

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_jtvi-01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php)

JOURNAL OF  
THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF  
The Victoria Institute,  
OR,  
Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

---

EDITED BY THE SECRETARY.

---

VOL. XXXVIII.



LONDON :

(Published by the Institute, 8, Adelphi Terrace, Charing Cross, W.C.)

---

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.  
1906.

## ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.\*

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR H. L. GEARY, K.C.B., V.P., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

ELECTION :—Sidney Collett, Esq., 191, Belsize Road, was elected Associate.

The following paper was then read by Rev. Canon GIRDLESTONE, in the absence of the Author :—

*THE BEARING OF RECENT ORIENTAL DISCOVERIES ON OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.* *Being the second in order of merit of the "Gunning Prize Essays."* By Rev. ANDREW CRAIG ROBINSON, M.A.

THE most serious assaults that are made in the present day on the genuine character of the Old Testament proceed for the most part from the camp of the Higher Critics, whose theories seem to the present writer inconsistent with the view that the Old Testament is an honest history of the people of Israel—not to say a record inspired by the Spirit of God.

Eminent archæologists—Professor Sayce and others—emphatically declare that recent Oriental discoveries entirely discredit the critical theories. Professor Sayce writes in one of his latest works—*Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies* (1904)—as follows :—

“The answer of archæology to the theories of modern *criticism* is complete ; the Law preceded the prophets, and did not follow them.” p. 83.

And

“In the *critical* theory of the Biblical narrative archæology thus compels us to see only a Philological mirage.” p. 53. (The italics are mine.)

---

\* Monday, March 5th, 1906.

Dr. Driver, on the other hand, had written in the latest edition (1897) of his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* :—

“The attempt to refute the conclusions of criticism by means of archæology has signally failed.” Preface, p. xviii.

In the following essay the bearing of recent oriental discoveries on certain specially controverted points will be more particularly discussed.

#### THE CUNEIFORM SYSTEM OF WRITING.

The cuneiform system of writing, discovered and interpreted in recent times, goes back, as is well known, to a period of remote antiquity ; to a period, in fact, more than 4,000 years before the Christian era. It was employed by the Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, and other nations of Western Asia ; and there is good reason to believe that it was used for many centuries in Canaan. Throughout these countries it seems to have formed a common medium of intercourse.

But after having thus endured for many thousand years as a common medium for the intercourse of men—a thing most passing strange occurred. Suddenly—following on the conquest of the Persian empire by Alexander in 333 B.C.—the knowledge of the cuneiform characters, of which this system of writing was composed, seems in the most mysterious fashion—without warning—neglected—unnoticed—to have simply passed away—fading completely from the minds of men—as utterly forgotten as if it never had been known.

In a memoir communicated to the Royal Asiatic Society in 1846 by Major Rawlinson—as he was then—the famous decipherer of the great Behistun Inscription of Darius, Rawlinson remarks that the Persian cuneiform character was no doubt currently understood at the period of the Greek invasion, but there is no monument that can be assigned to a later date than Artaxerxes Ochus. “It may be inferred, therefore”—he went on to say—“that the Persian cuneiform writing expired with the rule of the Achæmenian kings, and that the knowledge even of the character was altogether lost before the restoration of Magism by Ardisher the son of Babek.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1846), vol. x, part 1, p. 51.

No doubt the spread throughout Western Asia of Greek ideas following on the conquests of Alexander may be said to have been the immediate cause of this strange mysterious, fading

away of all knowledge of a form of writing which had prevailed throughout so many ages. Yet it does seem strange that the learned of that time should have allowed a script, in which were enshrined so many priceless historical records, and so many literary treasures of Western Asia, to die out of all knowledge of men. But so it was. And may we not in all this feel that there was something of the avenging hand of Almighty God, who not only caused to be reduced to ruinous heaps the proud cities of Nineveh and Babylon, which had crushed and carried away His chosen people into captivity, but also caused the very script, in which in the days of pride and splendour their kings had inscribed their boastful vauntings, to be buried in oblivion from the memory of men.

The cuneiform system of writing, which thus faded out of the knowledge of the world, remained in its mysterious sleep for nearly 2,000 years. It is unnecessary to enter here into the well-known story of how, by the ingenuity, learning, and labours of Grotefend, and many others—but above all, of Rawlinson—the secret of the cuneiform was discovered—the great enigma solved—and a forgotten world restored once more to the domain of history. Simultaneously, too, with the secret of the cuneiform, the mystery of the hieroglyphics of Egypt was revealed, and thus there was disclosed the ancient history of Egypt's glorious days, and all the high and immemorial civilisation of that strange land.

From both these sources wonderful light has been shed on Old Testament history.

#### THE CONNECTION OF ISRAEL WITH BABYLONIA IN THE EARLY TIMES.

##### *Abraham.*

The Old Testament in simple fashion narrates how the patriarch Abraham lived originally in Babylonia, in Ur of the Chaldees—identified with the present Mugheir—and from thence in obedience, as it would seem, to a Divine call, removed with his father to Haran. His original residence in Ur of the Chaldees is simply mentioned as a fact, no particular point being made of it one way or another; and if he had happened to be born in Haran his call and setting forth at the command of God to wander in the promised land of Canaan would have had just the same significance. The critics appear for some reason anxious to make out that any early connection which the

Israelites may have had with Mesopotamia was not with Ur of the Chaldees; yet it is hard to imagine what motive there could be for making the place of Abraham's birth Ur of the Chaldees, unless in point of fact in Ur of the Chaldees he was born.

A very considerable number of the critics, however, deny that Abraham was a real person at all; they hold, or assert, that his life as we have it in the Old Testament is an imaginative fiction of later times, an edifying story composed to reflect back and embody in the concrete person of an individual the religious ideas of a later age. Thus Wellhausen says of Abraham, that we may not regard him

“as an historical person; he might with more likelihood be regarded as a free creation of unconscious art.” *Prolegomena*, p. 320.

This is more or less the general attitude of the critics. Dr. Driver indeed seems to allow that there may have been *some* historical basis for the narratives of the patriarchs. He writes:—

“It is highly probable that the critics who doubt the presence of any historical basis for the narratives of the patriarchs are ultra-sceptical.” *Authority and Archaeology*, p. 150.

Now since Wellhausen believes that Abraham was the fictitious creation of a later time, it seems to have puzzled him to conceive why he should be represented as having belonged originally to Babylonia:—

“What the reasons were for making Babylon Abraham's point of departure we need not now consider.” *Prolegomena*, p. 313.”

But like so many of the rest of the critics he does not believe that Ur Casdim belongs to the original form of the tradition.

It is no wonder that Wellhausen should be at a loss to explain “what the reasons were for making Babylon Abraham's point of departure;”

for on the supposition that the story of the life of Abraham was an *artificial* one, what reason could there be for making it start in Babylonia? why, from such a point of view, should the early chapters of Genesis be clad, as it were, in a “Babylonish garment”? There seems to be no other reasonable explanation of why the narrative of Abraham's life begins in Babylonia but one, and that is, that his history is a *real* one, and that, in point of fact, it *was* from Babylonia that Abraham came.

His very name Abram seems to have come from Babylonia. No other Hebrew is recorded in the Bible as having borne that name, but in a tablet of the reign of Abil-Sin, the fourth king

of the dynasty of Babylon (about 1950 B.C., the period of Abraham) the name occurs in the form *Abe-ramu*. Also, at a much later period, in the Assyrian Eponym canon, the name *Ab-ramu* or *Abu-ramu* = "honoured father," is found as that of an official who gave his name to the year 677 B.C. And not only does the name of Abram himself thus occur as we have seen in Babylonia in a tablet written at about the time in which his life is placed, but the names of his grandson and great-grandson are also found amongst the West Semitic names in Babylon at about the same period. *Ya'kub* = Jacob, with its longer form *Ya'kub-ili* = Jacob-el; *Sar-ili* probably = Prince of God and the same as Israel; *Ya'sup* = Joseph, and its longer form *Ya'sup-ili* = Joseph-el.

Would a writer in the later times, composing an artificial history of the founders of the Hebrew nation, be likely to go for their illustrious names to alien Bahylon?

#### THE INCIDENT OF SARAI AND HAGAR.

There is one very curious point which has only just come to light, which constitutes a very striking piece of evidence for the genuine character of the narrative in Genesis in which Abraham is represented as having come from Babylonia. The incident related in the 16th of Genesis where Sarai, because she has no children, gives her Egyptian maid, Hagar, to Abram as his wife, has always, perhaps, appeared to our minds a strange and unnatural thing for Sarai to have done. Yet it was repeated by Rachel, who, because she had no children, gave her maid Bilhah to Jacob as his concubine, and by Leah, who because she considered she had not enough of children, gave Jacob her maid Zilpah. And then after that we have no instance in the Old Testament of any other wife doing the same thing.

This circumstance, then, stamps the narrative in Genesis with a peculiar mark which differentiates it from the succeeding portion of the Old Testament. What is the meaning of Sarai, Rachel and Leah acting as they did? The answer is that what they did was a *Babylonian custom*. Sarai was married in Ur of the Chaldees, in the very heart of Babylonia; and Rachel and Leah came from Haran in Mesopotamia, a place steeped in Babylonian customs and ideas. Dr. Pinches in the first edition of his work, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Historical Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, in discussing certain Babylonian marriage agreements made in a case in

which a man was taking two wives, one of whom was to hold an inferior position to the other, wrote as follows:—

“In the matter of Sarai, Abraham’s wife, giving her handmaid Hagar to Abraham as a second, or inferior wife, because she had no children herself, it is not improbable that we have a record of what was a common custom at the time.” p. 236. (The italics are mine.)

The first edition of Dr. Pinches’ book came out in 1902, and in January of that very year that wonderful document of the days of Amraphel, King of Shinar, known as the Code of King Ḥammurabi was discovered; it was published in the autumn of the same year. And the surmise of Dr. Pinches that what Sarai, Rachel and Leah are recorded to have done “was a common custom of the time” was shown to be perfectly correct. When the second edition of his work came out in 1903 Dr. Pinches was able in the appendix to publish the text of the Code of Ḥammurabi, that great king who reigned over Babylonia in the days of Abraham.

And the Code contains the following enactments:—

(144.) “If a man has married a wife, and *that wife has given a maid-servant to her husband, etc.*

(146.) “If a man has married a wife and she has given a maid-servant to her husband, and (the maid-servant) has borne children, (if afterwards that maid-servant make herself equal with her mistress as she has borne children, her mistress shall not sell her for silver; she shall place a mark upon her, and count her with the maid-servants.”

“has given a maid-servant to her husband.” (The Code.)

“Sarai . . . took Hagar her maid and gave her to her husband Abraham to be his wife.” (Genesis.)

What a close parallel!

And again,

“afterwards that maid-servant make herself equal with her mistress as she has borne children.” (The Code.)

“and when she saw that she had conceived her mistress was despised in her eyes.” (Genesis.)

In his notes on these enactments Dr. Pinches writes,

“Reference has already been made . . . to the contracts of the period of Ḥammurabi’s Dynasty, which illustrate the matter of Sarah giving Hagar to Abraham because she herself was childless (Gen. xvi, 1, 2). That this was the custom in Babylonia is now confirmed by law 144.” *Op. cit.*, p. 524.

He goes on to say:—

“Hagar despising her mistress (Gen. xvi, 4) is illustrated by law 146, which allows the mistress to reduce her to the position of a slave again, which was agreed to by the patriarch, the result being that Hagar fled.”

One has been sometimes inclined to feel that Abraham acted rather unkindly by Hagar when he said to Sarai, after her maid had despised her, “Behold, thy maid is in thine hand, do to her as it pleaseth thee,” but we can see now that he was only conceding to Sarai what was her absolute right by Babylonian law, under this section of the code of Hammurabi.

But when on a later occasion at the feast when Isaac was weaned Sarah saw Ishmael mocking, and demanded that the bond-woman and her son should be cast out, Abraham would seem to have demurred, and naturally so; for Ishmael was then, no doubt, a fine young lad, Abraham’s first-born son, and we read, “the thing was very grievous in Abraham’s sight because of his son.” Nevertheless in obedience to the command of God he sent Hagar and Ishmael away.

The curious light thrown on this incident in the history of Abraham by these two enactments of the code of Hammurabi, from which it is evident that every step in the proceedings was ruled by Babylonian custom and law, would seem to be powerful evidence of the genuine character of the history. What legend-spinner of the later age—in which this custom seems to have been unknown in Israel—would think of fettering his free conceptions by musty codes of Babylonian law?

#### GENESIS XIV.

##### *The names of the four kings.*

In connection with the Babylonian tone of the early chapters of Genesis the fourteenth chapter is of very great interest and importance. Shining as it were through the whole incident of Hagar which we have been considering, we seem to see the consciousness which Abraham had of the code of Hammurabi; but in the fourteenth chapter he seems to come almost into personal contact with King Hammurabi—Amraphel—himself.

Before the archæological discoveries of recent years this most remarkable chapter of Genesis, with its stately names of ancient kings, and all its simple antique narrative, stood quite alone, and unsupported by any evidence outside the Bible.

But in recent years the four kings from Mesopotamia have been identified, with more or less certainty, with kings whose

names have been deciphered in the cuneiform inscriptions. Amraphel, King of Shinar (the Bible name for Babylonia), has been identified with the well-known Hammurabi, one of the most notable rulers of Babylonia, who reigned for the lengthened period of forty-three years, and put an end to the dominant power of Elam. He is described in one of his inscriptions as King of Martu or the West-land, meaning in the language of the cuneiform records, Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine. Arioch, King of Ellasar, was long ago identified by the late Mr. George Smith with Eri-Aku, King of Larsa, Nippur, and Ur. Of these two kings, Dr. Pinches writes:—

“The identification of Eri-Aku with the Arioch of Genesis xiv, and Hammurabi, or Ammurapi, with the Amraphel of the same book, can hardly admit of a doubt.” *Op. cit.*, p. 218.

The third king, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, is identified with great probability with Kudur-lahgumal, styled in an inscription king of the land of Elam, who at one time invaded Babylonia, plundered its cities and temples, and exercised sovereignty in Babylonia itself. Tidal, king of nations—of Goyim, the Revised Version translates it—is with probability identified with Tudhula or Tidal, son of Gazza, mentioned in the same inscriptions. Goyim is supposed to be the same as Gutium—corresponding to the eastern part of Kurdistan.

#### *Opinions of various Critics.*

From what has been revealed by the cuneiform inscriptions in reference to these kings, it would appear that those critics who denied their historical character were a little too hasty in their scepticism. Dr. Driver, indeed, in a contribution of his to a comparatively recent work, *Authority and Archaeology*, in which he vigorously strives to minimise the bearing of these identifications of the kings on the general veracity of the narrative, goes on to state:—

“The historical character of the four kings themselves has never been seriously questioned.” *Authority and Archaeology* (1899), p. 45.

It seems very difficult to understand how Dr. Driver could make this statement in face of the opinions which were openly expressed as to the historical—or, rather, the unhistorical—character of the four Mesopotamian kings by well-known critics writing some years ago.

Hitzig, for instance, professor of theology in Heidelberg, writing in 1869, expressed the brilliant idea that the expedition of Chedorlaomer was merely an adumbration thrown back

into past times of the expedition of Sennacherib (2 Kings xviii, 13), each being an expedition of an *Eastern* king to put down a revolt undertaken in a *fourteenth* year. This fourteenth chapter of Genesis was, according to his idea, composed from the *fourteenth year of Hezekiah*. *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Leipzig, 1869), p. 45.

Strange that Dr. Driver should have written as he did in *The Guardian*, March 11th, 1896:—

“The difficulties which some Critics have found in Gen. xiv, consist not in the names mentioned in v, 1, *which no critic so far as I am aware, has ever insisted are unhistorical.*” (The italics are mine.)

Especially as the passage in Hitzig is referred to by Dillmann in his discussion of this very chapter. Dillmann, *Genesis* (1897), vol. ii, p. 32, note.

Nöldeke,\* writing in the same year, was incredulous as to an Elamite king having any such far-fetched dominion. The events related could just as well have happened in the year 4000 as 2000; the relater avoided intentionally the name of the familiar rulers of the world, the Assyrians; he sought above all for remote names and regions. The names of the kings might have been actually furnished to him, though in quite another connection. But however that might be, at the most we might assume that he had begun with a few true names intermingled with false or artificial ones, but by the pretence of authenticity contained in this, Nöldeke said, he was as little deceived as by the proper names and dates in the Book of Esther.

Such was the tone in which these critics wrote in the year 1869. And Wellhausen writing 20 years later—in 1889—fully endorsed the view of Nöldeke, and was equally sceptical as to the historical character of these four kings. He says—

“Nöldeke’s criticism (of Gen. xiv) remains unshaken and unanswerable; that four kings from the Persian Gulf should ‘in the time of Abraham’ have made an incursion into the Sinaitic Peninsula; that they should have attacked five kinglets on the Dead Sea littoral, and have carried them off prisoners . . . all these incidents are *sheer impossibilities* which gain nothing in credibility from the fact that they are placed in a world which had passed away.” *Die composition des Hexateuchs*, pp. 310, 312. (The italics are mine.)

Zimmern, on the other hand, candidly confesses that earlier views held on the subject must be given up. He writes—

---

\* *Untersuchungen zur Kritik des Alten Testaments* (1869), pp. 159, 160.

“In opposition to earlier views on the subject, it must be admitted that the situation presupposed in Gen. xiv—a campaign of an Elamite King with other princes in his train to Palestine as well as the prominent part taken . . . by Jerusalem and its king is, according to the knowledge we now possess regarding the earliest Palestine thoroughly historical and intelligible.”—*Der Theologische Rundschau*, May, 1898.

We have seen that Wellhausen emphatically denounced all the circumstances of this narrative from beginning to end as “sheer impossibilities.” Other critics, in face of these identifications of the kings, have felt themselves obliged to try to find some different way out of the dilemma.

As Professor Hommel says—

“They were obliged—since there seemed no other way out of the difficulty—to fall back again on the theory of a post-exilic forgery, and to suggest that, like a nineteenth century novelist in search of ‘local colour,’ the Jewish writer must have gone to the Babylonish priests for his antiquarian details.”

And he then quotes a passage to this effect from the 1st volume of Meyer’s *History of Antiquity* (Stuttgart, 1884). *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, pp. 161, 162.

Cornill (*Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1892, p. 73) writes in almost exactly the same style as Meyer. He calls the imaginary post-exilic Jew, who is conceived to have been the author of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, “*ein literarisch interessierter Jude*,” a literary designing Jew; and using even stronger language than Meyer, declares the chapter to have been dovetailed into the already concluded Pentateuch—a late addition in the style of Midrash and Chronicles, whose tendency in the episode of Melchizedek shows clear as day. To quote once more from Hommel—

“That the history of Abraham, whom they (the critics) regard as not merely a legendary, but rather a purely mythical being, should contain in its midst an ancient historical tradition was something which they could not accept; for in that case the whole theory according to which everything before the time of David is wrapped in the midst of legend would begin to totter on its base, and the account drawn up by Moses would begin to appear in another and far more authentic light. . . . In order therefore to save this master principle from ruin there was nothing for it but to adopt the above opportunist expedient, the inherent absurdity of which must, one would think, be patent to every unprejudiced observer.” *Op. cit.*, pp. 162, 163.

We see then the remarkable testimony to the truth of the general situation pre-supposed by Genesis xiv, which has been afforded by the cuneiform inscriptions, and we see also the desperate and opportunist expedients, expedients which beg the whole question, to which the critics have been obliged to resort in struggling to escape from the inference as to the genuine character of the entire narrative, which naturally results from that testimony.

Dr. Driver, however, has strongly asserted that--

“the bearing of the facts related about them (the four kings) in the inscriptions on the credibility of the narrative following is *nil*.”

That is to say, no doubt, that the rest of the incidents stand in exactly the same position in regard to credibility as they did before any evidence had been brought to bear upon the chapter from the cuneiform inscriptions. But such a statement as this would seem to be quite unreasonable. In ordinary cases where a witness whose evidence may have been doubted has been unexpectedly confirmed in a most important and leading point of his evidence by an entirely independent witness, whose testimony is practically conclusive on such a point, a strong inference is naturally raised that the evidence of the first witness on other points is also likely to be reliable. Such inference, of course, is not the same thing as if actual confirmatory evidence on all points were forthcoming, but still such an inference is usually held to be reasonable, and we may claim that in this particular case of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis it is fairly and very strongly raised.

The episode of Melchizedek, King of Salem (or Jerusalem) is considered by critics like Cornill to be one of the most undoubted marks of the late post-exilic composition of the chapter. And yet in view of the position which Jerusalem occupied as early as 1400 B.C. as testified by the Tel-el-Amarna tablets (in which it is described as a “capital” city) there would seem to be nothing more natural than that, in the midst of any important political events occurring in Southern Palestine, the King of Jerusalem should appear on the scene. The suspicion then with which the critics regard the introduction of the King of Jerusalem into the history, would seem to be uncalled for, and in the episode of Melchizedek the general situation presupposed in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis would appear once more to be in close accord with the political conditions indicated by the monuments.

*Uru-Salem the Cuneiform Name of Jerusalem.*

With regard to the name "Salem," it seems now to be practically agreed that it must undoubtedly be taken to mean Jerusalem. The name "Shalam" for Jerusalem occurs in the list of cities in Palestine which were captured in the reign of Rameses II. The names may still be read on the wall of the Ramesseum at Thebes; and the name "Salem" also occurs in a similar list of cities captured by Rameses III.

There is nothing, then, in the name Salem itself which would suggest a late date, but, on the contrary, the name would rather point to those ancient times when the cuneiform script of Babylonia prevailed in Palestine. The name Jerusalem in cuneiform writing is "Uru-Salem"—"Uru" meaning "city," and "Salem" "peace." "Salem" would seem a natural abbreviation from Uru-Salem, by the omission of the first element, city, and the retention of Salem, the distinctive proper name. Indeed, this whole narrative may possibly have once existed in the form of a record in cuneiform writing. We know that through centuries before Abraham the Babylonians were at various times the over-lords of Palestine, and we know from the Tel-el-Amarna tablets that in spite of the paramount influence which the Egyptians exercised in Palestine about 1400 B.C. as suzerain power, the hold which the cuneiform writing had on the people of Palestine was so strong and persistent that even official correspondence with Egypt was carried on by the writing and language of Babylonia. There is, therefore, we may claim, nothing unreasonable in the suggestion of Professor Hommel that possibly this fourteenth chapter of Genesis, which is in such close accord with the ancient history of Babylonia, and enshrines within it this peculiar name for the holy city (which seems an echo of "Uru-Salem") may have existed once in the form of a cuneiform record.

## THE BABYLONIAN CREATION TABLETS.

The critics give themselves a great deal of trouble in their endeavours to satisfy themselves as to the exact time when the Creation and Flood legends of the Babylonians became known in Israel. Their sceptical theories in regard to the patriarchs preclude them from adopting the simple idea that since, according to the Old Testament, Abraham came from Babylonia, he would naturally be acquainted with these stories, and his descendants, although not living in Babylonia, would be aware of them.

through him, and by reason of the powerful influence of Babylonian ideas prevailing in Palestine, and felt in Egypt also in the centuries preceding the Mosaic age. There is no need to trouble ourselves about the time of the conquest of Canaan, or the reign of King Ahaz, or the age of the exile, as the time when the people of Israel first became acquainted with these stories. It is enough if we believe that the great ancestor of the nation came from Babylonia—he and his descendants would naturally be familiar with all these things.

It would seem then that it is probably safe to assume that the writer of the sublime account of creation, which forms the poem of Genesis, was fully cognizant of the Babylonian story. On this the question next occurs—in what relation does this account in Genesis stand to that contained in the Babylonian Tablets?

To this question the answer given by Professor Sayce is, that the Biblical account deliberately contradicts the Babylonian.

After noticing the points of resemblance between the two accounts, Professor Sayce declares that between the Babylonian and the Biblical narratives there is a profound difference, a difference which indicates not only the priority of the Babylonian version, but also the deliberate purpose of the Hebrew writer to contravene and correct it. He writes:—

“The polytheism and mythology of the Babylonian theory are met with a stern negative; along with the materialism of the preface to the epic.” *Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*, p. 106.

This preface to the epic Professor Sayce translates:—

“In the beginning was the deep which begat the heavens and the earth, the chaos of Tiamat who was the mother of them all.”

Against this materialism of the Babylonian account, which represents a formless matter, independent of the Creator, generating itself, developing into the divine, and producing as by spontaneous generation the heavens and the earth, there stands, says Professor Sayce,

“on the forefront of Genesis the declaration that, ‘In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth.’ The earth was indeed a formless chaos resting on the dark waters of the primæval deep;—thus far the conceptions of the Babylonian cosmology are adopted;—but the chaos and the deep were not the first of things; God was already there, and His breath or spirit brooded over the abyss—while the letter of the Babylonian story has been followed the spirit of it has been changed. The Hebrew writer must have had the Babylonian version before him and

intentionally given an uncompromising denial to all in it that impugned the omnipotence and unity of God." p. 108.

Dr. Pinches sums up his discussion of the question as follows:—

"In the mind of the present writer there seems to be but one answer, and that is, that the two accounts are practically distinct, and are the production of people having entirely different ideas upon the subject, though they may have influenced each other in regard to certain points." *Op. cit.*, p. 48.

Professor Hommel's opinion, as expressed in *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, seems to be different. He seems to think that there was a monotheistic Babylonian version more ancient than the polytheistic—of which the latter was a corruption. This would seem in some degree to harmonise in general principle with the opinion of Delitzsch, that there were amongst "the immigrant North Semitic tribes religious ideas differing from the indigenous polytheistic mode of thought in Babylonia," but which "quickly succumbed before the polytheism" of the older inhabitants. *Babel und Bibel*, *Trans. by Johns* (1903), pp. 72, 133.

#### THE BABYLONIAN FLOOD TABLET.

##### *Its Place in Babylonian Literature.*

In Babylonian literature the story of the Flood occurs as one of the episodes in the epic of the Chaldæan hero, Gilgames, and is contained on the eleventh tablet of a series of twelve, which recount what is known as the Legend of Gilgames. The hero goes on a journey to visit Pir Napištim (the Chaldæan Noah), who for his goodness had been gifted with immortality, in order that he might find out from him the secret of how to become immortal. In reply to his questionings, Pir Napištim relates to Gilgames the story of the Deluge.

##### *Its Bearing on the Hexateuchal Criticism.*

That story as told in the Babylonian legend bears a striking resemblance in the incidents which it embraces to the Biblical narrative, although differing from it in the widest possible way in its theological aspect. Whilst the Babylonian narrative is grossly polytheistic, the Biblical breathes the purest monotheism. Nevertheless there is a remarkable similarity between the two in the incidents which they record, and the Babylonian story has a curiously important bearing on the critical analysis of Genesis and of the Pentateuch in general.

Professor Bissel, as long ago as 1892, in a work of his, *Genesis in Colours* (p. xiii), drew attention to the fact that the Babylonian narrative contained in a united form the various incidents which the critics in the case of the narrative in Genesis distribute between the two supposed writers, the Elohist and the Yahvist. Professor Sayce in his work, *Early History of the Hebrews* (1897) pressed the same point and repeated it in a later book, *The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia* (1902), p. 444. The fact is that the effect of this Babylonian Deluge Tablet is to place the critical analysis of the Flood story in Genesis between the hammer and the anvil; between the *hammer* of the combined account in the Babylonian tablet and the *anvil* of the combined account in Genesis.

The critics have analysed the Biblical account of the Deluge into two documents which, originally separate and independent, they hold to have been intertwined. There is the priestly writer P, who uses the Divine name Elohim and takes pleasure in formal phrases, precise chronological statements and records of genealogies, and to him certain incidents in the Flood narrative are attributed. And then there is the imaginative writer J, who uses the Divine title Yahveh, and whose narrative is striking and picturesque; and to him certain other incidents are attributed. These two writers are held to be quite independent of each other, and to write from completely opposite points of view.

But to trouble all this specious theory comes this incontestable record from ancient Babylonia, and it shows that all these incidents—formal or picturesque—supposed to be each so characteristic as to denote different writers in the Pentateuch, and so diverse from one another as to indicate distinct and independent points of view, existed as a matter of fact in a state of absolute union in a document as ancient as the times of Abraham.

If the formal and the picturesque could dwell amicably together in the *Babylonian* narrative—what warrant is there for inventing a formal writer and a picturesque for the narrative in *Genesis*?

In the light, then, of the Babylonian Flood tablet, the theory which we are expected by the critics to accept appears to be supremely unreasonable. We are to believe that first came the fully-developed story of the Flood in the Babylonian Deluge tablet. Then followed deterioration by scission, or splitting, one-half of the story being separated by the Elohist writer P, and the other half carried off by the Yahvist; and then the

story was re-developed by the uniting of the two parts—the two documents—in the Biblical narrative in Genesis.

The story ONE in 2000 B.C.—then divided—then united—ONE again in Genesis as it had been before.

Is it reasonable of the critics to expect all this to be believed?

It is a remarkable circumstance that Dr. Driver seems never to have attempted to answer this attack made on the Hexateuchal criticism by Professors Sayce and Bissel.

In *Authority and Archaeology*, a book published in 1899, to which Dr. Driver contributed an essay on "Hebrew Authority," he would seem to have had an excellent opportunity of opposing the conclusions of these two writers, because the connection between the account of the Deluge given in Genesis, as compared with the Babylonian Flood story, was one of the points discussed in his essay. In a footnote on another point connected with the Flood he refers to Professor Sayce's book, *Early History of the Hebrews*, showing that he must of course have been well aware of the conclusions put forward in that book. Nevertheless, in his essay, the critical point is evaded in the following words:—

"It would have been interesting to point out in detail in what respects each of these versions resembled in turn the Babylonian narrative; but for our present purpose *the question of the distinction of sources in the Biblical account is unimportant.*" p. 27 note. (The italics are mine.)

It seems strange that Dr. Driver should write thus in presence of the direct attack which Professor Sayce had made on the Hexateuchal criticism in connection with this very point, and especially as Dr. Driver's essay on "Hebrew Authority" was in part highly controversial, and, indeed, resolved itself towards the close into an elaborate defence of the criticism against the attacks of certain archaeologists, amongst whom Professor Sayce came in for particular attention. Yet this direct and simple point, which Sayce pressed against the criticism in connection with the distinction of sources, was evaded in the words which I have just quoted. It was utterly ignored and left unanswered. Perhaps there was no answer conveniently to be found.

There is no part of the Pentateuch perhaps where the theory of the distinction of sources has been held by the critics to be more certainly assured than in this account of the Flood in Genesis; and the distinction of sources here is closely and indissolubly bound up with the critical analysis of the

rest of the "Hexateuch." If grave doubt is thrown by the stubborn evidence of the monuments on the reality of the critical analysis in this case, *the whole Hexateuchal theory is assailed and is intimately and vitally concerned.*

#### THE LITERARY CONDITIONS OF THE MOSAIC AGE.

We have seen how the analysis of the Flood story in Genesis by the critics has shown their theories to be in direct antagonism to the evidence of archæology. The evidence of archæology goes to show that the story of the Flood is *one*—the theory of the critics is that it is "*a doublet*"—and we have seen how far-reaching is the significance of this antagonism, affecting as it does the reality of the whole Hexateuchal criticism.

Let us now consider another case—which is also of far-reaching consequences—in which once more the theories of the critics are in direct antagonism to the evidence of archæology.

Dr. Driver, in the latest edition of his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, takes occasion to remark that the assertion not unfrequently made that the primary basis of Pentateuchal criticism is the assumption that Moses was unacquainted with the art of writing, and that this had been overthrown by the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, rests (so he says) on an entire misrepresentation of the facts. That Moses was unacquainted with the art of writing, he says, is *not* the premiss upon which the criticism rests, and the antiquity of writing was known long before the Tel-el-Amarna tablets were discovered. p. 158.

It is not, however, the crude fact as to whether Moses could or could not write that is in question; the critics may be taken as admitting that he could. The point in question is that the barbarous state from a literary point of view, which the critical theories bring out as the condition of the Israelites in the Mosaic age, is in direct opposition to what archæology in the present day shows to have been the condition of Egypt and Western Asia at that time.

#### *Opinions of the Critics.*

As to what the views of the critics are in regard to the literary condition of Israel in the Mosaic age we can judge by the following:—

Wellhausen writes :—

“But it was within this period 850–750 B.C. that Hebrew literature first flourished—after the Syrians had been finally repulsed it would seem. Writing of course had been practised from a much earlier period, but only in formal instruments, mainly upon stone. At an early period also the historical sense of the people developed itself . . . in songs, which in the first instance were handed down by word of mouth only. Literature began with the collection and writing down of these songs.” *Sketch of the History of Israel and Judah* (1891), p. 71.

In the same strain Dr. Driver writes :—

“No doubt in Israel, as in many other nations, literature began with poetry. . . . At what date they ‘(the songs)’ were formed into a collection must remain matter of conjecture, the age of David or Solomon has been conjectured. . . . The terminus *a quo* of J. E.” he writes, ‘is more difficult to fix. . . . We can only argue from our view of the progress of the art of writing . . . or of the probability that they would be written down before the impulse given to culture under the monarchy had taken effect.” *Introd.*, pp. 121, 122, 124.

Thus crudely do the critics ignore the literary environment of the Israelites in Egypt, so amply revealed by archæology, and elect to start the literary history of the people from zero. And yet of course in Egypt in those days—as had been so from immemorial time—writing was in most general use for all the common purposes of life. The “tale of bricks” would no doubt be given to the task-masters of the Israelites in writing; the temple walls were inscribed with sculptured records; and literary culture, and elaborate ritual, surrounded the Israelites on every side.

Did the leaders of the Israelites when they crossed the Red Sea instantly forget all the culture and learning of the land of Egypt which they had just left, so that neither Moses nor any other among them rose to any literary effort beyond the most primitive and rude? “Writing mainly upon stone,” is the most that Wellhausen would admit;—songs handed down “by word of mouth only,” is all that he would allow even to times long after Moses; whilst what Dr. Driver thinks of literature in Israel in the Mosaic age may be fairly gauged by the passage already quoted, where in discussing the date of “J E” he talks of the probability that songs would have been written down *before the impulse given to culture under the monarchy had taken effect.*

When therefore Dr. Driver urges the point that an assumption that Moses was unacquainted with the art of writing is not a premiss upon which the criticism of the Pentateuch depends he is only leading away from the real point raised by archæology. That point is, that the conclusion of the critics that the Israelites in the age of Moses had no literature worthy of the name is irreconcilable with the teaching of archæology as to the literary condition of Egypt and Western Asia in that age.

And here it may further be remarked, that although this denial of any literature to Israel in the Mosaic age may not be a premiss upon which the critical theories rest, but rather a conclusion—*nevertheless*—such a conclusion—*if once it be accepted*—works round in a vicious circle of argument to help the criticism. For if it be accepted as true that such literary barrenness existed at that time, then the early history of Israel becomes as it were a *tabula rasa*, on which the critics may inscribe whatever theories their imagination may lead them to conceive, unchecked by the wholesome restraint which the admission of the existence of contemporary documents would impose upon them; and further, under such circumstances, they consider they are entitled to treat all writings in the Bible concerned with the Mosaic period as merely a collection of myths and legends, handed down by oral tradition, around which again their critical imagination is left free to play; and so even the most far-fetched speculations—in the dimness and uncertainty of mere oral tradition held to prevail—are emboldened to put forward a claim to recognition.

Archæology, which strikes at the historical probability of this literary barrenness of Israel in the Mosaic age, strikes at the same time at one of the buttresses at least, if not one of the foundations of the Higher Criticism.

This then is the point, which though long before known, was emphasized by the discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, namely—the yawning chasm that separates the conclusions of the critics from the state of things indicated by archæology. It is *not* that the critics said Moses *could not write*—and the discoveries of archæology revealed *that he could*—*but that* the conclusions of the critical theories deny to Israel in the age of Moses any literature worthy of the name, whilst the condition of things revealed by archæology would seem to show that in order to reconcile such a conclusion with that condition, we should have to suppose that the leaders of the Israelites, during their sojourn in Egypt, must have stolidly resisted the most ordinary influences of the every-day life around them.

Professor Sayce observes :—

“From one end of the civilised ancient world to the other men and women were reading, and writing, and corresponding with one another ; schools abounded, and great libraries were formed.”

“Moses not only could have written the Pentateuch but it would have been little short of a miracle had he not been a scribe.” *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

## THE CODE OF HĀMMURABI.

### *Description of the Code.*

In point of fact the whole spirit of the criticism, which seems perpetually dominated by the thought that all the religion and culture of Israel only truly blossomed in the later times, is completely opposed to the trend of archaeological discovery of the present day. The whole tendency of that course of discovery is to more and more unfold to view the fact of the great antiquity to which the culture and social institutions of mankind reach back. This contrast between the tendency of thought among the critics in regard to the history of Israel and the course of the revelations of archæology may be aptly exemplified by the case of the Code of Hāmmurabi. This, the most recent and wonderful discovery in the field of Assyriology, was made in January, 1902, among the ruins of Susa—“Shushan the palace,” as it is called in the Book of Daniel, “which is in the province of Elam.” Excavations carried on there under M. de Morgan brought to light the three fragments, which had composed an enormous block of polished black marble, covered with cuneiform inscriptions. At what had been the top of the monument a low relief was carved representing the great King Hāmmurabi himself standing before the Sun-god, from whom he is receiving the laws of his kingdom. When the cuneiform characters on the marble had been copied and read it was found that a priceless treasure had been unearthed—a complete code of laws, the earliest ever discovered in the world, “earlier than that of Moses by eight hundred years, and constituting the foundation of the laws promulgated and obeyed throughout Western Asia.”

The Code of Hāmmurabi has strong affinities to the Mosaic Code, and several points of contact with it. “An eye for an eye,” “a tooth for a tooth,” is a drastic principle of law, which holds in either code. There are other similarities, too, but the

differences are also very great. One most important distinction between the two is this: that the Code of Hammurabi seems to presuppose a commercial people, highly organised, and with all the complicated family and trade relations belonging to such a community; whilst the Mosaic Code seems to be intended for a people living under much more simple conditions.

Dr. Pinches notices another important point which he says shows the two codes to have been compiled from totally different stand-points; and that is that the laws in the Code of Hammurabi are purely civil, whilst into the law of Moses all kinds of provisions for the poor, the fatherless, and the necessitous, have entered. "From this point of view," he goes on to say, "Moses' Code is immeasurably superior to that of the Babylonian law-giver, and can hardly on that account be compared with it" (*op. cit.*, 2nd Ed., Appendix, p. 519).

The fact that a kindred people like the Babylonians possessed a written code of laws through so many centuries affords strong presumptive evidence in favour of the belief that the people of Israel had also a written code of laws during their national existence—as their own national tradition and consciousness most assuredly held that they had.

"For the law was given by Moses,"

says the writer of St. John's Gospel.

And this presumptive evidence is all the stronger owing to the undeniable resemblance which in many points exists between the Mosaic Code and that of Hammurabi. That it was only at a late period in their national existence that the Israelites received the code of laws which was to regulate the life of the nation is a theory which at any time was most improbable; but seems now still more incredible since the discovery of this most ancient code of laws existing among the kindred Semites of Babylonia.

This section of the subject may be closed with the words of Professor Sayce, which appear to be amply justified.

"While the Mosaic Code in contradistinction to the Babylonian Code belongs to the desert rather than to the City, *the laws implied in the narrative of the Book of Genesis* are those which actually were current in Canaan in the patriarchal age. No writer of a post-Mosaic date could have imagined or invented them; like the names preserved in Genesis, they characterise the patriarchal period and no other. The answer of archæology to the theories of modern 'criticism' is complete: *the Law preceded the Prophets*, and did not follow them." *Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*, p. 83.

## THE ASSYRIANS IN CONTACT WITH ISRAEL.

*Testimony to the Veracity of the Biblical Historians.*

The points at which the Assyrians came into touch with Israel are intensely interesting, but do not raise as a rule any highly controversial questions. They simply show wherever the Assyrians touch Israel that the story contained in the Historical Books of the Old Testament is a real, genuine, honest history which—unlike the boastful records of the Assyrian monarchs—places on record defeats as well as victories—national humiliation as well as the nation's triumphs. It is all very well for Dr. Driver to say—as he does—that

“No one for instance has ever doubted that there were kings of Israel (or Judah) named Abab, and Jehu, and Pekah, and Ahaz, and Hezekiah; or that Tiglath-Pileser, and Sennacherib, led expeditions into Palestine—the mention of these (and such like) persons and events in the Assyrian annals has brought to light many additional facts about them, which it is an extreme satisfaction to know, but it has only ‘confirmed’ what no critic has questioned.”

Perhaps so—and perhaps not; the point need not now detain us. But whether any critic did, or did not, question these things, they questioned *this*—the *bona fides* of the compilers of these Historical Books. These writers—so the critics say—worked them over to give them a particular character, which was not the true one that they ought to bear. It is important, then, to note that when these writers can be tested as to veracity by these Assyrian monuments, they come well out of the test.

*Conception of the Character of the Assyrians by the Classical Writers.*

It is a curious point what an erroneous view the classical writers of antiquity seem to have conceived of the Assyrian character. To them “Assyrian” seems to have meant everything voluptuous and effeminate. But the Biblical writers knew them better.

“Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding-place of the young lions; where the lion, even the old lion, walked, and the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid? The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses; and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin.”

So wrote the prophet Nahum about Nineveh. And most assuredly the Assyrian inscriptions show that Nineveh was a veritable lion's den—so fierce—so cruel—so ruthless—were her people.

#### CONCLUSION.

But time and space forbid adducing any further instances. From those discussed the writer hopes that he has made it clear that the bearing of recent oriental discoveries on Old Testament History is antagonistic to the critical theories, while they support the historical accuracy of the text.

#### DISCUSSION.

Rev. G. F. WHIDBORNE.—Mr. Chairman, I think we must be very grateful for such a striking and valuable paper. One or two points I might speak of.

The writer mentions Ur of the Chaldees as being proof—against the Critics—that Abraham is an historical person. I think that argument can be carried a little further still. Let us assume, with the Critics, that J. did not originate till the ninth century and P. not till Ezekiel's time, and that, before that, the account of Abraham only came from oral tradition, as Dr. Driver says. (Genesis, p. xvi). In those times Babylon seems at first hardly to have been known to the Israelites, and then it developed into a hostile nation, and finally into a cruel conqueror. Let us recollect the pride and exclusiveness of the Israelites, increasing through the monarchies. It is evidently absurd to imagine that a mere oral tradition would have preserved the then distasteful fact that the great national hero and progenitor was of Babylonish origin, or that a compiler of documents would have incorporated it in his compilation. The only reasonable explanation, on critical lines, of the mention of Ur of the Chaldees as the native country of the great national progenitor, must be that it was contained in an authoritative written history before Israel was a settled nation. In fact, it witnesses not only that Abraham was an historical person but that the account of him in Genesis was ancient written history.

I think that the paper suggests to us even more. We may find a presumption, at least, that Abraham not only lived, but himself wrote. We know that in his day written contracts of purchases were usual. The account of the purchase of the field of Machpelah is acknowledged to have followed generally the customs of the age. Now in the account itself we read how money is paid and then in verses 17 and 18 the chapter gives this remarkable clause: "And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth." I should like to ask if we could have a more distinct indication of the "making sure" by a written purchase-contract than in these words with their legal phraseology. It seems the strongest evidence that Abraham had to do with a written document and was accustomed to things written.

Remembering this, we turn to our author's claim, that there is nothing unreasonable in Hommel's suggestion "that Gen. xiv may have existed once in the form of a cuneiform record." The Critics, like, Dr. Driver, regard it as a distinct document, "SS." Let us grant this: the question remains, Can any special reason be alleged for the existence of such a document? The circumstances suggest a striking one. Abraham knew the character of the King of Sodom. He had done him a great service for Lot's sake, who was to remain on an inhabitant of his city. To safeguard him, he had been careful to give no excuse for the King of Sodom's greed. It becomes at once clear how essential a written memorial of the transaction would be, especially one which brought in the King of Salem as Umpire.

If, then, Gen. xiv is to be explained as a separate document, the most rational explanation would be that for this special purpose it was written by, or by the direction of, Abraham himself. If Abraham wrote it, Moses would naturally possess it, and use it.

It may, by the way, be noted that the Critics' assertion of an editor or compiler at once destroys any argument against age from phraseology; because the first business of any editor would naturally be to modernise archaic phraseology; even a transcriber might, for instance, instinctively change Laish into Dan.

The CHAIRMAN.—We have a letter of regret from Dr. Pinches, stating that unfortunately other duties prevent his being here. We should have gratefully valued his presence.

Canon GIRDLESTONE.—With regard to Mr. Whidborne's last sentence, there are a great many linguistic peculiarities in the Book of Genesis which the latter writings have not removed. There are odd spellings and idioms which only occur in the Book of Genesis. The linguistic side of the treatment of the subject has been severely neglected. In the days of David, who was a poet and a warrior, new musical instruments are introduced, new ways of marching, etc., and therefore I feel sure that from every point of view it can be shown that the books are, as they stand, in their true order.

Mr. DAVID HOWARD, F.C.S.—This paper has interested me exceedingly. I am no critic and no theologian, though I confess these studies have a great fascination to me. But as one who has certainly had to make scientific evidence a great deal of study and has had experience of evidence in other matters, the Higher Criticism always seems to be deficient in one thing: there is no extraneous confirmation of its conclusion. I have looked with the deepest interest for the time when some extraneous evidence would be brought to bear, and I might say with a little anxiety, to see how it would turn out. The extraneous evidence which has been brought out in such abundance of late years has all been in favour of the absolute authenticity of the Old Testament. In fact, light thrown by many discoveries tends to confirm the veracity of the Old Testament, and in certain cases enabling us to understand what was very perplexing, as, for instance, Sarah and those maid-servant wives. How can one imagine that such an idea as that—a purely Babylonish idea—could be woven into a forgery centuries after: as it was truly remarked, at the time that Israel was absolutely hostile to Babylon? The whole question of the origin of legends is a very fascinating one, and there is always the conceivable possibility that they are true, and so it is nothing very amazing that some sort of legend of the Flood should have survived from the very time itself, and it is most interesting to find a history dating back before Moses containing such a tradition. It is very remarkable to notice the absolute courage with which the writer of the first chapters of Genesis, evidently knowing what the tradition was of other nations, puts a construction upon these facts in that

clear definite form he gives; totally differing from that of the nations around.

Mr. M. L. ROUSE said, in delivering a short reply illustrative of the fallacy of the Higher Criticism, I have been led to examine Dr. Driver's introduction. I notice there, in other words besides those here quoted, that he virtually abandons the theory of two documents, the Yahvist and the Elohist. He twice says that the criteria are uncertain, and that he finds the difference at points hard to trace throughout.

On the other hand, there has recently been published an edition of volumes of the Old Testament writers as analysed by the Higher Critics: and I have looked at the one of Genesis (edited by a Mr. Bennett), and I was very much struck with this very great piece of dishonesty. Granting that the accounts were double, of course every section that begins with Elohim should belong to one story and every section that begins with Yahveh should belong to the other story. Now in one of the Yahvist sections—both preceded and followed by the name Yahveh—it is said that "after seven days" Yahveh would "bring a flood upon the earth." In an Elohist paragraph—both preceded and followed by the name Elohim—it says that "after the seven days the waters of the flood were upon the earth." Thus pointedly does the Yahvist account confirm the Elohist; but the Critics have picked out this one sentence and called it Yahvist.

Since the discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, a batch of letters has been discovered in the North of Canaan referring to every-day incidents, not necessarily to wars, plots or treaties, just showing how common this writing was; so common that Sheikhs wrote to one another about the every-day matters of living—their purchases, the welfare of their households, and what not.

Again, a few years ago Dr. Glaser explored into the heart of Arabia, and found records of three dynasties of kings, each preceding the other before the time of Solomon; a dynasty of priest kings, a dynasty of ordinary Sabean kings, and further back a dynasty of Minyan kings; and this long line of at least thirty-five kings have left inscriptions of their respective reigns—all written in a character akin to Hebrew, as also in a language related to Hebrew. Thus, not only can Moses have written in the cuneiform character, but there was a Hebrew character already existing for a form of the Hebrew tongue.

I should like to add to what is here said regarding Hammurabi, that his name appears somewhat later as Ammurapi—which brings it very near to Amraphel ; and, further, I would say that Hammurabi describes himself as lord of the Amorites ; just as Kudur Mabuq, the father of Kudur Lagnal, or Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, whom Hammurabi overcame, had previously, as we find, called himself king of the Amorites.

It has been the fashion of late to style the laws of Moses less original or more cruel than the laws of Hammurabi, with an insinuation that they were less just ; but you will find that, whereas Moses' law throughout says, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," in the Babylonian law it was, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" only when one injured a rich man. Again, whereas, according to Moses, a thief when he was breaking into a house might be killed and his blood was not to be upon the killer ; according to Hammurabi, if he were caught breaking into his house, the thief was to be killed and buried at the spot where he broke in.

There are many other points in which the excellency of the laws of Moses might be shown.

Professor ORCHARD.—I wish to express my thanks to the author of this paper for a most valuable and timely contribution to one of the most important discussions of our age. I think we shall agree with the conclusion arrived at (on p. 172), that it is absurd to suppose that the Israelites were not influenced by the culture and literature of those Egyptians amongst whom for such a very long period they had resided.

With regard to the Creation story and the Flood story, the idea that the Babylonian version is a Divine record is preposterous. If we are offered one version simple and pure and another complicated with strange, grotesque accretions, one cannot doubt which was the earlier in point of time. Moreover, we are very well aware that monotheism has been proved to be the primitive belief, and not polytheism. The idea that the Creation story was borrowed from the Babylonians would probably never have been seriously put forward had it not been that many people imagine that there was nothing in the Bible written before the time of Moses. That, of course, is an untenable assumption. The probability is that Adam himself wrote the Creation story under Divine guidance, that Noah

wrote the history of the Flood similarly; and no doubt Moses edited the book to which reference is made, when God tells him to write in "*the book*" the fact that The Lord would have perpetual warfare with Amalek because of his wickedness. There can be no doubt that from the very beginning of human history there was a Divine record.

I was very much struck with the remark by the Chairman that these Higher Critics' conclusions which are here exposed and refuted, that these theories are mere pictures of the imagination. The ablest representative of the Higher Critics is probably Dr. Driver, and Dr. Driver seems to have the idea that if you can prove they are credible on some points, other points are not important. It is a most absurd proposition. Dr. Driver prefers, and his Higher Critics prefer, to paint pictures of the imagination, rather than investigate facts; and if the pictures do not agree with the facts, then, of course, that shows that we are in some way or other unacquainted with the facts. Professor Sayce's description of the critical theory as "a philological mirage" appears to be apposite. The Higher Critics profess to investigate facts and reasons in support of the pictures of imagination which they present to their readers, but they do nothing whatever to allay the thirst of the human spirit for truth and reality. If I may correct a quotation from Dr. Driver by the author, I would say, the attempt to refute the conclusions of archæology by means of Higher Criticism has signally failed.

The CHAIRMAN.—I propose a vote of thanks to the author of this paper—which the Secretary will forward to him—for his most interesting paper and the valuable discussion.

The SECRETARY.—I second the motion. It will give me the greatest pleasure to convey the thanks of the Institute to the author of this paper.