew narrative, Noah remained in the ark. It is obvious that two months and a half is much too long a period to allow between the grounding of the ark and the appearance of the ground on which it rested, and that consequently it cannot represent the period originally given in the narrative. On the other hand, just as the indefinite '40 days' takes the place of the seven days of the Babylonian story in 7⁴, so it does again in this passage. The seven-day week of the Babylonians which was associated with the worship of the seven planets was deliberately rejected and a numeral substituted for it which expressed merely an indefinite and unknown length of time. Moreover, just as the seven days of the Babylonian story are in 7⁴ transferred to the period immediately preceding the deluge, so here they are transferred to the period which immediately followed it (vv. 10, 12). This has involved another change. In the Babylonian story Utu-napistim 'opened the window' (*apti nappasam*) of his vessel when the deluge ceased, but before the vessel grounded on the mountain of Nizir; in the Hebrew narrative Noah does not do this until after the ark had rested on the mountains of Ararat. Hence v. 6 ought to follow v. 4, the two and a half months of v. 5 being parallel to the 40 days of v. 6.

6-12. Apart from the number of days and the time when the window of the ark was opened, the account of the sending forth of the birds agrees closely with that in the Babylonian version. Here we read:

When the 7th day arrived
I sent forth a dove (and) let it go;
The dove went; it returned;
There was no resting-place (for it) and it came back.
I sent forth a swallow (and) let it go;
The swallow went; it returned;
There was no resting-place (for it) and it came back.
I sent forth a raven (and) let it go;
The raven went and saw the drying up of the
waters,
So it eats, it wades, it croaks, it came not back.

The Hebrew writer speaks of 'the raven' and 'the dove,' which were therefore well known. But the raven is mentioned in the wrong place, before and not after the sending forth of the dove, and the dove is sent three times. Hence it is clear (1) that the dove has taken the place of the swallow and the raven, and (2) that the mention of the raven must be introduced from some other document than that to which the triple sending forth of the dove belongs. On the other hand, both documents presuppose the cuneiform account, without which, indeed, the Hebrew narrative as it stands is unintelligible. We have in it, therefore, (1) a fragment of a translation of the Babylonian story from which the mention of the dove and the swallow has been omitted, and (2) a Hebrew version of the story in which the dove has been substituted for the swallow and the raven. As the swallow was known to the Babylonians as 'the bird of destiny' and thus closely connected with Babylonian idolatry, there was a reason for its omission; the omission of the raven is more difficult to explain.

In the account of the raven (v.⁷), 'going and returning' has been substituted for the 'seeing' of the Babylonian story, which is applied instead to the dove (v.⁸) to which in the Babylonian story the 'going and returning' belongs. Consequently there has been an interchange of the two phrases, occasioned by the change of place in the sending forth of the raven. As it was the dove which brought Noah the news that the waters were subsiding, if the account of the raven were retained it became necessary to make the latter go backwards and forwards until at last dry land appeared, and in accordance with the Babylonian story it was thus able to 'return no more.' Hence the transference of the 'return' to the raven, and of the 'seeing' if the waters were drying up to the dove. It results from this that the expressions 'the waters were dried up from off the earth' and 'the waters were abated from off the face of the ground' are alternative translations of the same cuneiform original.

We can now, therefore, restore the original text, putting the explanatory additions of the Hebrew translator between brackets: 'And he sent forth the dove (from him to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground), and it departed: the dove went and returned: for it found no resting-place for the sole of its feet, and it

came back (to him to the ark, since the waters were still on the face of all the earth. And he put forth his hand and took it, and brought it in unto him to the ark.)' The additions throw light on the Hebrew writer's mode of work, and resemble the additions in the longer edition of the Ignatian Epistles. They also remind us of the explanatory additions to the Biblical text in the Mishna. The Babylonian story does not say what was the interval that elapsed between the sending forth of the three birds. The Hebrew writer has taken his period of seven days from the time which, in the story of Utu-napistim, elapsed between the grounding of the ark and the time when the dove was sent forth. Perhaps in the Hebrew עָרָב, 'again,' we have a reminiscence of the fact. V.¹¹ is purely Palestinian. The olive was characteristic of Palestine; whether it grew in Ararat is doubtful. But to Palestine it was what the palm was to Babylonia. Not only, therefore, has the dove been substituted for the swallow in the case of the second bird, but the whole verse is Palestinian, and not Babylonian. And in poetical feeling and literary character it is immeasurably superior to the Babylonian poem. The statement that the dove returned 'in the evening' is a fine literary touch that is true to nature.

As Noah already knew from the olive leaf that the flood was 'ended,' there was no reason for sending the dove out again. But in v.¹² we return to the Babylonian story, with the substitution of the dove for the raven. The original text would have been: 'And he sent forth the raven . . . and it returned (to him) no more.'

It is possible that there were two Hebrew versions of the whole narrative, in one of which the raven alone appeared, and in the other the dove. In this case v.⁷ will be a summary of the Babylonian account, with the substitution of the raven for the other two birds. Here the first text would have been, omitted portions being enclosed in square brackets: 'He sent forth [the dove] (from him); it went and returned; [it found no resting-place, and it came back. He sent forth the swallow; it went and returned; it found no resting-place, and it came back. He sent forth] the raven (from him); [it went; it saw] the drying up of the waters; it returned not again unto him any more.' The second version, with the dove, is more purely Hebraic and Palestinian than the first.

13. When Noah opened the window to let out the birds, he could have seen whether the earth was dry or not just as well as he could have done by removing the cover of the ark. But the notice of the 'window' is derived from the Babylonian story: the ark of Noah was a chest with a ridged cover, which had to be taken off before its inmates could see what was outside. In v.¹³, therefore, we come back to the Palestinian conception of the vessel in which Noah was saved (see notes on 6¹⁴, 10). The verse shows no trace of a cuneiform original. The 'drying' of the surface of the ground preceded the complete drying of the earth itself (v.¹⁴).

15, 16. In the Babylonian story, Utu-napistim leaves his ship of his own accord, and it is not until he has offered sacrifice that the gods gather about him, Ellil even then remaining irreconcilable. To this the Hebrew writer offers a tacit denial: the one God who had brought about the deluge also told Noah to descend from the ark.

17. The Hebrew is a translation of the Babylonian phrase, *bul ts'eri umam ts'eri u namassê ts'eri*, 'cattle of the field, wild beast of the field, and creeping things of the field,' 'fowl' being inserted by the Hebrew writer, who adds 'that they (*i.e.* the creeping things) may breed abundantly in the earth, and that the (cattle and wild beasts) may be fruitful and multiply upon the earth'; cf. 1²². The sense of the verb שרץ, 'swarm,' corresponds with the Ass. *nammastu*, an abstract formation from *nammassû*; e.g. *pukhri nammasti*, all 'creeping things.' *Remesh*, 'creeping thing,' has been displaced by *sherez* in 7²¹ (on which see note), where two alternative translations of the Assyrian have produced a 'conflate' text.

19. Here 'everything that creepeth upon the earth' is a translation of the Ass. *nammastu*, which similarly includes animals and fowls. משפחות, *mish-pâkhôth*, 'families,' is a translation of the Ass. *nîni*, which is elsewhere transliterated נין (1²¹, etc.).

Entre Nous.

The Great Text Commentary.

The best illustration this month has been found by the Rev. William Jackson, Higher Crumpsall, Manchester.

Illustrations of the Great Text for October must be received by the 20th of August. The text is Lk 17³².

The Great Text for November is Ro 5²⁰—'And the law came in beside, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly.' A copy of Cohu's *Vital Problems of Religion*, or of Walker's *Gospel of Reconciliation*, or of any two volumes of the 'Short Course' series, will be given for the best illustration sent.

The Great Text for December is Ps 51⁴—

'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
And done that which is evil in thy sight:
That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest,
And be clear when thou judgest.'

A copy of Dobschütz's *The Influence of the Bible on Civilisation*, or Cohu's *Vital Problems of Religion*, will be given for the best illustration sent.

The Great Text for January is Phil 4¹⁰—'And

my God shall fulfil every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.' A copy of Dobschütz's *The Influence of the Bible on Civilisation*, or of Murray's *Jesus and His Parables*, will be given for the best illustration sent.

The Great Text for February is Ro 8²⁸—'And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose.' A copy of any volume of the *Great Texts of the Bible*, or of the *Greater Men and Women of the Bible*, will be given for the best illustration sent.

Those who send illustrations should at the same time name the books they wish sent them if successful. More than one illustration may be sent by one person for the same text. Illustrations to be sent to the Editor, Kings Gate, Aberdeen, Scotland.

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