

The Princeton Theological Review

JANUARY, 1918

THE TERMINOLOGY OF LOVE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

I

Considered as a monument of the Greek language at a particular stage of its development, the New Testament is a very interesting document; and not least so in the terminology which it employs to express the emotion of love. The end-terms of this development, so far as it is open to our observation, are found—we are speaking in broad categories—in the literature which we know as “classical” on the one side, and in the speech of the modern Greek world on the other. In passing from one of these end-terms to the other, a complete revolution has been wrought in the terminology of love; a revolution so radical that the ordinary verb for “to love” in classical Greek has lost that sense altogether in modern Greek, its place being taken by a verb in comparatively infrequent use in the classics; while the ordinary substantive for “love” in modern Greek, formed from this latter verb, does not occur even once in the whole range of classical Greek literature. Coming in somewhere between these two end-terms, the New Testament, flanked on the one side by the Septuagint version of the Old Testament and its accompanying Apocrypha, and on the other by the Apostolic Fathers, forms a compact body of literature in which alone we can observe the revolution in progress; or, we should better say, in which this revolution suddenly appears to sight already nearly completed. Without any heralding in the secular literature, all at once in this religious literature the change presents itself to our view as in principle already an accomplished fact.

NOTES AND NOTICES

THE STANDING STILL OF THE SUN (Joshua x. 12-14)

The very interesting interpretation of this famous passage suggested by Professor Wilson appears highly probable from the astronomical standpoint. It is unfortunately impossible to determine at what dates total eclipses of the sun were visible in Palestine during the probable period of the Hebrew conquest, without long and laborious calculations, which can not be undertaken at present. Oppolzer's *Canon der Finsternisse*, which gives exact details concerning the times and places of visibility of all eclipses since the year 1208 B.C. is not available for earlier times. It is however of interest to note that, between this date and the Christian Era, there were seven solar eclipses which were total, or very nearly so, in southern Palestine. The earliest of them, on September 30, B.C. 1131, was total shortly after noon in almost exactly the region of Joshua's battle. It seems quite probable therefore from the scientific standpoint that there may have been an eclipse in this same region several centuries earlier, which would satisfy all the conditions. Could this be established, it would throw most welcome light upon the chronology of this early period. It is very desirable that this question should be fully investigated; but in the present strenuous times the writer has not time for the heavy computations involved.

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THE FLOOD OF WATERS (Genesis vi. 17)

This phrase has occasioned the commentators considerable difficulty. The entire sentence, literally translated, reads as follows:—"And I, behold, I am bringing (or, am about to bring) the flood (*hamabbûl*), waters upon the earth (*mayim 'al hā'āreṣ*), to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven." These words are rendered in the AV and RV "the flood of waters," a rendering which seems clearly to violate one of the commonest rules of Hebrew syntax, according to which the noun in the construct state may not take the

article. The German rendering a "flood with waters" is better in this respect but if correct would probably require the presence in the Hebrew of a preposition or at least of the conjunction *waw*. The Vulgate reverses the order of words and renders *aquas diluvii*. But the LXX is perfectly literal as far as the syntax is concerned, reading τὸν κατακλυσμὸν ὕδωρ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν.

Various attempts have been made to explain this construction. Franz Delitzsch, for example, regarded two explanations as possible; that "waters" is in opposition to "flood" and therefore not in the genitive, or that *mabbûl mayim* is practically equivalent to a compound word "water-flood."

The difficulty has been increased by the uncertainty as to the meaning and etymology of the word *mabbûl*. Gesenius connected it with a root *yābhal* "to go forth," a derivation which is suggested by the rendering *diluvium* "deluge" of the Vulgate. Buxtorf on the other hand derived it from the root *nābhēl* meaning *quod omnia fecerit concedere*, cf. Gen. ix. 11. And in this he seems to have come very near to the truth. For in the Babylonian the root *nabālu* (Hebrew *nābhal*) is used in the transitive sense of "destroy." One of the frequently occurring phrases, which the Assyrian kings used to describe the vengeance which they took upon their enemies contains this word, *abbul[=anbul]aqgur ina ishati ashruḫ* I destroyed, I demolished, I burned with fire (their cities). The word *mabbûl* would then mean "destruction" (using the word in the active sense of destroying agency or instrument).

This rendering of the word *mabbûl* is of prime importance to an understanding of the syntax of the passage. For it is clear that if *mabbûl* simply means "destruction" and not "flood," the phrase "waters upon the earth" is most naturally to be regarded as an explanatory apposition added for the purpose of indicating more definitely and specifically the nature of the impending destruction. The main—indeed the only serious obstacle in the way of the acceptance of this explanation has been hitherto the general belief, based primarily on the general context and confirmed by the LXX rendering that *mabbûl* means "flood." And since the word "flood" (κατακλυσμός) is so much narrower in its signification than *mabbûl* as actually to limit it to the exact meaning, which the accompanying phrase "waters upon the earth" is intended to give to it, these

words considered as an explanatory apposition seem in consequence superfluous and even incomprehensible. But when we find that the Hebrew word means "destruction" and that it is consequently a much wider and more general term than "flood," this difficulty disappears and the reason for the adding of the explanatory phrase becomes at once apparent.

The explanation of the word *mabbûl* as meaning "destruction," is so appropriate that it has been quite generally accepted. But the clearing up of the etymology and meaning of the word by means of the Babylonian has opened up a new subject for discussion, namely whether *mabbûl* is to be regarded as a Hebrew word or as a word of foreign and probably Babylonian origin. The fact that it contains the transitive significance of the Babylonian verb might seem to favor the view that it is a Babylonian word and its being explained by the phrase "waters upon the earth" is regarded by some scholars as a confirmation of this view. Otherwise the explanation should be they think unnecessary. There is a tendency, therefore, to regard these words, or *mayim* alone, as a gloss. And the view has even been advanced that the word *mabbûl* may itself be a later insertion. But no one of these theories seems to be well founded.

There are several good reasons for thinking that *mabbûl* may properly be accepted as a Hebrew word. If it were of foreign origin, it would of course be most natural to trace it to the Babylonian, especially as it is the Babylonian which has supplied us with the best clue to its meaning. But this word does not occur in the Babylonian Flood-Legend, where if anywhere we would expect to find it. All the words¹ which are there used to describe the "flood" are entirely distinct from this one. Nor is it found elsewhere in Babylonian so far as the writer is aware. The word itself is of a nominal forma-

¹ The chief words are *abubu*, *mêhu*, and *karashu*. The only one of these, which can be connected with the Hebrew is *mêhu* "storm-wind." For although the noun itself does not occur the verb from which it is probably derived is common to the Hebrew and Babylonian. Three other words *sharu*, *shanutu kibati* and *kabla*, which occur in the Bab. Flood-Legend cannot of course be connected with *mabbûl* in any way. The word *milu* flood derived from the verb "to fill" (Heb. and Bab.) does not seem to occur in the Flood-Legend, although found elsewhere in Babylonian.

tion, the *maqṭûl*,² which is not of frequent occurrence in any of the Semitic languages, when used transitively.³ It occurs in a few nouns in Hebrew; but does not seem to have been identified as yet in Babylonian, a fact which would indicate at least that it was of infrequent occurrence in the latter language. Much more decisive against its Babylonian origin is the fact that Barth's law⁴ would require that as a Babylonian word it should begin with *n* instead of with *m*. Hence the fact that it is written *mabbûl* instead of *nabbûl* is an objection to the view that it is a Babylonian word. The strongest argument in favor of the Babylonian origin of the word is found of course in the fact that it is in the Babylonian and not in the Hebrew root that we find the transitive meaning which is clearly contained in the word *mabbûl*. But even this argument is not convincing since it is highly probable that this verb had in Hebrew the transitive as well as the intransitive meaning.⁵ From the standpoint of philology it seems proper therefore to claim this word as genuine Hebrew.

The fact that the word *mabbûl* is explained by the phrase "waters upon the earth" is not a sufficient reason for maintaining that it is not genuine Hebrew, or that it, or the phrase, which explains it, is a gloss. For it has been pointed out that *mabbûl* as is clearly shown by its etymology is a term of very

² Cf. Barth, *Nominalbildung*, S. 257.

³ It is of course the regular form of the passive participle of the first stem in the Arabic.

⁴ Cf. Delitzsch *Assyrische Grammatik*, S. 179.

⁵ There are a number of verbs in Hebrew, which are used both transitively and intransitively. Several of them are used frequently in both senses. But others are used chiefly and sometimes almost exclusively in the one or the other sense. Thus *hāzaq* is only three times used transitively; *hāphak* only a few times intransitively. And since *nābhal* is a comparatively rare verb (it occurs only about 20 times and about half of these instances are in Isaiah), which in the majority of cases is used in a single metaphor, the figure of the withered leaf or fading flower, there is nothing inherently improbable in the view that the verb was also used transitively by the Hebrews, although no examples of such a usage seem to occur in the O.T. The fact that the Imperfect of *nābhēl* is in *o* (*yibbōl*) and that the Participle (*nōbhēl*) has the active instead of the intransitive form is certainly in accord with such a view and may be said to favor, although it cannot of course be regarded as proving it.

broad and general meaning, which might readily admit of, and even require, nearer definition. If it means merely "destruction" the words "waters upon the earth" can properly be regarded as constituting such a nearer definition and need not be looked upon as intended to interpret a foreign word of doubtful meaning. The same argument holds good against the claim that "waters upon the earth" is a gloss. For nothing could be more natural than this use of a limiting phrase in immediate connection with a general term for the purpose of more precise definition and determination. The critics are so fond of finding duplicates or glosses in every narrative that it is only to be expected that they would seek one here. But the whole sentence, when properly interpreted is phrased in a manner so appropriate to the circumstances that it is hard to see on what grounds valid objections can be made to it.

The conclusion seems warranted therefore that *mabbûl* is properly to be regarded as a Hebrew word meaning "destruction," which preserves for us the transitive force, not found elsewhere in the O.T., of the verb *nābhal*; that it was a word of such comprehensive meaning as to require, when first used to designate the Deluge, a word of explanation; and that it then naturally became the *terminus technicus* for that "destruction" without parallel.

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