

is the half-conscious invention of a child-like age, not to be treated more seriously than any other myth current in the folk-lore of the world. Something like this is the view suggested by Canon Cheyne in the last edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

But though it is quite possible that in some of the forms which the tradition has taken there may be mythological elements, as is not unfrequently the case in stories based on actual historical events, it can hardly be said that the Bible account finds a very satisfactory explanation by that method. It is too sober and circumstantial in its details to be so easily disposed of, and there is no obvious natural fact sufficiently suggestive of the story to account for it. Not many reverent Bible students, at any rate, will be content to accept that explanation of the Genesis narrative, save as a last resort after everything else has failed to remove the objections against it. Certainly the way out of the difficulty in this case is too easy to make such a violent device necessary.

The whole force of the scientific objections, it will be observed, lies in the supposition that, according to the Bible narrative, the deluge is absolutely universal over the whole of the earth's surface. If we are allowed to suppose that it was of a local character, confined to a limited area, the scientific difficulties at once disappear. There would be no impossibility in constructing an ark or vessel large enough to house the domestic animals of such an area, together with such other species as it might be necessary to perpetuate there for man's use in the future. Of the rest, some might perish, while others near the edge of the submerged region, might save themselves by flight. The great bulk would be in no wise endangered.

The space of a year might seem a short time for a geologic event of such magnitude as would correspond even moderately to the demands of the narrative, though not a few geologic catastrophes, such as earthquakes and tidal waves, have been sudden enough. But that period of a year which appears in