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I.—LITERARY.

CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS IN THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.*

REV. T. R. ENGLISH, D. D.

PREACHING, which is the prime function of the ministry, has been aptly and tersely defined as "Truth through Personality."

The other departments of instruction in this institution have to do mainly with the truth—a fixed and unvarying element. This department, however, more especially in one of its branches, has to do with the ever-varying element of *personality*—the medium through which the truth is conveyed.

The burning question here is not, "What is truth?" but rather, "How can the truth be brought into saving contact with a perishing world?"

Whilst there are many and divergent views as to what constitutes that truth which is committed to the ministry, there are no less divergent views as to the nature and functions of the ministry; views, perhaps not so obtrusively heterodox, but none the less pernicious in their influence.

In view of the practical importance of the subject, and without apology for introducing to your attention so trite a theme, let us consider briefly and simply some, at least, of the conditions of success in the gospel ministry.

Where shall we find our model minister? the ideal pastor? What constitutes the highest excellence in this calling? One instinctively points to the great "Shepherd of the sheep," as being the archetypal "teacher sent from God," the very incar-

*Inaugural Address in Union Theological Seminary, Va., May, 1894.

THE CUNEIFORM CORROBORATIONS OF THE EARLY NARRATIVES OF GENESIS.

PROF. W. W. MOORE.

While the cuneiform records, recovered from the ruins of Nineveh, have given us an almost complete account of the Babylonian tradition of the Flood, as we saw in our last number, the tablets containing the Babylonian versions of the creation story are much more seriously mutilated, so that we have them only in the form of tantalizing fragments. These remnants represent three different versions of the same essential facts, two very brief and one comparatively full :

1. Fragments of two tablets from the library of Cutha, now Tel Ibrahim, in Babylonia, which contain, as part of an incantation, a description of original chaos and the crude creations of the primal gods, but with no suggestion of a creation in successive acts such as we have in the first chapter of Genesis.

2. A bilingual tablet (discovered in the British Museum by Mr. Theophilus G. Pinches in 1891) which, like the one above mentioned, was part of an incantation—that is, “it was not written to give an account of creation, but as an introduction to a formula to be repeated at the dedication of the great temple at Borsippa, to invoke the protection of Merodach and the other beneficent gods, and to drive away the malevolent deities.” This also, therefore, is a short account, but it speaks of the creation of mankind, animals, plants, rivers, fields, and the cities and temples of ancient Babylonia. The peculiar feature of this account is that it is bilingual, written, not only in the Semitic Babylonian language but also in the more ancient Sumero-Akkadian, a fact which confirms the conclusion already drawn from other premises, that the substance of the story is of extreme antiquity.

3. But the fullest and most interesting of all these accounts, though the latest, is the one first published by George Smith in 1876, though since enlarged by the discovery of other fragments, and sometimes called the Assyrian version, because the tablets containing it came from the library of Assurbani-pal, King of Assyria, (B. C. 668-626). This is part of a long epic poem, occupying a series of tablets, seven in number,

each of which bore the title of the poem, the number indicating its place in the series, and a catch line containing the opening words of the following tablet, so that the fragments can be approximately rearranged in their original order. The number is significant, corresponding as it does to the seven days of Genesis, though there is no explicit identification of the seven tablets with the 7 days of the week. Moreover, as the first tablet was merely introductory, the numbers of the separate sections of the two accounts do not rigidly correspond, the Assyrian version being apparently one chapter in advance of the Hebrew. For instance, the *fifth* tablet describes the creation of the heavenly bodies and the appointment of the moon to the work of marking the week and the month, matters which belong, according to the distribution in Genesis, to the *fourth* creative day. Here then, notwithstanding the mutilated condition of the tablets and a lack of complete correspondence in the numbering, we have a striking parallel to that first chapter of Genesis, which has been the field of one of the fiercest conflicts of modern times.

Only the opening lines of the first tablet have been recovered. From these we learn that the Assyrian story begins with a time when nothing existed but the primeval ocean, the great abyss, called *Tiamat*, (the same as the *tehom*, or "deep," of Gen. 1:2), which in the Assyrian account is presently personified as the mother of chaos and of all opposition to light and order. Then the gods came into existence, first *Lakhamu* (male) and *Lakhamu* (female), and afterwards *Ansar* and *Kisar*, or the upper and lower firmaments, then after a long period the three great gods, *Anu* (Heaven), *Bel* (the earth's surface), and *Eu* (the terrestrial waters), who correspond to the Greek triad, Jupiter, Pluto and Neptune.

Time was when what is above was not yet called heaven.

What is below was not yet named earth,

[That is to say : When heaven and earth did not exist] :

The primeval ocean was their progenitor,

Mother *Tiamat* the bearer of them all,

Their waters still were gathered together [*i. e.* there was one mass of water] ;

Field was not yet harvested, yea not even dry-land was to be seen,

Time was when none of the gods had been brought into existence.

Nor yet was any name called on [in worship] nor yet did any one determine the destiny.

Then were created the gods.....

Lakhamu and *Lakhamu* then were brought into existence.....

And grew up..... ..

Ansar and *Kisar* were created

A long time elapsed

(Then) the gods *Anu*, (*Bel*, and *Ea*) were made.

The rest of this tablet is lost, and all of the second except a few words, so that there is at this point a break in the story. It has been conjectured that the whole thought expressed in the first tablet was, that in the beginning the great gods were created out of the watery abyss, but that over the rest of the created world chaos continued to rule. Then in the three following tablets we have a description of the struggle between chaos and order, darkness and light for the possession of the world. In this contest the champion of the gods is *Marduk* (the son of *Ea*), the rising sun, the principle of light; and his adversary of course is *Tiamat*, the mother of chaos, the principle of darkness, the great serpent. From the scanty fragments which remain, it would seem that the second tablet described the preparations which were made to insure the victory of *Marduk* over *Tiamat*, of light over darkness. Compare Gen. 1 : 3, "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." Of the third tablet also but a few fragments remain; the only lines of it that have been published contain simply the acceptance by the gods of *Marduk's* offer to conquer *Tiamat*. The fourth tablet, which is represented by two long fragments, describes the conflict itself. We give two brief extracts, following Muss-Arnolt's translations :

They approached each other, *Tiamat* and *Marduk*, the leader of the gods.
To the fight they rushed against one another, they approached for the battle.

But the lord spread out his net, to enclose her ;
An evil wind, to seize her from behind, he let loose before him ;
Then *Tiamat* opened her mouth to crush it.
But *Marduk* caused the evil wind to enter her mouth so that she could not shut her lips.

The strong winds filled her stomach,
So that her heart sank ; wide opened he her mouth.
He grasped his sword and split open her stomach ;
Her entrails he tore out, cut out her heart.
He grasped her and destroyed her life,
Her corpse he threw down ; upon it he placed himself.
After *Tiamat*, the leader, had been killed,
Her host was broken up, her throng was scattered.
And the gods, her helpers, going at her side,
Trembled, feared, and retreated backward.
Marduk let them escape and spared their life ;

With a cordon they were surrounded which no one can escape ;
 He enclosed them and their weapons he broke.
 They were placed (like birds) in a net ; they sat down in utter prostration.

And the world they filled with their wailing.

* * * * *

Toward *Tiamat*, then, whom he had overcome, he turned back,
 And the lord trampled on the lower part of *Tiamat's* body.
 With his unmerciful club he smote her,
 He cut through the veins of her blood ;
 The wind, even the wind of the north, he caused it to carry to secret places.

He saw it, his face rejoiced, he gloried.
 A present, a peace offering he caused to be brought to him.
 Then the lord quieted down, seeing *Tiamat's* corpse.
 The foul, rotten flesh he tore away, and he performed wonderful deeds.
 He tore from her like of a fish her skin in two halves.
 Half of her he stood up, and made it the heavenly dome.
 He pushed (in front of it) a bolt ; he stationed a guard ;
 And commanded him not to let the waters pour out too freely.
 He connected the heaven with the world.

And placed it opposite to the premeval sea, the dwelling of the god *Ea*.
 Then the lord measured off the circuit of the primeval sea.
 A palace he built like unto *Esharra*,
 The palace *Esharra* which he had built as a heavenly dome.
Anu, *Bel* and *Ea* he caused to inhabit it as their habitation.

Having thus made the visible heavens out of the skin of *Tiamat*, and assigned them as a habitation to the gods *Anu*, *Bel* and *Ea*, *Marduk* next proceeds to furnish the heavens with mansions for the several heavenly bodies. This is the subject of the fifth tablet, of which only nineteen lines have been preserved intact.

He established the mansions of the great gods.
 The stars, corresponding to them, he fixed, and the annual constellations.

He determined the length of the year, its limits he defined.
 For each of the twelve months three stars he fixed,
 From the time when the year opens in fixed limits.
 He founded the mansion of Jupiter, to mark their bounds,
 That none of the days might deviate, nor be found lacking.
 The mansion of *Bel* and *Ea* (*i. e.* the north pole and the south pole) he established with him.

He opened gates at both sides,
 And forced open the bolts on the left and the right.
 In the very midst he made the zenith.
 He made the moon-god (*Nannaru*) brilliant, and intrusted the night to him.

He defined him as a night-body ; to mark off the days (saying) :

“Monthly without ceasing define (the time) with the disc :
 In the beginning of the month light up in the evening,
 That the horns shine to mark the heavens.
 On the seventh make half the royal cap (*i. e.* show one half of the disc).
 On the fourteenth mayest thou mark the half of the month.”

The sixth tablet is entirely lost. Of the seventh a few fragments have been recovered which show that this tablet described the creation of animals.

When the gods in their assembly had created the beasts,
 They prepared the mighty monsters.
 They created the living animals,
 The cattle of the field, the beasts of the field, and the creeping animals.
 They fixed the habitations for the living animals.
 They distributed the creeping things in the field, the creeping things
 in the city.

* * * * *
The gods staggered much, at the end of their assembly,
(i. e. they were drunk, celebrating the completion of the creation).

The rest is lost. Therefore we have no account of the creation of man, which probably followed that of the animals, as in Genesis. In Babylonian hymns, however, *Marduk*, the hero of the foregoing story, is spoken of as the creator of man.

Such then is the story of creation as told by the tablets. When we examine this material somewhat more closely, a number of interesting points emerge.

1. The story as given in the cuneiform inscriptions is evidently a sun-myth. We have seen that it begins with the statement that at first the primeval waters lay mingled in one boundless, confused mass. After awhile this chaos brought forth the gods: first, the elder deities, *Lakmu* and *Lakhamu*; then *Ansar* (the comprehensive heavens) and *Kisar* (the comprehensive earth); then *Anu* (heaven), *Bel* (earth's surface), and *Ea* (the terrestrial waters); and, finally, *Marduk*, the sun, whom the Babylonians represent as the fabricator of the world, called the son of *Ea* (the terrestrial waters) because he daily rises from that god's abode, the ocean. “But *Tiamat*, the watery abyss, resisted the unfolding order and infringed the divine command, probably by her continual endeavor to confound earth and heaven and sea. The nightly darkness obscuring the regions of the universe and enveloping all nature in the primeval shroud, the dense mists reuniting at times the waters of heaven and earth, continued rains when the windows of heaven were opened and the fountains of the great deep broken up, which threatened to deluge the earth and again convert

the celestial and terrestrial waters into the one vast original ocean, suggested a possible return to chaos; yea, told these Babylonians, who believed in the existence of animate beings back of every natural object, of a determined struggle on the part of *Tiamat* to reduce all things to primitive disorder; while the black clouds and vapors of fantastic shape, the angry mutterings of thunder and the fierce tornado, evoked in their superstitious minds the conception of a brood of horrid creatures, offspring and abettors of *Tiamat*, allied with their cruel progenitress in bitter warfare against the established order of the universe. These foes, which the Babylonians discerned in darkness and fog and storm, *Ansar*, the deity of the comprehensive heavens, in vain sent *Anu* to overcome. *Ea*, lord of earthly waters availed still less. Finally *Marduk*, the rising sun, was sent. A fearful storm was the result; but the god of the rising sun dispelled the darkness, scattered the hideously shaped clouds, lifted the vapors in masses on high, subdued the tempest, reopened the space between heaven and earth, revealed the blue firmament, cleared a pathway for the starry host, brought to light the earth and dried its surface, awoke animal and vegetable life.

The story in its developed form is an exaltation of the sun. The events which preceded the sun's appearance are recognized, but being apart from the plan are not dwelt upon." (Prof. J. D. Davis).

2. Substitute for the gods spoken of in this sun-myth the natural objects which were personified in these divinities, and the result is a somewhat orderly account of the development of the universe, and one which even corresponds in a rude way to the narrative in Genesis.

I. *First Tablet*: Creation of the heavens and the earth.

II, III, IV. *Second, Third, and Fourth*: Victory of light and order over darkness and chaos.

V. *Fifth*: Creation of heavenly bodies.

VI. *Sixth*: (wanting).

VII. *Seventh*: Creation of animals.

In both accounts, Babylonian and Hebrew, we have, "the same idea of a surging chaos, reduced gradually to order, the same view of the appointment of years and seasons, and of the formation subsequently of living creatures."

3. The germ of the story is not the sun-myth above described, but this account of the physical development of the

universe. That the sun-myth *is* an excrescence—a later addition to the original story is evident from the fact that *Marduk* is not described as coming into existence till after the development of the universe has reached a certain point. If the story had been a sun-myth from the beginning, would not *Marduk*, the maker of the world, have been represented as antedating the creation of heaven and earth? But he is not so represented. He is brought on the stage only when the victory of light over darkness is to be described. There are other proofs that the sun-myth is a polytheistic amplification of the original story, but we cannot pause to state them here. Suffice it to say that the core of the story is his account of the orderly unfolding of the material universe.

Now we come to the question of chief interest. How shall we account for the strong resemblance between the Babylonian and the Hebrew stories of the creation? What is the relation between these two accounts, both of which describe the successive acts of creation in the same general order? Shall we say that the Babylonian story was derived from the Hebrew? This cannot be, because the story was current in Babylonia long before the days of Moses? Shall we say that the Hebrew story was derived from the Babylonian? This also seems impossible in view of two facts: (1) That, notwithstanding the pronounced resemblance in form, there is a quite infinite difference in spirit—they stand as far apart as the poles in point of style, tone, and teaching; (2) That the cosmological theories of other ancient peoples (even though they were polytheists or sun-worshippers) do not present the features that *distinguish* the Babylonian account from the Hebrew and do present the features that are *common* to the two. Does not this raise the presumption that all these accounts are derived from a common source, rather than that any one of them is copied from any other? Shall we not say, then, in this case, as in the case of the Flood, that both the Babylonian story

*If instead of considering the creation story alone, we take a broader view for a moment and look at all the traditions which are common to Genesis and the Ethnic religions, another fact emerges which argues strongly against such dependence of the pagan account on the Hebrew: "The traditions common to Genesis and heathenism *end at the dispersion*. Now how is it that the religions of India and China, America and Ancient Europe, know of Adam and Noah, and know nothing of Abraham and Jacob?"

and the Hebrew are derived from the same cycle of tradition? And is not this tradition the remnant of a primeval divine revelation? Is this not the only reasonable explanation of a tradition so persistent, so widespread, and so concordant? A mere myth could not have fastened itself as this story has done upon the minds of nations so widely different in their theological conceptions and religious views. The substratum of the story must be veritable history. The Babylonian and the Hebrew accounts then resemble one another because both record in part the contents of a primeval revelation transmitted by more or less trustworthy tradition. But no mere tradition is equal to the task of handing down truth through age after age in absolute purity. And the corruptions which the story has suffered in the Babylonian version are obvious, glaring, unmistakable. The original nucleus of historic fact has been overlaid, and largely obscured by a rank growth of fantastic theogony and degrading superstition. But in the Hebrew version the story is stripped of all these pagan accumulations. The inspired writer does not reject the tradition, he preserves it, but he frees it from all manner of deformity and excrescence. And, as Dillmann has well said, the incomparable superiority of the Biblical account does not lie so much in the material substructure, or in its new treatment of questions pertaining to physical science, but rather in permeating the material that has been brought forward with a higher knowledge of and faith in God. And just because its conception of God as distinct from the world is loftier and truer, its conception of creation as his handiwork is also loftier and truer. Dillman was unquestionably right when he said that "amongst all ancient cosmogonies that of the Bible approaches most nearly to the conclusions of science." But the main purpose of the narrative was not so much to anticipate scientific discovery as to teach religious truth, not so much to teach the relation of the world to second causes as to teach its relation to the First Cause, not so much to show how the world was made as that God made it, not so much to teach "how the heavens go as how to go to heaven." Therefore it is not scientific but popular, accepting the form of current tradition in so far as it was true, but smiting from it all false accretions, superinducing upon it a new spirit, and thus making it the fit vehicle of revealed truth. As Dr. Talbot W. Chambers says: "The Bible opens with an account of the

creation—not in philosophical form or in scientific phrase—for that would have been wholly unintelligible to the people of former ages, but in such a simple and familiar way as to give men a solid basis of opinion on points of the highest religious importance. The whole account presupposes the existence of God, and no man can accept it and be an Atheist. It represents God as entirely distinct from the universe, he being the cause of its existence, and so it condemns Pantheism. It speaks of him as one being who produces manifold and varied effects, even all that exists, and thus precludes Polytheism. It sets him forth as a beneficent creator, who pronounces all his work very good, while sin comes in afterward, and the tempter is sentenced and punished, thus foreclosing the way to Dualism, or the belief in two eternal beings, one good, the other evil. It describes creation as the free act of one supreme Being, and so denies Fatalism. Hence the exceeding value of this narrative, not as satisfying an intelligent curiosity, but as furnishing ethical and theological instruction of the highest value." Compare for a moment the concluding statements of the two accounts. In the Hebrew narrative we have a simple, suggestive, uplifting conclusion like this: "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." In the Babylonian account we read that the gods celebrated the completion of their creation *by getting drunk!*

While, then, there are marked external resemblances between the Babylonian story and the Hebrew, the internal differences are still more marked. The similarity in form is striking and significant, pointing as it does to a common source in primitive revelation; but the dissimilarity in spirit is still more striking and significant, demonstrating as it does the direct and controlling influence of the divine spirit of truth over the mind of the Hebrew prophet in making his record of the history of creation.

By way of summary, then, not to mention other matters of importance in this connection, we may say that the foregoing facts make it clear that (1), The Assyro-Chaldean account of creation is not taken from the Mosaic account; (2)

The Mosaic account is not taken from the Assyro-Chaldean account; (3), The framework of the two accounts is derived from the same source, viz: Mesopotamian tradition; (4), This tradition incorporated fragments of a divine revelation to primitive man; Therefore, (5) The Mosaic account was probably not communicated to Moses by direct revelation, but (6), The Mosaic account was none the less inspired, that is to say, Moses was guided by the Holy Spirit in his choice of the material which he embodied in his narrative, so that here we have not myth, not legend, not "idealized history," but *history*; and (7), The main purpose of this history was to teach great fundamental truths of religion, such as (a), *the eternal self-existence, personality, and unity of God*, in opposition to Assyro-Chaldean theogony and polytheism, (b), *the creation of the universe by the independent, supreme, and almighty God*, in opposition to Assyro-Chaldean self-origination of matter (chaos was anterior to the gods)—and many others—its inspiration being evinced, not only by these truths themselves, but also by its style, sober, stately, authoritative, absolutely free from the extravagant and grotesque features of the Assyro-Chaldean legend.

The method of Moses, therefore, in writing Genesis was not unlike that of the author of the books of Kings, who states that much of his material is drawn from the court annals.

The cuneiform tablets testify to the existence of another interesting remnant of primeval revelation among the ancient Babylonians, viz: the Sabbath. They used the week of seven days and observed the seventh. This we learn from the Assyrian calendar tablet of saints' days for the inter-calary month Elul, which uses the very word *Sabbath*, and defines it as "a day of rest for the heart." The Accadian original, from which this Assyrian translation was made, uses a word for Sabbath which means "a day of completion of labor." This hemerology of Elul states that on the 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th (and 19th) days of the lunar month "flesh cooked on the fire may not be eaten, the clothing of the body may not be changed, white garments may not be put on, a sacrifice may not be offered, the King may not ride in his chariot, nor speak in public, the augur may not mutter in a secret place, medicine of the body may not be applied, nor may any curse be uttered."

But it is to be observed (1), that there were *five* Sabbaths in the month, and (2), that the new moons and the Sabbaths coin-

cide, while in the Jewish worship they are distinct, so that in Babylonia the Sabbath fell on certain days of the *month*, regardless of the days of the week (*cf.* the sanction of the Sabbath in Gen. ii : 3, and Ex. xx : 11). This lunar character of the Chaldean calendar, however, seems to be an outgrowth of their star-worship. Indeed, the sun, the moon, and the five planets known to them gave their names to the seven days of the week among these pioneer astronomers, and the names we use are but translations of those used by the Babylonians four thousand years ago.

Further, the number seven had a peculiar significance among them. There were seven planetary gods, seven corresponding terraces of the great temple at Birs Nimrud (once supposed to be the tower of Babel), seven evil spirits, seven stages of Ish-tar's descent into Hades, seven points to the war-god's disk weapon, "seven days" thrice mentioned in the Chaldean account of the Flood, and so on.

In our next number we shall pass from these Babylonian echoes of primeval revelation to a consideration of the positive historical confirmations of the later Scriptural narratives by contemporary cuneiform records.

