

Chapter 5

Enoch and the Flood

THE HAND of God is visible in Adam's possession of speech without the opportunity of acquiring it in a natural way, whence we might be led into the interesting inquiry whether there is a primitive language with God, and whether Hebrew be that language, and whether this will be the language in use in the age to come, and throughout the endless ages of perfection. We may have a better opportunity for looking at these matters when we come to consider the confusion of tongues. There are other features of the visible hand in the circumstances of Adam and Eve; but we have lingered long enough in and about the garden of Eden, and must needs proceed on the sorrowful journey "through time's dark wilderness of years"—thankful, however, that the darkness is not so complete as it might have been, but that here and there the glory of the visible divine hand illumines the night, showing us the road that leads at last to day restored for ever.

We pass by Cain and Seth, and note the first undoubted gleam of the visible hand, in the termination of Enoch's three hundred and sixty-five years' "walk with God." "*He was not, for God took him*" ([Gen. 5:24](#)). This might have been for us a very enigmatical saying if it had not been interpreted for us by apostolic comment. Our orthodox friends would, of course, have had no difficulty with it in any case. As they read it, it is a thing that happens every time a righteous man dies. We hear them say of such and such, "God has taken him," when we know that what has happened is the man's death and burial. It is unfortunate for their view of the case that Enoch's case, who did not die, is the only case in which we have this mode of narrative. In all the other cases, the record is, "and he died" ([Gen. 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27](#), etc., etc.). The explanation is furnished in the apostolic comment referred to: "By faith Enoch was translated *that he should not see death*, and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" ([Heb. 11:5](#)). If we are told that God took Enoch, it is because he continued alive to be taken and was taken, and did not die. If Enoch had died as our modern friends die, it would not have been said of him that God took him, as modern friends say of their dead. The fact is, the Bible and our modern friends are entirely out of harmony. Our modern friends have inherited a philosophic speculation which, not being true, is a fable—to the effect that man is immortal and cannot die, whereas the very backbone of the Bible is the fact, proclaimed, defined, and illustrated times without number, that the race of man has become liable to death through the sin of Adam, and in death remains without existence for the time being.

But it is the taking of Enoch in the Scriptural sense that we look at. He was "translated that he should not see death." When he fulfilled a year for every day of the year—365 years—he was removed from among men without seeing death. The reason of this removal does not quite belong to the subject of these chapters. Still it is interesting to note, "He walked with God." His life in an age of growing corruption was so conformed to the will of God as to secure the perfect approbation of God. The disapprobation of God in the case of Adam was expressed in the sentence of death; here we have exemption from death as the result of God's approval of Enoch. It naturally occurs to us to marvel how this exemption could take place in view of Enoch's inclusion in Adam's sentence, as yet untaken away in Christ. But our difficulty eases when we

realise that Enoch's "walk with God" included that regular offering of typical sacrifice in which Christ's great work was foreshadowed, and by which Enoch identified himself with that work. There was no more setting aside of God's appointed order than there will be in the case of those who "are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" and shall not see death. In the case of these, the law of God has its fulfilment in their retrospective "crucifixion with Christ" emblematised in baptism into his death; in the case of Enoch, the same result was reached prospectively so far as the divine purpose was concerned, and actually in Enoch's offering of sacrifice.

It is the fact of Enoch's removal, however, that more particularly claims our attention—the fact considered as a miracle. It was a wonderful event certainly for a man to be taken away from the earth. The need for it from the divine point of view, we cannot estimate for want of intimate acquaintance with the circumstances of Enoch's generation. The fact of its occurrence may satisfy us as to its suitability to what the age in its divine relations called for. The possibility of its occurrence will not be a debatable question with those who look at things with a broad robust sense that takes in all facts. Those who view their surroundings in a superficial way may feel some doubts. Gravitation (as we call it) is the law that we are most acquainted with; and looking at this alone, poor mortals feel it is impossible that they could rise through the air and leave the earth. But even poor mortals can see, as in the case of a balloon, that a counter force interposed can neutralise the action of gravitation, and carry a man in the opposite direction to that in which gravitation would draw him. Will they be so presumptuous as to declare that ballooning is the only mode of counteracting gravitation? If so, we can but turn away without much hope of making an impression in favour of reason. The man who knows most is least confident on all such points. The universe is full of hidden powers and wonders. The wise man but wishes to know what they are; he does not dictate what they ought to be. Gravitation is one wonder; but there are others. Gravitation is an invisible force; but there are other invisible forces, and the greatest of them all is the one invisible force that holds them all together, and of which they are subdivided manifestations—the Spirit of God—the eternal living intelligent force, power or word, which was with God and is God. With this power, it is as natural in a given case of need to bestow the faculty of mounting the skies as the susceptibility to be drawn downwards as in falling to the earth. And when such faculty is given and exercised, it is no more a violation or going against nature than the most ordinary of natural occurrences. It is merely a higher use of power than mortals are accustomed to—the exercise of which to those who possess it is as natural as the exercise of the faculties we all so wonderously possess now. As a matter of fact, we have such a power exemplified in the cases of Elijah, the Lord Jesus, and the angels. Elijah was taken away from the earth; the Lord Jesus ascended to heaven; and the angels, by volition, have power of movement through the atmosphere. Men dream of exercising such a power. There was quite a discussion on the subject in the newspapers some time ago; it was carried on under the name of "Levitation". Many correspondents were able to tell of having dreamt—in some cases in waking dreams—of having by the mere exercise of the will wafted themselves through space. The mere sensation of such a thing is significant in its place. It speaks of a latent possibility which, though it must remain latent in our present sluggish nature, points to a possibility of development under the right conditions. What those conditions are, it is impossible for unassisted man to guess. They are revealed to us in the Scriptures. The first is a moral harmony with God, and the second physical harmony. Because of the violation of the first (the entrance of sin into the world, the second was made impossible by the consequent sentence of death which we considered in our last chapter. Nevertheless, we are in the image of the

Elohim—the battered and deteriorated image, but still the image, in defacement, of a higher nature, and therefore we experience aspirations and intuitive reachings after higher accomplishments that we can never realise in our present state. The gospel of Christ is the gladsome intimation that such as receive the divine approbation by reason of faith and obedience, will be emancipated from the present low, earth-cleaving, dying nature, and “clothed upon” with a higher nature, like to that of the Lord Jesus and the angels, in which they will be powerful, glorious, and immortal, and endowed with that infinitude of powers and faculties which we now but dreamily and wistfully yearn after. [1 Cor. 15:40–54](#); [Phil. 3:20](#); [John 3:2–8](#); [1 Cor. 13:9–12](#); [2 Cor. 5:1–4](#); [Luke 20:36](#); [Rev. 7:15–16](#); [20:4](#).

Among those powers will doubtless be included that faculty of locomotion by volition—travelling by will through space—which the angels so constantly exhibit—a mode of travel exceeding the highest dreams of modern mechanics—because achieved on principles out of their reach—the dynamics of the Spirit of God, acting through the vital machinery of spiritual immortal bodies in harmony with the nature of the Universal Spirit which has its kernel in the Living God, in whom they will have and hold their being more intimately and consciously than now. But this power, like all other powers, will be exercised in submission to the divine will. The setting aside of the divine will was the beginning of sorrows with Adam’s race: the restoring of it to its place will be the laying of the foundation of our everlasting peace. Consequently, the power of travel in inter-stellar space will not be used at the caprice of its possessors. The Father’s command will govern all. When we have said this, the whole subject is enclosed in the boundary line of the plan which gives the earth to the sons of men. Excursions from the earth, if they take place, will be exceptional, and by special permission. The possibility of such excursions is shown by the Lord’s ascent to the Father’s right hand, and the coming and going of the angelic host. More than this we need not seek to know.

Enoch had but to be seized of the Spirit of God, so to speak, in which all things subsist, to become capable of a removal as easy and natural as the falling of Newton’s apple to the earth. It is only the same power differently applied. But then comes the atmospheric difficulty from our sharp but shallow contemporaries of the unbelieving fraternity. What is the difficulty? Well, say they, and truly, the atmosphere becomes so rare at a short distance from the earth that it is impossible for an animal organisation, in which life is generated by breathing, to exist. In support of this contention, they will faithfully rehearse the records of experimental balloonists, how, that at a height of three or four miles, or six at the highest, the ears tingle, the nose bleeds, the senses benumb, and vitality sinks; to all of which the receiver of higher truth has but to say, granted; granted, but what has it to do with the case? We are not speaking of a man taken up in a balloon, or taken up in any other natural way, but taken up by the Power that is at the bottom of nature everywhere, out of which nature has been evolved by Omnipotent volition. We are speaking of a direct act of the wondrous eternal wisdom, out of which has come the vast and complicated system around us—from the balanced revolutions of the planets to the minute and exquisite apparatus of life in field and flood everywhere. Do you suppose that if God draw a man from the earth, He would make no provision for the preservation of his senses on the way? Do you suppose God has no other way of developing vitality than by the heart-pumped, lung-purified arterial circulation of minute scarlet discs, floating in transparent serum? Do you suppose that the electrical energy thus generated in the animal organization cannot be supplied in any other way? The propounding of the question terminates the difficulty. Enoch, when “God took him,” would be exposed to none of the discomforts and perils of balloonists. The full mantling supply of divine energy would not only upbear him from the drawing grasp of Earth, but would preserve

every vital power in full and vigorous play, and invest him with a sense of comfort and self-possession such as we feel in our placidest and pleasantest dreams—and all without any of the opposition to nature such as people imagine takes place when a miracle is performed: all would be done in harmony with the fundamental laws and needs of nature, by addition and adaptation to the power already imparted to nature, and not by setting it aside.

In the case of spiritual bodies, there will not be the need for adaptation that must take place where an animal body has to be preserved in an attenuated atmosphere. Spiritual bodies have powers in harmony with the Immensity-filling spirit in which all things subsist.

We pass from Enoch to the flood, to look at the next exhibition of the visible hand of God. We assume the occurrence of the flood, as a matter of course. The circumstance of its record in the Mosaic writings is sufficient proof in view of Christ's endorsement of those writings as divine, even if he had not himself specifically referred to the flood as an event of actual occurrence, with which to bring his own second coming into comparison ([Matt. 24:38](#)). It is, of course, interesting to know that the tradition of a flood comes to us in most national histories—the most recent and striking instance being Mr. Smith's discovery of the story of it in a corrupt form on Assyrian tablets over 3,000 years old. But these confirmations are by no means essential to evidence otherwise complete.

We look at the nature of it, the object in view, and the extent of its prevalence. The object of it was to destroy mankind on account of their indifference to God's expressed will, and their corruption of the "way" He had placed among them for His worship. It would be interesting to dwell on the principle illustrated in the purpose, that God's pleasure and not man's well-being as a creature, is the governing element in human destiny. There is need in our day for the enforcement of this principle, when men are everywhere carried away by notions on the subject of human rights, which are utterly unphilosophical while pretentiously the opposite—altogether one-sided—derived from a contemplation of only one, and that the most limited aspect of the case. They have looked at the human bearing of things only. They have left God's rights (which are the only rights) altogether out of the account, with the result of unfitting them to recognise justice in the authenticated dispensation of his destroying judgments, whether in Eden, outside Noah's Ark on the day of deluge, or among panic-stricken Canaanites in the presence of Israel's host. Christ is on the side of all those dispensations of judgment, and every wise man will desire to be where Christ is on any question. However, this is not the place for discussing the aspect of the flood, though a glance at it was unavoidable. It is the nature of it as an interposition of miraculous power that demands our consideration.

The first reflection that occurs to the mind is, that in the flood itself (leaving out of account the miraculous nature of its revelation beforehand to Noah, and the directions for preparation) the miraculous element was, so to speak, minimised to the lowest point. God could have annihilated the human race more expeditiously in many other ways; for example, Nadab and Abihu struck dead in a moment; all the first-born of Egypt destroyed in a night; Sennacherib's army decimated by a single fatal blast, and many more. In the flood, natural suffocation by water was resorted to. There was doubtless a reason for this slow method. Probably, it admitted of those adjuncts of preliminary terror which the justice of God saw the case demanded. Then, again, Noah's salvation was accomplished by as little of the miraculous as possible. It would have been easy for God to have isolated a certain district from which the destroying waters should have been kept, and within which Noah and all his, would have been protected from the destroying tempest. Instead of that, just as the death of the doomed population was effected by natural means, so the salvation of Noah was effected by natural means, by the floating of a

wooden structure within which he had previously retired for safety. For this also there was doubtless excellent reason: Noah's salvation was in this way made the result of his own faith and obedience, in which God was honoured and Noah brought into the right relation.

The ways of God are always most wisely adapted to the requirements of each situation as it arises, and it will be found in the study of each case that the amount of miracle employed is the smallest that the case calls for. There is none of the prodigality of marvel—meaningless marvel that characterises all artificial histories—such as the apocryphal gospels, the life of Mahomet, or the Arabian Nights entertainment. Only so much extra-natural effort is put forth as is needful for the object in view. The miracle in the case lay in the bringing of the water. The question of how much was necessary involves the question of the area to be covered: in other words, was the flood universal in the sense of covering the entire globe? Considering the comparatively limited extent of the human family at the time, and that it was confined to one small district of the globe, it would seem reasonable to conclude from the principle already looked at—the divine sparingness of means—that the flood was co-extensive only with the Adamically-inhabited portion of the globe.

There are facts that compel such a conclusion; and as all facts are of God, they must be in agreement. The animals of New Zealand are different from those of Australia. The animals of Australia, again, are different from those of Asia and Europe. These again differ entirely from those of the American continent: all differ from one another: and *the fossil remains on all the continents show that this difference has always prevailed*. Now if the flood were universal in the absolute sense, it is manifest that these facts could not be explained, for if the animals all over the earth were drowned, and the devastated countries were after-wards replenished from a Noachic centre, the animals of all countries would now show some similarity, instead of consisting of totally different species. The animals taken into the ark in that case would be the animals of the humanly-populated district only—a comparatively small district in relation to the face of the world at large. If we suppose that only the district populated by the human race was submerged, there would be no difficulty, because in that case, the outlying parts of the earth would not be interfered with, and the state of the animal life in these parts would continue to be what it had been in previous times.

It seems at first sight a difficulty in the way of this view, that the Mosaic description of the flood seems to set before us an absolutely universal flood. “All the high hills that were under the whole heavens were covered.” This difficulty will vanish, however, if we realise that the language of the narrative is intended only to represent things as they appeared to the Noachic survivors. The whole Bible narrative was written for the inhabitants of the earth, and therefore adopts their point of view throughout. Any other would have been inconsistent with the object of the narrative. When you describe a matter to children, you instinctively adapt the form of your discourse to their modes of looking at things, otherwise you fail to be understood. You speak very differently to an equal. In relation to God's great works, men are children: they can only take in the aspects of these works as they appear to mortal sense, and consequently, the Divine presentation of them in narrative has to deal with aspects, not with the *modus in esse*. This is not to present an error instead of a truth, but to use in discourse a part of the truth where a part only is serviceable: for the *aspect of a matter* is certainly part of the truth of a matter, though it may be but a small part. To speak of the sun rising in the morning is to speak of an aspect of the truth not in any way inconsistent with the fact that the sun does not move.

To an onlooker, “all the high hills under the whole heavens” would be covered; as a matter of fact, all the hills within range of his observation and for many miles beyond it would be

submerged. But the hills in other parts of the world might be untouched for all that. When Moses said that God had put the fear and the dread of Israel upon the nations that were “under the whole heavens”; and Paul, that the Gospel had been preached “to every creature which is under heaven,” the statement was not intended in the absolute sense, but in the sense relative to the speaker. The nations “under the whole heavens” of Israel’s experience were afraid, but there were other nations under the whole heaven of absolute speech, that had never heard of them. Every creature under the heaven of actual apostolic operations had heard the Gospel, but there were vaster multitudes under other skies to whom the Gospel never went—the Chinese, Japanese, and others. This indicates the local stand-point that must be recognised in the understanding of apparently absolute expressions—a thing common to current speech, as when we say of an invited party of friends, “Every one has come,” the “every one” is absolute only within the range of the subject referred to.

The only question remaining is, how could the Mesopotamian district of the earth be overspread with a flood deep enough to cover the highest mountains (and there are very high mountains in the district) without at the same time producing the submergence of the universal globe? The intimation that “the fountains of the great deep were broken up,” in addition to the falling of a mighty rain, seems to suggest the answer. “The great deep” is of course the ocean: the ocean was made to flow in upon the doomed district, and from various directions, as implied in the plural “fountains.” Now how was this to be done, but by depressing the district, which a glance at the map will show lies between several great seas on the north, south and west? A slow depression (indiscernible to the inhabitants, because of its gentle and far-reaching extent) would produce the effect of “breaking up the fountains of the great deep,” and bringing the waters of the ocean to aggravate the terrors of the appalling deluge of rain. It is Hugh Miller’s suggestion (quoted by McAusland in his work on the Adamite) and seems to meet the necessities of the case entirely. Hugh Miller points out that a depression of this sort, “would open up by three separate channels the fountains of the deep.” The depression extending to about two thousand miles each way, “would at the end of the fortieth day” (at the rate of 400 feet per day) be sunk in its centre to the depth of sixteen thousand feet—a depth sufficiently profound to bury the loftiest mountain in the district, and yet, having a gradient of declination of but 16 feet per mile, the contour of its hills and plains would remain apparently what they had been before. The doomed inhabitants would but see the water rising along the mountain sides and one refuge after another swept away till the last witness of the scene would have perished and the last hill top would have disappeared. And when after a hundred and fifty days had come and gone, the depressed hollow would have begun slowly to rise, and when after the fifth month had passed, the ark would have grounded on the summit of Mount Ararat, all that could have been seen from the upper window of the vessel, would simply be a boundless sea, roughened by tides, now flowing outwards with a reversed course. towards the distant ocean, by the three great outlets which during the period of depression, had given access to the waters. Noah would, of course, see that the fountains of the great deep were stopped and the waters, “returning from off the earth continually.”