

The primary reason of the deluge in the mind of our narrator is the moral condition of the world, which was filled with violence, owing to the aggressions of the giant half-breeds of the period and their Cainite allies, and to the decay of the race which alone represented the higher spiritual aims and hopes of humanity. The prospect was one of increasing evil, which there was no adequate religious influence to counteract, and which must lead to a hopelessly brutalized condition of mankind, frustrating all the intentions of the Creator in forming a being in His own image and with high and immortal destinies. The author of the old Central American story of the deluge strikes the same note with the author of Genesis, when he says that men were incapable of knowing the gods. They had fallen away from all appreciation of the spiritual, and had become blind to all but purely material aims. In such a condition of things it is time for the destructive powers of the material universe itself to be invoked to sweep the godless race away and to prepare for a new and better era. The same idea seems to be expressed by our Savior when He compares the state of the world before His second coming to judgment to that in the time of Noah. The men of this later time are not accused of idolatry or other special forms of wickedness, but simply of an entire devotion to things earthly and sensual, and want of faith in the Redeemer. It is this negative quality which renders them entirely hopeless, and fit only for destruction. But tho to our narrator the deluge is thus a miraculous judgment on a hopelessly irreligious race, he is aware that the catastrophe is brought about by natural causes, and that the deliverance of the survivors is arranged for by material means.

As in the Babylonian story and other ancient legends of the event, an ark is prepared for the only family which "walked with Elohim" and "found grace in the eyes of Jahveh," and this ark of safety is so important and perhaps so novel as a work of human art as to merit a detailed description. It is a large, rectangular building, rather than a ship, and is constructed of the light and durable cypress wood. It is strengthened with three decks and with numerous bulkheads or partitions. It is covered without and within with resinous coatings, probably of asphalt. It has a door in the side, like the large ports for taking in cargo in some modern ships. It has a window or hatch above, which, from its small size, only a cubit square, has excited much comment. Most likely those are right who suppose that there was a row of small ports around the upper part, and immediately under the roof or upper deck. The ark has no sails or other means of propulsion, but is intended merely to float and drift. In this it differs from the Chaldean ark, which is said to have been a ship and to have had a steersman or pilot, and hence must have had sails or other means for directed motion. It has been absurdly stated that the term box or chest, employed in Genesis, bespeaks ignorance of navigation on the part of the Israelites. But even Abraham must have been acquainted