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816TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,  
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST, 1938,  
AT 4.30 P.M.

BRIG.-GEN. W. BAKER BROWN, C.B., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read, confirmed and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the election of Mrs. F. Moser as a Member.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Wing-Commander P. J. Wiseman, R.A.F., to read his paper entitled "The Significance of the 'Six Days' in Genesis I."

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*THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE "SIX DAYS" IN  
GENESIS I.*

By WING-COMMANDER P. J. WISEMAN, R.A.F.

**I**S it possible after centuries of discussion to say anything new about the meaning of the "six days" which divides the narrative of Creation into six sections? I think it is. I shall propose for your consideration the evidence or the following explanation of these six days. *The phrase "and there was evening and there was morning day . . ."* has no reference to any act or process of creation but indicates the days on which the successive parts of the story of creation was revealed and recorded. Consideration is first given to the history, contents, and interpretation of the Mesopotamian Creation tablets. Next we review the theological interpretations of the "days." Thirdly, the structure of the Genesis narrative is examined, and in IV the Biblical and archæological evidence solves the problem.

I.

Nearly seventy years ago Mr. George Smith was deciphering some clay tablets in the British Museum when he noticed on one (K 36) a reference to "creation." Thereafter he concentrated his attention on searching for further tablets

which might throw light on the early narratives of the Book of Genesis. The clay literature at his disposal was immense; it consisted of nearly 20,000 tablets and fragments of tablets which had been discovered nearly twenty years before in the ruined library of Asurbanipal, at Nineveh, by Layard, Rassam, and Loftus. Although little more was found referring to "creation," several fragments relating to a "deluge" were deciphered. On December 3rd, 1872, Mr. Smith read before the Society of Biblical Archæology his translation of these tablets; Col. Sir Henry Rawlinson, who had been the first to recognise the value of several of the larger fragments, presided. The place was crowded with archæologists, theologians and other scholars, including the Prime Minister. This distinguished company is described as "listening breathlessly" while the able archæologist detailed the finding and deciphering of the early Babylonian Legends.

The paper read that day became famous and was enthusiastically discussed in Europe and America. It produced a confident expectation that further archæological research would reveal the source from which the Genesis narratives had been derived, or at least show that the Babylonians had similar accounts. Consequently, a sum of money was placed at his disposal by the *Daily Telegraph* so that he could himself go to Assyria in search of the missing parts of the "Genesis narratives." Some fragments of the Deluge account were soon discovered in the same ruined library at Kouyunjik. Smith thus describes the finding of a piece of a "Creation tablet." "My next discovery here was a fragment evidently belonging to the creation of the world; this was the upper corner of the tablet, and gave a fragmentary account of the creation of animals. Further on in this trench I discovered two other portions of this legend, one giving the Creation and fall of man; the other having part of the war between the gods and evil spirits. At that time I did not recognise the importance of these fragments, excepting the one with the account of the creation of animals, and, as I had immediately afterwards to return to England, I made no further discoveries in this direction." When two years later he summarised the results of his efforts to discover the Assyrian account of Creation, he wrote: "the tablets composing it are in mutilated condition, and too fragmentary to enable a single tablet to be completed, or to give more than a general view of the whole subject. The story as far as I can judge from the fragment

agrees generally with the account of Creation in the Book of Genesis, but shows traces of having originally included very much more matter. The fragments of the story which I have arranged are as follows :—

“ 1. Part of the first tablet, giving an account of the Chaos and the generation of the gods.

“ 2. Fragment of subsequent tablet, perhaps the second, on the foundation of the deep.

“ 3. Fragment of tablet placed here with great doubt, probably referring to the creation of land.

“ 4. Part of the fifth tablet, giving the creation of the heavenly bodies.

“ 5. Fragment of seventh ? tablet, giving the creation of land animals.

“ 6. Fragments of three tablets on the creation and fall of man.

“ 7. Fragments of tablets relating to the war between the gods and evil spirits.” (*Chaldean Account of Genesis*, pp. 7 and 62.)

I have cited this great Assyriologist, who first occupied himself with the Genesis narrative, in order that we may see the origin of the expectation that a parallel account to that in Genesis i would be recovered from the soil of Mesopotamia. Notwithstanding the fact that for sixty years numerous scholars have been unremitting in their search, that expectation has never been realised. On the contrary, as more and more of the missing parts have been recovered, the greater has been the chasm between the Babylonian and Genesis records.

Subsequent researches have gradually filled in the blanks in the Babylonian story. In 1888, Dr. Sayce translated tablet No. 93016, and in 1890, Dr. Jensen, of Marburg, published an up-to-date text in his *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*. Five years later Dr. Zimmern gave a still more complete translation in Gunkel's *Schöpfung und Chaos*. Dr. King added twice as much material to that hitherto published, when, in 1902, he issued his *Seven Tablets of Creation*. Up to that time only a few lines of the sixth tablet had been recovered, but so long as parts were missing the hope remained that, when found, the tablets would contain matter similar to that in the Creation narratives of Genesis. This prevailing view may be seen, for instance, in Dr. Ryle's *The Early Narratives of Genesis*, p. 18 : “ The sixth tablet which

has not yet been found must have recorded the formation of the earth and the creation of the vegetable world, of birds and fishes."

The search for the missing fragments continued during the earlier part of this century. In 1899, the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft commenced the immense task of thoroughly excavating the city of Babylon, but nothing was discovered there which added materially to our knowledge of the Babylonian story of the Creation. However, the German excavators at the old capital of Assyria, Ashur (Kalah Sherghat), were in this respect more successful, for they found some copies of the Creation series, including the long-missing sixth tablet. These new Assyrian texts were published in 1919 by Dr. Erich Ebeling in *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*; but the newly discovered sixth tablet did not contain any of the matter which Dr. Ryle said it "must have recorded."

Over sixty tablets and fragments have been recovered and, except for the astronomical poem (tablet V), the "Creation" series is now sufficiently complete to make a full comparison with Genesis i. The two accounts are as follows:—

Bible.	Creation tablets.
1. Light.	1. Birth of the gods, their rebellion and threatened destruction.
2. Heaven.	2. Tiamat prepares for battle, Marduk agrees to fight her.
3. Earth, Vegetation.	3. The gods are summoned and wail bitterly at their threatened destruction.
4. Sun and Moon (Regulating lights).	4. Marduk promoted to rank of "god"; he receives his weapons for the fight, these are described at length, defeats Tiamat, splits her in half like a fish and thus constructs heaven.
5. Sea and winged creatures, sea monsters.	5. Astronomical poem (only 22 complete lines).
6. Land animals, creeping things, man.	6. Kingu who made Tiamat rebel is bound, and as a punishment his arteries are severed and man created from his blood. The 600 gods are grouped; Marduk builds Babylon where all the gods assemble.

I submit that a comparison of the two accounts shows clearly that the Bible owes nothing whatever to the Babylonian account. Perhaps it is not surprising to find that as the various fragments were discovered, pieced together, and deciphered that the newer knowledge of the actual contents of these tablets did not overtake the old false conjectures and expectations. At first many archæologists agreed with Smith that the origin of the Bible narrative was the Babylonian Legend ; but when these archæologists were in possession of the facts, they made it quite plain that the Genesis account was not derived from the Babylonian. Thus we find in *The Babylonian Legends of the Creation and the Fight between Bel and the Dragon*, issued officially by the Trustees of the British Museum, that "the fundamental conceptions of the Babylonian and Hebrew accounts are essentially different." Sir Ernest Budge said : "It must be pointed out that there is no evidence at all that the two accounts of the Creation, which are given in the early chapters of Genesis, are derived from the seven tablets." (*Babylonian Life and History*, p. 85.) It is more than a pity that theologians, instead of keeping abreast of modern archæological research, continued to repeat the old disproved theory of Hebrew "borrowings." For instance, we find the following paragraph even in the late editions of Dr. Driver's *Genesis* (p. 27) : "The more immediate source of the Biblical cosmogony, however, there can be little doubt, has been brought to light recently from Babylonia. Between 1872 and 1876 that skilful collector and decipherer of cuneiform records, the late Mr. George Smith, published, partly from tablets found by him in the British Museum, partly from those he had discovered himself in Assyria, a number of inscriptions containing, as he quickly perceived, a Babylonian account of Creation. Since that date other tablets have come to light ; and though the series relating to the Creation is still incomplete, enough remains not only to exhibit clearly the general scheme of the cosmogony, but also to make it evident that the cosmogony of the Bible is dependent upon it." The newer information we now possess emphatically contradicts Dr. Driver's final statement, and I submit that there was no evidence whatever to support it when it was made. But this theory, rejected by archæologists, remains a popular impression to this day, as may be seen from the report just issued on "Doctrine in the Church of England," where it is stated (p. 44) that "it is generally agreed among educated Christians that these (Gen. i and ii) are mythological in origin."

In order that we may test this widespread assumption that the Genesis record is based on the mythological Babylonian accounts, I select from nearly 800 lines of crude polytheistic and mythological matter, *those lines which most closely resemble* Genesis i. I use Dr. Langdon's translation. (*Epic of Creation.*)

Line.

Tablet I.

1. When on high the heavens were not named,
  2. And beneath a home bore no name,
  3. And Apsu primeval, their engenderer,
  4. And the "Form," Tiamat, the bearer of all of them,
  5. There mingled their waters together ;
  6. Dark chambers were not constructed, and marshlands were not seen,
  7. And they were not named, and fates were not fixed,
  9. Then were created the gods in the midst thereof ;
  81. In the midst of the nether sea was born Asur,
  95. Four were his eyes, four were his ears,
  132. Mother Huber the designer of all things,
  133. Added thereto weapons which are not withstood ; she gave birth to the monsters.
  135. With poison like blood she filled their bodies,
- Colophon.—First tablet of "when on high" according to its original it was written.

Tablet II.

Colophon of K 292.—Second tablet of "when on high," etc.

Tablet IV.

128. Unto Tiamat whom he had bound he returned again.
  129. The lord trod upon her hinder part.
  130. With his toothed sickle he split her scalp.
  131. He severed the arteries of her blood.
  132. The north wing carried it away into hidden places.
  133. His fathers saw and were glad shouting for joy,
  134. Gifts and presents they caused to be brought to him,
  135. The lord rested beholding the cadaver,
  136. As he divided the monster, devising cunning things.
  137. He split her into two parts like a closed fish.
  138. Half of her he set up and made the heavens as a covering.
  139. He slid the bolt and caused watchmen to be stationed.
  140. He directed them not to let her waters come forth.
- Colophon.—Tablet IV, "when on high," not finished.

## Tablet. V.

Colophon on K 3567—Fifth tablet of “when on high.”

## Tablet VI.

1. When Marduk heard the words of the gods, his heart prompted him as he devised clever things.
2. He opened his mouth speaking unto Ea, that which he conceived in his heart, giving him counsel.
3. Blood will I construct, bone will I cause to be.
4. Verily I will cause Lilu (man) to stand forth, verily his name is man.
5. I will create Lilu, man.
6. Verily let the cult services of the gods be imposed, and let them be pacified.
7. I will moreover skilfully contrive the ways of the gods.
8. All together let them be honoured and may they be divided into two parts.
9. Ea replied to him, speaking to him a word.
10. For the pacification of the gods he imparted to him a plan.
11. Let one of their brothers be given. He shall perish and men be fashioned.
12. Let the great gods assemble. Let this one be given and as for them may they be sure of it,
13. Marduk assembled the great gods,
23. It was Kingu that made war ;
24. That caused Tiamat to revolt and joined battle.
25. They bound him and brought him before Ea. Punishment they imposed upon him, they severed the arteries of his blood.
26. With his blood he (Ea) made mankind. In the cult service of the gods, and he set the gods free.
27. After Ea had created mankind and (?) had imposed the cult service of the gods upon him.

Colophon.—Sixth tablet of “when on high.”

I submit that the continued propagation of these legends as the source from which the Genesis narrative is derived is entirely unjustifiable. Surely it is not reasonable to imagine that these crude accounts of gods and goddesses plotting war among themselves, smashing skulls, getting drunk, etc., as the basis of the first chapter of the Bible. From the fragment which Smith had discovered he imagined that it referred to the creation of animals;

now we know the animals were the "monsters" created in order to fight Tiamat. The old theory of the supposed similarities between the Bible and Babylonian tablets was founded on the "expectation" that discoveries would prove it true; excavation has proved it false.

Neither is there any evidence for the assertion that the Genesis record is the old Sumerian or Babylonian account stripped of all its mythical and legendary elements. It must be obvious that if this "stripping" had taken place there would be nothing left from which to construct a narrative.

Until recent years it was thought that the account was written on seven tablets; but the more recent discoveries have clearly shown that this was not the case. In his *Semitic Mythology* (p. 289), Dr. Langdon states: "The Babylonian Epic of Creation was written in six books or tablets, with a late appendix added as the seventh book, as a commentary on the fifty sacred Sumerian titles of Marduk. No copies of the Babylonian text exist earlier than the age of Nebuchadnezzar. The epic had immense vogue in Assyria, where the national god Ashur replaced Marduk's name in most of the copies, and it is from the city of Ashur that all the earliest known texts are derived. These are at least three centuries earlier than any surviving southern copy. Since traces of the influence of the epic are found in the Babylonian iconography as early as the sixteenth century, it is assumed that the work was composed in the period of Babylon's great literary writers of the first dynasty." Smith and others had conjectured that the Assyrian tablets had been copied from Babylonian sources. The finding of tablet 45528 proved this, for the colophon read:—

"First tablet of *Enuma elis* (when on high) taken from . . .  
A copy from Babylon according to its original it was written."

The closest resemblance, and certainly the most significant one, is that throughout a period of 1,500 years, which is as far back as can at present be traced, the Babylonians always recorded the "Creation" series on six tablets. Although there is this agreement in the number six, it is quite evident that the division of the record of Creation in Genesis into six days cannot be traced back to Babylonian sources. Long ago Schrader wrote in his *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, vol. i, p. 15: "Neither the cuneiform Creation story nor that of Berossus gives any hint that the Babylonians regarded the creation of the universe as taking place in seven days."

## II

Theological literature concerning the Creation narratives is immense. Only restricted references can be made to the interpretations of the six days. It is very noticeable that before any expositor can explain the chapter he must first determine the meaning of the "days"; and not a small part of the literature on the subject is occupied with attempts to account for them. The efforts to solve the meaning of these six days have been numerous, and I suggest, not very successful—the days are explained away rather than explained. A clear statement of the problems with which expositors are confronted, and of the explanations which are current among those who accept the narrative as historical, may be cited from Anstey's *Romance of Bible Chronology*, p. 63: "The length of time described by the Hebrew word *Yom*—day, as used in this chapter, cannot be definitely determined. The word itself is frequently used to express a long period, an entire Era. The time occupied by the whole process of the six days' work is referred to in Genesis ii, 4, as the day that the Lord God made the heavens and the earth. The use of the expression "and evening came and morning came . . . . day one" (Gen. i, 5; repeated Gen. i, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31) seems to suggest a literal day as measured by the revolution of the earth on its axis, but it cannot be said to be proved that the writer is not here using the words "evening and morning" in a figurative sense, for the commencement and the completion of whatever period he intended to mark by his use of the word "day." In the same verse (Gen. i, 5) the word "day" is used to mark a still briefer period, viz., that portion of the day when it is light.

"The attempt to parcel out the six days' work into the six geological Eras, to which they somewhat roughly, but by no means accurately, correspond, cannot be regarded as a satisfactory explanation of the writer's intention and meaning. There may be certain analogies between the order of Creation as described in the first chapter of Genesis, and the order of the formation of the various strata of the crust of the earth as read by the geologist, and in the order of the occurrence of the fossil remains which are found embedded in the stratified layers of the earth's crust, for God's works are all of a piece; but there are also great and manifest divergencies, and these are so great and so manifest that the two series cannot be said to run absolutely parallel with each other, or to perfectly correspond. The natural

interpretation of the narrative, to one who recognises the greatness of the power of God, is that which understands the chapter as a record of the creation of the world in six literal days ; but it cannot be denied that the word "day" may have been used by the writer in a figurative sense, and intended by him to indicate a more extended period corresponding to a geological Era of time.

"The creation of Adam took place on the sixth day after the creation of light. Whether this sixth day is to be interpreted as the sixth literal day, as measured by the space of time required for the revolution of the earth upon its own axis, or as a sixth geological Era, must remain uncertain, as there is nothing in the Hebrew text to decide between the more precise and the more extended connotation of the term."

From this it will be seen, that among those who regard the narrative as historical there are two main systems of interpretation. The first is the theory that verse one refers to a completed creation, which (in verse 2) became a desolation ; while the remaining part of the chapter is stated to be a record of a re-creation or restoration in six actual days of twenty-four hours each. The second explanation is that the days are long periods of geological time. A writer who holds the first view states that as a result of the ruin referred to in verse 2 "the earth became inundated with the ocean waters, its sun had been extinguished ; the stars were no longer seen above it . . . there was not a living being to be found in the whole earth" ; he then suggests that a glacial age succeeded. Of the remaining part of the narrative he states : "It is therefore clear that we must understand the six days to be six periods of twenty-four hours each . . . these days are mentioned as comprising an evening and a morning." It is usual for those who adopt this point of view to grant the long period required by geologists for the existence of fossil remains, by placing this as having occurred in a previous creation, which they suggest is implied by verses 1 and 2.

On the other hand, those who hold that the narrative is continuous, without a chasm in verse 2, allot a "day" to each period of geological time. Such an able geologist as Sir J. W. Dawson felt it quite legitimate to give the days this interpretation.

### III.

While it is obvious that the above-mentioned theories discredit each other, they do not discredit the text of the

narrative itself. In this instance I submit that there is a clear distinction between what men have said about scripture and what scripture says. This first narrative is written in a most exceptional and remarkable manner. It has a unique framework of repeated phrases; each of the six sections commencing and ending alike, except that the days are numbered one to six. This framework is constructed as follows:—

1. v. 3. God said . . . let there be . . . and there was . . .
4. „ saw . . . that it was good.
- „ divided between . . .
5. „ called . . .
- And there was evening and there was morning  
day one.
2. v. 6. God said . . . let there be . . .
7. „ made . . .
- „ divided between (Sept:) . . . and it was so.
8. „ called
- „ saw that it was good (Sept:)
- And there was evening and there was morning  
day second.
3. v. 9. God said let . . . let . . . and it was so.
10. „ called . . .
- „ saw that it was good.
11. „ said . . . let . . . and it was so.
12. „ saw that it was good.
13. And there was evening and there was morning  
day third.
4. 14 God said, let there be . . . let . . . let . . . and  
it was so.
16. „ made . . .
17. „ set . . .
18. „ saw that it was good.
19. And there was evening and there was morning  
day fourth.
5. 20. God said let . . . and it was so (Sept.).
21. „ created . . .
- „ saw that it was good.
22. „ blessed . . .
23. And there was evening and there was morning  
day fifth.

6. 24. God said let . . . and it was so.  
 25. „ made . . .  
 „ blessed . . .  
 „ saw that it was good.  
 26. „ said let . . . let  
 27. God created . . .  
 28. „ blessed . . .  
 „ said . . .  
 31. „ saw that it was very good.  
 And there was evening and there was morning  
 day the sixth.

Apart from the repetition of these phrases, the words used are few and simple ; but they are important, for they give the order in which the creative events were *revealed*. While the complete narrative extends from chapter i, 1, to chapter ii, 4, this special framework is confined to vv. 3-31. The first two verses are evidently a superscription, and the last four (chapter ii, 1-4) are a subscription or colophon. Even so, I cannot accept the view that verse 1 refers to a creation earlier than the one described in the remaining verses of the chapter. I suggest that no one would have read so much into verse 2 had there not been a need to find an explanation of the "six days."

It is therefore apparent that the mode of explaining the "days" dominates the exegesis of the record. Whatever meaning the word "day" may have elsewhere in the narrative, or in scripture, surely the phrase "and there was evening and there was morning day one," etc., must refer to an ordinary day of twenty-four hours. Although the Hebrew words translated "evening" and "morning" are doubtless a translation from an older language, there can be little doubt that the words used are intended to indicate a normal day. For בֹּקֶר is used for "morning" and עֶרֶב for "evening." Words with a wider meaning, חֹשֶׁךְ "darkness" and אֹר "light," are not used. It is apparent from the narrative itself that the creations mentioned in the first three sections are not stated to have been accomplished in three days of twenty-four hours each ; for in the fourth section it expressly states that the appearance of light from the sun and moon was "for seasons and *for days* and years." It was not until then that the solar system made a natural "evening and morning" possible. Neither did the writer, by dividing the account up into six sections by the use of the phrase "and there was evening and there was morning . . .," intend

to imply that the preceding acts of creation had occupied an evening and a morning. To those acquainted with ancient literary methods, there is no suggestion, for instance, that within the same twenty-four hours the earth which was covered by the sea made its appearance, the grass, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, which God saw was good, was immediately fully grown, so that three days later cattle eat the grass and man the fruit.

Those who adopt the alternative view that the six days represent geological ages are likewise confronted with overwhelming difficulties of interpretation, as may be seen from the following extract from *Essays and Reviews* :—

“ It is evident that the bare theory that a day means an age or immense geological period might be made to yield strange results. What becomes of the evening and morning of which each day is said to have consisted ? Was each geologic age divided into two long intervals, one all darkness, the other all light ? And if so, what became of the plants and trees created in the third day or period, when the evening of the fourth day—the evenings be it observed, precede the mornings—set in ? They must have passed through half a seculum of total darkness, not even cheered by that dim light which the sun, not yet completely manifested, supplied on the morning of the third day. Such an ordeal would have completely destroyed the whole vegetable creation, and yet we find that it survived, and was appointed on the sixth day as the food of man and animals. In fact, we need only substitute the word period for day in the Mosaic narrative to make it very apparent that the writer at least had no such meaning, nor could he have conveyed any such meaning to those who first heard his account read.”

When we examine the record itself the difficulties seem to vanish, for nowhere does it state that any creative act or process took place either before or after the use of the phrase “ and there was evening and there was morning.” These words are not exegetical of that which has been recorded previously. Neither the “ geological period theory,” nor the theory of a restoration in six days of twenty-four hours each, explains the use of the mornings and evenings.

Still another explanation — the vision theory — has been adopted to explain the “ days.” It is said that the narrator

had visions of each stage of the Creation on each of the six days. This explanation at least has the merit that it does not involve the use of the phrase "evening and morning" to indicate a long geological period. But can it be sustained? I think not. Because one significant thing about this first narrative is that all the marks of a vision are absent. We do not read "I heard," "I saw," etc. On the contrary, *the whole account looks at Creation from God's point of view and not man's*; we read "God saw," "God called," "God said." The difference between a normal narrative and a vision may be seen when we compare this record with such a passage as Jeremiah iv, 23-24, which has been used in order to illustrate verse 2. "And I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. And I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled." It is also said that the earlier chapters of the Bible are like the last chapters. They are, but with this significant difference, the one is a narrative, the other a vision. A comparison shows the difference of style. John says: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and I heard a voice out of heaven saying . . ." Such phrases as, "I turned to see," "after this I looked and lo," the constantly repeated "I saw," are entirely absent from the Genesis account. Instead, we find "God saw," etc. Dr. Driver (*Genesis*, p. 23) stated: "the narrative contains no indication of its being the relation of a vision (which in other cases is regularly noted, *e.g.*, Am. vii-ix; Is. vi.; Ez. i, etc.); it purports to describe not appearances ('And I saw and behold . . .'), but facts ('Let the earth . . . And it was so'), and to substitute the one for the other is consequently illegitimate." I entirely agree with his statement that "it purports to describe not appearances but facts." But Dr. Driver has his own solution of these "days." It is given on p. 35 of *Genesis*. "Gen. ii, 1-3, it will be observed, does not name the sabbath, or lay down any law for its observance for man: all that it says is that God 'desisted' on the seventh day from His work, and that He 'blessed' and 'hallowed' the day. It is, however, impossible to doubt that the introduction of the seventh day is simply part of the writer's representation, and that the sanctity is in reality ante-dated: instead, *viz.*, of the seventh day of the week being sacred, *because* God desisted on it from His six days' work of creation, the work of creation was

distributed among the six days, followed by a day of rest, *because* the week, ended by the sabbath, existed already as an institution, and the writer wished to adjust artificially the work of creation to it. In other words, the week, ended by the sabbath, determined the 'days' of creation, not the days of creation the week." Of course, this is exactly the opposite to that which the writer of Genesis i says: but Dr. Driver wishes to make some unknown writer responsible for this alleged artificial attempt to ante-date the sabbath. In that case would such a writer omit the word sabbath?

Some years ago when it was the practice to seek the origin of all Scripture institutions in Babylonian beliefs and practices, it was asserted that the Hebrew sabbath had been borrowed from them. This assertion was made because a British Museum lexicographical tablet (K. 4397, in *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets*, etc., in the British Museum, Part XVIII, pl. 23, 17), contained the following equation:—

ûm-nûh libbi                      shabattum

and the literal translation of "shabattum" is "Day of the rest of the heart." It was assumed at once by many that this was a definite indication that the sabbath was of Babylonian origin. But Dr. Pinches subsequently found a tablet giving the Sumerian and Babylonian names for the days of the month. It was then found that "shabatti" was the Babylonian name for the fifteenth day of the month, not the seventh. It was known that the Babylonians observed the seventh, fourteenth, fifteenth, nineteenth, twenty-first and twenty-eighth days of the month. However, the fifteenth day, so far from being a "sabbath," was regarded as an evil, unlucky, or inauspicious day. It is now abundantly clear that the seventh or "hallowed" day referred to at the end of the Creation narrative in Genesis had nothing to do with the Babylonian "evil" day, and that the sabbath did not originate in Babylon.

The concluding words of the narrative states that God did something for six days and "desisted" on the seventh, therefore "hallowing" it. What does Genesis say that God did on these six days? and what did He cease doing on the seventh? I submit that the solution of this problem is to be found in the first four verses of Genesis ii. The actual account of the Creation is complete when, at the end of the first chapter, we read "and there was evening and there was morning day six." The ap-

pendix to the account reads: "And were finished the heaven and the earth and their host." *The fundamental mistake which has been made, is the assumption that this sentence states that God finished the work of creating the heaven and the earth in six days.* The next sentence does say that God finished something after the sixth day, for it tells that "God finished on the seventh day His work which He had made," or, as Dr. Driver renders it, "And God finished His business which He had done." The use of the word "finished" at the end of Babylonian tablets is not uncommon. An instance may be seen in Dr. Langdon's *Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms*, where he reproduces a series of liturgical tablets. These are often composed in sets of six. The last tablet of one series reads: "Tablet six of the goddess of . . . which is finished." This liturgical composition was written on a series of six tablets, and this note about finishing on the colophon to the sixth tablet indicates that the series of tablets was finished or completed. Another instance of this may be seen on the colophon of Tablet IV (No. 93015) which reads: "Tablet IV of Enuma Elis not finished." Thus the scribe indicates that there are further tablets to complete the series; this latter tablet is one of the Creation series which was completed in six tablets. I submit, therefore, that this Babylonian literary usage throws light on the meaning of this "finishing" in six days. *It indicates that what was finished was the recording of the narrative*, and this is precisely what the Septuagint version of chapter ii, verse 4, states.

It has been assumed that the reference in chapter ii, 1 and 2, to "finishing" of the work refers to the acts or process of creation. The Bible statement is simply "And the heavens and the earth were finished." It does not say that God finished creating the universe on the sixth day, as is so constantly assumed. Expositors have found difficulty with the wording of the final sentence of verse 3, which the A.V. has translated "which God had created and made." But it will be seen from the margin of the R.V. that the correct translation is "created to make." God "finished" the revelation He had made and "desisted" (translated "rested" in the A.V.) on the seventh day. Attempts have been made to interpret this "seventh" day as continuing until the present. But as it expressly states that God "hallowed" the seventh day, and Exodus, ch. xx, referring to this seventh day in connection with Creation, relates it to the sabbath, I suggest that we are not justified in giving the seventh day an unnatural interpretation. So on the seventh day—a day as normal as the other six—God

ceased from doing something He had done on the previous six literal days. Thus the narrative is separated into six sections by its statement "and there was evening and there was morning day one," second, etc., according to the events which were revealed and recorded on each of those six days. The numbering of the days would indicate that the original record was written on six tablets on six days. I suggest that this is the reason why the Assyrians and Babylonians clung so tenaciously throughout the centuries of their history to this particular number of tablets on which to record their Creation story.

The "finishing" was the completion of the revelation, it was recorded stage by stage on each of the six days. Throughout the Bible we have instances of God speaking to man, but in the whole of Scripture we find nothing comparable with the statements made in these early narratives, where we are told that God was in direct communication with man. I have shown elsewhere\* that these narratives in Genesis bear all the marks of being written contemporaneously, even in the earliest times. This first narrative contains evidences of extreme antiquity; it is remarkable in that it has nothing nationalistic or local in it. It would seem that it was written before myths and legends had corrupted the knowledge of the One God, and the order of His creation. Moreover, we have noticed that the record is given from God's point of view, not man's. It is a universal account containing things which no scribe would ever have thought of inserting. It is not a conceived account but a received record.

Dr. Langdon has said that "There is no evidence in the extensive Sumerian literature that they had any considered theory of the creation of the world" (*Semitic Mythology*, p. 277). Yet there are many references to the manner in which original things were revealed. Thus Berossus represents Oannes teaching Alorus, the first ruler, "By day he companied with men . . . but when the sun went down he sank again into the sea, and tarried by night in the ocean." Though such Babylonian ideas as these are crude, they moulded their beliefs. As Mr. Gadd states in his *History and Monuments of Ur*: "Of this story as to the origin of culture no version has yet been discovered in the native literature, but it would be no very hazardous opinion if this were ascribed to chance only. For not only is it very evident that Berossus disposed of excellent material at present unrecovered,

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\* *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis.*

but the story itself is so characteristic of the Babylonian outlook that it could not be a late fiction."

In the epilogue to the seventh tablet of the *Enuma Elis* (Creation) series, we read: "Verily the First One (Mahru) taught them." In his *Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*, vol. i, p. 51, Dr. Jeremias, referring to the tablets of Destiny, repeatedly mentioned in this Creation series, says that these tablets "are a concrete representation of the idea of revelation."

Until recent years the theory which gained considerable acceptance, and which underlies so much of the criticism of the Genesis narratives, was that man's first religious beliefs were animistic, that gradually he struggled through polytheism to a pure faith in God. So far from this assumption being proved, the reverse has been found to be true. The early narratives of Genesis imply that man, though created from the "dust of the earth," was a unique creation, "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." Or, as we read in Matthew i, "Adam which was the son of God." He possesses an intellect, is represented as using language to name the things he saw about him. He is the Crown of Creation. No doubt the language he used was simple; it would be as simple as early pictographic writing.

The concluding words of this first narrative expressly claims that it is a written record. The Septuagint version reads: "This is the book (lit. record) of the generations of the heaven and the earth." Psalm cxiv, 160, says: "The beginning of Thy word is true."

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Brig.-Gen. W. BAKER BROWN, C.B.) said: The subject of this lecture as originally advertised was "Genesis and Archæology," the lecture as delivered is called "The Significance of the Six Days in Genesis i," and this has a much more limited scope.

The first part of the lecture is devoted to rebutting the suggestion that the story as told in Genesis is a development or summary of an account of the Creation, which has been handed down from an early period through Sumerian and Babylonian traditions. He seems to have made this point on which I would only comment that he is merely proving a negative. The fact that this theory of development may be wrong does not contribute anything towards

the correct appreciation of the account as handed down to us. The lecturer then goes on to what is an analysis of the words used in the latest translation of our English Bible, following much the same ground as our lecturer of a fortnight ago. Into the details of this I am afraid I cannot follow him, though I hope some of the experts here this evening will join in the discussion.

I should, however, like to add a few remarks not from the technical aspect, but as a representative of the large number of people known as "The Man in the Street," many of whom, like myself, have been too busy with practical work (in my case in many parts of the world) to study the exact meaning of Hebrew words. To satisfy us it is necessary not only to give a clear explanation of the meaning of the words used in Genesis, but to reconcile these words with the facts which have been established by the evolution of science and the labours of explorers and great thinkers.

I will only refer briefly in illustration to three branches. First archaeology, or the investigation of ancient remains, many of which are buried beneath the surface of the earth, has helped enormously in the understanding of the Bible record and in the identification of places and people mentioned in Genesis and Exodus. Of the facts so revealed in recent years, the most striking is perhaps the dating of the fall of Jericho. Is it too much to hope that further search may reveal some record of the Exodus, perhaps in the form of a tablet from a high official in Egypt to the governor of a town in Palestine, warning him of the escape from Egypt of a turbulent tribe of serfs and slaves under a leader named Moses. But while we accept such confirmation of the narrative, we must also recognise that the same methods of research have revealed the existence in many parts of the earth before the earliest days of Babylon of groups of men or manlike beings with many of the attributes of man. This fact must be taken into account in explaining the Bible story.

Or take geology. This has confirmed the Bible story in a remarkable way as regards the order of the creation, the gradually drying up of a wet and formless earth and the successive appearance of fish, reptiles, birds, animals and man. But against this we must put the facts of the great periods of time which must have been required for each geological epoch.

Finally take astronomy. This is an older science. It confirms in a remarkable way the statement that the earth was formed from

chaos, but the fact that the sun and not the earth was the centre of our universe was apparently quite unknown or suspected by the ancient writers and obliges us to reconsider many of their statements. We know for a practical certainty that the sun was created long before the earth, and the statement in Genesis i, 14, that "God made the two great lights" cannot refer to an act of creation but only to the sun and moon becoming visible on the earth. Our lecturer of a fortnight ago read this verse in the same way, but in explaining the first act of Creation in Genesis i, 3, he said that he could not say where the light came from. The simple explanation is that as the sun was there all the time, the gradual drying up of the earth was due to its influence.

These, however, are all points which will be familiar to you and for which we have got to find a solution. That such a solution exists is certain; whether in this life we shall arrive at the whole truth is much less certain. When it comes it will not be by revelation, but by the accumulation of the actions of many individuals in many different fields, and in that spirit I personally welcome the lecture we have heard this evening.

Rev. ARTHUR W. PAYNE warmly thanked Commander Wiseman for his most valuable paper, recognising that his acquaintance with Mesopotamia, viz., the scene of the Garden of Eden, the Flood, the call to Abraham, gave him special advantages to deal with its particular topic.

He (the speaker) asked himself three questions with regard to the question of a 24-hour six day, viz., creation as has been suggested, as being stated in this first chapter of Genesis:—

- 1st. *Could* Almighty GOD do this ?
- 2nd. *Did* Almighty GOD do it ?
- 3rd. *Will* Almighty GOD do it again ?

There was no doubt about the answer to the first query.

The reply to the second seems to be clear in reading carefully the Hebrew, Isaiah xlv, 18, that after the first Creation, of verse 1, Genesis i, there was a re-formation after a fall, or a catastrophe—a *replenishing* (v. 28), as Jehovah distinctly says He did not create it. *Tohu*, though it became (Genesis i, 2) *Tohu* and *Bohu*.

The fact of the *Erev* and *Boker*, the evening and the morning, being repeated six times, and the mention of numerals one to six days, seemed clear proof that it was not a question of a long period, viz., 1,000 years for the day and night, for that would surely mean what was created in the first 500 years of light would be destroyed in the next 500 years of darkness.

The fact of failure that had come in through Satan was indicated in Isaiah xiv, and Ezekiel xxviii, and the possibility of such a creation in so short a space of time was seen in the regeneration by the Holy Spirit of the individual soul when it became a new creation, or the new birth, and also in the marvellous change that will take place, in the beginning of the Millennial Day in Palestine and the whole world, in a very short period of time. Creation (that we were dealing with, in this opening chapter of Holy Writ) is a matter of Divine Revelation and not of human speculation or philosophic subjective conjecture and discovery.

Mr. WM. C. EDWARDS said: I have greatly enjoyed this lecture. Laymen free from the forms and rules of the Schoolmen—which were produced in the gloomy cells of monasteries—seem able in a few words to explain, as Commander Wiseman has done, the results of years of patient investigations in the simplest terms. I wonder what we can do to get these “over” to the misleading leaders of the Modernistic clergy. Some years ago I took exception to a sermon of a leading Modernist and wrote offering to send to him the book that proved him wrong. He replied somewhat as follows: “I have read all I want to read and my mind is made up on the subject.” He, not so long after, appeared as the co-respondent in a case and for me he seems a solemn warning of I Cor. ix, 27. Some years ago I saw some of these tablets in Berlin, as well as our own Museum, and it is a matter of supreme amazement how any reasonable person can pretend to see in them any likeness to the sublime Creation-chapters of our Holy Bible. I could as well believe that my nursery rhymes or the street ballads like “Simple Simon” or “Mother Hubbard” could be the source of the sublimities of Milton and his *Paradise Lost*. Under what condition did the early chapters of the Holy Bible appear? When the Children of Israel came out of Egypt they were a mixed multitude of ex-slaves and few, if any,

could read or write. We know by the study of the so-called Egyptian *Books of the Dead* that those who wrote them could not read what they copied. Forty years later, when the Children of Israel stood on the eastern bank of Jordan, Moses addresses them as a LITERATE people, for he bids them READ (Joshua i, 8); he commands that they WRITE these words on the doorposts of their houses, to bind them on their hands and make phylacteries of the same, and TEACH them to their children. When a husband would divorce his wife he was commanded to WRITE a bill of divorcement, thus enabling a virtuous woman to defend her honour in the courts of law. I think that it is certain that during these forty years' wanderings the people attended desert schools, no doubt taught by appointed teachers, probably Levites. But for such schools you need text-books and in Genesis I feel perfectly certain that you get such a text-book. INSPIRED by God to give the story of creation, the fall as well as the flood, and the history of the races (*e.g.*, Gen. x). Here we can see God's dealings with men in Judgment and Salvation. I would undertake with this one book of Genesis to educate, as Adams Christian did on Pitcairn Island, a people like those that were in the wilderness. I think that it is safe to affirm that this education continued in the Promised Land. In the Targums we are told the word NAIOTH (I Samuel xix, 18) is always rendered as "house of learning," and I make bold to suggest that in many places the Schools of the Prophets were such, and that all the cities of refuge had such schools for the priests, or any who would come for religious education to them.

The lecturer had some interesting things to say about the word FINISHED (Hebrew KALAH). It reminds me of the old books and MSS. that used to finish with the Latin word FINIS. The word occurs in several places, *e.g.*, Deut. xxxi, 30, and reminds one of the ending of the 2nd Book of Psalms, which closes with the words: "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are FINISHED" (Psalm lxxii, 20). But most of all, we may recall with solemn joy that they were in the last words of our atoning Lord and Saviour upon the cross (John xix, 30), when He triumphantly cried with a loud voice, "IT IS FINISHED."

Mr. H. W. BRYNING said: I have always been interested in the literature of the story of the Creation and cannot understand how

any critic could entertain the notion that the record may have been adapted from the pagan myths of Babylonia, rather than the reverse. Why not conclude that the polytheistic literature of legend originated after the Confusion of Tongues, when superstitious ignorance may have become widespread? For science admits that the evidence points to Monotheism as the original religion.

There is so much to be learnt from the concise and pithy statements which are of scientific interest in the narrative of Creation that it is difficult for any one exponent to perceive all their implications.

For example, I have heard the question put as a poser, Why is "*evening*" placed before "*morning*" in these texts? I have never heard a satisfactory reply, but on studying the subject I perceived the philosophy in the statement,

"And there was evening, and there was morning,"

which is significantly reiterated in closing the record of God's work for each of the six "days" or stages into which His revelation is divided.

Now, it is obvious from the narrative (v. 1 to 5) that the first day upon this planet began when its surface emerged from darkness and received the diffused light of the sun; and as the rays from a great distance (many millions of miles) may be regarded as parallel and tangential to the longitudes of the earth 180 degrees apart, there began to be an evening and a morning simultaneously, so that, as the earth rotates, there is always evening on the eastern "limb" of the lighted hemisphere, while there is morning to the part of the earth which emerges from its shadow. The words quoted above therefore describe accurately what happened after God said, "Let there be light."

It follows from this explanation that the hemisphere that received the light experienced its first evening as it passed into the earth's shadow before any part of it emerged into the light and saw the dawn of another day. To my mind this would suggest the reason for the order, "*evening morning*."

The logical conclusion is, therefore, that the reference to "*evening*" and "*morning*" has no bearing upon the "DAYS" in the narrative of Creation.

Mrs. MAUNDER said: I am sorry that you did not find room for the 5th tablet—the astronomical one—for on that one I can speak with some small measure of authority. I can give you limiting dates between which it must have been composed; it could not have been so early as 800 B.C., it must have been composed within a score (or so) years of 600 B.C.

Some four years ago I was asked to trace the origin of the symbols given to the sun, moon, and the five planets—such symbols as are figured on p. 786 of the *Nautical Almanac*. I need only refer here to three of them—Venus, Jupiter and Saturn. All seven had got essentially their present form by about the second century of our era. Venus was then shown as carrying a necklace—not a mirror as we are used to think her symbol means; Jupiter carried a sceptre, but as a pole with a knob on it was not distinctive, he was given the capital Greek letter Z, the initial letter of Zeus, and we use that Z, but with a vertical line across the lower bar. His Latin equivalent, Jupiter, carried a thunderbolt instead of a sceptre. The symbol for Saturn was a sickle or scythe. I tried to take these symbols further back. The necklace of Venus found its origin ultimately, I think, in the lapis lazuli necklace of the Lady of the Gods, Ishtar, as described in the Epic of Gilgamesh, lines 163–165. But in the bas-relief figured on p. 18 of the 1931 edition of the Babylonian legends of the Creation, issued by the British Museum, Marduk has appropriated to himself both the symbols of Jupiter and Saturn, and bears the thunderbolt, the sceptre, and the sickle. Also there is no doubt that "The Star of Marduk" is the *Planet* Jupiter, for it is written, "When he stands in the midst of the heavens he is Nibiru" (Thompson's Reports, No. 84); and "it divides the heavens and stands still; it is the star of Marduk, Nibiru" (Cuneiform Texts, Plate 2, l. 37). And finally, in the 5th tablet of the "Creation" it is written (1) He [Marduk] "formed the stations of the great Gods. (2) He set in heaven the constellations which are their likenesses. (3) He fixed the year, he appointed limits. (4) He set up for the twelve months three stars apiece. (5) According to the day of the year, he . . . figures. (6) He founded the station of Nibir to settle their boundaries. (7) That none might exceed or fall short."

It is just this that the planet Jupiter actually does, more or less precisely, and the word *Nibir* means "he who transits." In his twelve-year revolution round the sun, he spaces out about the

12th of the Zodiac in one year—that is to say, he covers one “*sign*” (not one *constellation*) of the Zodiac in a year, and when he is in opposition to the sun, he souths (or transits) at midnight. In other words, he divides the heavens equally. By his “stationary points” he divides that 12th of the Zodiac into 3 (almost equal) parts or “dekans.” Now this tablet must have been composed *after* the 12, real, unequal and irregular constellations had been replaced by the 12 imaginary, equal and regular signs.

In 1934, I wrote in the *Observatory Magazine*: “Even though this 5th tablet must have been written well within a century from the division of the Zodiac into signs and dekans, I think the Lord Marduk was taking to himself credit for more than he actually did do. He may have, perhaps, divided the 12 signs into 36 dekans, but he did *not* ‘fix the boundaries of the stations of Nibir.’” That great advance in astronomy had already been made in India.

Dr. J. K. Fotheringham asked me why I had used the B.M. version and not Professor Langdon’s, and seemed to challenge my interpretation of the tablet. I took the opportunity to ask him whether there was any difference in *the astronomical sense* in the two versions, and he acknowledged that there was none (which for me was all that mattered); he agreed, too, that if the tablet showed that a real phenomenon was described, then we ought to allow that it should be so interpreted.

As regards the meaning to be ascribed to “the evening and the morning were the — day” in the first chapter of Genesis, I think, speaking as an astronomer, we must accept it either as a “day of God,” in which case we can by no means define its meaning, or as a “day of man,” and take it practically. In this case we must consider what point on earth we take as a standpoint for observation; if at the equator, the day has 12 hours’ light and 12 hours’ darkness; as we go north or south, we come to a point where it has 6 months’ light and 6 months’ darkness.

Mr. L. E. JOSE said: This is one of the most momentous gatherings in the history of the Victoria Institute, and I think we need to be quite clear as to the exact suggestion which Wing-Commander Wiseman has put before us. I gather that it amounts to this.

That the Creation lasted over long ages, but that it was described to the author of Genesis i in a week of successive days of twenty-four hours each.

This seems a very reasonable view, having regard to the actual words of Genesis, where after each section of the story the words occur, "And there was Evening and there was Morning Day one" and so on with the following days. Very likely, days in which God talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden.

There is a lot of trouble in the world just now. It springs not so much (comparatively speaking) from the attacks of evil from outside as from the lack of true light from the Christian Churches. And this lack springs from unbelief. In dealing with this matter of the truth of Genesis i, the foundation of the Bible story, we are right at the heart of the matter. (Hence my opening remark.)

Just recently, a body of earnest freethinkers, earnestly seeking heavenly truth by the road of earthly wisdom, has issued a report of their conclusions. They have set us an example of lovable co-operation in pursuing their aim, but their ignorance of relevant facts and factors is very striking. There is great need for the Members and Associates of the Victoria Institute to bear witness to the truth by every good means in their power. By voice, by careful distribution of relevant reliable literature, and so on, to set their light upon a hill and not under a bushel. We need especially to get at the seats of education; at those who teach, at those who study. All this, of course, involves the expenditure of a little money. I hope we have all studied closely Wing-Commander Wiseman's book, *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis*, and are making ourselves familiar with the whole subject. A great responsibility lies on us in these matters, and we need to be up and doing.

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Writing at a date subsequent to the meeting, I should like to ask Wing-Commander Wiseman his view of the words in Exodus xx, 11, beginning "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth."

Mr. SIDNEY COLLETT proposed that a very hearty vote of thanks be accorded Brig.-Gen. W. Baker-Brown, C.B., for so kindly giving up his valuable time and presiding at this meeting. Mr. Collett then added the following remarks:—

I have also much appreciated Wing-Commander Wiseman's paper, as it presents very clearly the two views, viz., the "period" and the "24-hour day" theory of the first chapter of Genesis. Now I suggest that the key to the true interpretation of this subject is found in the two words "created" and "made"; and if the way in which those words are used were carefully noted, much confusion would be avoided. In Gen. i, 1, we read: "In the beginning God 'created' the Heaven and the earth." When that "beginning" was, no man knows. But there our geologists may have as many millions of years as they like. But that word "created" is never used again in the whole of that chapter, except in relation to animal life (v. 21) and man (v. 27), both of which were, of course, "created," but never in relation to the earth. For example, on the third day (v. 9) God did not "create" the waters. They were already "created"; hence He merely "gathered them together." Then the dry land (the earth) "appeared." So the earth was there already, having been "created" as in v. 1. Also on the fourth day God did not "create" the sun, He "made" it in a condition to give light and heat to the earth and "set it" in its true position (v. 16 and 17).

Now I contend that a natural reading of the Bible shows that there must have been some catastrophe after the "Creation" mentioned in v. 1 for the three following reasons:—

First, we cannot imagine that the Almighty, all of whose works are perfect, could or would create the earth in conditions described in v. 2.

But secondly, we are not left to conjecture, for in Isa. xlv, 18, God Himself declares that He did not "create" the earth in vain—the original word is exactly the same as that used in Gen. i, 2, "waste"!

Thirdly, in Gen. i, 2, where we read the earth "was" without form and void, it should read: the earth "became" or "had become"; it is exactly the same word as is translated in Gen. xix, 26, where we read: Lot's wife "became" a pillar of salt; she was not originally so, but became so at the destruction of Sodom. So the earth was not originally "created" waste and void, but evidently "became" so, owing to some great catastrophe. Hence after v. 2, the first chapter of Genesis does not describe the "creation" of the earth at all, but its reconstitution for the dwelling-place of man.

Then there is that remarkable expression in Gen. ii, 3: "the work which God created to make" (which is the true reading) and which I submit can only mean that the Almighty, in creating the earth as recorded in Gen. i, 1, foresaw that a great calamity would occur, and that it would be necessary for Him to reconstruct it and thus "make" it for His original purpose as the dwelling-place for man. And while this somewhat strange expression "created to make" seems to fit in exactly with the views I have here ventured to express, it is difficult to imagine what else they can mean.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Mr. THOMAS FITZGERALD wrote: Commander Wiseman's helpful paper is valuable for, among other reasons, the emphasis placed on the necessity of determining the true meaning of the "days" in the first chapter of Genesis. Much has been written in the past on this subject, yet the question remains, "What is the true meaning of the words used by Moses in his narrative?"

While it has been well said that "*revealed* truth and *discovered* truth either agree, or at least run parallel, in their never-opposing course,"\* we affirm that the right understanding of Genesis was never dependent upon the discoveries of Science. Whatever man may discover by his own research is never a subject of revelation.

We are often reminded that "it is never safe to neglect any source of information." The wise Biblical student will welcome all the facts which scientists have established, by precise observation and verification in their studies of *phenomena*, and we would not, for one moment, make the Bible a *substitute* for such researches. The *origin* of all things is another matter, and we claim the right to expect that the true scientist will not neglect the narrative in Genesis, which claims to be a revelation of the origin of the universe.

There is a growing tendency among a certain class of scientists to utterly ignore the Mosaic record. Sir Arthur Keith is the protagonist of this school. A few years ago, writing on the subject of man's origin, he stated: "Why is it that medical men, particularly those who are responsible for laying their profession upon a solid

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\* *V.I. Trans.*, vol. viii, p. 82.

basis of fact, no longer temporise with Genesis, but have scrapped this book, even as an allegory ? ”\*

I am in entire agreement with Commander Wiseman when he says that the Bible owes nothing whatever to the Mesopotamian creation tablets. One remarkable feature of the Mosaic account is that, of all the Cosmogonies of ancient times, the Genesis narrative is the only one which survives.

No *proved discovery* of Science, so far, has been found to disagree with the accuracy of Gen. i, 1, which I hold, with many others, is a finished, comprehensive statement of what took place “in the beginning” (whenever that was), when God commenced His creative acts. The whole completed universe (the heavens and the earth) was then brought into existence. By what process and whether by stages we are not told. All those vast ages of the past are hidden in that first verse, which can only be understood by faith (Heb. xi, 3, R.V. Marg.). What follows is presented as *evidence* and must be received as historically true.

How precise and accurate is the statement of verse 2, “And the earth was without form and void” ! Why do interpreters persist in neglecting the import of the fact that the *earth* only is mentioned in that verse, not its *origin* (that is mentioned in the first verse), but its *condition*. My own view is that the Hebrew idiom may be better expressed in English thus—“but the earth was (what it had become) void and waste.” This translation will stand all tests whether philological, grammatical, exegetical or geological. The Bible itself is its best commentary, and in the first chapter of Genesis this use and meaning of the Hebrew idiom is fully established. The Rev. I. A. McCaul (lecturer in Hebrew at King’s College, London), writing on this point, said : “In lo, ‘darkness *was* upon the face of the waters’ ; ‘God saw the light that it *was* good,’ the italics indicate the absence of the copula in Hebrew. But in the words ‘and the earth was without form,’ the absence of italics shows that there is a word in the Hebrew in this case for ‘was’ and so there is, and it ought to have been translated ‘had become’ (Greek, *egeneto*), ‘and the earth had become without form and void.’ In my own mind there is no doubt whatever that this is the meaning of the Hebrew words. But if so, surely it affects the preceding verse, and

\* *The Evening Standard*, November 4th, 1927.

*necessitates* an interval of time being interposed between the action of the first and second verses."\* Dr. E. B. Pusey, Regius Professor of Hebrew, Oxford, agrees with this translation and interpretation.†

The author of the paper seeks to explain the "days" by referring (p. 104) to the fact that the original Babylonian record was written on six tablets on six days, and suggests as a solution of the problem of the numbering of the days in Gen. i, that the finishing of the works of creation is not in view, but that, according to "Babylonian literary usage," what was "finished" was the recording of the narrative. "The numbering of the days," says the author, "would indicate that the original record was written on six tablets on six days."

Is there any necessity to call in the aid of the Babylonian tablets for a right understanding of the Mosaic narrative? I think not, and here again we may be assured that the Bible itself is its best commentary. Wherever the numeral is applied to the word "day" throughout the Scriptures, the natural day is meant. The use of the expression "evening and morning" connotes the natural day without exception, and nowhere in Scripture can we trace the term "evening and morning," when in association, as signifying a vast, indeterminate period of time. A notable example of the numeral, associated with the term in the plural, "evenings and mornings," is found in Daniel, "and he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings" (Dan. viii, 14, R.V.). For confirmation of this rendering see *V.I. Trans.*, vol. lxi, pp. 56, 57, also *Dr. Lange's Commentary on Daniel*, translated by Dr. Jame Strong, p. 178.

It is as true to-day as when Sir Wm. Dawson wrote in 1888,‡ that one of the most difficult problems in this history (Gen. i) is "the meaning of the word *day*, and the length of the days of creation," and the issue will remain undecided until the simple, plain narrative of Genesis is accepted as a record of historical facts.

Dr. R. E. D. CLARK wrote: Wing-Commander Wiseman's view of the seven days of Genesis is of great interest. As, however, it is not consistent with the English version of the Old Testament,

\* *V.I. Trans.*, vol. ix, p. 129.

† *Daniel the Prophet*. Third Ed., p. xix.

‡ *The Origin of the World*. Fifth Ed., p. 123.

it would be interesting to hear how he deals with the apparently explicit statement of Ex. xx, 11, "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is."

Later, for some unknown reason, the rotation of the earth may have been speeded up.

Lt.-Col. L. M. DAVIES, M.A., F.G.S., F.R.S.E., F.R.A.I., wrote : I welcome the author's demonstration of the fact that the creation story in Genesis owes nothing to Babylonian legends. He has done good service in making this so clear.

As regards the interpretation of the "Six Days," however, I feel less in accord. What exactly does the author hold? His remarks on p. 104 seem to imply that the division into Six Days only means that the creation record was written on six tablets on six successive days; but does this really satisfy himself? What about the first light, which we are told *constituted the First Day*? Was this, or was this not, the first actual light in the creation process, as the story indicates? If it was, it had nothing to do with the light of some long subsequent day on which the first tablet was written; and the author's theory becomes untenable. But if, as the author seems to suggest, it was not the first actual light, but the light of the day when the first tablet was written, then the First Day is annihilated as an account of actual creation, since it only mentions that light. Thus, there would only be *five creation tablets* if the Six Days were narration ones and not creation ones.

What, too, is gained by the author's theory? He realises that the geological record cannot be really squared with the story of the Six Days—so what do his tablets record? I think he would do far better to stand by the original belief of the Church, that those Days were literal ones of actual creative processes.

I do not agree that "the first two verses are evidently a superscription" (p. 99). How could they be, when the earth of verse 2 is in a *tohu va bohu* condition obviously *antecedent* to the operations of the Six Days, and the "darkness" over it has not yet been designated "Night" in contradistinction with "Day"? That the creation of heavens and earth mentioned in the first verse is PRIOR to the Six Days has been recognised by Christians from the earliest days. This was pointed out by Dr. Molloy in his book entitled

*Geology and Revelation.* As Molloy showed, the existence of a GAP of wholly unknown duration between verses 1 and 3 of Genesis was emphasised, among early Christians, by St. Basil, St. Ambrose and St. Chrysostom. They were followed during the Middle Ages by the Venerable Bede, Peter Lombard, Hugo of Saint Victor, St. Thomas, Perrerus and Petavius. Thus, at least fourteen centuries before geology was even heard of as a science, it was clear to commentators that a wholly unlimited interval existed between the original creation "in the beginning," and the commencement of the First Day's work. "How long that interval may have lasted," says Petavius, "it is absolutely impossible to conjecture" (*De Opificio Sex Dierum*); and Perrerus declared that it could only be made known by a special revelation (*Comment. in Genes.*).

All that men like Chalmers did, when the broad facts of geology became known, was to point out that the geological ages might go into that gap. As a geologist I agree, and have tried to deal with objections to that view in my book *The Bible and Modern Science*. To my mind there are no valid objections.

I agree with the author's statements that the Days of Genesis were obviously meant to be taken literally, and I see no reason for doubting that they were days of actual work. We are told that "in Six Days God *made*"; not that "in Six Days God recorded the making." I cannot understand why the author seems to find it difficult to believe that God created fully-grown grass and trees (p. 100); and I would remind him how Satan tempted our Lord (Who obviously had the power) to turn stones instantly into bread—*i.e.*, into not only the fully *matured* but also the *cooked* products of wheat. For why, if God can literally create, should He not as easily create mature as immature organisms? Adam and Eve themselves were not created as infants, but as adults.

I repeat, however, that although I cannot abandon the literal Days of *creation* for literal Days of *narration*, I much appreciate the author's valuable demonstration of the unique character of the Genesis narrative, and the impossibility of regarding it as owing anything to Babylonian myths. For his timely exposition of this fact, which occupies the greater part of his paper, the author deserves the gratitude of all lovers of Scripture.

Major H. B. CLARKE (late R.E.) wrote : It has always appeared to me that as Scripture cannot contradict itself any solution of a difficulty which makes it do so must fail, whatever other conditions it fulfils.

Therefore Wing-Commander Wiseman's suggestion that "the evening and morning" were one, two, three, up to six days, is only a method of saying that here the record finished, or that they were anything but literal days, which God did create or make the creatures of that period appears to me to be impossible. Exodus xx, 11, expressly states that in six days God did do this, and the fact that a literal day, the Sabbath, is therefore to be observed makes it clear to me that literal days of 24 hours are meant. The fact of "evening and morning" being mentioned appears to me to make the "periods" idea equally impossible. It is for these reasons, therefore, that I, personally, hold the catastrophic theory, which as the first speaker said, also accounts for other statements otherwise unintelligible. I am neither a Hebrew scholar nor an archæologist, to my regret, but await further light on the subject.

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY.

It will be seen that not a small part of the discussion is based on the old assumption that the repeated phrase "and evening came and morning came day one" etc., refers to the period occupied by God in creation and is only mainly concerned with upholding one or other of the two opposing views now prevailing on this subject. On the one side there are those who insist that the word "day" implies a "great period of time," and those (by far the larger number) who maintain that Scripture requires that creation occupied only six ordinary days. As both these views have been discussed in my paper, I do not propose to repeat the reasons why I am unable to accept either of them. It must be quite apparent to both schools of thought that their interpretation of the "six days" contradict each other. I submit that the new explanation accords with all the facts of Scripture, and agrees with the main conclusions of both sides because the days are shown to be literal days of revealing and recording, not days occupied by God in acts and processes of creation. How long the latter occupied we are not told.

So far as I am aware, the only new suggestion is that contained in Dr. Clark's communication, but as this is not an archæological problem, I must leave it to the astronomers. However, it seems to me that his suggestion is open to the obvious objection already cited in my paper, that an enormously long period of light and darkness would make animal and vegetable life as we know it impossible.

Mr. Jose's short summary of my views is correct, except that I should prefer to state them in this way—The six times repeated phrase "and there was evening and there was morning day . . ." refer, not to any act or process of creation, but to six literal days of revelation of the story of creation. After the six days this revelation ceased, therefore the seventh day was "hallowed" by God. The statement in Genesis ii, 1, "And the heaven and the earth (*i.e.*, the subject-matter of the preceding record) were finished," is similar to that which may be found on the last of a series of Babylonian tablets, where it simply indicates that the last or sixth tablet completes the record concerning the subject stated. There are, therefore, no time limits whatever in the Genesis record of creation, consequently no necessity to resort to the "gap and re-creation theory," or to divide the record up into six geological ages.

In his supplementary question, Mr. Jose requests an interpretation of Exodus xx, 11, and as several questioners cite this verse, I am glad of this opportunity of referring to it because I severely limited my paper to the Genesis narrative, seeing that an adequate discussion of this verse should include some account of the differing or complementary reason given in Deut. v, 14 and 15 (where the commandment is repeated), for observing the Sabbath. The words in Exodus xx, 11, with which we are concerned are *בְּשֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה*, which the A.V. translates "For *in* six days the Lord made." First we note that the word *in* forms no part of the Hebrew text. It is next necessary to ascertain the limits of the meaning of the word *עָשָׂה* "asah," translated "made." It is an exceedingly common word, and very different to the Hebrew word *בָּרָא* "to create." Asah is translated "do" or "did" over 1,560 times and "make" 670 times. The dominant meaning, therefore, is to indicate something done; the pret.: 3rd person, expresses a completed state, a finished action. The wideness of its meaning may be seen, for instance, in Genesis i, 11 and 12, where

it is twice translated "yielding." It is frequently translated "thou hast shewed" as may be seen in Genesis xix, 19; xxiv, 14; xxxii, 10 (in Heb. v, 11); Exodus xl, 14; Numb. xiv, 11; Judges i, 24; II Sam. ii, 5; I Kings xvi, 27, etc. Had it been translated in precisely the same way here (as it probably would have been had the A.V. translators possessed the key to the significance of the six days of Genesis i), it would have read "For six days the Lord shewed heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested (desisted or ceased) the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it." I submit that to translate the word "asah" in a manner similar to that repeatedly given elsewhere is far more legitimate than to make "evening and morning" a long geological period or to make "was" (of Genesis i, 2) mean "had become" or "became," or to suggest that "asah" means *recreation*.

I hope the foregoing is the light which Major Clarke is awaiting. He will see that I agree with him about the days of Exodus xx, 11, being literal days. This seems evident from Genesis ii, 3, where the seventh day of cessation is in the preterite: expressing a completed action—not a rest which still continues. Although he holds the view that re-creation took six days of twenty-four hours each, I am glad to note that he candidly refers to it as the "*catastrophic theory*."

I regret that General Baker-Brown should have thought that I intended to discuss Genesis in a general way. When the Council asked me to read a paper, and later requested the title which I proposed for it, I had not determined the precise matter which I should bring before the Institute. I gave, therefore, a general title, "Genesis and Archæology." Some weeks before the paper was printed, I decided that my subject should be the meaning of the "six days." Of course, this paper was in the hands of the Institute before the paper on Genesis i and ii was read a fortnight previously. It will be observed that I am unable to accept the "six literal day" or "long geological period" theories referred to in that paper, but have submitted for your consideration an entirely new reason for taking another view of this problem.

General Baker-Brown cites three sciences with which any interpretation should conform. I agree, provided we conform only to the established facts, and not the conjectures of these sciences. For we cannot put his final statements under the heading on archæology, even among the conjectures. Babylon, as all archæologists

know, is for Iraq, not a very ancient city. Archæology has revealed a very high state of civilisation long before Babylon was built.

I agree with him generally in his remarks under the heading of geology; that the formation of land, its drying after the seas had receded, and the appearance of vegetation and of life upon it, probably required "great periods of time." But other speakers and written communications insist on six literal days for this process.

It should, I think, be stated that the paper was not written for the "man in the street," but for the Victoria Institute, and great care has, therefore, been taken to base its statements on the meaning of the Hebrew text, and not on any English translation.

I agree with the Rev. Arthur Payne that "and there was evening," etc., must refer to a normal day, but I cannot agree that it refers to periods in which God *recreated* the earth and all life on it. I have endeavoured to show that the phrase refers to the period occupied in revealing the story. It is surely significant that the Bible never speaks of a past *recreation* of the earth.

Mr. Edwards' use of the word "finis" is a good illustration. The statement in Genesis i has precisely this meaning on ancient tablets, for it indicates the completion of the *record*.

Mr. Bryning's explanation seems to be a slight variation of the "long period theory," for there were six such "evenings and mornings." Exodus xx, 11, implies that they were literal days, and the Hebrews commenced their day in the evening. Either the evenings and mornings were immense periods of time, or ordinary days, and his theory does not seem to help. It can scarcely be said that the six-fold repetition of the phrase merely means that while it was evening at one part of the earth it was morning at another.

Mrs. Maunder will observe that my references to the "creation" tablets were limited to citing those lines which most closely resemble Genesis i. Unfortunately, only about 22 lines of Tablet V have been discovered. I thank her for her valuable remarks on the probable date of the references to NABIRU on this tablet. The colophon of K3567 shows that this fragment was written in the days of Asurbanipal (668-626 B.C.). But archæologists are agreed that the general contents of the Assyrian tablets were copied from far older tablets. As I have stated in my paper, the Assyrian scribes explicitly say this. With regard to the length of the "day," the standpoint for observation is surely in the region of the Tigris and

Euphrates, as is stated in Genesis ii, and in that country there is quite a normal "evening and morning."

I understand that Mr. Collett holds the "six, twenty-four-hour day theory," but does this explain the evidence of animal and vegetable life in various strata more than one day before the creation of Adam? Those who hold this theory are willing to give millions of years if necessary for Genesis i, 1-2, but insist on six literal days for vv. 3-31, although in the latter we have the first reference to life of any kind.

Colonel Davies would not, I feel sure, wish to press the views held by Basil, Ambrose, etc. It must have been as difficult for them as for us to understand why God *did* (not that He could, I agree that He could) create the earth in six ordinary days. Hence the gap theory became necessary in their day in order to surmount the difficulty.

It is agreed that the commandment "Let there be light" has no reference to the first day of the *revelation* of the story of creation; but I am unable to follow his subsequent reasoning about five days. It should be noted that the record carefully avoids the use of the word "light" in connection with the six times repeated phrase. The more limited words "evening and morning" are used.

With regard to paragraph 3 of his communication, I hope that we gain truth by this investigation. Surely, Colonel Davies does not claim that the "gap" theory was the original belief of the Church!

I think we are in agreement that the first two verses are a summarised description preceding vv. 3-31; all that he has written seems to show this. If I am asked, *could* God create fully-matured trees with fruit, etc., in a day? I answer "Yes"; but this is not our problem, it is, *did* God? Colonel Davies' theory necessitates that God did, but I submit that this is entirely contrary to the express statements in Genesis ii, 5, where we read "And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before *it grew*." Moreover, it can scarcely be claimed to be God's general way of working as revealed in the Bible.

I fully agree with Mr. Fitzgerald that Genesis i was not the product of man's thinking, but of God's revelation. I have endeavoured to stress this, yet it is very necessary to call in ancient literary methods in order to explain Genesis i, for, as I have shown in my *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis*, these records were written long

before the days of Moses. I endorse his final statement that Genesis i must be taken literally, but remind him that Sir William Dawson accepted the "long geological period theory," while he takes the "six ordinary day" view. Is not this because neither contending side has taken the account literally, but each has investigated it as if it were a modern when actually it is an ancient literary production.

May I say that if, after full investigation, this new interpretation of the "significance of the six days" is upheld, then, as Mr. Jose stated in the discussion, it will have been "one of the most momentous gatherings in the history of the Victoria Institute." For it shows that the record is a direct revelation from God in six days, and is so recorded. Moreover, it reconciles the contending interpreters, for it reveals that while the days were literal, they do not refer to the time occupied by the Creator in creating, but in revealing and recording, and that this recording on six tablets was done in earliest times.