

is here predicting the destruction of the great Assyrian power, the theme to which the entire book of Nahum is devoted. At this point he simply quotes an Assyrian legal phrase, shalmu kenu, which occurs in hundreds of Assyrian contracts and legal documents to indicate several and joint responsibility for the carrying out of an obligation. To anyone living at the time and familiar with Assyrian customs, the phrase conveyed as much meaning as a page of discussion. It declares that even though the Assyrians should stand together, every one with his shoulder to the task, carrying out to the full his national obligations, nevertheless God will break through their ranks and destroy their power. The phrase is quite incomprehensible apart from the Assyrian background which archeology has revealed to us. In turn, it becomes an interesting and remarkable corroboration of the accuracy of the Biblical narrative.

8. Relation to Derivation.

We have already mentioned the relation of the stories in Genesis 1-11 to the idea of derivation of Biblical ideas from Mesopotamian sources (III.E.1). This idea was brought to the fore by Prof. Friedrich Delitzsch in his "Babel and the Bible" lectures, given in 1902 and 1903 in Berlin. In these lectures he recognized that Mesopotamian discoveries had shown many historical and cultural features of the Biblical account to be remarkably accurate, but went on to assert that these discoveries also prove that the religious and cultural ideas of the Bible are simply an inferior borrowing from a superior cultural and religious environment found in Mesopotamia. Great excitement was aroused by Delitzsch's lectures, but most of the theories he advanced have not stood the test of time. Scholars immediately pointed out many flaws, and others have subsequently come to light. Yet many of his ideas are uncritically accepted in liberal circles today, and unfounded theories of derivation are sometimes widely used for discrediting the dependability of the