
A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

whatever of soreness or ill-will towards the offender, and yet common sense and the desire to avoid future occasion of friction may dictate a policy of aloofness for the time to come. As long as the Kingdom of Heaven is among men on earth, such limitations to human fellowship are inevitable, and the effort to ignore them is utopian; but it is always possible for the true subjects of the Kingdom to forgive from their hearts even those with whom they cannot freely associate. God does not ask impossibility from His servants; the Christian rule is well given by St. Paul: "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men"; and again, with special reference to fellow-members of the Church: "Forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."

Job, Ecclesiastes, and a New Babylonian Literary Fragment.

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A Babylonian text of considerable interest for students of the Old Testament has recently been published.[1] Ebeling, the editor of the text, draws attention to the parallelism, in respect both of form and contents, which it presents with the work of the Hebrew pessimist, the author of Ecclesiastes; but, although he describes the new text as a specimen of a class of literature hitherto undiscovered in Babylonia, viz. that of the philosophical dialogue, he does not comment on the parallelism in form which, in so far as the description is correct, it presents with the Book of Job. Slight as is its resemblance to Job, it is yet sufficient to deserve attention; and, after giving a translation of a part of the new text, I will return to consider its significance in connexion with Job.

The text is contained on two tablets in the Berlin Museum, and a small fragment in London. The two Berlin tablets overlap, so that for parts of the text there are two witnesses. On the other hand, the beginning of the dialogue is so far undiscovered, and in other parts the tablets are broken, and the text defective. As my purpose is merely to draw attention to the parallelism with Hebrew literary forms, and as that purpose will be sufficiently served by a translation of part of the Babylonian work, I give here a translation only of the last half (according to Ebeling's arrangement), which, except in one or two lines, is free from mutilation, whereas the first half is much more mutilated and uncertain. For the present purpose, too, it is unnecessary to dwell in detail on the uncertainties or ambiguities in the translation which are dealt with in at least a preliminary way by Ebeling. The translation here given is mainly from Ebeling's German version, modified here and there by reference to the original text. In due time, no doubt, we may look for an English translation of the whole by a competent Assyriologist; and that, perhaps, not only of the fragments so far recovered, but of others which may still be lurking in London, and merely, as Ebeling suggests, awaiting fresh search to be discovered.

The dialogue consists of a serious of sections, each section closely adhering to the same scheme. The sections that occur on both the Berlin tablets are not arranged in the same order in both; nor in the different texts is the line division always identical. But the sections are separated from one another by horizontal lines. I number the sections according to the enumeration of Ebeling's translation.

The interlocutors are a slave and his master; what each says is, generally speaking, perfectly obvious from the vocatives; but in VII. we may infer from the consistent scheme in other sections that the last two lines are spoken not by the master in continuation of l. 5, but by the slave; and in XII. the scheme suggests as the most probable dis-

[1] *Mitteilungen der vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, 1918[2]; *Quellen zur Kenntnis der babylonische Religion*, bearbeitet von Erich Ebeling (Leipzig, 1919), pp. 50–70.

tribution: l. 2, master; ll. 3–6, slave; l. 7, master; l. 8, slave. With these preliminary explanations I give the translation:—

VII.

Slave, attend to me! Yes, my lord, yes.
I will raise a revolt (?). Yes, do so, my lord, do so.
If you raise not a revolt, what (or, empty) is your carcase (?)?
Who will give to you to fill your belly?
No, slave, I will not raise a revolt.
The man who raises a revolt is killed, or (otherwise) it goes hard with him;
He is mutilated, or caught, or cast into prison.

VIII.

Slave, attend to me! Yes, my lord, yes.
I will love a woman. Yes, love, my lord, love!
A man who loves a woman forgets trouble and care.
No, slave, I will not love a woman. Love not, my lord, love not.
Woman is a pit (or cistern),[1] a hole that is dug:
Woman is an iron dagger, sharp, which cuts a man's throat.

IX.

Slave, attend to me! Yes, my lord, yes.
Fetch me straightway water for my hands: give it me; an offering will I make to my god.
Make it, my lord, make it. Merry is his heart who makes an offering to his god:
Loan upon loan he makes.
No, slave, I will not make an offering to my god.
Make it not, my lord, make it not!
The god wilt thou teach; like a dog will he follow thee,
Whether 'my ritual' or 'ask not' or ought else he desire of thee.

X.

Slave, attend to me! Yes, my lord, yes.
I will give food to my country. Give, my lord, give!
A man who gives food to his country, his barley is abundant (?).
No, slave, I will not give food to the country.
Give it not, my lord, give it not!
Creditors will devour thy barley: they will diminish thy barley: moreover, they will curse thee.

XI.

Slave, attend to me! Yes, my lord, yes.
Help will I give to my country. Give, my lord, give!
A man who gives help to his country
His own help lies in the urn of Marduk.
No, slave, I will not give help to my country.
Give it not, my lord, give it not.
Ascend the hills and traverse the dwellings (?):
Behold the skulls of the hindmost and the foremost.
Where is the harmful, where is the helpful?

[1] A pit to entrap some one.

XII.

Slave, attend to me! Yes, my lord, yes.
Now, what is good?
To break my neck and thy neck,
To cast into the river—that is good.
Where is the hindmost who ascended to heaven?
Where is the great who captured (?) the (whole) earth?
No, slave, I will kill thee, I will send thee before me.
And, my lord, three days after, how will they live after me!

These six sections of the dialogue suffice to indicate the general character of the whole. The writer balances the advantages and disadvantages of various courses of action; the master proposes a certain course of action; the slave acquiesces, and suggests certain advantages that may accrue from it. Then the master proposes not to do what at first he had proposed to do, and the slave is ready to point out what is disadvantageous in such a course. The dialogue, in addition to the activities referred to in the sections here translated, discusses, in those not here translated, attendance at court, dining, hunting, house-building.

The dialogue thus implies a critical outlook on life: the writer can see advantages and disadvantages in any form of human activity; but the outlook is ultimately pessimistic; for in each section the reasons against any course of action follow and apparently cancel the reasons in favour of it; and in the last section the conclusion seems to be that death is better than life; but still balancing the pros and cons, and not quite resolved whether himself to be or not to be, the master proposes by slaying him to give the slave the chance of putting the great question to the test; and, if we may so interpret the obscure closing line, the slave retorts by pointing out that in this course, too, there is a disadvantage; for without the slave, how will the master fare?

It is in the critical and ultimately pessimistic outlook on life that the Babylonian dialogue offers a parallel to Ecclesiastes: like the Babylonian, the Hebrew writer can find relative advantages for any kind of human activity; 'to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven' (Ec 3^1), and the various sections of the Babylonian dialogue develop the double-sidedness of all activities which Ecclesiastes expresses by saying that 'there is a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted,' a time to break down, and a time to build up,' etc.; or, again, in his advice not to be either righteous or wicked

overmuch, for there are disadvantages as well as advantages attendant on righteousness, and the same is true of wickedness ($7^{16f.}$). And, as in the dialogue, the final word each time is against any and every form of activity, so in Ecclesiastes the refrain is: 'This also is vanity'; the starting-point, which gives tone to the whole book, is the question: What profit hath a man of all his labour wherever he laboureth under the sun? and the conclusion is that the day of death is better than the day of birth (7^{1}).

It is unnecessary to go further into detail to show that Ebeling was guided by a right instinct in detecting a parallelism between the contents of the dialogue and the contents of Ecclesiastes; or that the parallelism is most striking between the general tone and temper of the two works. The parallelism with Job on the other hand, in so far as it is to be detected, is almost entirely a parallelism of form. It is not, indeed, impossible to find parallel ideas or expressions; for in Job (ch. 3), too, we have a presentation of the idea that death is better than life; but this stands at the *beginning* in Job, and the book moves on to anything but a pessimistic conclusion. Moreover, in the treatment of this idea and throughout, the whole tone and temper of the two works is different; there is no passion in the Babylonian dialogue; in it life is regarded from a cool, calculating, utilitarian standpoint utterly different from the standpoint of Job. Again, there is in Job a criticism of God as currently represented, but nothing approaching the low irreverence of the last line but one of section IX. of the dialogue.

But the parallelism in form with Job, slight as it is, is of great interest. So much in Hebrew literature has been related to Babylonian thought or literary form that it has proved tempting to search for Babylonian parallels to Job, and even to attempt to trace back the great Hebrew poem to Babylonian sources. For a considerable time now fragments of a Babylonian poem have been known to which the name of the 'Babylonian Job'[1] has been given; and the relation of Job to this earlier Babylonian poem has been much discussed. This poem tells, in the words of the sufferer himself, the story of a person of high rank, apparently a king, who, after a long life of prosperity, became a slave and fell sick, and was reduced to despair, though aware of no sin that could justify this change of fortune and having sought in vain to discover from the gods what was amiss. Subsequently the sufferer is released from his sins and sufferings.

Much of this Babylonian poem is obscure, and the exact nature of the relation between it and Job uncertain. But one thing is clear: the *form* of the two works is entirely different: the so-called 'Babylonian Job' is not a dialogue; it is the utterance of a single speaker. Thus, even if we were to admit, what is improbable, that what is common to the thought of the Babylonian and Hebrew poems was due to the direct influence of the former over the latter, Babylon would thereby supply no anticipation of the *form* of the Book of Job, which is so little anticipated or paralleled in Hebrew or other early Semitic literature. It is this anticipation or parallelism of form that the new Babylonian fragment in some measure supplies. In it we find dialogue used for the purpose of discussing aspects or problems of life. It has also another formal resemblance to Job, viz. its schematic character. But in both respects the differences are not less striking: in the Babylonian fragment the dialogue is rudimentary, the scheme rigid. In Job the schematism scarcely extends beyond the order of response and the general character of the speeches, which are all of some length and never brief interruptions or explanations; in all three cycles of speeches the friends speak in the same order, Eliphaz first, Bildad second, Ṣophar third, Job replying to each in turn.[2] But in the Babylonian dialogue each section is cast in the same mould; and for examples of such schematism we must look elsewhere in Hebrew literature; *e.g.* to the framework of Judges and Kings, or to the prophetic poem in Am 1. 2; the nearest approach to it in Job, and that a very remote one, is seen in the fact that the speeches of the friends almost uniformly open interrogatively.

The new Babylonian fragment is in form a dialogue, as is the central part of the Book of Job, and it is possible that the lost opening may have formed a remote parallel to the Prologue to Job.

[1] An English translation of part of the poem may be found in R. W. Rogers' *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*, 164–169. An English translation of all known at the time, together with an exhaustive discussion, was contributed by Jastrow to the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1906, pp. 135–196. But fresh fragments have come to light since, and a new English translation is much needed.

[2] In the present text the third cycle is incomplete, lacking any speech of Ṣophar.

But there is nothing in the conclusion which survives that is any way similar either to the speech of Yahweh or to the Epilogue in the Hebrew work. And even the resemblance to the dialogue between Job and his friends is strictly limited; not merely has it but two interlocutors instead of four, but there is much less indication of character. The characters in Job, indeed, are less fully developed and differentiated than in other great dramatic literature, but far more so than the master and the slave in the Babylonian dialogue. Indeed, except perhaps in the last two lines, the two persons of the dialogue are the merest device for presenting two aspects of various forms of human activity.

Thus the main and perhaps the only but yet a sufficient justification for instituting any comparison between the Babylonian and the Hebrew works lies in this, that Job in respect of its form has hitherto occupied a quite isolated position in earlier Semitic literature. The distance between it and this recently discovered Babylonian dialogue is still great; future discoveries[1] may or may not do something to fill up the gap.

[1] Two other Babylonian dialogues have also been published by Ebeling in *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*: but he found himself unable to carry out his purpose of publishing these with translations in the *Mitteilungen* (see the *Vorwort* to the second heft of the *Mitteilungen*).

Literature.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THE most important event in the interpretation of the New Testament, since Sir William Ramsay began the issue of his books on St. Paul, is the publication by Messrs. Macmillan of the first volume of a series on *The Beginnings of Christianity*, to be edited by Dr. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Dr. Kirsopp Lake.

'The leading idea of this series is to continue the work begun by the late Bishop Lightfoot in editing Christian documents historically as well as critically. His great contributions of commentaries on the Pauline Epistles, Galatians, Colossians and Philemon, and Philippians, were succeeded by his masterly editions of the Ignatian literature and of Clement of Rome. It is now proposed to follow up these by an edition of the Acts of the Apostles in three volumes, and to extend the series down to the day when the Church obtained official recognition by the Roman Empire.' Part I. (in three volumes) will deal with the Acts of the Apostles, the first volume giving an account of the Jewish, Gentile, and Christian Backgrounds, the second containing the Criticism, and the third the Text and Commentary. The first volume has now been issued (18s. net). It consists of four sections with five appendixes. The first section, on the Jewish World, is divided into four chapters—Chapter I. 'The Background of Jewish History,' by the Editors; Chapter II. 'The Spirit of Judaism,' by Mr. C. G. Montefiore; Chapter III. 'Varieties of Thought and Practice in Judaism,' and Chapter IV. 'The Dispersion,' both by the Editors. The second section describes the Gentile World. It is divided into two chapters—'The Roman Provincial System,' by Mr. H. T. F. Duckworth, and 'Life in the Roman Empire at the Beginning of the Christian Era,' by Professor Clifford H. Moore. Primitive Christianity is the subject of the last and longest section. It is written entirely by the Editors. Its last chapter is on Christology. The Appendixes are on 'The Zealots,' by the Editors; 'Nazarene and Nazareth,' by Professor George F. Moore; 'The Slavonic Josephus,' by the Editors; 'Differences of Legal Interpretations between Pharisees and Sadducees, by the same; 'The Am ha-ares (the People of the Land) and the Haberim' (Associates), by Professor Moore.

Now it is unnecessary to say that here we have the last word of scholarship. No doubt some of it will be out of date thirty years hence, as some of Lightfoot's work is out of date and erroneous now. But to-day it is all that is known. The only question is, Can the judgment of the editors be relied upon? And that question cannot be answered yet. When the volume on the criticism comes we shall see; we shall see more clearly when we can examine the volume containing the commentary. This volume is a matter of learning, pure and simple.

But notice one fact. Mr. C. G. Montefiore has