

P J Wiseman

CLUES TO CREATION IN GENESIS

Edited by Donald J Wiseman



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with a Foreword by

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FOREWORD

by

DONALD J. WISEMAN

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In response to a growing number of requests the two studies written by my late father, P. J. Wiseman,¹ are presented here in a single volume. The first originally appeared as *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis* in 1936; the second, *Creation Revealed in Six Days* in 1946. Despite their publication in 'war economy' format and in a limited edition, new printings were immediately called for. These were followed by translations into German (*Die Entstehung der Genesis*, Wuppertal, 1958) and into Dutch (*Ontdekkingen over Genesis*, Groningen, 1960). References to his writings are made in a number of books (e.g. R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1970) which summarises the first book on pp. 545-53). These have increased the demand for reprints.

My father's interest as a Bible student was quickened by his residence in the Middle East, especially during 1923-5 and 1931-3 when in Iraq. He read extensively and took the opportunity of visiting the principal excavations; these included the British Museum and University Museum of Pennsylvania expedition to Ur under Sir Leonard Woolley and that of the University of Oxford Ashmolean Museum at Kish under Professor S. H. Langdon. He had many discussions with these and other scholars there (especially the late Professor Cyril Gadd). While he himself did

not read the cuneiform scripts and had a limited knowledge of classical Hebrew he carefully checked his theories with competent scholars. His enthusiasm was in no small measure the encouragement to me to enter these specialised fields of archaeology and ancient Semitic languages, and we often discussed his ideas together in their formative stages.

P. J. Wiseman's primary idea is a simple one. Taking his clue from the recurrent 'catch-lines' or colophons in Genesis of the form 'these are the family histories (generations) of ...', he examines them as clues to the literary structure of Genesis and as indicative of its origin and transmission. He takes the Genesis narratives as they stand and relates them to well-attested ancient literary methods. It is of interest that no critical review of his books has contradicted his main thesis. It is no part of his intention to discuss the general problems presented by Genesis or archaeology and he concentrates his comments about Genesis on the literary problem of its origin. His view, which he always emphasised was a hypothesis, provides a satisfying alternative to the theory usually associated with J. Wellhausen and known as his 'Documentary Hypothesis'. The centenary of this theory will be remembered shortly since, much modified, it is basically that on which so much modern critical Old Testament study continues to rest for want of an alternative. My father always thought that such a subjective theory as that of the Wellhausen school would hardly have been conceived, or copied, had the many literary tests (among the tens of thousands of cuneiform tablets which have since been discovered) been known at that time.

Since these books were first written there have been many more colophons discovered among the cuneiform texts which have been found in Babylonia. They have been published by H. Hunger, *Babylonische und assyrische Kolophone* (1968) and by E. Leichty, 'The Colophon' in *Studies presented to A. L. Oppenheim* (1964), pp. 147-54. These substantiate the references to this scribal device which is the 'key' to the elucidation of the documents which composed Genesis put forward here. Similarly, new additions to our knowledge of the Babylonian versions of the creation story make no major change in the inferences derived from the *Enuma*

elish epic quoted in the following chapters. It is, however, significant that the new text of an earlier old Babylonian account of the creation of mankind, his downfall and the Flood, occur together on a single tablet dated c. 1700 BC (W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-hasis: The Babylonian story of the Flood*, 1969). It is evident that the Genesis narratives were not derived from the very different and polytheistic Babylonian records.

Recent discoveries of Semitic literature from Syria and Mesopotamia, among them many dated texts c. 2300 BC, notably the finds in 1975–6 from Tell Mardih (Ebla) and, from a millennium later, the Akkadian texts from Ras Shamra, show the continuity in the tradition both of scribal education and literary practices. In many instances tablets show them to have continued virtually unchanged for a further two millennia. Unlike the Wellhausen theories, based on subjective assessment of the Hebrew text alone, these extra-biblical documents give us fixed and dated points along this stream of tradition.

I have, therefore, felt it a duty – in the light both of the importance of and interest in P. J. Wiseman's thesis – to prepare these chapters for republication so that readers may judge their relevance for themselves from the grounds advanced. A certain number of necessary changes have been made, especially to omit those sections, in Part I or Part II, which were duplicated when they were in separate volumes. Since it was no part of the original purpose to provide a survey of archaeology in relation to the book of Genesis, no attempt has been made (or is necessary to the main argument) to bring archaeological detail up to date. A number of minor changes and corrections have been made for the sake of clarity. In the main, however, it has been thought desirable to adhere as closely as possible to the author's views as originally expressed. For this reason the 1611 Authorised Version of the English Bible has been left as the basis of all quotations from Scripture.

To the present writer the particular value of this theory in relation to Genesis is the implication of the early use of writing, with the possibility that Genesis 1 to 11 could be a transcript from the oldest series of written records.

In Part II there will be found suggestions of special interest to readers who are specialists in the natural sciences. Reasons are given for the author's firm view that the original text of the Bible never said that the world was *created* 'in six days'. In fact, Genesis uses the Hebrew word *bārā* 'create' very sparingly. It occurs in the first chapter of Genesis only three times. This is at the three major stages in the acts of God in Creation: (1) The creation of the *inorganic* earth (v.1); (2) the creation of *organic* life (v. 21); (3) the creation of *man* (v.27). Reasons are also given for the author's view that the Bible states that what God was doing in these 'days' was not creating, but revealing and explaining to man what he had already done. The recurrent phrase 'and God said . . .' supports this. Moreover, it is shown how on this view the Sabbath rest is in keeping with other Scriptures. As our Lord said: 'The Sabbath was made *for man*.' God 'broke off' or 'desisted' from his work of revelation on the seventh day for the sake of man, and initiated it as a perpetual rest day for mankind.

Many members of various professions have expressed their gratitude for the part the two original volumes played at crucial periods in their developing intellectual and spiritual lives. They take the view that, of all the various ways in which Genesis and science have been interpreted and related, this approach appears to be the most rational, the most true to the text of Scripture and the most free from difficulties. For those who accept the text of Genesis, it leaves no conflict with the substantiated findings (as distinct from the hypotheses) of modern science.

In sending these pages to press, it is my prayer that my father's book will continue to be of help to many. Also, may it encourage others to study the finds of archaeology and relate them not merely to Genesis but to the Bible as a whole.

My family wishes to thank Dr Douglas Johnson for his assistance and encouragement in preparing this book for press.

July 1976

Donald J. Wiseman

PART ONE
ANCIENT RECORDS
AND THE
STRUCTURE OF GENESIS

INTRODUCTION

This book is the outcome of studies in archaeology, completed whilst the author was working in Iraq. The investigation of the problems of the book of Genesis in its ancient environment, and in the light of the mass of new facts regarding ancient literary methods, throws an entirely new light on the problem of its nature and authorship.

The aim is to state as simply as possible the evidence which Genesis has to give concerning its own origin and composition. To many it will appear surprising that Genesis has anything whatever to say for itself regarding the method by which it was originally written, for scholars have discussed this very question for the last two centuries without even suggesting that it contains the slightest direct statement concerning its own authorship. The investigation is of the greatest possible importance, and the conclusions which result from it no less so, for this first book of Scripture is the basis on which much of the superstructure, not only of the Old Testament, but also of the New, is reared. Moreover, Genesis has an interest and significance to which no other document of antiquity can aspire.

The proposed solution to the problem of the composition of Genesis outlined in the following pages, is the result of applying the findings which archaeological research has presented to us in recent years. During this period the writer has spent several years in 'the land that was Babylonia', (modern south Iraq) visiting the various excavations at the ancient sites, and in constant touch with the latest discoveries. In this environment of ancient things Genesis was carefully re-examined, not for the purpose of discovering a new solution to its composition, but solely to illustrate the geography and archaeology of the country in relation to it.

The viewpoint stated

While engaged in these studies the key to its literary composition became increasingly clear, for Genesis was permitted the rare privilege of being allowed to speak for itself in the light of all the new knowledge we now possess of the methods of writing practised in patriarchal times. It would seem that the key to its composition has hitherto remained unrecognised, and therefore unused. While prevailing theories have been unable to unlock the door to its literary structure, it is submitted that the following explanation does: *The book of Genesis was originally written on tablets in the ancient script of the time by the Patriarchs who were intimately concerned with the events related, and whose names are clearly stated. Moreover, Moses, the compiler and editor of the book, as we now have it, plainly directs attention to the source of his information.*

Such a statement needs adequate confirmation by the writer, and on the part of the reader a patient study of all the evidence on which it is based. When this evidence has been scrutinised, the author would claim that it is attested by facts so numerous and verified by undesigned coincidences so overwhelming, that almost every critical difficulty regarding Genesis disappears.

Archaeology and the earliest writing

Until the beginning of the last century, the only known contemporary history which had been written earlier than 1000 BC was the early part of the Old Testament. The ancient historical records of Babylonia had not been unearthed, but lay buried and unknown beneath mounds and ruins which had hidden them for millenniums. It was because the earlier books of the Bible stood alone and unique in this claim to have been written centuries before any other piece of writing then known to the world, that a century ago critics endeavoured to prove they must have been written at a date much later than Moses. On the other hand, the defenders of the Mosaic authorship could not then know that writing was in frequent use a thousand years before he was born. Consequently both sides in the controversy imagined that the contents of Genesis had been handed down by word of mouth, it

being assumed that writing was impracticable, and almost unknown in the times of the Patriarchs.

P. Ewald was prepared to admit that Moses was acquainted with the art of writing, but he says that 'the accounts of the Patriarchal time contain no sure traces of the use of writing in that early age'. Even as late as 1893, H. Schultz wrote, 'of the legendary character of the pre-Mosaic narratives, the time of which they treat is a sufficient proof. It was a time prior to all knowledge of writing' (*Old Testament Theology*).

Constant reference will be made to archaeological research. This is necessary because of the urgent need for a re-consideration of Genesis in the ancient environment in which it came into existence. It will also emancipate us from the prevailing fallacy of investigating the book just as though it should have been written in a manner similar to modern history. It is not possible to avoid reference to the 'critical' theories concerning its origin, for while those scholars have sometimes stated clearly certain literary characteristics observable in Genesis, their speculations based on these observations are frequently at variance with the explicit statements of the book itself and also with modern archaeological discoveries. Because the series of conjectures commonly known as 'Higher Criticism' are so widely accepted in certain quarters as an explanation of the method of its composition, it is necessary to test these modern suppositions. It will seem that such conjectures would never have seen the light of day, had scholars of that time been in possession of modern archaeological knowledge. It is therefore submitted that because the critical theories originated in an age of ignorance concerning the earliest patriarchal times, and the newer facts of excavation have rendered them so hopelessly obsolete, the time is overdue for a new appreciation of Genesis in the light of recent archaeological research.

Outline of Part One

For this reason it is necessary to call upon archaeology to be our first witness, to inform us of the facts, and to enlighten us regarding the lessons to be learned from excavation, especially in their bearing on the antiquity of early writing and the literary methods

employed. This witness will occupy chapters 2 to 4 of the first part of this book. Genesis speaks for itself in chapters 5 to 8. In chapter 9 reference is made to theories now obsolete. In chapter 10 Genesis defends itself against attack. In chapter 11 the titles for God, used in Genesis, are considered. The New Testament use of the ancient narratives and the witness of the Lord Jesus Christ will be discussed in chapter 12. The evidence is summed up in chapter 13.

The highest meaning that can be given to the word 'critic' is 'to judge'. A true judge may not commence his examination of the evidence by taking for granted that the accused book of Genesis is 'guilty', he will listen to the witnesses patiently and impartially. He will be scrupulously fair to weigh the whole of the evidence, and not allow any material fact to be suppressed. Moreover, both sides must be permitted to give their evidence in their own words.

A secondary meaning of the word 'critic' is 'a hostile witness'. The following pages are a plea that the book of Genesis should be given a fair hearing. Because we are in search of the whole truth, the critics in chapter 9 will put forward their greatest and most eminent advocates and give their witness in their own words – not merely specially selected extracts, but the whole of their material evidence.

It is often easier to be an advocate for the prosecution than for the defence. It is certainly not so difficult to be destructive as constructive, it requires less thought to pull down than to build up. One match can be used to fire a palace which will take many men a considerable time to replace. It is not difficult to suggest doubt or suspicion against a book, but it may take much time and labour to clear it of the charges and restore it to confidence. It is intended that these pages should be constructive.

DISCOVERIES IN BABYLONIA

The discoveries in Babylonia which have aroused the greatest interest among the general public have been those connected with the Bible. In the early days of excavation, the finding of a palace belonging to a king mentioned in Scripture, or of an inscription referring to an Old Testament incident, produced not merely excitement, but sensation. To this day the excavations at Ur of the Chaldees have been followed with far greater interest by the majority than the unearthing of the older city of Kish; simply because Abraham may well have lived at Ur, and from it journeyed to Palestine, while Kish, having no direct connection with the Bible, is not of great interest except to archaeologists.

It was not until the middle of the last century that excavators began digging among the ruined mounds of Mesopotamia. Eighty years ago these long undulating hills of earth were the undisturbed grave clothes covering the remains of the oldest civilisations. The Arab pitched his black goats' hair tent on these hills, and with unseeing eyes followed his primitive plough as it was dragged around these mounds of earth. This was all that was then visible of Babylon, Ur, Erech and Calneh, in the land of Shinar, and Asshur, Nineveh and Calah in the land of Asshur. The sands of time had covered these cities so thoroughly that less than a hundred years ago they appeared to be merely ordinary hills. Except for their elevation they seemed to be composed of nothing but the dust of the desert. However, rain storms had partially furrowed their sides, revealing pieces of broken pottery and tablets on which had been imprinted an intricate pattern made up of combinations of wedge-shaped indentations.

In Egypt, the great monuments – the pyramids, temples and palaces – had at least kept their heads above the shifting sands of the desert, thus partially remaining visible to the wondering gaze of men. But in Mesopotamia the cities were so thoroughly buried, that it had become a land of dead cities; moreover, so obliterated had the places of their internment become that their sites were either unknown or uncertain. The mounds masked their secrets so well that with few exceptions the inhabitants of the country knew no more of what lay beneath them than did the sheep who fed on their scanty spring grass. Now jackals and scorpions make their homes in their ruins, ‘her cities are a desolation, dry land and a wilderness’ (Jer. 51 :43). Even today there are many mounds of which we know nothing, either of their past or present contents. Quite recently some distinguished archaeologists who had not only repeatedly visited a certain ancient site, but who had thoroughly surveyed it, passed it by unrecognised more than once, supposing it to be an unknown ruin.

The mounds in Babylonia

It is necessary to restrict this brief review of excavation to the lands referred to in the earlier chapters of the book of Genesis; the lands of Shinar and Asshur, until lately known as Mesopotamia (the land between the rivers), but now called Iraq. In early times the southern part of the country was known as Babylonia, and the northern as Assyria. Still earlier, the southern plain was called Sumer, and the more northerly Agade (Accad). This country is a strip of land, some 600 miles long and 250 miles broad, now extending from the Kurdish mountains in the north to the Persian Gulf in the south, with the Persian or Iranian mountains as its eastern border, and on its western, the desert of Arabia. It is a land uniform in its flatness, down which the two great rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, flow.

Here civilisation commenced, here excavators have discovered the beginnings of history, and out of its soil the most ancient forms of writing have been dug. It is the cradle of the human race.

It is not surprising that early travellers mistook the buried cities for ordinary hills. So obliterated were the ruins of the city of

Babylon, that it is questionable whether some of those who wrote about the great city knew exactly where it was, for they describe mounds quite different in shape and size to those of the ruins of Babylon. Benjamin of Tudela, a Spanish Jew, who visited the country in the twelfth century, writing of these ruins, says, that they were 'to men inaccessible on account of the various and malignant kinds of serpents and scorpions living there' (*Itinerarium*), while Marco Polo seems to have passed them by unnoticed. On the other hand the site of Babylon appears to have been known to the Arabs, for De Beauchamp, who visited it twice between 1780 and 1790, says of the ruins that 'they are exactly under the mound the Arabs call Babel'.

Sir Antony Shirley, who travelled through Mesopotamia at the end of the sixteenth century, wrote of 'Nineve, that which God Himself called That great Citie, hath not one stone standing which may give memory of the being of a towne.' Tavernier visited Mosul in 1644, and referring to these ruins said 'They appear a formless mass of ruined houses extending almost a mile alongside the river. One recognises there a large number of vaults or holes which are all uninhabited.'

Early attempts at solution

The first attempt to solve the mystery of the contents of these mounds was made at the beginning of the last century, but it was not until 1842 that the work of excavation properly commenced. Even then, little effort was made to obtain written records, because excavators could not read them, and the few scholars engaged upon the task had not themselves entirely solved the puzzle of cuneiform writing. It must be admitted that in those early days excavators were searching mainly for sculpture which would adorn the museums of London and Paris.

Claudius James Rich may be called the first excavator. His ability to acquire oriental languages had become evident quite early, so much so, that at the age of sixteen he was appointed to a military cadetship in the East India Company's service. At twenty-one he became the Company's resident at Baghdad. Thereafter all the time he could spare from his official duties he devoted to his

historical researches. He visited Babylon in the December of 1811, and wrote about the desolation and confusion which existed there, and of the brick robbers who had been carrying away Nebuchadnezzar bricks for ordinary building purposes. The East India Company requested him to send home specimens of these bricks, and also of the clay tablets inscribed with wedge writing. These were forwarded in a box three feet square. At that time a small glass case in the British Museum contained all that Britain possessed of the antiquities of Babylonia. In 1821, aged thirty-four, Rich died of cholera.

The remaining mounds, covering the numerous cities of ancient days, were left undisturbed until 1842 when France sent Paul Emil Botta to Mosul as their Consul. On the eastern bank of the Tigris, opposite Mosul, lay the ruins of Nineveh; two mounds of which were prominent. The southern, called Nebi Yunus (i.e. Prophet Jonah) appeared to him to be that which would yield the best results, but on the summit of this mound was a small village including a mosque which the Arabs claimed to contain the tomb of the prophet Jonah. Here Botta found that the owners of the houses and land either refused him permission to dig, or requested far greater sums for the privilege than he was prepared to pay. He was therefore restricted to the northern mound known as Kouyunjik, but success did not attend his excavations. However, early in the proceedings a peasant from the village of Khorsabad, some thirty miles north of Nineveh, happening to pass the diggings and finding that Botta was in search of stones with pictures on them, volunteered the information that in his village there were plenty of such stones. The Frenchman, having already learnt the tendency of the Arab to wish to be the bearer of good news, took little notice of the peasant's story; but having had months of unsuccessful digging at Nineveh, he sent some of his workmen to the Arab's village to see what they could find. As soon as digging began they came across sculptured bas-reliefs and inscriptions. An Assyrian palace had been found. When the news of this discovery reached Paris it created such interest that funds were immediately placed at Botta's disposal to continue the work. By 1844 numerous rooms in the palace had been unearthed, and it was identified as the palace

of Sargon II, who is mentioned in Isaiah 20:1, as sending his Commander against Ashdod. Botta also discovered a magnificent alabaster wall sculpture of Sargon accompanied by his Commander.

In 1851, Victor Place succeeded Botta, not only at the French Consulate at Mosul but also as excavator of Khorsabad. He spent the next four years in unearthing the palace of Sargon. Apart from the reference to him in Isaiah, practically nothing was known of this monarch. Now the rooms in which he had lived, and sculptured representations of him which had been lost to sight for 2,500 years became familiar. Monsieur Place put sixty-eight cases containing some of these great sculptures and inscriptions, together with those he had collected from Babylon, on a raft and sent them down the Tigris for shipment to Paris, but before the raft reached the junction of the Euphrates and the Tigris, it foundered with all its precious cargo.

Early British initiatives

It was not long before Great Britain became represented in northern or Assyrian archaeology in the person of Austen Henry Layard. From early years he had an enthusiasm for the East, yet had been articled to a solicitor in London. After six years in the office he abandoned law and went to Constantinople, where he hoped to obtain an appointment as attaché at the British Embassy. In 1839 he commenced touring the Near East; in those days a long and perilous undertaking. When on his way to Persia in 1840 he visited Mosul, and on his return in 1842 met Botta at Nineveh. In 1845 Sir Stratford Canning, the Ambassador at Constantinople, instead of making him the attaché, gave him fifty pounds for archaeological research; this, together with his own money, enabled him to realise the aspirations of the last five years. He set off at once for Mosul, and in order to attract as little attention as possible, said nothing whatever to anyone about his plans. Taking with him only six workmen, he went twenty-five miles down the eastern bank of the Tigris to a mound called Nimrud – the Calah of Genesis 10. On the first day he discovered an Assyrian palace, on the third he came across numerous fragments of cuneiform tablets,

but for the latter he was not searching, for he could not decipher this cuneiform writing.

One day when he was away from the excavations Layard saw two mounted Arabs riding towards him at top speed. On reaching him one excitedly exclaimed, 'Hasten, O Bey, hasten to the diggers, for they have found Nimrod himself! *wallah* it is wonderful, but it is true, we have seen him with our own eyes.' They had discovered one of the great human headed winged lions now in the British Museum. Scarcely a day passed without unearthing something of value, but on one occasion when he had dug a fifty-foot trench into one of the mounds, he was about to abandon it because nothing worth while had been traced, when a workman unearthed a black marble monument – the now famous obelisk of Shalmaneser III – inscribed on which are the words, 'I received the tribute of Jehu Son of Omri silver and gold,' etc. When Colonel Rawlinson at Baghdad deciphered this inscription referring to the king of Israel, the news of the 'find' created a considerable impression. Layard commanded a second expedition in 1849–51, and the results were so good that it required hundreds of cases to send even part of the acquired treasure to the British Museum.

Discovery of a great library

Hormuzd Rassam, a resident of Mosul, who had assisted Layard, took charge of the operations two years later. At first he found little to encourage him at Nimrud, so he turned his attention to the mound Kouyunjik at Nineveh. Here he found the palace of Ashurbanipal, and on the sides of one room was a bas-relief depicting the king standing in his hunting chariot, with his servants around him handing him the weapons for the chase. More important still, he found the great king's immense library containing tens of thousands of tablets, but unfortunately many of them were either broken or burnt. Ashurbanipal was a great collector of ancient tablets, he boasted of his ambitions in this respect, and was known to have sent scribes to distant cities to reproduce their most important tablets, some of which were quite ancient even then. The tablets he found by Rassam were packed in the primitive fashion of those days, and shipped to the British Museum, where,

owing to the fact that they were so numerous, and the decipherers so few, they remained in the cellars for many years before it was discovered that among them were the king's copies of the Creation and Flood tablets. These were recognised nearly twenty years afterwards by George Smith, and immediately became famous.

During all this time, Babylonia had been almost ignored, excavators having concentrated their attention on the northern mounds of Assyria. In 1849 Col Rawlinson, and in 1854 J. E. Taylor, visited Ur of the Chaldees, while in the latter year Rawlinson made researches both at Babylon and at Birs Nimrod. During these years Loftus surveyed these and other sites, but owing to the threatening attitude of the southern Arab, could not excavate them. In 1878 Rassam dug trenches into the mounds of Babylon securing some important inscriptions, but none so spectacular were found there as those yielded by the mounds of Assyria. Excavators, therefore, again turned their attention to Nineveh.

Finds at Nineveh

George Smith, who commenced his career at the British Museum as an engraver, unremittingly surmounted the difficulties in the translation of cuneiform writing, until he became one of the most skilful decipherers of his day. In the course of his work at the Museum he recognised and deciphered the Flood tablets (which had been discovered nearly twenty years before), and disclosed his find to the world in a paper read before the Society of Biblical Archaeology in December 1872. Such was the intense interest it created, that in 1873 the *Daily Telegraph* gave one thousand pounds to defray the cost of Smith going to Nineveh to search for the missing portions of these tablets, and for additional exploration. At Nineveh, he was cleaning the dust from some tablets when he sighted some of the missing lines. He returned to England but set out again in the November of the same year on a second expedition, for the permission granted by the Turkish authorities to excavate was to lapse in four months. Notwithstanding considerable difficulties he worked rapidly, unearthing numerous inscribed clay tablets, and on his return gave his attention to those which would illustrate the Old Testament, particularly the earlier

chapters of Genesis. In March 1876, we find him again leaving for Nineveh, but on his arrival in the country he found cholera so prevalent that it was impossible to commence excavations. Forgetful of the climatic dangers of this country, exposed to the terrific heat of the mid-day sun, often without food, and even in these conditions, over-exerting himself, he left Nineveh for London a disappointed man, because on this occasion he had accomplished nothing. He got no further than Aleppo, where on the 19th August, 1876, he died. George Smith was one of the most successful Assyriologists that Britain has known.

It was not until 1888 that America began to take a direct and active part in Babylonian excavation. In that year they commenced work on the mound which the Arabs called Nippur, and excavations there were most determinedly carried out, in spite of considerable opposition, until the Great War. From this mound thousands of tablets were obtained, and the texts which have been published, some in more recent years, reveal many of great importance.

However, it is only in the last few years that excavation has reached back to the times outlined in the early chapters of Genesis. The discoveries in Assyria and Babylonia during the last century rarely took us back beyond the age of Moses.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the discovery of the Code of Hammurabi placed us in possession of the laws prevalent in the days of Abraham. Concerning the centuries before this, archaeology was dim and uncertain. The researches of recent years have, however, brought to light a number of astounding and valuable facts relating to the times covered by Genesis. Now archaeologists are mainly engaged upon the examination of sites and strata relating to the Genesis period, i.e. 3500–2000 BC.

Finds at Ur

In 1922 Mr (later, Sir Leonard) Woolley of the British Museum acting in co-operation with the University of Pennsylvania, commenced the systematic excavation of Ur of the Chaldees. From the very beginning of the work, this expert archaeologist demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt the high state of civilisation

existing in early times. Yet in 1923, when I watched his workmen in the process of removing thousands of tons of earth in order to reveal the great ziggurat or 'High Place', built 250 years before Abraham was born, I scarcely realised that the later results of this expedition would yield such rich treasures and throw so great a flood of light on the times of Genesis. This 'High Place' is the best preserved specimen in the whole of the country; it is a solid mass of brickwork 200 feet long, 150 feet wide and originally about 75 feet high. During this excavation some bricks with the inscription of Ur-Nammu, the builder of this temple tower, were found. One of these was given to me, and on it the cuneiform characters are perfectly stamped, thus revealing that writing was common hundreds of years before the time of Abraham.

A year later I was shown a tablet which had just been found at Al Ubaid, some four miles from Ur. It belonged to the period of 5,000 years ago, and was one of the most ancient specimens of writing then known. C. J. Gadd, of the British Museum, who that season was at Ur, had found on it the names of two Sumerian rulers, one of whom was known, but the other up to the moment of the discovery had been regarded even by archaeologists to be quite legendary. It certainly adds to the reality of the background of Genesis, to watch, as I did, the excavation of the wall with which Ur-Nammu encircled his city two centuries before Abraham lived there. This wall was seventy-seven feet thick and three miles round.

In 1929 Sir Leonard Woolley instructed his workmen to dig a deep pit in a selected part of the city. In doing this they unexpectedly found a remarkable change in the character of the soil, for clean water-laid clay suddenly commenced. The Arab workmen reported it, and were told to continue digging down. After a depth of eight feet this clean water-laid clay ceased as suddenly as it had commenced, for below it broken pottery was found and other evidences of the existence of a village before the layer of clay became deposited. The place where this discovery occurred was down through strata which covered the sloping face of a mound, and the thickness of the water-laid clay varied across it from eight to eleven feet in depth. The water necessary to lay such a great

thickness of deposit must have been so considerable that Sir Leonard Wooley came to the conclusion that the only possible explanation of his discovery was that they had found definite evidence of the effects of the Flood. In the season 1929–30 he dug down through the Flood level into virgin soil, and in 1934 he sank another pit some distance away, again through the water-laid clay of the Flood, discovering some statues and pottery in the pre-Flood level. At the conclusion of this last season's work, he told me that his findings regarding the Flood had been abundantly confirmed. I have examined this Flood earth. The complete absence of salt prevalent in other levels, its exceptional nature, the sudden beginning and as abrupt cessation, then the recommencement of broken pottery and bones beneath it, are certainly most remarkable evidence of a Flood.¹

Beginning in the year 1927, at a level which he later dated 3500 BC, Sir Leonard Woolley unearthed a large cemetery, and many grim discoveries suggested deaths which had probably been violent. In it, however, were many fine examples of the type of golden head-dress worn by women of those times, also numerous bead necklaces. One of the most spectacular finds was that of a golden helmet of Mes-kalam-dug, whom Sir Leonard placed as having lived about 3500 BC.²

At Kish and Nippur

Professor S. H. Langdon commenced researches at Kish and Jemdat Nasr in 1923, which have been exceedingly fruitful in their contribution to our knowledge of the earliest periods of civilisation. I was at Kish two days after the discovery of a stone tablet in a semi-pictographic script, believed to be one of the oldest pieces of writing known to man. Here also, a distance of 150 miles from Ur, evidence of the Flood were found.

At Nippur the expedition of the University of Pennsylvania found a large number of inscriptions dating before the time of Abraham; these have been published by the University Press. In the volume issued in 1914 by Dr Arno Poebel (*Historical Texts*) he reproduces a series of tablets relating to the Creation and the Flood, and 'ten rulers who reigned before the Flood'. It is quite

possible that the latter corresponds to the ten Patriarchs mentioned in Genesis 5. These tablets are written in one of the earliest forms of cuneiform script known.

Later, Mr H. Weld-Blundell obtained a number of inscribed clay prisms which had been found at Larsa. These he has presented to the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, and Professor S. H. Langdon studied and deciphered them. One known as WB 444 contains a complete list of men who 'ruled before the Flood', the names are then given of those who ruled 'after the Flood' until the year 2000 BC. Another (WB 62) gives a list of ten persons who 'ruled before the Flood'.

Signs of early development

Reference should also be made to Dr H. H. Frankfort's *Third Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Tell Asmar (Eshunna)*. Under the chapter heading of, 'The Religion of Eshunna in the Third Millennium BC' he writes, 'In addition to their more tangible results, our excavations have established a novel fact, which the student of Babylonian religions will have henceforth to take into account. We have obtained, to the best of our knowledge for the first time, religious material complete in its social setting. We possess a coherent mass of evidence, derived in almost equal quantity from a temple and from the houses inhabited by those who worshipped in that temple. We are thus able to draw conclusions which the finds studied by themselves would not have made possible. For instance, we discover that the representation on cylinder seals, which are usually connected with various gods, can all be fitted in to form a consistent picture in which a single god worshipped in this temple forms the central figure. It seems, therefore, that at this early period his various aspects were not considered separate deities in the Sumero-Akkadian pantheon.' This illuminating statement throws light on the way polytheism developed from monotheism; it used to be imagined that the reverse was the case.

Warka (the Erech of Genesis 10) has been partially excavated by German archaeologists who found remarkable evidence of an advanced state of civilisation in pre-Abrahamic days.

During subsequent years excavators have been busy tracing the various strata of civilisations backwards into the very twilight of history.

The background of the patriarchal age

Many of the sites excavated in the last seventy years go back to the days of Genesis, for it is with the earliest civilisations that archaeologists are now concerned. They have brought to light the culture and writing of men who lived 5,000 years ago, their investigations have reached even to pre-Flood days. These researches have revolutionised thought, for concerning the civilisations of this early period we previously had known next to nothing. They have done more, for they have painted in the background on a canvas which previously was almost blank. We now understand much concerning the environment of the Patriarchs and the methods of writing prevalent in the times of Genesis. Before these excavations this early period was considered legendary even by archaeologists, but almost beyond their highest hopes they have been able to dig and plan settlements which were previously in the realm of pre-history. Now, in the opinion of these experienced men, Sumerian civilisation had reached its zenith centuries before Abraham.

The archaeologists are by no means engaged in an attempt to find evidences which agree with the Bible. I know from personal contact and repeated discussions that this is far from being their aim. They sift their evidence in a most critical spirit and, if there is any bias, it is in favour of the critical standpoint rather than that of the Bible. Yet, in the words of more than one, they have expressed the truth of the matter when they have affirmed that they have been compelled by the evidence they have unearthed to accept that Genesis in this or that respect is accurate. It has been my privilege to have been present with the excavators when some of these evidences were unearthed. I have been impressed with the tremendous change which has taken place in their outlook on these early biblical records, and the assurance with which they now speak of events recorded in Genesis.

EVIDENCE OF ADVANCED CIVILISATIONS

No more surprising fact has been discovered by recent excavation than the suddenness with which civilisation appeared in the world. This discovery is the very opposite to that anticipated. It was expected that the more ancient the period, the more primitive would excavators find it to be, until traces of civilisation ceased altogether and aboriginal man appeared. Neither in Babylonia nor Egypt, the lands of the oldest known habitations of man, has this been the case. In this connection, Dr H. R. Hall writes in his *History of the Near East*, 'When civilisation appears it is already full grown', and again, 'Sumerian culture springs into view ready made', and Dr L. W. King in *Sumer and Akkad*, says, 'Although the earliest Sumerian settlements in southern Babylonia are to be set back in a comparatively remote past, the race by which they were founded appears at that time to have already attained to a high level of culture.'

All the real evidence we have, that of Genesis, archaeology, and the traditions of men, points to the Mesopotamian plain as the oldest home of man. Far Eastern civilisation, whether Chinese or Indian, cannot compete with this land in the antiquity of its peoples, for it can easily sustain its claim to be the cradle of civilisation. Yet, notwithstanding this, it is not possible to push back the habitation of man in this land many milleniums into the past, for the very simple and conclusive reason that the more southern Mesopotamian land must have been formed within the last 10,000 years or so. We know that owing to the peculiar nature of the rivers in bringing down silt and depositing it at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, the land has been formed gradually during the

past milleniums; the land is still being added to by this means. Ur of the Chaldees, which was once on the edge of the Persian Gulf, is now over one hundred miles from it.¹

Advanced civilisations

In some of these southern sites, in places where it is known that earliest man inhabited, archaeologists have, as we have seen, dug down to the virgin soil. They are dealing with these earliest traces of civilisation of the period 3500–2500 BC. Writing about the era of 3500 BC, Sir Leonard Woolley says in *The Sumerians*, 'It is astonishing to find that at this early period the Sumerians were acquainted with and commonly employed not only the column, but the arch, the vault and (as may be argued from the apsidal ends of the chambers) the dome, architectural forms which were not to find their way into the western world for thousands of years. That the general level of civilisation accorded with the high development of architecture is shown by the richness of the graves. Objects of gold and silver are abundant, not only personal ornaments but vessels, weapons and even tools being made of the precious metals: copper is the metal of everyday use.'

In his report on the 'Technical achievements of the third millennium BC as evidenced at Tell Asmar', Dr H. H. Frankfort writes, 'Man's mastery over matter progressed further in early dynastic and Akkadian times than is often believed, and it will be useful to discuss here briefly a few relevant discoveries.' He then cites the use of glass at 2600–2700 BC, and also the analysis made by C. H. Desch of the National Physical Laboratory, London, of some bronze objects found at Ur containing a quantity of tin 'corresponding to a true casting bronze'. At Tell Asmar the majority of metal objects were made of copper, but Dr Frankfort continues, 'with us the bronze of a knife handle remains an isolated instance. A knife blade from one of the private houses, however, contains 2.8 per cent of tin'. He also writes of 'a most unexpected discovery made during the last season, that iron was used for tools before 2700 BC – more than fifteen hundred years before the day when the first iron dagger known was sent, presumably by a Hittite king, as a present to the youthful Tutenkhamen of Egypt'. The bone of

the handles found at Tell Asmar had gone, but the silver foil that had covered them remained.

Sir Leonard Woolley who had done so much to illuminate the period before Abraham, writes in his *The Sumerians*, 'About 2000 BC, after the fall of the Third Dynasty at Ur, Sumerian scribes took it in hand to record the glories of the great days that had passed away. They must have had at their disposal a mass of documentary evidence, and from this they compiled, on the one hand the political history, and on the other hand the religious traditions of the land. Their histories have perished, or survive only in excerpts embodied in Babylonian chronicles of a much later date.'

The peak period of development

It was confidently expected that excavation would support the widely held view of a gradual development of civilisation. But the cumulative evidence to the contrary has grown to such substantial proportions in those two countries, Iraq and Egypt, where we find the most ancient civilisations, that it seems that soon after the Flood, civilisation reached a peak from which it was to recede. Instead of the infinitely slow development anticipated, it has become obvious that art, and we may say science, suddenly burst upon the world. For instance, in his *Outline of History*, H. G. Wells suggests that the oldest stone building known to the world is the Saqqara Pyramid. Yet, as Dr J. H. Breasted points out in his *Conquest of Civilisation*, 'from the earliest piece of stone masonry to the construction of the great Pyramid, less than a century and a half elapsed'.

Writing of this step pyramid, Sir Flinders Petrie states: 'The accuracy of construction is evidence of high purpose and great capability and training. In the earliest pyramid the precision of the whole mass is such that the error would be exceeded by that of a metal measure used on a mild or a cold day; the error of levelling is less than can be seen with the naked eye.' Again 'The conclusion seems inevitable that at 3000 BC was the heyday of Egyptian art.'

The first stone building erected at Saqqara as the funerary temple of King Zoser was excavated by Mr C. M. Firth for the Egyptian Government. Of it, Dr H. R. Hall of the British Museum

writes: 'This building is of extraordinary interest, as the first fruits of the young Egyptian genius in the field of architecture. In it we see features such as the columns and the decoration, that it is difficult to believe can be so old as the IIIrd dynasty; but there are others that are obviously archaic.' Again, 'It is easy to say that this remarkable outburst of architectural capacity must argue a long previous apprenticeship and period of development; but in this case we have not got this long period. The Egyptians of the first dynasty, some three centuries before, had apparently no stone buildings, and the reign of Zoser was in later legend notable because he had built the first stone house.'

Even this rapid development was to be outdistanced, for within a period of 150 years after the erection of this first stone building, the mightiest building in stone the world has ever known had been achieved. Khufu, or Cheops as the Greeks named him, called the great pyramid 'the Glorious'. It was about 480 feet high, and covers $12\frac{1}{2}$ acres; notwithstanding the number of stones which have been removed, it still contains 85,000,000 cubic feet of masonry. Herodotus says that it took ten years to quarry the stone and another ten years to build it into the pyramid. According to Diodorus, 300,000 men were employed on the work. All this expenditure of time and labour, in the words of the British Museum Guide on Egypt, was in order to produce 'the most magnificent tomb in the world as his last resting place'. It must be remembered that this swift progress in architecture was not maintained. Sir Flinders Petrie says: 'The materials used in building tell much about the builders. In the series of pyramids the finest material and work is at the beginning, and through the IVth to the VIth dynasties the degeneration is continuous, until a pyramid was a mere shell of building filled with chips.' This sudden burst of achievement, which occurred in Babylonia at the same period, made a lasting impression on the architecture of these countries.

It is not merely the massiveness of the great pyramid that impresses; in its construction the building reveals a greater knowledge of astronomy than was prevalent in civilised Europe 3,500 years later. Art, and we may say science, had already triumphed. The Sphinx, a statue of the second pyramid builder, is in the form

of a king's head with a lion's body; the body is 187 feet long, and the head 66 feet high. The man who planned the pyramid and had the stones cut with such fineness that they fit with marvellous perfection, who organised the transportation of these millions of tons of stone to the site, and their elevation to such heights, was not in a primitive state with a pigmy brain, even though only 150 years had elapsed since the first stone building had been erected.

Slow progress of man disproved

In the face of these facts, the slow progress of early man is a disproved assumption, and the idea that an infinitely prolonged period elapsed before civilisation appeared cannot be maintained. The prevailing theory in this respect is most assertive where it has least evidence.

Four thousand years ago in Babylonia, men were highly developed in certain arts and technical trades. For instance, two bronze goats' heads made in this period, when analysed, were found to be made of 82.9 per cent of copper, 1.33 per cent of nickel, 0.88 per cent of iron, 0.23 per cent of antimony, and 14.61 per cent of oxygen. A silver vase was found in Telloh, in circumstances which the excavators say indicate it to be nearly 4,500 years old. On it is the coat-of-arms of Lagash (four eagles with outstretched wings), also representations of stags and lions; it is a remarkable and skilful piece of work. Their lapidary work was never excelled in subsequent times, and can scarcely be surpassed in some respects in the present day, even with all our modern implements and improvements. The pottery of the Sumerian age, the early civilisation of Babylonia, is more expertly made than at any later period. Archaeologists have taken us into the distant past, and still they find civilisation at a high state of culture. In the words of Sir Leonard Woolley (*The Sumerians*), 'so far as we know, the fourth millennium before Christ saw Sumerian art at its zenith.'

These Sumerians claim to be the earliest inhabitants of the country. In his *History and Monuments of Ur*, C. J. Gadd writes, 'the Sumerians possessed the land since as far back in time as anything at all is seen or even obscurely divined, and it has already

been remarked that their own legends, which profess to go back to the creation of the world and of men, have their setting in no other land than their historical home.' Again, 'But the shapes of the flints are not those of a pure stone age, nor has any certain evidence yet been found in Iraq of a population so primitive as to have no knowledge of metal.' This recalls the words of Berosus who, writing in the third century BC, says of these southern Mesopotamian people, that they introduced into the world the method of using metal and the art of writing, 'in a word all the things that make for the betterment of life were bequeathed to men by Oannes, and since that time no further inventions have been made.' Writing of the first historical age in Babylonia, Dr Gadd adds: 'Works of art which astonish by their beauty have been found, not least at Ur itself, to be the relics of the first, not the last ages. Nothing but the good fortune that they were recovered by regular excavation could have avoided a ludicrous misconception of their date.' 'Gold is the material of their possessions and the symbol of their superfluity. In their flourishing days and at their lavish court, the arts of manufacture rose to a perfection and beauty in their products which was never seen again. The articles made were indeed of much the same kind as those of later ages, but they were, at this very early period, marked by a richness and splendour rather of Egyptian sumptuousness than the supposed sobriety of the River-lands. These deposits amaze by their riot of gold; silver also is there in great profusion, evidently nothing accounted of.'

Neither the Bible nor Babylonian excavation know anything of uncivilised man. Life at the beginning was necessarily simple, but it seems that it was not only enlightened, it was cultured.

Chapter 4

METHODS OF THE SCRIBES IN 3000 BC

One of the most remarkable facts which has emerged from archaeological research, is that the art of writing began in the earliest historical times known to man. It is now generally agreed that history first dawned in the land known as Babylonia, and that civilisation there is older than that of Egypt. Both civilisations are characterised by the use of written records. Until recent times it was the general tendency to insist on the late appearance of writing, now the pendulum has swung to the opposite direction, and the present tendency is to thrust back the period for which written records are claimed to about 3500 BC. Egyptologists have discovered documents written on papyrus which they claim may be dated as early as 3000 BC.

When visiting Professor Langdon of Oxford University, who was excavating at Kish, I witnessed the unearthing of what is believed to be the oldest piece of writing ever found. It was on a stone tablet and in the form of line pictures. This 'line picture writing' is thought by many to be a development of a still older form of writing by which the ancients made ordinary pictures convey their thoughts on stone or clay. This infant system of writing while decidedly primitive is by no means crude, for the Egyptians used it at the height of their art and power. Such a method of conveying ideas through pictures has been revived recently; it is used for wayside signs, by picture newspapers and illustrated advertisements. Some of the ancient forms of picture writing are so old that they cannot now be deciphered; when, however, such picture writing as that of the Egyptian hieroglyphics is used, it conveys the thoughts of the writers intelligibly and accurately.

A conservative estimate is that the pictographic forms of writing which have been found may be dated from 3300 to 2800 BC; thereafter cuneiform writing came into use.

Writing and writing materials

In the very early days clay became the common material on which to write, though stone was used in some instances. The clay of the Euphrates valley is remarkable for its fineness, it is as fine as well-ground flour. When made plastic with water, it was shaped into the size desired to be written upon and the writing done with a stylus made of metal or wood, one end of which was triangular. This stylus was held in the palm of the hand, and a corner of it was pressed into the plastic clay, leaving a mark which resembled a wedge (hence cuneiform writing, from *cuneus*, a wedge). All the signs were made up of single wedges, placed parallel, at various angles, or across each other. By this means nearly 600 entirely independent and distinct signs were made by use of from one to thirty wedges. There were many scribes, and though the sizes of the stylus used and consequently that of the wedges varied, yet the general character of the script remained much the same in each period of history. The care and neatness bestowed upon a tablet is often indicative of its importance.

After this wedge writing had been impressed on the soft clay, the tablet was either dried in the great heat of the Babylonian sun, or baked in a special kiln. The scribes mixed a little chalk or gypsum with the clay, because they found that by doing so, when the tablet dried, it scarcely shrank and did not crack. *These clay tablets are, next to stone, the most imperishable form of writing material known to man.* Even when dried in the sun they become so hard, that for thousands of years they have remained intact and legible. Great care is however necessary when excavating sun-dried tablets if damp earth has come into contact with them. But after they have been dried, they again become so hard that it is difficult to tell they were not baked in a kiln.

As early as 2350 BC clay envelopes were used for private letters and contract tablets, and it became the practice to rewrite the contents of the tablet on the envelope, then to close it with a

private seal. The owner could be assured that the contents had not been tampered with if the seal remained intact. Should a dispute arise the tablet within was examined.

It is probable, then, that from earliest times, the thoughts of men were set down in writing by the use of pictures or signs. These developed into 'line pictures' because straight lines were more easily inscribed on such substances as stone and clay. When clay became the common writing material, a series of wedges were impressed on the plastic clay so as to form pictures. At length pictures were almost entirely abandoned and groups of wedges formed words. Of some early Sumerian tablets found at Telloh, Professor L. W. King wrote, 'these documents from the nature of their clay and the beauty of their writing are among the finest specimens yet discovered in Babylonia' (*Sumer and Akkad*).

Flourishing cuneiform correspondence

Cuneiform writing must have become general at an early date. Thousands of clay tablets have been found written before the patriarchal age. Altogether there are more than a quarter of a million cuneiform clay tablets distributed among the various museums of the world. So common did writing become in Babylonia that a German scholar, Friedrich Delitzsch, wrote, 'In truth, when we find among the letters which have survived from those ancient times in great abundance, the letter of a woman to her husband in his travels, wherein after telling him that the little ones are well, she asks advice on some trivial matter; or the missive of a son to his father, in which he informs him that so-and-so has mortally offended him, that he would thrash the knave, but would like to ask his father's advice first; or another letter in which a son urges his father to send at last the long-promised money, offering the insolent inducement that then he will pray for his father again – all this points to a well-organised system of communication by letter and of postal arrangements.'

The following is a typical letter written for Hammurabi, once thought to be identified with the Amraphel who was chased by Abraham as recorded in Genesis 14. It is about a tax collector named Shep-Sin who had been making excuses for not remitting

to the treasury the fee which he had agreed to pay for the right of collecting the taxes in a country district of Babylonia. 'Concerning chief collector Shep-Sin I have written to thee: "Send him with the 1800 gur of sesame and 19 minae of silver owed by him as well as chief collector Sin-Mushtal with the 1800 gur of sesame and 7 minae of silver owed by him, send them to Babylon." But thou hast replied that the chief collector had said: "Lo it is harvest-time. After the harvest we will go." Thus they have said and thou hast informed me. Now the harvest is over. So soon as thou seest this tablet which I address to thee, send to Babylon Shep-Sin, the chief collector with the 1800 gur of sesame and 19 minae of silver owed by him and Sin-Mushtal, the chief collector with the 1800 gur of sesame and 7 minae of silver owed by him; with them thy loyal guard. And let them come to present themselves before me with all their wealth' (*The Letters and Inscriptions of Hammurabi*, translated by L. W. King).

Nearly a thousand years before Abraham was born and a millenium and a half before the birth of Moses, Lugalzaggisi, King of Erech, began his inscriptions with words which do not differ greatly from those used by the last king of Babylon, 2,200 years later. To quote L. Delaport: 'Schools existed where lessons were given in reading, and in tracing on clay the elements of the script's signs. That of Nippur was, in the first millennium, the most famous for the antiquity of the texts preserved in its archives. A number of tablets from the century of Hammurabi, as well as models and copies, illustrate the methods of instruction – first reading and writing simple signs with a study of their various phonetic values; then the pupil's initiation into the use consecutively of groups of signs and ideograms, and then of current formulae. He was next given instructions in grammar in the guise of paradigms – declensions and conjugations. Finally he finished his education with mathematics.'¹ One other quotation (from the Preface of D. D. Luckenbill's *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*) must suffice. 'This writing material was cheap, which may account in part for the fact that the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians seemed unwilling to transact even the smallest items of business without recourse to a written document.'

Papyrus and communication

In Egypt, where the papyrus plant flourished, papyrus became the usual material on which to write. The earliest papyrus manuscript still in existence is stated to have been written about 3000 BC. The papyrus rolls, written upon with pen and ink, were usually nine to ten inches wide, and one example is 144 feet long. Papyrus as a writing material does not appear to have been used to any extent in Iraq; the inscribed clay tablet, baked hard, was considered a more appropriate and enduring substance for that country.

The cuneiform system of writing became general in all the civilised countries east of the Mediterranean; it was also adopted by the Hittites who are so often mentioned in Genesis. That it was understood in Egypt is evident from the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, of which some 300 were found in that country in 1887. Among them we find letters dated about 1400 BC from Palestine officials to the Egyptian government, all written in cuneiform.

We are by no means certain exactly when Hebrew was introduced into Palestine. Until recently the earliest examples of the Phoenician script, on which Hebrew characters are based, were the Moabite Stone (850 BC), and the Siloam inscription (700 BC). However, since 1930 discoveries have been made at Ras Shamra in Syria, of a library of tablets written in cuneiform. In many of these a few wedge signs are used as an alphabet, thus taking this type of script back to 1300 BC. It is to excavations in Syria and Palestine that we must look for light on the problem of the origin of Hebrew. Akkadian (Babylonian and Assyrian) is as close to Hebrew as any other language and many words are common to both languages.

Deciphering the cuneiform

We must now turn to the story of the early attempts to decipher cuneiform writing; only a brief outline can be given here for it is a long and intricate one. When at first, specimens of cuneiform writing were brought to Europe, scholars even doubted whether it was real writing, or merely a form of oriental decoration! Grotefend was the first to explain the use of the mysterious

wedges. By 1802 he had, with tolerable certainty, read the three proper names of the kings found on an inscription brought from Persepolis, but apart from these three words his conclusions were generally wrong.

Major (later, General, Sir) Henry Rawlinson, the British Representative at Bagdad, at great peril, succeeded in 1835 in copying the bilingual texts of Darius at Behistun near Kermanshah. By 1839 he had read 200 lines of this inscription. In 1847 Edward Hincks, an Irish clergyman, made a great advance towards discovery when he found that cuneiform was not an alphabetical system of writing, and by 1857 he had fixed the value of 252 combinations of wedges. Other scholars confirmed the findings of both Rawlinson and Hincks.

However, a certain amount of scepticism existed regarding the translations made by these scholars, for in 1857 Mr Fox-Talbot, who was an early student of cuneiform, suggested that a test should be made by giving Rawlinson, Hincks, Oppert and himself an Assyrian cuneiform historical text which had not been published. These scholars agreed to make a translation of it entirely independently of each other, and to submit their results to the Royal Asiatic Society, who were to form a committee to compare the translations which the decipherers were to hand in. This committee found that the results were in agreement on all essential points, so that thereafter doubts were for the most part dispelled, and it was generally acknowledged that the key to the decipherment of the Babylonian cuneiform writing had been found. There were some scholars, however, who still doubted the solutions given; they were puzzled by the fact that a single sign could have more than one syllabic value. This was partly due to the circumstance that the old picture writing had been copied by wedge writing, so that a five-wedge sign placed similar to four fingers and a thumb meant a 'hand', and a set of wedges crossed star formation, indicated a 'star'. At length all doubts vanished, and the translation of cuneiform writing has become a relatively accurate science. Since that time a succession of brilliant and able scholars such as S. H. Langdon, C. J. Gadd, A. Poebel, S. N. Kramer and A. Falkenstein have grappled with the continual

problems and difficulties presented by the more and more archaic forms of writing which have been unearthed.²

Scribes, tablets and literary form

Some important elements of ancient writing must yet be noticed. What literary methods were in use in early days? What style and form did they adopt for their various documents? How and where did they sign and date their letters and other tablets? Seeing that clay tablets cannot be stitched, as can pieces of parchment or the pages of a book, what means were used to connect tablets together and preserve their proper sequence when more than one tablet was necessary in order to contain a piece of writing? These problems are rarely referred to in popular books on excavation and the student must turn to technical works, the contents of which are largely printed in cuneiform, in order to obtain an adequate answer to them.

We first notice that when scribes were employed, they not only wrote the whole of the letter, record, or legal tablet, but also took the owner's seal and impressed it on the clay; for these scribes knew best just how much pressure the seal should have on the clay to make it distinct. The seal was usually a cylinder from half an inch to an inch and a half long, but sometimes a precious stone engraved and worn on a ring was used. Each seal was specially inscribed for the owner, and often included his name in cuneiform. A reference to the use of the seal is found in Job 38:14, 'It is changed as clay under a seal.' Judah carried a seal about with him, and Joseph was given Pharaoh's seal ring (Gen. 41:42). At Ur of the Chaldees Sir Leonard Woolley found seals owned by men who lived before the Flood. The use of this seal impression was the equivalent of the modern signature. When the owner's seal had been impressed upon the clay, the tablet, if written by a scribe, had sometimes written on it the name of the owner of the tablet. (I have tablets sealed over 4,000 years ago.)

The matter to be inscribed on clay documents varied greatly. There were *historical* tablets containing narrative concerning clans or nations; *legal* tablets relating to the sale of land, buildings, or loans; *commercial* tablets, detailing in a manner similar to a

modern invoice, transactions in farm produce, cattle or common merchandise; *letters*, both official and private, and tablets containing *genealogical lists*.

Anyone familiar with cuneiform tablets can tell almost at a glance the nature of their contents. Just as in the present day the size and style of paper used (whether foolscap or letter paper, parchment or post-card) generally indicates the nature of their contents, such as a legal document, a private letter, or an official communication, so the size and style of Babylonian tablets are similarly indicative of their contents. There were prisms, cylinders, tablets made barrel-shaped and pillow-shaped, some of the latter as big as quarto paper and others as small as a postage stamp.

Ordinarily, clay tablets were made of sufficient size to contain all the writing matter to be inscribed. But in some instances this was only achieved by using a small stylus, thus enabling a larger number of words to be written on the limited space available. It was not considered satisfactory to make a clay tablet too large. This was for two good reasons; firstly its liability to breakage, and next, from consideration of weight and handiness. Instances of tablets eighteen inches by twelve are rare.³ As a general rule single tablets sufficed for ordinary documents, such as letters, contracts, invoices, genealogical lists.

Linking a series of tablets

When, however, the lengthy nature of the writing required more than one tablet, it was just as necessary then as it is today (with the pages of letters or books) to adopt means to preserve their proper sequence, especially when a considerable number of tablets were required to complete the series. This was achieved by the use of 'titles', 'catch-lines' and 'numbering'. *The title was taken from the first words of the first tablet, these were repeated at the end of each subsequent tablet, followed by the serial number of that tablet*; just as a title is often repeated at the head of each page of a book and each page is numbered. By this method, not only the series to which each tablet belonged, but also the order in which they were to be read, was indicated.

As an additional safeguard it was also the practice to use 'catch-lines'. This system has not entirely lapsed, but is still frequently adopted in writing or typing modern documents of importance. The present usage is to repeat the first two or three words of a subsequent page at the end of the preceding page. In Babylonian tablets the same method was employed, for the first few words of the subsequent tablet are repeated as 'catch-lines' at the end of the previous tablet. It will not surprise the student acquainted with ancient or eastern customs, that many of the literary habits were precisely the reverse of our own. The Hebrews commenced their writing on what to us is the last page of the book, and wrote from right to left. Similarly we find that in ancient Iraq, it was the ending and not the beginning of a tablet which contained the vital information as to the name of the writer, date on which written and description of the composition.

We would suggest that there can now be little doubt that initially much of the book of Genesis would have been written on tablets. We know that they were in use in the days of Moses. Similarly, it is very probable that the Ten Commandments were written on tablets (not 'tables') of stone, and in a manner similar to Babylonian tablets in 'that the tablets were written on both their sides' (Exod. 32:15). The Hebrew verb 'to write' means to 'cut in' or 'dig', a reference to the early method of writing.

In the following chapter we shall show how on examining the book of Genesis we find that some of these ancient literary usages are still embedded in the present English text. Just as the scribes of Nineveh 2,500 years ago, when copying tablets which had been written a thousand years earlier, ended the tablet with a short statement indicating from which library the original text had come, we suggest that the compiler of Genesis has done precisely the same.

THE KEY TO THE STRUCTURE OF GENESIS

It is the purpose of this chapter to demonstrate that the master key to the method of compilation which underlies the structure of the book of Genesis is to be found in an understanding of the phrase 'These are the generations of . . .'. If this phrase is handled consistently, the author believes that it will be found to solve the literary and many other difficulties which the book has so long presented.

All scholars appear to agree that this is the most significant and distinguishing phrase in the book. For example, Dr S. R. Driver says (*Genesis*), 'The narrative of Genesis is cast into a framework, or scheme, marked by the recurring formula "*these are the generations* (lit., begettings or genealogical histories) of . . ." The entire narrative as we now possess it is accommodated to it.' Professor H. E. Ryle informs us that the use of the phrase 'represents, as it were, successive stages in the progress of the narrative'. Commentators of all schools of thought, such as G. J. Spurrell, F. Lenormant, J. Skinner, J. E. Carpenter, C. F. Keil, H. Bullinger, J. P. Lange, and C. H. H. Wright divide the book into sections which begin with the phrase. The formula is used eleven times in Genesis. As to its importance there can be no doubt, for so significant did the Septuagint translators regard it, that they gave the whole book the title 'Genesis'. This is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word translated 'generations'.

The formula is used in the following places:

- 2:4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth.
- 5:1 This is the book of the generations of Adam.
- 6:9 These are the generations of Noah.

10:1					These are the generations of the sons of Noah.
11:10	”	”	”	”	” Shem.
11:27	”	”	”	”	” Terah.
25:12	”	”	”	”	” Ishmael.
25:19	”	”	”	”	” Isaac.
36:1	”	”	”	”	” Esau.
36:9	”	”	”	”	” Esau.
37:2	”	”	”	”	” Jacob.

Misunderstandings of some scholars

But while scholars of all schools of thought are agreed concerning its importance, they seem to have misunderstood both its use and meaning. The reason for this is quite simple. Many of these sections commence, as is frequent in ancient documents, with a genealogy, or a register asserting close family relationships. This has led them to associate the phrase ‘These are the generations of . . .’ with the genealogical list where this follows, hence they have assumed that the phrase is used as a preface or introduction. For instance, S. R. Driver writes (*Genesis*), ‘This phrase is one which belongs properly to a genealogical system; it implies that the person to whose name it is prefixed is of sufficient importance to mark a break in the genealogical series, and that he and his descendants will form the subject of the section which follows, until another name is reached prominent enough to form the commencement of a new section.’ Dr Driver’s assertion is plainly contrary to the facts.¹ For if we examine the evidence regarding the latter part of the statement we find that the most prominent person in *Genesis* is Abraham. He, more than all those mentioned, would be entitled to be named if this interpretation could claim to be true. Yet it is remarkable that while lesser persons are mentioned, there is no such phrase as ‘These are the generations of *Abrahám*.’ The first part of the statement is also erroneous, for the phrase does not always belong to a genealogical list, for in some instances no genealogical list follows: in fact, the main history of the person named has been written *before* the phrase and most certainly is not written after it. When we read, ‘This is the book of the generations of Adam,’ we learn nothing more about Adam

excepting his age at death. The record following, 'These are the generations of Isaac,' is not so much a history of Isaac as that of Jacob and Esau. Similarly, after 'These are the generations of Jacob,' we read mainly about Joseph. In fact this peculiarity has puzzled most commentators. It is therefore clear that this phrase is *not* an introduction, or a preface to the history of a person, as is so often imagined.

Consequently it is of considerable importance to ascertain the precise meaning of this phrase 'These are the generations of . . .'. The Hebrew word for 'generations' in this expression is *toledoth* and not the ordinary Hebrew word *dor* which is translated 'generations' 123 times. Fortunately there can be no reasonable doubt about the meaning of this word *toledoth*. Gesenius, the pioneer Hebrew critical scholar, in his lexicon, explains its meaning as 'History, especially family history, since the earliest history among oriental nations is mostly drawn from genealogical registers of families. Then also for the origin of anything, i.e., the story of their origin; Genesis 2:4 "this is the origin of the heavens and the earth," i.e., the story of their origin.'

In a similar manner most Hebrew scholars translate the word. For instance, F. Buhl (17th German Ed.) 'genealogical history'; F. Böettcher 'history'. H. A. C. Havernick says: '*Toledoth* signifies the history of the origin.' J. Fürst defines it as 'generation, creation, commonly an account, a history of a rise, development of a thing'. B. J. Roberts, 'This is the history'; M. Kalisch, 'beginnings'; H. Ewald, 'origins'; Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes), 'productions'; A. Dillman, 'forth-bringsings', H. E. Ryle 'the chronicles'. To this day, the Rabbis who are immersed in biblical Hebrew use the word *toledoth* as the equivalent of the ordinary English word 'history'. The Hebrew collection of Jewish traditions about the life of Jesus is called *Toledoth Jeshu* and this the Jews always translate *History of Jesus*. Even S. R. Driver sees that the word *toledoth* is so used, for in commenting on chapter 25:19, he writes, 'The generations of Isaac (according to the principle followed by the compiler), the *history* of Isaac and his descendants.' On chapter 37:1 he refers to the phrase as 'P's introduction to the *history* of Jacob.'

The meaning of family histories

It will be seen, therefore, that the word is used to describe *history*, usually family history *in its origin*. The equivalent phrase in English is, 'These are the historical origins of . . .' or 'These are the beginnings of . . .' It is therefore evident that the use of the phrase in Genesis is to *point back to the origins of the family history* and not forward to a later development through a line of descendants. This is made abundantly clear from the only occasion of its use in the New Testament, where in Matthew 1 : 1, we read, 'The book of the generations of Jesus Christ,' following which is a list of ancestors. Here it certainly means the exact opposite of descendants, for it is used to indicate the tracing back of the genealogy to its origin. This is precisely the meaning of the Greek word *geneos* translated 'generation'. So that when we read 'this is the book of the history of Adam' it is the concluding sentence of the record already written and not an introduction to the subsequent record.

The first use of the phrase is in chapter 2:4, 'These are the generations of the heavens and the earth.' In this one instance we find that scholars have generally placed the formula in its right position, for they have seen that it obviously points back to the narrative of the creation contained in the previous chapter, and that it cannot refer to the narrative which follows, for this section contains no reference to the creation of the heavens. The phrase is only appropriate as a concluding sentence. So most commentators, notwithstanding their usual opposite interpretation of the words, make the story of the creation *end* with them. Had they seen that *all* sections of Genesis are *concluded* by the use of this formula they would have recognised the key to the composition of the book.

Examples of misunderstanding

It is because commentators have seen so clearly that 'These are the generations (or origins) of the heavens and the earth,' in its first use, *ends* that narrative, that they have found themselves in such serious difficulties in their assumption that its use in all the remaining passages is as a commencing phrase. In order to make their interpretation consistent they have endeavoured to change

the position of the phrase. Thus G. J. Spurrell in his commentary on the Hebrew text of Genesis writes, 'in this chapter no history of the heavens and the earth follows; so E. Schäfer and others suppose that this half-verse properly ought to precede chapter 1:1, its present position being perhaps due to the compiler of the book who inserted it here in order to form a transition to chapter 2:4bff.' And J. E. Carpenter and G. Harford-Battersby (*The Hexateuch*) write of the formula that it 'is not appropriate to the narrative that follows it in chapter 2:4b', and say it should be transferred to the beginning of the section. Continuing this remarkable method of reasoning, Dr J. Moffatt in his translation of the Bible has deliberately altered the text by taking this sentence out of chapter 2:4, and placing it at the beginning of the first chapter of the Bible. These scholars have no manuscript authority whatever for this transposition of the text; but having inherited or assumed an incorrect interpretation of the use of the formula, they think it necessary to do violence to the text by moving it from the end to the beginning of the section, for it is obvious to them (but why in this instance only?) that the words can only refer to what has gone before, i.e., to the narrative of the creation.

Another illustration may be taken from *Ellicott's Commentary*. On Numbers 3:1 ('Now these are the generations of Aaron and Moses'), it says; 'the word generations here, as in the book of Genesis and elsewhere, is used to denote the history', then having lapsed into the usual assumption that it can only refer to the *history* of the descendants, it proceeds on this supposition to give a long and involved explanation in an endeavour to account for the fact that 'we find in this place no mention of the sons of Moses'. Had the phrase been interpreted correctly it would have been clear that the reference was backward to the record already written (about or by Aaron and Moses) and not forward to the history of their sons.

In two instances only, in Genesis, does a genealogical list follow the sentence without intervening words, and both these lists are quite complete without its use. Also, the formula is not necessarily connected with a genealogical list at all, although in almost every

instance a list of immediate descendants is given *before* the phrase as well as after it. 'These are the generations of the heavens and the earth' has obviously nothing to do with the list of descendants, neither have the two sentences in chapter 37:2 ('These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph being seventeen years old was feeding the flock with his brethren') any immediate connection with each other. 'These are the generations of Jacob' ends one section of history; 'Joseph being seventeen years old', etc., commences another section.

Early Babylonian records

In the early days in Babylonia, the most treasured tablets were those containing the record of ancestors and the appropriate place for such a genealogical list is at the *beginning* of a tablet. That it was quite customary to give a genealogical list at the commencement can be seen from the beginnings of such books as Exodus and Chronicles. When this is understood it clears away the great difficulty out of which commentators have laboured to extricate themselves in endeavours to account for the absence of a genealogical list after the formula. An instance of this may be cited from William Paul's *Analysis and Critical Interpretation of the Hebrew Text*. On Genesis 6:9, he says, 'This is the record of the history of Noah, for so 'Toledoth' is rendered by Rosenmuller, Gesenius and Lee here and in Genesis 2:4.' He then lapses into the conventional assumption that a genealogical table must necessarily follow, but states: 'There is here no genealogical account of Noah's pedigree, with the exception of the mention of his three sons of whom previous notice was taken.' It is therefore evident that the formula is not a preamble to a genealogical list, but an ending to such a list or narrative. This may be seen from numerous early tablets.

The genuineness of these Genesis records and their uncorrupted state, is surely attested by this adherence to the prevailing literary method of ancient writing, where we find little or nothing by way of preface, but frequently a very formal conclusion. In contradistinction to its simple opening, the conclusion of Leviticus is, 'These are the commandments which the Lord commanded

Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai,' and the last sentence of Numbers reads: 'These are the commandments and judgments which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho.' One instance outside Scripture may be cited, that of the Code of Hammurabi, the king who was contemporary with Terah and Abraham. Here again the conclusion is more lengthy and formal than the preface. It is at the end of his great inscription that he speaks of having written it. He says, 'The righteous laws which Hammurabi the wise king established . . . my weighty words have I written upon my monument.'

Now the Genesis method is the general literary method of early times. But commentators, having assumed that the formula begins a section and not realising that it *ends* it, have used this key to its compilation upside down, and consequently the problem of the composition of the book of Genesis has remained unsolved by them. For instance, J. Skinner wrote (*Genesis*) just before he died in 1929, 'The problem of the *Toledoth* headings has been keenly discussed in recent writings, and is still unsettled.'

Other important features

Another important fact needs to be emphasised in connection with this formula's use. On its second mention (5 : 1) we read: 'This is the *book* of the origins of Adam.' Here the word *sepher*, translated 'book', means 'written narrative', or as F. Delitzsch translates it, 'finished writing'. Moreover, the Septuagint Version renders chapter 2 : 4: 'This is the *book* of the origins of the heavens and the earth.' The 'books' of that time were tablets, the word simply means 'record'. The earliest records of Genesis, therefore, claim to have been written down, and not as is often imagined passed on to Moses by word of mouth. We are of course, not sure who wrote the original tablet containing Genesis 1. The archaeological and other evidence, however, strongly suggests that anything written up to the time that Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees was written on tablets. As we have sought to show in a previous chapter, the Ten Commandments were written on tablets.

Finally, a careful examination of the use of the name of the person stated at the end of 'These are the origins of . . .' makes it clear that it refers to the owner or writer of the tablet, rather than to the history of the person named; i.e., 'These are the origins of Noah' does not necessarily mean 'This is the history *about* Noah', but the history written or possessed by Noah. When in chapter 11:27, we read: 'These are the generations of Terah', we do not read much about Terah, for it simply records that he was the son of Nahor. The phrase is intended to indicate that Terah either wrote, or had written for him, the list of his ancestors found in verses 10 to 27. Nowhere is there a 'these are the generations of Abraham', yet his story has been fully written, for we are told that Isaac and Ishmael wrote or owned the tablets containing it. In the early days of writing, it was often the practice to impress the name of the scribe at the end of the tablet. The formula 'these are the generations of . . .' may have been inserted by Moses, the compiler. It is possible that the Patriarchs mentioned in Genesis did not with their own hands impress the cuneiform, or other ancient script, on the stone or plastic clay; in some instances a scribe may have been employed.

To summarise, we have noted three things about this phrase:

- (1) It is the *concluding sentence* of each section, and therefore points backward to a narrative already recorded.
- (2) That the earliest records claim to have been *written*.
- (3) It normally refers to the *writer* of the history, or the owner of the tablet containing it.

The book of Genesis, therefore, contains the following series of tablets possessed by the persons whose names are stated. All of these tablets could have come into the possession of Moses, who compiled the book as we now have it, in the way that family records were normally handed down.

Tablet

series	Contents
1	1:1 to 2:4 This is the book of the origins of the heavens and the earth.
2	2:5 to 5:2 This is the book of the origins of Adam.

- 3 5:3 to 6:9a These are the origins (or histories) of Noah.
- 4 6:9b to 10:1 These are the origins (or histories) of the sons of Noah.
- 5 10:2 to 11:10a These are the origins (or histories) of Shem.
- 6 11:10b to 11:27a These are the origins (or histories) of Terah.
- 7 & 8 11:27b to 25:19a These are the origins (or histories) of Ishmael and Isaac.
- 9-11 25:19b to 37:2a These are the origins (or histories) of Esau and Jacob.

In this way Moses clearly indicates the source of the information available to him and names the persons who originally possessed the tablets from which he gained his knowledge. These are not arbitrarily invented divisions, they are stated by the author to be the framework of the book.

Two supporting facts

Two remarkable confirmations of these divisions are:

(1) In no instance is an event recorded which the person or persons named could not have written from his own intimate knowledge, or have obtained absolutely reliable information.

(2) *It is most significant that the history recorded in the sections outlined above, ceases in all instances before the death of the person named, yet in most cases it is continued almost up to the date of death, or the date on which it is stated that the tablets were written.*

In confirmation of the first point, it will be seen in a later chapter that these narratives bear all the marks of having been written by those who were personally acquainted with the events recorded. These valuable personal histories were not entrusted, as is generally supposed, merely to the memory of man to be handed down century after century by word of mouth. Writing was prevalent at a very early date, and of all the things to be put down in writing, few were of more importance than the events recorded in the early chapters of Genesis. Moreover, we know that in the most ancient

times men concerned themselves with writing about the very things which have been preserved to us in the earlier part of this book; the stories of Creation and the Flood were among the oldest and most frequently written of the historical tablets. We have tablets from Babylonia written 4,000 years ago relating to the Creation and the Flood. It is true that these Babylonian accounts are grotesque when compared with Genesis, but they were written 600 years before Moses was born, and even at this date were only copies of tablets which had been written centuries before.

The second corroboration is that in almost every instance where it is applicable, the history contained in the section indicated ends just before the death of the person whose name is given at the conclusion of the tablet. Nine persons are mentioned. Tablet I bears no name, it simply reads: 'These are the origins of the heavens and the earth.'

Tablets two to eleven

An examination of the remaining sections reveals that in:

Tablet II (2:5 to 5:2), the history ceases abruptly with Tubal-cain, the 'instructor of every artificer in brass and iron', Jabal, 'the father of such as dwell in tents and have cattle', Jubal, 'the father of all such as handle the harp and organ', and Tubal-cain 'the forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron'. These men were the eighth generation from Adam, and a comparison with the chronology given in Genesis 5 shows that this generation lived immediately before Adam's death.

Tablet III (5:3 to 6:9a) written, or owned, by Noah. The genealogical list ends with the birth of his three sons. This list is followed by a statement concerning the corruption of mankind, revealing that this was the cause of the Flood, which took place when Noah was an old man. In this instance he could have written the story of the Flood. This is contained in the tablets of the 'history of the sons of Noah'.

Tablet (series) IV (6:9b to 10:1) written, or owned, by Noah's sons. They contain the account of the Flood and the death of Noah. How long Ham and Japheth lived after Noah's death we are unaware, but we know that Shem survived him by 150 years,

hence there is nothing in this section which the sons of Noah could not have written.

Tablet (series) V (10 : 2 to 11 : 10) written, or owned, by Shem. Shem writes of the birth and the formation into clans of the fifth generation after him. We know that he outlived the last generation recorded in this tablet, i.e., the sons of Joktan.

Tablet VI (11 : 10 to 27) written, or owned, by Terah. Terah's genealogical list registers the death of his father Nahor, while he himself lived on till his son Abraham was seventy-five years old. Had Terah lived another eleven years he would have been able to record the birth of Ishmael, and if for another twenty-five years it would have been possible for him to add, 'and Abraham begat Isaac'. But the history contained in this tablet ends immediately before his own death. If the words found at the end of the tablet, 'and Terah lived seventy years', refer to the date he wrote it, then according to the Samaritan Version it was written just one year after the last chronological event mentioned in it, i.e. the death of Nahor.

The series of Tablets VII and VIII (11 : 27 to 25 : 19) written, or owned, by the two brothers Ishmael and Isaac. The latest chronological statement (25 : 1 to 4) refers to the birth of Abraham's great-grandsons, and of their growth into clans. Ishmael died forty-eight years and Isaac 105 years after Abraham. As Abraham would seem to have married Keturah soon after Sarah's death (which occurred thirty-eight years before Abraham died), this period of thirty-eight years added to the remaining 105 years of Isaac's life, is a most reasonable period to assign for the birth of Abraham's great-grandsons by Keturah. This indicates that the history recorded in these tablets ceases just before the death of Isaac, whose name is given as the last writer, for Isaac survived Ishmael by fifty-seven years and records his death.

The remaining Tablets (series) IX, X, and XI (25 : 20 to 37 : 2), were the tablets belonging to, or written by, Esau and Jacob. Jacob is the central figure in the record, and the latest chronological statement in them is that of the death of Isaac. Immediately before the ending formula, 'these are the origins of Jacob', we read, 'and Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojourning, in the land of

Canaan.’ This sentence has seemed so isolated, that it has been regarded by many to have little relation to the context, yet, as we shall see in a later chapter, it is evidence of the date when and where the tablets were written. Within a few years Jacob had moved down to Egypt. This sentence indicates where he was living when he closed his record. For although he tells us of the death of Isaac, he says nothing whatever of the sale of Joseph into slavery, which occurred eleven years before Isaac’s death, neither does he tell of Joseph’s interpretation of the butler’s dream, or of any other event in Egypt. Until Jacob went down to Egypt (ten years after he had buried his father), thus leaving ‘the land of his father’s sojourning’, he could not know anything whatever about these things. Thus the record of Jacob closes precisely at the period indicated in the sentence in chapter 37 : 1. He had gone back to the south country, Hebron (where his father lived), only ten years before Isaac had died, and he records his death. Within ten years of this latter event, Jacob was himself living in Egypt. So this hitherto obscure verse of chapter 37 clearly indicates not only that Jacob wrote the tablets, but when and where they were written.

It cannot be a mere coincidence that each of these sections, or series of tablets, should contain only that which the person named at the end of them could have written from personal knowledge. Anyone writing even a century after these Patriarchs, could and would never have written thus. It is therefore abundantly clear that this important formula ‘These are the origins of . . .’ which is acknowledged by almost every scholar to be the framework on which the records of Genesis are constructed, is *consistently* used by the compiler. It is often a rule in Scripture that the first use of a word or phrase fixes its future meaning, and we have seen that the obvious and admitted meaning it bears in its first use in chapter 2 : 4, is appropriate in the remaining instances of its use in Genesis. Thus we are delivered from the labyrinth of conflicting guesses and given clearly indicated sources. These are the names of the persons who wrote or owned the tablets from which Moses compiled the book.

THE GREAT AGE OF THE BOOK

Every part of the book of Genesis furnishes evidence that it was compiled in the present form by Moses and that the documents from which he compiled it were written much earlier. The various lines of evidence may be summarised as follows:

(1) The presence of Babylonian words in the first eleven chapters.

(2) The presence of Egyptian words in the last fourteen chapters.

(3) Reference to towns which had either ceased to exist, or whose original names were already so ancient in the time of Moses, that as compiler of the book, he had to insert the new names, so that they could be identified by the Hebrews living in his day.

(4) The narratives reveal such familiarity with the circumstances and details of the events recorded, as to indicate that they were written by persons concerned with those events.

(5) Evidences that the narratives were originally written on tablets and in an ancient script.

Babylonian and Egyptian words

The early chapters of Genesis contain Babylonian words; in fact, it is said by some linguistic experts that the whole environment of these chapters is Babylonian. As these chapters claim to have been written down by persons then living in that country, this is what we would expect. It is a strong indication that they were written at a very early date. How do the experts account for the fact that the only definitely Babylonian words are to be found in the earlier chapters of Genesis, and not in the latter part of the

book, or in the rest of the Pentateuch? It is impossible to suggest that they found their way into these particular chapters after the Hebrews' second contact with Babylon in the days of Daniel or Ezra. For even the most critical scholars admit that these accounts had been written before then.

When the narrative reaches the point at which Joseph arrives in Egypt, the whole environment changes. We find definitely Egyptian names such as 'Potiphar, the captain of the guard' (37:36). 'Zaphnathpaaneah and Asenath' (41:45). A. S. Yahuda's testimony regarding this is weighty. We find ourselves removed from the simple country life of the Patriarchs in Palestine, and introduced to the customs of a Pharaoh and the constitution of a kingdom. We are told of the particular method by which the land was granted to the Egyptian priests (47:22); that Joseph has a gold chain about his neck, that runners who went before his chariot demand homage to him as to the highest official of the court (41:42). When Joseph's brethren come down to Egypt he does not eat with them, 'because the Egyptians might not eat bread with Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians'—a statement which I submit would never have been written at a time later than Moses. Finally, we are told how the bodies of Jacob and Joseph were embalmed in accordance with the normal Egyptian custom, and of the forty days that this process occupied. The person who wrote these chapters was intimately acquainted with Egyptian life and thought.

Lost cities and new place names

There is one sentence—probably the most important piece of evidence of all—which must be added to the five lines of evidence already indicated. In Genesis 10:19 we read, 'and the border of the Canaanite was from Zidon as thou goest towards Gerar unto Gaza; as thou goest towards *Sodom and Gomorrah*.' This sentence arrests attention, for it must have been written before the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, which took place in Abraham's day. So completely were those cities blotted out that all trace of them became lost and it was believed that they were buried beneath the Dead Sea. In our study of the sources we have seen

that this sentence occurs in Shem's tablet, and in his day Sodom and Gomorrah were still standing.

The third line of evidence is that many of the original place names given in Genesis were so old, even in the age of Moses, that it became necessary for him to add an explanatory note, in order to identify these ancient names for the sake of the children of Israel entering the land after their exodus from Egypt. Several instances of this may be seen in Genesis 14. When in the time of Abraham this tablet was written, it recorded the movements of certain kings, and the names of the places as they were *then* known, were put down. But in the four hundred years which elapsed between Abraham and Moses, some of these names had become changed, or the localities unknown to the Israelites. So Moses, with this ancient text (i.e. Genesis 14) before him, in compiling the book of Genesis added a note to enable his readers to identify them. Thus we have:

Bela (which is Zoar) verses 2 and 8.

Vale of Siddim (which is the Salt Sea) verse 3.

En-mishpat (which is Kadesh) verse 7.

Hobah (which is on the left hand of Damascus) verse 15.

Valley of Shaveh (which is the King's Dale) verse 17.

These are the only occasions in which these ancient names are used in the Bible.

Further instances of the use of notes to explain ancient names or localities are to be found in chapter 16: 14: Beer-lahai-roi (behold it is between Kadesh and Bered); in chapter 35: 19 we read of Ephrath (which is Bethlehem); in chapter 23: 2 we are told that 'Sarah died in Kirjath-arba (the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan).' This quote is of special interest as it was necessary to give not only its modern name, but even to say that Hebron was in the land of Canaan. This surely indicates that the note was added at a very early date, and before the children of Israel had entered the land. No one in later times would need to be told where Hebron was. The children of Israel must have known it quite well after its capture in Joshua's day, when the city was given to Caleb for an inheritance. It then became one of the 'cities of refuge' and

as such must have been familiar throughout the land. Besides all this, David was king in Hebron for seven years. On the other hand, it would be necessary for a people not yet entered into the land to be told, not only the name of the place where the founders of the race had lived, but where this place was situated.

We get a similar note in the nineteenth verse of the same chapter, 'the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre (the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan)'. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had been buried in this cave of Machpelah; consequently it would have been well known to their contemporaries. But it must be remembered that the whole of the nation excepting Joshua and Caleb had died in the time which had elapsed between leaving Sinai and entering into the land of Canaan. I submit that once the children of Israel had settled in the land, there would be no need of a note to explain where the founders of their race, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had been buried. I suggest that these explanations were written for those who were about to enter into the land of Canaan. This supports the view that these notes were written by Moses who died on the margin of the land, immediately before the Israelites had entered into it.

Primitive geographical expressions such as the 'south country' (20: 1 and 24: 62), 'the east country' (25: 6) are used in the time of Abraham. These ancient designations never reappear as a description of the countries adjoining the south and east of Palestine. After the time of Genesis they have well-known and well-defined names. I submit that they were written down in *early* days, and that no writer after Moses would have used such archaic expressions as these.

Another most significant mark of antiquity in Genesis is to be found in the existence of small 'city states' and of a large number of clans. By the time of Solomon these had ceased to be, and even at the time when Abraham lived, Babylon and Egypt were dominated by powerful monarchs ruling from their capitals over vast districts.

Familiarity with local detail

In a later chapter we shall look at further facts indicating that

these records were written soon after the incidents recorded had happened. Also that they were written with so great a familiarity with the details of these happenings, that the conclusion is inevitable that the men who were most concerned in these events, had written them down soon after their occurrence. An instance of this may be cited in the action of Sarah with her maid Hagar, in relation to the birth of Ishmael. The procedure followed both by Abraham and Sarah was precisely that laid down in the law then in existence as evidenced by laws 144–6 of the Code of Hammurabi. In Mosaic times quite another law was ordained in Deuteronomy. The modern hypothesis that these incidents are a selection made for religious purposes, does not agree with the facts. For, as in other parts of Scripture, the narrative recounts the weakness as well as the strength of the Patriarchs; their sins, as well as their virtues. The records have not been idealised, but left in their ancient and truthful reality.

Evidence of tablets in the text

The fifth and final series of evidences for the antiquity of Genesis, is found in the various indications that these records were originally written on tablets, and in accordance with ancient methods. In Babylonia the size of the tablet used depended upon the quantity of writing to be inscribed thereon. If this was sufficiently small, it was written on one tablet of a size that would satisfactorily contain it. When, however, the quantity to be inscribed was of such a length that it became necessary to use more than one tablet it was customary:

- (1) To assign to each series of tablets a 'title'.
- (2) To use 'catch-lines', so as to ensure that the tablets were read in their proper order (see chapter 4).

In addition, many tablets ended with a colophon. This was the equivalent of the modern title-page. However, on ancient tablets it was placed at the end of the written matter, instead of at the beginning as is now done. This colophon frequently included among other things:

- (3) The name of the scribe who wrote the tablet.
- (4) The date when it was written.

There are clear indications in Genesis of the use of some of these methods. As these literary aids relate to the tablets as they came into the possession of Moses, it is of course unlikely that we should find them all in the document as completed by him. That the book was compiled at an early date, certainly not later than the age of Moses, is indicated by the presence of these literary aids. It is remarkable confirmation of the purity with which the text has been transmitted to us, that we find them still embedded in this ancient document.

Evidence of these literary aids may be observed in the following significant repetition of words and phrases connected with the beginning or ending of each of the series of tablets, now incorporated in the book of Genesis.

- 1:1 God created the heavens and the earth.
- 2:4 Lord God made the heavens and the earth.
- 2:4 When they were created.
- 5:2 When they were created.
- 6:10 Shem, Ham and Japheth.
- 10:1 Shem, Ham and Japheth.
- 10:32 After the Flood.
- 11:10 After the Flood
- 11:26 Abram, Nahor and Haran.
- 11:27 Abram, Nahor and Haran.
- 25:12 Abraham's son.
- 25:19 Abraham's son.
- 36:1 Who is Edom.
- 36:8 Who is Edom.
- 36:9 father of the Edomites (lit. Father Edom).
- 36:43 father of the Edomites (lit. Father Edom).

The very striking repetitions of these phrases exactly where the tablets begin and end, will best be appreciated by those scholars acquainted with the methods of the scribes in Babylonia, for those were the arrangements then in use to link the tablets together. I submit that the repetition of these words and phrases precisely in those verses attached to the colophon, 'These are the origins of . . .', cannot possibly be a mere coincidence. They have remained buried in the text of Genesis, their significance apparently unnoticed.

Titles and dating of tablets

On cuneiform tablets the 'title' was taken from the commencing words of the record. In a similar manner the Hebrews called the first five books of the Bible by titles taken from their opening words. Thus they called Genesis *berēshith*, the Hebrew for 'in the beginning'; Exodus was called *w^e'ēlleh shemōth* ('Now these are the words') the words with which the book commences; so Leviticus is called *wayyiqrā* ('and he called'); Numbers, *b^emidbar* ('in the wilderness', Deuteronomy, *hadd^ebarīm* ('the words'). To this day these are the titles given to the first five books of Moses in the Hebrew Bible.

This practice was carried out in the ancient East in the following manner. When two or more tablets form a series, they were identified together because the first few words of the first tablet were repeated in the colophon (or title-page) of the subsequent tablets, somewhat similar to the way in which the name of a chapter is repeated at the head of each page of a modern book. Where pages of a book were not bound together as they are now, the advantage of this would be obvious. By the repetition of such words as we have listed, the whole of the Genesis tablets were connected together.

In addition, some of these tablets show evidence of 'dating'. After a tablet had been written and the name impressed on it, it was customary in Babylonia to insert the date on which it was written. In the earliest times this was done in a very simple fashion, for it was not until later that tablets were dated with the year of the reigning king. It was the custom to do it in the following way: 'The

year in which the throne of Nabu was made', 'Year Sumu-el the king built the wall of Sippar', 'Year of the canal Tutu-hengal' (presumably the year the canal was cut), 'Year Samsuiluna made a throne of gold', 'Year in which canal Hammurabi was dug'.

The method of dating the Genesis tablets is seen in the following instances. The end of the first tablet (2:4) reads, '... in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.' The sense in which the phrase 'in the day' is used may be seen from such a passage as verse 17 of the same chapter, where we read, 'in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die'; and also verse 2, 'God rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made.' At the end of the second tablet (5:1) we read: 'This is the book of the origins of Adam *in the day that God created man.*' Later tablets are dated by indicating the dwelling-place of the writer at the time that the colophon was written and these dates are immediately connected with the ending phrase, 'these are the generations of ...' Instances of this are:

25:11 And Isaac dwelt by Beer-lahai-roi.

36:8 And Esau dwelt in Mount Seir.

37:1 And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father sojourned, in the land of Canaan. (RV)

This early method of dating is in agreement with the current literary usage of that early age and also with the rest of the text, as we have noted in a previous chapter. For instance, it was precisely at the time he was living in 'the land of his father's sojourning' that Jacob's tablets were written.

Accumulative evidence of tablets

I suggest that when this ancient method of 'dating' tablets is fully appreciated, and the use of 'catch-lines' (referred to in chapter 4) is understood, it will be seen that we have the means of solving such problems as that presented by the wording of Genesis 11:26 and 27, 'and Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor and Haran, now these are the origins of Terah. Terah begat Abram, Nahor and Haran.' The first statement in these verses has been a great stumbling-block to chronologists and commentators,

for as it reads, it implies that when Terah was seventy years old, all the three sons named were born to him. But Scripture makes it plain that this was not so, as anyone may see by referring to Acts 7:4, and Genesis 12:4, where it is clear that Abram was not born until sixty years later, i.e. when Terah was 130 years old. It is mere speculation to attempt to give the birth dates of the other two sons. To what then does the statement 'and Terah lived seventy years' refer? I venture to suggest that (in conformity with the prevailing practice of the times) Terah was 'dating' his tablet, i.e. indicating that it was written when he was seventy years old. This of course implies acceptance of the Samaritan date of the death of Nahor, the father of Terah, which occurred one year before Terah was seventy. The repetition of the names 'Abram, Nahor, and Haran', before and after the formula, or *toledoth*, indicates that they are 'catch-lines' and conform to the usual practice of repeating the first words of the subsequent tablet after the last line of its preceding tablet.

Moreover, it would not be an uncommon practice when tablets relating to ancestors came into possession of a descendant that he should add his own tablet giving his own ancestry. This serves to connect him with the persons and events previously recorded. I suggest that this is just what Terah has done. He has simply added a list of his ancestors (Gen. 11:10 to 27) connecting him with Shem. Again we must emphasise that such genealogical tablets were general and important in his day. Again, we see that the literary methods employed in connecting together these tablets comprising Genesis, are precisely those which were in use in the most ancient times. The writing contained on the tablets in the possession of Abraham (Gen. 1:1 to 11:27) contain about one-fifth of the number of words which were inscribed on the Stele of Hammurabi, itself composed at a time which may well be the age of Abraham (that is about 1750 BC). The brevity of the Bible's earliest records is worthy of note. That of the Creation is the most brief, notwithstanding its importance. All the records before the Flood are concise and brief. Then they gradually expand. Writing before the Flood would probably be less extended than it later became in the time of Abraham. In his day writing had already

become common, so we find that the story of his life and of his sons is written in much more detail.

The remaining literary aid was the use of the colophon. This was a final paragraph, sometimes long, in other instances only a few words. Among other things, this appendix usually stated the name of the writer or owner of the tablet. The remnants of this ancient usage may still be seen in periodicals and newspapers where the name of the printer and publisher appear as the last lines of the paper. As we have said, the usual colophon in Genesis is, 'These are the origins of . . .'

To recapitulate, we would emphasise that as such ancient literary aids and cuneiform usages are still discernible, they clearly reveal the purity of the text and the care with which it has been handed down to us. It also signifies that in the earliest times these records were written on clay tablets, and that *these tablets forming the series, i.e. Genesis 1:1 to 37:1, were joined together in the same manner as we have them today*. We would claim that the evidence of the text of Genesis itself is quite incompatible with the hypothesis advanced by modern scholarship, viz. that Genesis was composed, or edited, at a much later date from sources which were originally unrelated to each other.

WHO WROTE THE ORIGINAL TABLETS?

Before examining in greater detail the substance of these tablets, it is necessary to recall again the facts brought to light in recent years regarding the literature of the period under review. It is now certain that writing was prevalent before the days of Abraham. To those acquainted with the results of excavation in the Near East, not only is there no difficulty in believing that the Patriarchs caused such records to be written, but in view of the exceptional nature of the revelation of God to them, it would be surprising if they had not caused the narrative to be set down in writing.

In January 1902 M. de Morgan found at Persepolis three broken pieces of black diorite stone which, when fitted together, measured nearly eight feet in height and twenty inches across. On it had been written some 8,000 words in cuneiform, arranged in 4,000 narrow lines, and in forty-nine columns. The number of words contained on this stone is about a quarter of the number in the book of Genesis. The writing is cut into the stone with considerable care, and the laws reveal a most advanced state of civilisation. If the original tablets which Abraham caused to be written, such as Genesis 14, were now available, scholars would be able to read his cuneiform writing. The originals of other tablets written long before Abraham's day have been translated by Assyriologists. The fact that the tablets were written 5,000 years ago presents no difficulties to the archaeologists. I myself have witnessed the unearthing of several tablets written soon after the Flood. Of one tablet Professor S. H. Langdon claimed that it was certainly written *before* the Flood. No longer is there any good reason to doubt that the very earliest records in Genesis – those of

the Creation and the Fall – were written down in a very early form of writing, within the period which Genesis assigns to Adam's sons.

The first series of tablets

Of course, no man could have written the first series of tablets (1: 1 to 2: 4) from personal knowledge of the manner in which the world was created. Significantly enough it is the only tablet which does not state the name of the author or writer. It simply says 'these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth.' The facts contained in the narrative preserved on this tablet were also beyond the normal outlook of the time. From where did it come? Who wrote it? The second question is not so important as the first. For if it is not a concise account revealed by God of the order of Creation, it is merely a piece of literary speculation. We must face the fact that it contains facts which centuries of modern scientific research, aided by the use of recently perfected instruments of marvellous precision and power, have only lately discovered. Yet so profoundly accurate is this narrative that one scholar (Professor G. W. Wade in his *Old Testament History*) writes of the inherent improbability of an ancient writing anticipating accurately the conclusions of modern science.

Naturally the wording is simple, but the truth conveyed is profound. Human as the language is, it is still the best medium God could use to communicate with man. It is God teaching Adam in a simple, yet faultless way, how the earth and the things which he could see on and around it had been created. The Lord God talked with Adam in the Garden. This tablet purports to be a simple record of what God said and did. Adam is told just as much as his mind could understand. The details and processes are not fully revealed. Had they been, how could he and later ages have understood them? We would claim, then, that this first section of Genesis is the most ancient piece of writing. It is a record of what God told Adam. It is not an *impersonal* general account. It is God teaching the first man the elemental things about the universe, at the very dawn of human language. Here we get back also the very inauguration of written history. For it may have been written

before even the sun and moon had been given names. Let us note the simplicity with which the facts are presented. There is a type of repetition and simplicity rarely recurring in Scripture; 'Let there be *lights* in the firmament . . . and God made two *great lights*, the *greater light* to rule the day and the *lesser light* to rule the night.'

We know that long before the time of the Flood men worshipped the sun and the moon, and had given them names. Had this first chapter of Genesis been written even as late as Abraham's day, instead of the simple expression 'greater light' we should have had the Babylonian word for the sun, *shamash*. It is used in the legal tablet (containing the names of thirteen witnesses) in my personal possession. Moreover, *shamash* was the name of the sun god worshipped by the Babylonians. In his laws, Hammurabi depicts himself in the attitude of receiving his laws from this *shamash*. When Abraham left Ur, the moon god was the chief object of worship in that city. The great tower built in the centre of the city (at least 250 years before the time of Abraham) was surmounted by a temple dedicated to this moon god. Names for the sun and moon have been among the oldest words known in any language, yet this document was written before names had been given to the 'greater and lesser lights'.

Features of the first document

This earliest of all documents is written in a most exceptional way. It is recording the words of God used in telling Adam the story of Creation. Observe the method employed in writing this narrative. 'And God *said* . . . and God *called* . . .' What God called the components of the universe is placed on record. 'And God called the light *day* and the darkness called He *night*', 'and God called the firmament *heaven*: and God called the dry land *earth* and the gathering together of waters called He *seas*.' It is written in the style of someone recording precisely what Adam heard when the narrative was told to him.

Further it is written on a very personal note. It is far removed from the style of a vision. There is no 'I saw', 'I beheld', 'I heard'. It is direct speech, 'and God said, Behold I have given you every herb yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed to you, and it shall be for

meat.' These words were spoken to the first man. It is not a vague and general account. All the reader needs to do is to realise its unique features and to compare it with the Babylonian versions.

The Greek version of the Old Testament translates the final sentence of this account 'This is the *Book* of the origin of the heavens and the earth.' How it came to be written we are not told, but we are informed that language originated in Eden. Adam, who gave names to the living creatures, could conceivably write this short account in the first form of writing. The ancient literary methods, already referred to, show that the tablet could have been in existence by the time of Noah. The use by the Septuagint of the word 'book' indicates that the original account was written down early, though it may have been repeated verbally at first.

This first chapter is so ancient that it does not contain mythical or legendary matter; these elements are entirely absent. It bears the markings of having been written before myth and legend had time to grow, and not as is often stated, at a later date when it had to be stripped of the mythical and legendary elements inherent in every other account of Creation extant. This account is so original that it does not bear a trace of any system of philosophy. Yet it is so profound that it is capable of correcting philosophical systems. It is so ancient that it contains nothing that is merely nationalistic; neither Babylonian, Egyptian nor Jewish modes of thought find a place in it, for it was written before clans, or nations, or philosophies originated. Surely, we must regard it as the original, of which the other extant accounts are merely corrupted copies. Others incorporate their national philosophies in crude polytheistic and mythological form. This is pure. Genesis chapter 1 is as primitive as man himself. It is the threshold of written history.

The second series

The second tablet or series of tablets extends from the fifth verse of the second chapter to chapter 5 : 2, and contains an account of the beginning of man upon the earth, the Garden of Eden, the Fall, and the murder of Abel. This tablet also bears the clearest marks of extreme antiquity and simplicity, which could never have come from a late hand. For instance, the test of obedience is the eating or refraining from eating the fruit of a tree. The tempter is referred to

after the Fall as 'a serpent in the dust', a form never afterwards used in the Old Testament. Again, it is one that no late writer was likely to employ. Then there are expressions such as 'sin crouching at the door' in connection with the story of the offering made by Cain. Also there is the remark of Lamech, 'I have slain a young man to my wounding and a young man to my hurt', pointing to contemporary archaic events of which no explanation is given. Again the record shows evidence of being a personal one, 'I heard Thy voice in the Garden and I was afraid . . . I hid myself.' I suggest that no late writer would have used such intimate language as 'the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day'. The Jew had been taught a most reverential conception of God, as One infinitely eternal and supreme, the Maker of the heavens and the earth. Even unto Moses God did not appear except in majesty and awe. The expression 'cool of the day' is most natural in the Near East; for the greater part of the year it experiences intense heat throughout mid-day, while in the evening a cool wind blows. Often in Iraq I have heard that expression used to indicate the time immediately after the sun has gone down and the evening wind begins to blow.

The one person who knew all the facts about the Fall is stated to be the source from which the account came. This second tablet takes the story up to the birth of the sons of Lamech. Soon after this Adam died; the concluding words of the tablet are, 'This is the book of the origins of Adam.'

Noah's tablet

Noah's tablet comprises 5:3 to 6:9, and commences with a genealogical register of the Patriarchs connecting him with Adam. This list is followed by a statement concerning the corruption extant in his day, together with an explanation of the cause of it. 'These are the origins of Noah.' It is a small tablet of narrative writing added to a genealogical list.

The fourth series

The next series of tablets form 6:9 to 10:1. We are still in an ancient realm of thought. It commences in a Babylonian scene, but

ends outside that country. Although for the first time we have moved beyond the confines of the ancient Mesopotamian plain, the writer does not take us to Palestine but to Ararat. We also have the use of that exceptional word ‘gopher’ wood in connection with the construction of the ark. This is most archaic, and the word is never used again. The tablets end with the statement: ‘These are the origins (or family histories) of the sons of Noah.’ They are almost wholly taken up with the account of the Flood. This story has received considerable attention from modern scholars who assert that it was borrowed from Babylonia. They have made much of ‘two accounts’ or ‘three accounts’ interwoven into the narrative. J. Astruc, when he came to analyse this story, insisted that it contained three accounts. He instanced such passages as these in chapter 7:

- Verse 18 And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth.
19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth.
20 Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail.

Also

- Verse 21 And all flesh died that moved upon the face of the earth.
22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of life and all that was in the dry land died.
23 And every living substance was destroyed.

It is sufficient here to note two most significant facts. First, that the conclusion of the tablet informs us that more than one person is connected with the writing of the narrative, for it is the history of the three *sons* of Noah. Next, that an examination of it reveals every indication that it was written by several eye-witnesses of the tragedy.

The fifth series

The fifth series of tablets is contained in 10:2 to 11:9, and therefore includes the famous tenth chapter – the account of the origins of the clans which became nations. Embedded in this

chapter is a brief statement regarding Nimrod. In the earlier verses of the eleventh chapter we have an account of the building of the Tower of Babel and the scattering of the peoples. Of these records it is written, 'These are the histories of Shem.' We have already referred to the significance of the seemingly abrupt ending of his genealogical list with the 'sons of Joktan', and the repetition and its completion in Terah's tablet. This tablet of Shem's is an outline of developments during the 500 years after the Flood.

The sixth series

In 11:10 to 27 we have the genealogical register belonging to Terah. It gives a list of his ancestors connecting him with Shem, the son of Noah. Several such genealogical lists from Babylon are in existence, written long before Terah's.

The seventh and eighth series

The next and longest division (11:27 to 25:12) is followed by a postscript of seven verses (13 to 19). In accordance with his usual custom Moses has placed the name of Abraham's eldest son Ishmael (v. 12) before that of Isaac the heir (v. 19). A similar arrangement in the next section places Esau before Jacob; in both instances they were brothers. (It will be noticed in Numbers 3:1 that in a similar way he places Aaron, his elder brother, before himself.) This whole section contains records belonging both to Isaac and Ishmael. It commences with 'Terah begat Abraham', and ends with 'and his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah'.

The intervening chapters are a narrative of all we know of the life of Abraham, the central figure of the book of Genesis. Abraham alone could have recounted most of the incidents, but it would appear that his sons wrote them down, or at least, the copies which we believe that Moses had before him belonged to them. The whole story shows a great familiarity with details. For instance, the visit of the three men recorded in the eighteenth chapter, 'as he sat in the tent door *in the heat of the day*, and he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood over against him; and when he saw them he ran to meet them from the tent door, and

bowed himself to the earth and said . . . and he hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal . . . And Abraham ran to the herd and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto his servant and he hastened to dress it . . . and set it before them; *and he stood by them under the trees*, and they did eat.' The remainder is an intimate personal account of Abraham's prayer for Sodom. After its overthrow we read, '*And Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord*, and he looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah and toward the land of the plain, and beheld and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace' (19:27 and 28). The style is just what we would expect of Abraham relating the incidents to Isaac who is stated to have owned the tablets recording them.

The ninth to the eleventh series

The following section (25:19 to 36:1) is followed by two postscripts contained in chapter 36 concerning Esau in Canaan and Seir. This section (including the postscripts is, I suggest, the record left by Jacob and Esau. The greater part of the story concerns Jacob, and more than half of it refers to his journey to and from Padan-aram and his life there. He alone could have recorded the events occurring during this period of his life.

It is necessary to bear in mind the place occupied by the Patriarchs in the affairs of the time. For instance, Abraham comes into contact with Pharaoh and the princes when he goes into Egypt. In his day, Egypt was a mighty power, and he must have had a status which made him a person of prominence in that country, for it was not merely an oriental mode of speech that made the sons of Heth say, 'Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince amongst us.' We are told that he had 'menservants and maidservants', and that 'Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold', that 'their substance was great'. So great a person was he, that when he returned to Canaan, he could say to Lot, notwithstanding the presence of the Canaanite in the land, 'Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we are brethren. *Is not the whole land before thee?*

Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if thou take the right hand then I will go to the left . . . and Lot chose him the plain of Jordan, and Abraham dwelt in Canaan' (13:8 to 12).

In such a manner the choice was made where he would live, and thus the scene is set for the next chapter where he meets the four kings, among them one so mighty as Amraphel, King of Shinar. When these four kings from the East easily overcame the five petty city-state kings of Transjordan, we read that 'when Abraham heard that his brother Lot had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them as far as Dan . . . and smote them and brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people . . . and Abraham said unto the King of Sodom, I have lift up my hand unto the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread nor a shoelatchet nor aught that is thine, lest thou should say I have made Abraham rich.' In a like manner Isaac and Jacob are depicted as possessing considerable status in their day, and quite capable of writing or employing scribes to write the tablets containing narratives from which Moses compiled the account.

The rest of the book

But who wrote the last fourteen chapters of Genesis? It is mainly a history of Joseph in Egypt, at least the family history centres round him. This record begins with the words, 'and Joseph being seventeen years old', and ends with 'and he (Joseph) was put in a coffin in Egypt.' This section, as we have seen, contains many purely Egyptian words and phrases, as well as intimate references to Egyptian modes of life. In this section we have passed from Babylonia to Egypt where in all probability it would be written on papyrus. Unlike other sections it has no ending formula to indicate who the author is. This question forms part of the problem considered in the following chapter.

WAS MOSES THE COMPILER?

What we have suggested as the explanation of the narratives and genealogies of which Genesis 1 to 36 is composed, having been advanced on the basis stated in Genesis itself, it remains to consider the work of Moses in relation to the completed book.

On examining it we discover that the name of Moses is not mentioned. Nowhere in Scripture is there a statement that Moses actually wrote the narratives or genealogies of Genesis. In Genesis we have no statements referring to Moses in the same way as, or similar to, those so often repeated in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, 'The Lord said unto Moses . . .' or 'God spake unto Moses saying'. Surely this is a most remarkable and significant fact. Modern critical scholars have told us repeatedly that we can ignore such phrases as claims to authorship. They suggest that they were used inaptly, and lavishly inserted by later writers or editors, who wished the readers to believe that what they themselves had written had actually been spoken to Moses directly by God. It was done, so we are told, in order to claim for their writings the great authority of Moses.

If this is so, how do these scholars account for the complete absence from Genesis of any reference to Moses? Especially as they assert that these alleged writers and editors most certainly included Genesis in the writings which they wished to attribute to Moses, and for which they desired to claim the cover of his traditional authority. Surely the fact that the phrase: 'The Lord spake unto Moses, saying . . .' does not appear in Genesis, counts strongly against such editors and redactors. For they appear not to have touched the original text of Genesis. Furthermore, the non-occurrence of this phrase in the book is surely a clear indica-

tion that when it is used in the remaining Books of Moses it is likely to have been used authentically and accurately, and that there also, the text has been preserved in a pure state.

The New Testament method of referring to the Books of Moses is also worthy of note. It is a significant example of the accuracy with which references to authorship are made in the Bible. Although Christ and the Apostles repeatedly quote from Genesis, they never actually say that Moses wrote or spoke the statement quoted. When, however, we read references or quotations taken from the beginning of Exodus and onwards to Deuteronomy, it is then we begin to read in the New Testament, 'Moses said . . .'

Evidence of Moses

What internal evidence, then, have we of any connection of Moses with the book? In the first place, there is the obvious unity of plan which it presents. Secondly, there is the authorship of the story of Joseph in Egypt. Moses was learned in all the arts of the Egyptians; his acquaintance with the literature of Egypt and ability to write the language was perhaps his greatest asset. He was born sixty-four years after Joseph had died. Joseph may have written a great part of his story, but we are not told that he did so, for there is no such phrase as, 'These are the origins of Joseph', at the end of Genesis. Besides, in this instance Joseph's death and embalming are recorded, and he could not have written that. The whole of the story contains numerous Egyptian expressions, and shows an exact acquaintance with Egyptian customs. Every indication points to Moses as the writer of the narrative. Thirdly, there are the 'notes' and 'explanations' made by the compiler. These (as we have seen in chapter 6) fit in exactly with the circumstances of a people on the edge of the Promised Land, for whom Moses was writing. The fourth piece of evidence is that the book of Exodus commences just where Genesis leaves off, and is unintelligible without the explanation, given in Genesis, of the circumstances leading up to the state of affairs with which it opens.

It is worthy of comment that though many learned works have been written to defend the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, these say next to nothing about the direct connection of Moses

with the greater part of Genesis. For instance, so able and accurate a writer as the late Dr W. H. Green of Princeton, in his valuable volumes on this subject, gives many excellent reasons why Moses wrote the laws contained in Exodus to Deuteronomy, but he leaves Genesis isolated. Dr Adam Young writes of Moses that, 'his authorship of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, is attested by every possible mark of an internal and of an external kind', but no mention is made of Genesis. Others speak of 'four-fifths of the Pentateuch claiming to have come from Moses'. The first fifth, Genesis, has been neglected.

Sources of information

It would seem that conservative scholars, though accepting the Mosaic composition of Genesis, have not found it practicable to indicate exactly the manner in which he received his information. Doubtless the reason why most have hesitated to say that he received the whole as we have it, as a direct revelation from God on Mount Sinai, is a very sufficient one, that he himself does not say that he did so. Surely, had he so received it, Moses would have stated the fact, just as he so constantly does from Exodus to Deuteronomy. There is a distinction between a direct revelation of the original narratives and genealogies from God, and the full inspiration afforded Moses by God in its compilation. The end achieved by God is the same. Luke wrote in his gospel record by 'having traced the course of all things accurately from the first', but the divine inspiration of Luke's gospel was none the less because of this. There have been many eminent scholars who have suggested, and some who have asserted, that Moses used previously written documents from which he compiled Genesis. None, however, so far as I am aware, have even suggested the precise nature of the documents which came into his possession, notwithstanding the fact that such information is given in Genesis.

There would seem to be three reasons for this: firstly, it is due, as we have seen in chapter 5, to a misunderstanding of the use of the phrase, 'These are the generations (or origins) of . . .' and secondly, to a lack of acquaintance with or oversight of, the literary methods prevalent in the times of Genesis or a failure to apply

these to the book. These methods, such as dating, catch-lines, titles and colophons, are rarely referred to except in technical archaeological works. Thirdly, it is due to acquiescence in the now obsolete, but commonly accepted opinion, that the contents of Genesis were handed down to Moses by word of mouth. The long ages to which the pre-Flood Patriarchs lived is emphasised to show that oral transmission as far as Abraham would have entailed that the narratives and genealogies would have needed to pass through but few memories. There is, however, nothing whatever in Genesis, or elsewhere, which asserts an oral transmission. It was, perhaps, not possible until the results of more recent excavations had become known, to read such a verse as chapter 5: 1 'This is the book (tablets) of . . .' as though it could mean precisely what it says. This oral transmission theory originated at a time when men were unacquainted with the facts concerning the early development of writing.

The early origin of writing needs to be emphasised again. It is scarcely possible to put too strongly the importance of the fact that the archaeological museums of the world now possess thousands of tablets from the Ancient Near East. Hundreds of them were written before Abraham's day and many before the birth of Moses. Included amongst them are accounts of the Creation and the Flood. We can now at least give Genesis credit for speaking the truth, and for stating precisely what it intends to convey when it refers to such records. Moses did not use a collection of stories which had descended to him by word of mouth, for he himself informs us at the end of the various narratives and genealogies, who had written or owned them. These, commencing at the dawn of history, had accumulated as Noah, Noah's sons, Terah, Isaac and Jacob.

Transmission of tablets

How did these tablets get into the hands of Moses? They contained records from the creation of man to his own time. We suggest that the internal evidence of the book indicates that the tablets of Creation were extant in the time of Noah, and we suggest that the record of the Garden and the Fall (to which Moses added a

geographical description) had been written by this time. These would descend to Noah, for we notice that in his own tablet (5 : 29) he makes a reference (3 : 17) to the first tablet. Noah added the genealogical list contained in chapter 5. Already several cuneiform tablets bearing some resemblance to this chapter have been found; they refer to ten men who 'ruled before the Flood'. Noah's tablet is simple and straightforward compared with these, and the ages given are not a tenth of those stated in the Babylonian tablets. Noah also adds a short statement regarding the corruption existing in the world in his day. His sons, we are informed in Genesis, wrote the account of the Flood, while Shem wrote the genealogical list which now occupies chapter 10, and also the brief description of the building of the Tower of Babel. Thus we see how Noah, possessing the tablets relating to the Creation and the Fall, would pass these on to Shem, together with his own tablet, and as Shem already had the tablets relating to the Flood, these including his own (Genesis 10, and the Tower of Babel), would naturally pass down to Abraham, with the genealogical tablet written by his father Terah. Thus to him were committed these ancient 'oracles of God' - that is Genesis 1 to 11 : 27.

This does not by any means imply that copies were not made by other members of these families. There is every reason to believe that they were made. A scrutiny of the later copies of these copies, which excavators have dug up, however, reveal that they had become hopelessly corrupted very early by the introduction of dozens of contemporary gods into the Creation tablets, and a similar distortion befell the Flood tablets. On the other hand, all scholars would recognise that the records preserved to us in Genesis are pure and free from all these corruptions which penetrated into the Babylonian copies.

The archaeological evidence suggesting that the second series of tablets relating the story of the Fall was joined to the first recording the story of Creation was presented in chapter 6. We have also seen the way that the sons of Noah joined their accounts of the Flood to their copy of Noah's tablet by a repetition of certain words, and the manner in which Shem connected his tablet with the previous tablets of which he appears to have had copies.

We would claim that the archaeological evidence suggests that a tablet such as Terah's was written in the ordinary cuneiform script used at Ur of the Chaldees. But the earlier tablets were probably written in a more ancient script, and these would possibly be transcribed into the more modern language of the day. Abraham, coming into possession of these precious documents telling of the God of his fathers (the one God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth), was called by God to leave Ur for Canaan. The most sacred possession which he would carry with him were these tablets. Some uncertainty still exists about the language spoken in Palestine at the time of Abraham's arrival there,¹ though we know that 600 years later correspondence with both Babylonia and Egypt was still conducted in cuneiform script. This was the script of the educated of the day. There can be little doubt that Isaac and Jacob would have used this script when writing their tablets.

When Jacob moved with all he had down to Egypt, he would carry with him the narratives and genealogies of the book of Genesis up to 37: 1, for Jacob tells us that he had written his own account while 'he lived in the land of his father's sojourning, in the land of Canaan.' As we have noticed in chapter 6, we possess ancient evidence that Isaac's tablet was joined with Terah's by the use of a 'catch-line', and that the remainder of the tablets, Esau's and Ishmael's, were also connected with Jacob's in the manner prevalent in that day. So, in Jacob's time these tablets comprising Genesis 1 to 36 were connected together as one record.

Joseph to Moses in Egypt

In Egypt they became the heritage of Joseph and the family then developing into a nation. They would naturally pass into the hands of Moses, not necessarily the actual originals (though stone and baked clay are the most imperishable forms of writing material known), but true copies of these originals. An educated Egyptian of his day would be able to read cuneiform writing with as much facility as a classical scholar today is able to read Greek or Latin. At the time of Moses this cuneiform writing was the current diplomatic script, and the despatches received at the Egyptian Foreign Office, from eastern lands, were in this script. The hun-

dreds of Tel-el-Amarna tablets are examples of such correspondence. Moses, learned in the arts of the Egyptians, would readily be able to read and, if necessary, to translate them.

Until Moses was eighty years old these tablets of Genesis were his only Bible. This would appear to be the only way God instructed him, for there is no mention of God speaking directly with him until the end of the forty years in Midian, when he called him to return to Egypt to bring his people into the Promised Land. Then God announced himself by saying: 'I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face.' God was speaking to him, just as the Patriarchs had recorded that he had spoken to them. His mind would be saturated by the Genesis records and with the knowledge of all that this involved.

Although his Bible consisted only of the tablets now contained in the first thirty-six chapters of Genesis, his mind would not be a blank regarding sacred institutions, nor was he dependent on oral traditions as to what God had ordained for the Patriarchs. In the second tablet he would read of Abel 'bringing the firstlings of his flock, and Cain the fruit of the ground, for an offering unto the Lord', and in Isaac's tablet of that incident in his life when the ram was substituted for him on Mount Moriah. The fourth series of tablets would tell him of the 'altar which Noah builded', and later tablets how Abraham set up altars at the places where he dwelt; of his giving one tenth to Melchizedek, and of Jacob vowing a tenth to God. The centuries before Moses were not dark ages unilluminated by God. God had not left mankind without a written revelation. At various times and in different forms he had spoken to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their records had been written on tablets, in the manner customary at that time. The revelation of God in Genesis, as it was handed down to Moses, had not been dependent on the memory of man during the centuries which had elapsed.

The scribe for God

Moses became the leader of the nation, and we are informed that as soon as he left Egypt he began his career as a scribe for

God. It is possible that he used the tablets, for the Ten Commandments were probably written on two tablets (not tables) of stone, and written in the usual manner, on both sides. As we have noted, the Hebrew verb 'to write' means 'to cut in', a possible reference to the original method of writing on tablets. When the Israelites had crossed over into Sinai, and immediately after their battle with Amalek, we read: 'and the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book' (Exod. 17:14). After God had given the covenant to him on Mount Sinai, we read: 'And the Lord said unto Moses: Write thou these words, . . . and he wrote *upon the tablets* the words of the Covenant' (Exod. 34:27 and 28). As soon as God gave Moses the first part of the law, we read that: 'Moses wrote all the words of the Lord' (Exod. 24:4). Of the stages of their journeyings we are told: 'And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the command of the Lord' (Num. 33:2).

The endings of the books of Leviticus and Numbers, where we are told that they were written by the hand of Moses, are further illustrations of this. Also in Deuteronomy 27:2 and 3, we read: 'And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister, and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law,' and, in verse 8, they are told to write this 'very plainly', then in 31:9, 'And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests.' In the same chapter there is a very interesting account of how Moses 'the same day' wrote the words of a song: 'Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel.' 'So Moses wrote the song the same day.' The reason for having this written at once is stated in verse 21, 'for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed, for I know their imagination . . . even now.' In this same chapter we read: 'And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book until they were finished.' This writing on that day ended the forty years of Moses's literary career.

It would seem certain from the 'notes' and 'explanations' which Moses has given us in Genesis that they were written by him when

he was at the edge of the Promised Land. With these inspired tablets before him, tablets written from the earliest days, he is compiling his book, possibly necessitating the transcription of these ancient records into the current language of the people. Most reverently does he handle them, for they are the record of God's dealing with their fathers of old. The first thing that impresses us as we read them now, is that he regards the old wording as so sacred that usually he avoids making unnecessary alterations to the text even to modernise words. He leaves the original ancient expressions and place names just as he finds them, though they are no longer in current use. In order that they may be understood by this people – a new generation just entering the land – he explains the ancient records by adding the contemporary place names alongside the ancient names, and sometimes he states that the name is retained 'to this day'. These 'notes and explanations', some of which have been noticed in chapter 6, are sufficient to interpret ancient usages, to explain or indicate the location of Eden, and to identify patriarchal place names. An examination of such a verse as Genesis 23:17, '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 in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure,' etc., leaves the impression on the mind of a verbatim extract of the precise wording on a legal tablet such as was used in the days of Abraham. Furthermore, in the Flood tablets, more criticised than any other part of Genesis on account of the 'phraseology and style', there are clear indications that the wording has been repeated verbatim from the tablets of the 'sons of Noah'.

Signs of reverence for text

It is evident that Moses held these tablets in such high esteem that he made no attempt whatever to avoid the repetitions, or combine genealogies. Thus, for instance, the genealogies of Shem are found in both 10:22–29 and 11:10–18, also the reference to the corrupt state of the earth, and the declaration regarding its destruction, as found in 6:5–8 and 9:13, are left duplicated. We have already seen that these repeated facts belong to tablets

written by different Patriarchs. Indeed, these repetitions are characteristic of the whole book, and are commented upon by almost every reader. It is most significant that with the exception of the section relating the story of the life of Joseph in Egypt, every tablet or series of tablets begins with a repetition of facts contained in the previous tablet. This is precisely what anyone acquainted with the ancient methods of writing would expect and is further evidence of the faithfulness with which the records have been transmitted to us.

It would be to venture off the safe ground of fact, on to the shifting sands of speculation, to go beyond that which is written and attempt to indicate what we are not told. The precise method Moses employed to adapt, connect and transcribe these tablets, may be a fascinating pursuit, but it would be mere speculation. The facts regarding the origin of the narratives, however, are plainly stated in Genesis, and these need no support from imagination. It is sufficient that all the evidence we have before us indicates that these records have been kept in their original purity when brought together by Moses. The more rigid the tests applied to Genesis, the more minute the examination of its contents in general and the words in particular, the more it is read in the light of the newer facts of archaeology, the more irresistibly does it lead us to the conclusion that Moses – the one outstanding man who is named by the consensus of ancient thought, and confirmed by all the implication of Scripture – compiled the book, using the pre-existing records, which the Patriarchs had named, or he has named, at the end of each section of family histories.

THEORIES NOW OBSOLETE

If the foregoing approach to the book of Genesis based upon the findings of the ancient Near Eastern archaeological excavations, is correct, then it is clear that many of the earlier theories concerning the compilation and authorship of Genesis were misconceived and are now obsolete. What is known as the Higher Criticism (theories concerning authorship and composition, as distinct from Lower Criticism which is concerned with the validity, integrity and exegesis of the text) has placed the date of Genesis hundreds of years too late.

It is also safe to say that some higher critical theories would never have seen the light of day, had it not been that they originated in an age unenlightened by archaeological discovery. The fundamental mistakes they made were primarily due to the lack of knowledge concerning ancient times which existed a century ago when these views arose. Their basic misconceptions may be summarised as follows:

- (1) Some theories were born in an age of ignorance regarding early civilisations.
- (2) The critics attempted a literary analysis when they knew nothing of the early methods of writing.
- (3) The majority assumed that writing was not in use in the days of the Patriarchs.
- (4) Their speculations became dominated by the 'myth and legend theory' now generally abandoned.

The first reason

The first reason why some critical theories are now obsolete is that they were advanced when their proponents were completely

ignorant regarding the civilisations of the times of Genesis. Excavations in the Euphrates valley did not begin until the middle of the last century, yet notwithstanding the lack of knowledge which then prevailed, too many scholars thought themselves capable of determining what they imagined to be the literary conditions, or lack of them, appropriate to those times.

The Old Testament was then the only primal historical light which shone in the darkness, for apart from it (at that time) men were not in possession of history written earlier than 1000 BC. Light concerning early civilisations began to dawn when A. H. Layard and P. E. Botta commenced uncovering the sites near Nineveh, but the discoveries there did not at the time take us back beyond the days of the Old Testament prophets. However, by the end of the nineteenth century excavations had gone back to the times of Abraham; later they reached the times of the Flood and beyond. Yet notwithstanding all this modern research many modern scholars have not abandoned theories, now wholly untenable, which had been constructed upon the earlier obsolete assumptions.

The second reason

Their basic mistake was that they attempted a literary analysis of the book of Genesis, resting on differences of style and the use of special words and phrases, at a time when ancient literary methods were unknown. Any competent estimate of the age, composition, or authorship of a book implies a wide and adequate knowledge of the literary method in use during the period covered by the book. But the higher critical theories were advanced before anyone was in possession of a single secular document of the patriarchal age and the critics were thus wholly ignorant of the manner in which records of that age were written. When this is understood, it is not surprising to read in J. Wellhausen's account of the inception and growth of this literary analysis, about 'conjectures', or of the way successive critics scrapped not only the conclusions but the principles on which their predecessors had based on their theories. Thus the 'two document theory' was contradicted by the 'supplementary hypothesis', and this in its turn

was displaced by the 'crystallisation hypothesis'. Like men groping in the dark, advanced scholars wove together their intermixture of short-lived theories. At last Wellhausen wrote of 'inconsistency', 'reaction', 'had really gone too far', 'the fragmentary hypothesis was now superseded', this fragmentary theory 'remained dominant till Hupfeld denied' and 'his (Hupfeld's) assumption was corrected by Noldecke'.

With such scanty critical apparatus, and without a single piece of writing of the age of Genesis to assist them, they commenced their analysis, finally dissecting Genesis into a series of unknown writers and editors all of whom they allege could be detected by their 'style' or 'editorial comments'. Although nothing was known at this time, apart from Genesis, of early civilisations, these scholars assumed that the times must be excessively crude, yet they committed the fallacy of subjecting Genesis to a type of contemporary literary analysis, just as if it were a piece of modern writing.

The third reason

This lack of knowledge regarding early history made it possible for the critics to assume that civilisation was primitive, and writing almost unknown to the Patriarchs. So unenlightened were most of the workers at this time that it was imagined that the wedge-shaped writing which had been found, was only a form of pottery decoration. Until the mounds of Babylonia gave up their tens of thousands of tablets, and these, together with the inscriptions from the land of Egypt, had been deciphered, it was customary for commentators on Genesis to write a special introduction which defensively suggested that writing was sufficiently prevalent to enable Moses to write! Thus the conservative *Speakers' Commentary* issued in 1871 says on page two, 'The first question then which naturally occurs is, was the art of writing known so early as Moses? and especially was it known to the Egyptians and the Jews?' As described above, it is now known that writing was so common a thousand years before the great lawgiver was born as to be used for ordinary commercial transactions. Civilisation had already reached an advanced stage.

The fourth reason

Similarly, theories concerning 'myths' were adopted fifty years before the commencement of modern archaeological research. It was at the end of the eighteenth century, very soon after the 'higher critics' had begun to formulate their theories, that there swept over Europe a literary fashion which attempted to label as myth all early history which has come down to us. In 1795 G. F. Wolf published his famous *Prolegomena*, in which he endeavoured to show that the persons and places referred to by Homer were wholly mythological. He even denied that Homer had any existence. This craze spread like an epidemic and scholars everywhere occupied themselves with finding mythological explanations to account for historical facts. This method of interpretation was instantly taken up by the critical school, who endeavoured to explain the historical facts of Genesis as 'nature myth stories'. However, in 1874, H. Schliemann began his excavations, and on the 16th November, 1876, he found the tomb of Agamemnon. His find was at first derided, for had not scholars decided that Agamemnon, King of Mycenae, was merely a mythical creation of an unknown Greek writer? But gradually, yet completely, the obvious facts of archaeology undermined this fourth pillar of criticism until it collapsed. The very mummies of so-called mythical and legendary figures, and the palaces in which they lived have been unearthed.

It is therefore as unscientific as it is inaccurate to speak of 'the assured results of modern criticism', for these results are neither assured nor modern. Archaeology has given us the literary background of the patriarchal age, and a clear insight into the diffusion of civilisations and writing in those early times. Excavation has proved the critical theories to be not only groundless, but false. The Bible statements have been abundantly confirmed.¹

GENESIS DEFENDS ITSELF

At this point we need to examine in greater detail the charges made by some critical scholars against the book of Genesis. These are:

- (1) Differences in phraseology and style.
- (2) Repetition of the same event.
- (3) Evidences of date.
- (4) Differing names for God.

Differences of style

Some critics affirm that they can detect differences of phraseology and style in the book. They say that they are able to disjoin and isolate not only verses, but phrases, and to distribute them among writers respectively called 'Priestly', 'Jehovist', 'Elohist', etc. They assert their ability to discover where and when an editor or redactor has amended or added a single word. It is significant that although they claim to know the literary style of these writers, yet they do not know their names or when or where they lived. In fact, the theory which at present holds the field, is that instead of merely one 'Priestly' and one 'Jehovist' writer, the book was composed by a school of writers, and that their composition was spread over a considerable period. They add that the writings of this group were subjected to the scrutiny of several editors who endeavoured to harmonise the narratives, and that the efforts of these editors received the attention of a final editor who scrutinised their work and gave the book the form it now possesses. They were forced to introduce this final editor. The admission is, however, fatal to their theory, for he would most certainly have been capable of eliminating any discrepancies or repetition had he seen them to exist. The

least we can assume is that a Hebrew literary editor would have been as capable of detecting a discrepancy as the average modern scholar.

It would be wearisome to follow these writers through the confused maze of their examples of 'differences of style and wording'. If we take one simple narrative – the thirty-seventh chapter of Genesis – as an instance of this pretentious literary dissection, we find that they have distributed this single chapter in the following manner between three writers E, J, and P:

Verses	1	to	2a	assigned to	P
	2b	to	4	„	„ J
	5	to	11	„	„ E
	12	to	18	„	„ J
	19	to	20	„	„ E
	21			„	„ J
	22	to	25a	„	„ E
	25b	to	27	„	„ J
	28a			„	„ E
	28b			„	„ J
	28c	to	30	„	„ E
	31	to	35	„	„ J
	36			„	„ E

According to this analysis the chapter becomes a tangle in which the products of 'schools of writers' have been worked in alternately, yet the result is a continuous narrative. It has been shown above (in chapters 5 to 8) that Moses plainly indicates the sources from which Genesis was compiled, and this is a sufficient answer to this critical medley of unknown schools of writers. It disposes of the intricate theories and assumptions which would assign it in fragments to unknown persons, who lived in unknown times, and at unknown places, yet about whom these scholars claim to know with infallible certainty their 'style', 'vocabulary' and religious opinions.

Repetition

The second series of charges made against Genesis is that there are many instances of 'duplicate accounts'. Dr S. R. Driver writes,

‘the narrative of the Deluge, 6 : 9–13 (the wickedness of the earth) is a duplicate of 6 : 5–8.’ That such a repetition should exist is certainly significant, particularly that one should follow the other. What we believe to be the true significance of it has been referred to in chapter 7 where it was observed that the first account (6 : 5–8) is the end of Noah’s tablet, and the second (v. 9–13) commenced the history of the Flood written by the ‘sons of Noah’. Moreover, such a repetition was a common literary method in early writing, and as the records contained in the early chapters of Genesis would require several tablets, it served to connect the record left by the sons of Noah with that written by Noah himself.

The next alleged duplicate is said to be contained in the two promises made to Sarah of a son in 17 : 16–19 and 18 : 9–15. This too, is quite naturally explained when we realise that we have in this section the tablets of both Isaac and Ishmael. Many theologians do not seem to realise that this charge of ‘repetition’ could be brought against nearly every piece of ancient writing. It is characteristic of the style of the time and is evidence of their ancient character. In this connection Professor Arno Poebel in his work on cuneiform *Historical Texts*, issued by the University of Pennsylvania in 1914 (in commenting on some ancient Sumerian tablets found at Nippur), writes: ‘the readers of the Bible, moreover, will recognise the quaint principle of partial repetition or paraphrase.’

The third instance quoted by S. R. Driver is that ‘The section 27 : 46 to 28 : 9 differs appreciably in style from 27 : 1–45.’ Again significantly enough these two passages are found in the section where we have the records of two persons, Isaac and Ishmael. It is not suggested by Dr Driver that there is any discrepancy between them. That one should emphasise the side of Isaac and the other that of Ishmael is just what we should expect.

The fourth and fifth instances of S. R. Driver’s criticism in 28 : 19 and 35 : 15 are: ‘we find two explanations of the name Bethel, and two explanations of the name of ‘Israel’ in 32 : 28 and 35 : 10. Esau is described as already resident in Edom, whereas in 36 : 6, his migration thither is attributed to causes which could not have come into operation until after Jacob’s return to Canaan’ (*Genesis*). This criticism is presumably based on the assumption

that Esau had no cattle until after Jacob's return from Padan-aram. But Jacob did not go away to Padan-aram until he was seventy-seven; there is not a word in this passage which could be said to be in the slightest degree improbable. Surely S. R. Driver was aware that Mount Seir is only at the southern end of the Dead Sea, and that Jacob was living at Beersheba, merely fifty miles away. Modern scholars constantly speak of these Patriarchs as nomad sheiks. A return to Canaan and a subsequent parting would not be abnormal. I submit that no difficulty exists.

Having dealt with all the alleged duplicate passages and differences of explanation which this leading modern critic makes on Genesis, I leave the reader to judge between Genesis and critic.

Evidences of date

The next line of attack relates to evidences of date, for certain passages are alleged to indicate a date later than Moses. In the words again of S. R. Driver (*Genesis*): 'There are indeed passages in Genesis which cannot reasonably be supposed to have been written until after Israel had been settled in Canaan, as 12:6, 13:7, 14:14 (Dan), 21:32, 34 and 26:1 (the Philistines, if what is stated on 10:14 is correct, were not in Palestine till the age of Rameses III, considerably after the Exodus), 36:31 (a verse which obviously presupposes the existence of the monarchy in Israel), 40:15 (Canaan called the "land of the Hebrews").'

As the first two passages refer to the same situation, they may be taken together. In 12:6 we read, 'and the Canaanite was then in the land'; in 13:7, 'and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land'. All the difficulty vanishes if, as suggested, these sentences are understood as explanations made by Moses when compiling Genesis from tablets. When the context is read carefully, it will be seen that he is referring to the two localities, Shechem and Bethel, where Abraham had lived temporarily when he first entered the land. When Abraham arrived in Palestine from Mesopotamia he pitched his tent at Shechem – then the Canaanite dwelt in this district – and when he continued his journey southwards to Bethel, he found 'the Canaanite and the Perizzite' were inhabitants of the district. Now it is evident by the use of the two names 'Canaanite' and 'Perizzite' that 'Canaanite' is to be under-

stood here as it often is elsewhere, as merely one of the many tribes then inhabiting Palestine. But these notes by Moses were not written until the people were on the margin of the land and about to enter it after forty years in the wilderness, that is, a period of over 400 years after Abraham's brief stay at Shechem and Bethel. What then was the difference in the habitation of these tribes between the times of Abraham and Moses? This is what Moses is indicating, and this we find from Numbers 13 : 29, where we read that in the days of Moses, 'the Amorites dwell in the mountains and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along by the side of Jordan.' Thus in the 400 years which had elapsed, the Canaanite had lost his foothold, or had moved, from the mountainous country round Shechem and Bethel, to the low lands along the sea coast and the Jordan valley. The Canaanitish clans which the people would meet on entering these parts of the land had therefore changed, and Moses here has made a note to indicate that the inhabitants of Abraham's day are no longer living in the same places. The addition of these notes, therefore, is a clear attestation that the original was written in Abraham's or Isaac's time, and that the note explaining the new situation was later made by Moses.

The next objection concerns the word 'Dan' in 14 : 14. Contemporary scholars assume that it is the town of Dan taken in the days of the Judges which is referred to. This assumption cannot be proved or pressed; the scholars of ancient days would know as well as the critics of today the date when Laish was named 'Dan'. Such repetition of simple names is constantly occurring in ancient tablets, and no Assyrian scholar would jump to the conclusion that there was necessarily a contradiction. In all probability the reference was to an ancient town of this name in existence long before the person or town of Laish was taken by the tribe of Dan.

The next difficulty raised by S. R. Driver is one which he himself admits to have made by his conjecture that the Philistines are referred to in 10 : 14. It is not a Bible difficulty, but one which his own supposition has created.

The final, and to the critical scholars the most decisive passage in Genesis which they think to be indicative of the late date on which it was written, is in chapter 36 : 31, where we read, 'These

are the kings of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.' Dr Driver says of this verse that, 'it obviously presupposes a monarchy in Israel', and, therefore, hints that it was written after Saul began to reign. The passage does not necessarily presuppose this, for it simply says, 'reigned *over* the children of Israel', and not reigned *in* Israel. Pharaoh reigned over the children of Israel, while in Egypt the whole nation had become subjects of the king of Egypt. The opening verses of Exodus inform us that this sovereignty had become arbitrary and despotic, that they were then the slaves of Pharaoh who feared that they may 'fight, so as to get them up out of the land' (Exod. 1 : 10). In order to prevent their escape the king commanded that all male children born should be put to death. They said of themselves that they were Pharaoh's bondmen. This phrase 'before there reigned any king over Israel' is a note of explanation, as all are agreed, but who is more likely than Moses to have written it? He knew of Pharaoh's reigning over Israel. But there is a further reference. In Deuteronomy 7 : 8 we are told that 'the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh.' In the song of Moses the Dukes of Edom and kingship are again mentioned together. After the overthrow of Pharaoh in the sea we read, 'the Dukes of Edom shall be amazed', 'the Lord shall reign for ever and ever', and in the final poem written just before he died (Deuteronomy 33) Moses speaks of the God of Jeshurun being king in Jeshurun (i.e. Israel). We have already seen that it was just at this period of his life that Moses wrote some of these 'notes of explanation'.

Further evidence that this list of Edomite kings ended at the time Moses wrote, is to be found in the fact that when 1 Chronicles 1 repeats this list from Genesis 36, it adds one phrase about the last king, Hadar, that 'he died'. In Genesis this fact is recorded of all the kings named before Hadar, so it would appear that he was still living in Moses's day. But S. R. Driver makes much of this 'difficulty', and referring to the list of kings who reigned over Edom writes, 'the last-mentioned king will actually have lived just before the time of Saul.' But nearly 800 years elapsed between the date of Esau's marriage and 'the time of Saul', and this would

involve eight kings reigning for 800 years. To such lengths will such a scholar go to support what he and the critics maintain to be the most decisive argument indicating a late date. In those days eighty years may well have been ample for eight kings to reign, as none of their sons succeeded to the kingship. Ninety years elapsed between Esau's marriage and Jacob going down to Egypt, and 250 years more before Moses arrived at the edge of the land of Canaan, in all a period of 340 years. It is more than sufficient time for eight kings to hold power over a clan. Yet there is scarcely a critical attack on Genesis which does not assert this so-called 'difficulty' to be overwhelming. On such trivial grounds has the authenticity of Genesis been questioned.

We have examined this expert witness, and have fairly and honestly endeavoured to permit him to state his accusations in his own words, nothing relevant being omitted. His charges have been considered and, it is submitted, disposed of completely. The one-sided nature of the evidence given by this witness is apparent when it is seen that he has merely brought forward statements which he thinks tell against the book being a true and ancient history. On the other hand he has omitted in his summary every passage which speaks in its defence. In this paragraph of S. R. Driver's regarding 'evidences of date', he says nothing whatever about such a verse as Genesis 10:19, which refers to Sodom and Gomorrah as towns then in existence, and refers to them as a landmark, notwithstanding that these cities were destroyed beyond recognition as early as Abraham's day. He does not similarly deduce from this verse that it must have been written before the days of Abraham, when they were destroyed. When the poverty of the critical case against Genesis is compared with the overwhelming evidence the book provides in its own defence, the verdict must surely be certain.

One remaining critical objection, that of the use of the divine names, is dealt with in the following chapter.

THE TITLES FOR GOD

The chief imputation made against Genesis by modern scholars is that different names for the Almighty are used in various parts of the book. Each different writer, they allege, had only one name for God. On this assumption they endeavour to account for the use of different names, by asserting that each section or verse where a particular divine name is mentioned, indicates that it was written by the writer who uses that name exclusively or predominantly. It was on the basis of this use of the divine name in Genesis that modern scholars first elaborated their theories, until at length they represented the book as a piece of literary patchwork, and extended their application to the remaining books of the Old Testament. As the critical 'documentary theory' of the composition of Genesis originated in the supposed exclusive use by one writer of the name of Jehovah (or Yahweh, אֲדֹנָי the LORD), this document theory and the use of the name Jehovah will be considered together in this chapter.

Astruc's theory

It was Jean Astruc, a French physician, who invented the theory of separate documents based on these divine names. He found that in the first thirty-five verses of Genesis, i.e. chapters 1 to 2:4a, the word 'Elohim' (God) was used, and no other divine name, while in chapters 2:4b to 3:24 the only designation given is 'Jehovah Elohim' (Lord God), except where Satan uses the word God. The passages must have been written by different writers, he said, for if Moses wrote the whole of it himself first-hand, then we would have to attribute to him this singular variation, in patches, of the divine name. He then divided the book up into little sections according to

the divine name used. Thus he alleged that a writer who used 'Elohim' was the author of the Elohist document, and the writer who used 'Jehovah', was called the 'Jehovist'. As this two-fold theory was found to fail as an explanation, seeing that some verses which were obviously written by the same person contained both names for God, another contrivance was devised in order to separate the verse into two parts. This was done by introducing an editor, who combined these two documents into one. Even this complication did not satisfy, for the modern scholars had to admit that the word Elohim (God) appeared in passages which they attributed to the writer who was supposed to use the name 'Jehovah' exclusively. A loophole out of this difficulty was soon devised by alleging another 'redactor', who, it is asserted, has altered the divine names.

After a century of such conjectures the following elaborate tangle had been produced to explain the use of 'Jehovah' and 'Elohim' in Genesis. Two different writers, or rather schools of writers, some time after the reign of Saul, produced two documents known as 'J' and 'E'. A redactor called 'RJE' combined these two documents into one. In the course of his editing he is supposed to have taken pieces from 'J' then 'E', sometimes altering, at other times adding a passage of his own. It is asserted that this editor has done his work so well that it is difficult to separate the original writings. Another redactor revised and again altered this composition. It is then said that a further document was written nearly a thousand years after Moses, called 'P', and a redactor called 'EP' added this document to 'JE', inserting details of his own authorship. In this way Genesis has been reduced to a series of confused fragments and authors, in order to account for the way the name of God is used in the book. At times the critics assert that the Bible was written just like all other books. But no other book was ever written in this fashion! Some years ago a critical edition of Genesis was issued in which the parts written by these alleged authors and editors were represented in inks of various colours, it became known as the 'Rainbow Bible'. J. Skinner's volume on *The Divine Names in Genesis* is an illustration of the tangle into which this subject has been tied. The critical

scholars have to admit that their literary expedients break not only the logical, but also the grammatical sequence of passages; it is confusion confounded. J. Wellhausen acknowledged that the result was an 'agglomeration of fragments'.

But J. Astruc had found one important verse of Scripture to which he appealed in support of his theory, and all the succeeding workers have made this the foundation text of their arguments. In Exodus 6:3 we read, 'I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as God Almighty (El-Shaddai), but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them.' This, it was said, is a clear and explicit statement. One leading scholar writes, 'unless the writer of Exodus 6:3 contradicts himself not one of these passages (in Genesis) can have issued from his hands' (J. E. Carpenter, *Oxford Hexateuch*).

Alternative explanations

On the other hand the defenders of Genesis most unreasonably dislike the modern scholars making their stand on this text of Scripture ('by my name Jehovah I was not known to them', Exod. 6:3). They maintain that the verse cannot mean precisely what it appears to mean, because the name of Jehovah is in fact used nearly 200 times in Genesis. The usual explanation given of this by anticritics is, 'though the name was ancient and known to the Patriarchs, its *full meaning* was not known to them, and so God was not manifested to them by it', or 'the name of Jehovah was known, but not known to be understood.' These interpretations overlook, first the fact that God distinctly states the alternative way by which he appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and secondly that there is no special explanation of the full meaning of the name, other than the simple yet profound declaration 'I AM THAT I AM.'

Further, in the endeavour to show that Exodus 6:3 cannot mean what it says, appeal is made to such passages as Genesis 4:26, 'then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah'. But it is found that the name occurs even before this, so for an instance, the editor of the *Companion Bible*, who was an anti-critic, says of this verse: 'If this refers to Divine worship it is not true, for Abel and Cain both began, and their descendants doubtless followed their

example. What was really begun, was the *profanation of the name of Jehovah.*' This is just as much conjecture as that of the critical scholars, for the verse does not contain a hint of such a thing, and had this been the case it would have said so. Such evasions are pathetically ridiculous attempts to get out of a difficulty. Many similar unreasonable and unwarranted wriggles could be cited where commentators, in attempting to rid themselves of the perplexing passage, have abandoned the plain meaning of words.

A more elaborate, but even less convincing type of explanation is offered by that able Jewish scholar, H. M. Weiner, who writes:

'... suffice it to say that in the opinion of the writer the reading "I made known" is clearly right. The meaning which at first sight appears to be the same, is seen, in the light of comparative evidence as to primitive ideas, to be absolutely different. It appears that men in a certain state of civilisation hold that names have an objective existence, and regard the utterance of a man's name by himself as giving his interlocutor a certain power over him. There is plenty of Old Testament evidence to show that the early Hebrews believed in the objective existence of names. It seems that here the utterance of the Name of God, not in any incidental or evasive fashion (as, for instance, in quotation, "Thus saith the Lord", etc., in Exod. 3:15), but as a part of the direct formula "I am the Lord", would have an esoteric meaning for the ancient Hebrew. The true effect of the phrase was not to reveal a new name or give a fresh meaning to an old one, but to create a bond between Deity and people, and to give Moses and the Israelites a direct pledge that the whole power of Deity would be exerted on their behalf' (*Origins of the Pentateuch*).

A fundamental misconception

Numerous contradictory explanations have been given both by critics and defenders to account for the fact that in Exodus 6:3, we are told that God was not known to the Patriarchs by the name of Jehovah, while on the other hand, Genesis frequently represents Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as using the name. *I submit that all these contradictory explanations and evasions have been due to the*

fundamental mistake made by both sides in assuming that no part of Genesis had been written until the time of Moses. This crucial assumption has resulted in the desperate literary tangle of the modern scholars, and the difficulties of the defenders. The critics find themselves in the hopeless position of employing numerous editors who had before them the explicit statement of Exodus 6 : 3, when they are said to have edited Genesis. Are we supposed to assume that the final editor was unaware that he was contradicting himself? The critical 'explanations' only increase their difficulties.

All these evasions are made because neither side in this great and prolonged debate has realised that the book of Genesis is a record written by the persons whose names are stated in it, that the earlier writers used a primitive script, and the later tablets were written in the cuneiform script and language of the day. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the tablets which Abraham would take with him from Ur of the Chaldees, would be written in the cuneiform script prevalent in that city. When Moses came into possession of these tablets he would find on some of them the cuneiform equivalent for 'God'. An instance of this may be seen in the tablet of Creation, where 'God' is used thirty-four times, and no other divine title or name appears. In others he would find in addition the cuneiform equivalent of 'El Shaddai' (God Almighty, or All Sufficient), the name by which Exodus 6 : 3 plainly states he appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The importance of 'El Shaddai'

There are some noteworthy facts regarding this word 'Shaddai' to which sufficient attention has not been given. In the first place, the full composite title 'El Shaddai' as stated in Exodus 6 : 3, is not used elsewhere than in Genesis, and these uses are on important occasions (Gen. 17 : 1, 28 : 3, 35 : 11, 48 : 3). The next impressive fact is that the word 'Shaddai' alone is used forty-two times, and in almost every instance by persons writing or living outside Palestine, and in contact with Babylonian cuneiform modes of expression. Job uses it thirty-one times, Balaam who came from Mesopotamia, Naomi the Moabitess, and Ezekiel the prophet in Babylonia use it. This accounts for thirty-eight of the forty-two uses of the word, and is surely significant.

We have an account in Exodus 3 of God's revelation of himself to Moses at Horeb, and of his commission to go down into Egypt to bring up the people out of slavery, 'and Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, *What is his name?* What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you, this is my name for ever.'

It is necessary at this juncture to note the difference between a *name* and a *title*. The word 'God' is not a *name*, it is a title. Jehovah was the *name* of God. This distinction may be seen in the second commandment: 'Thou shalt not take the *name* of *Jehovah* thy God in vain.' The Jew did not mind writing and speaking of God (Elohim), but he so regarded this commandment that he did not utter the name Jehovah when reading the Scriptures, but substituted the word 'Adonai' for it. Moreover, the Hebrews spoke of *the* Elohim, the true God, as contrasted with false gods, but never did they speak or write of *the* Jehovah, for there was only one Jehovah in heaven and earth. In Genesis we read of 'my God', but never of the 'Jehovah of Israel', for there was only one Jehovah. I do not stay to enter into the question of the exact pronunciation of the name. God says: 'I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory I will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.'

When men began to make 'gods many and lords many', they called them 'gods'; but to distinguish them from each other, they gave each a *name*. So that the word 'god' ceased to be used, even in Scripture, exclusively of the Creator of the heavens and the earth. It is used for idols, for we find Laban calling his teraphim which Rachael had stolen, 'gods' (*elohim*), and Jacob does the same. In Exodus 12:12, we read of the 'gods (*elohim*) of Egypt'. Chemosh and Dagon are the names of, and are called, '*elohim*'. In early times Babylonia had dozens of 'gods' but each of them had a distinguishing name, as well as the title 'god'. The names of more

than eighty Babylonian 'gods' who were worshipped in the time of Abraham, and whose names have been found in tablets with the determinative 'ilu' (god), may be seen in Dr Herman Ranke's *Early Babylonian Personal Names of the Hammurabi Dynasty*, published in series D of *Researches and Treatises of the University of Pennsylvania*.

When we reach the time of Moses, matters in this respect were even worse, for there were over forty petty states in Egypt, each with its own chief god, worshipped in the temple at the principal city of its name or state. All these gods had other gods associated with them, a wife goddess, or sons, called 'gods', and each in his own territory was regarded as a 'god almighty', as the creator and preserver of all the world and mankind. The Egyptian seemed to see nothing illogical in these scores of gods, each being creator and ruler of the world. All of them were given names to distinguish them from each other. Besides this, each town and village possessed its own god. The Theban Recension of the 'Book of the Dead' gives the names of over 450 gods and the pyramid texts contain references to over 200. Although the names of many of the Egyptian gods have been lost to us, those of over 2,200 are known. Amidst all this polytheism, it became necessary when God was to reveal himself (as he did in Exodus 6) in an especial manner both to the Hebrews and to the Egyptians, that He should use a *name* to distinguish himself, the only true God, from all the false gods around. That name was a most significant one, 'I AM'.

The problem for Moses

When Moses, at a later date than the revelation of Exodus 6, was compiling the book of Genesis, with his patriarchal tablets before him, he would find the cuneiform equivalent of El Shaddai on many of them. Now that God had given himself a new name, Jehovah (a personal pronoun, not a title), which word for God should he use in transcribing these ancient tablets? Every translator of the Bible has been confronted with the same problem. The title 'God' may be repeated, but how is the description or name – the cuneiform equivalent of El Shaddai – to be transcribed where necessary, unless the new revealed name of God (i.e. Jehovah) is

used? To use any other name would be to create a misunderstanding in the minds of those for whom Genesis was being prepared.

The translators of the Bible into Chinese had the same problem. Which of the Chinese names should be used? *Tien-chu*, meaning 'the Lord of heaven', or *Shang-ti*, the Confucian name for the 'Supreme Ruler', or *Shin* which may mean 'spirit'. If there had been a pure name or description for 'God' in China, a name not debased by association with the religions of the country, there would have been no difficulty. In Arabic-speaking countries, the word *Allah* is used for the one God in heaven. The singular of Elohim is *Elah*, in the Arabic it is *ilah*, and with the article *al' ilah* the modern equivalent of *Allah*. This is a good Arabic title for God, but if I speak of Allah to a Christian, or a Jew, living in an Arabic-speaking country, I at once associate myself with Mohammedanism.

What name then was Moses to write? God had revealed himself to him by the name of Jehovah, and that name had been announced to the children of Israel in Egypt and was revered by them. Now that the ancient records of their race, preserved in purity and handed down by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were being edited and possibly translated by Moses, what name should he use, seeing that the ancient title 'El Shaddai', God Almighty or All Sufficient, had been corrupted by its use in connection with scores of other 'gods' each of whom were called 'god almighty' by their devotees? The most natural course was to use the name Jehovah. Thus then, is the presence of the word Jehovah in Genesis quite naturally explained. Not by assuming a complicated jumble of tangled documents written by unknown writers as the modern scholars do, or by an evasion of the literal meaning of Exodus 6 : 3, but by the inspiration by which God led Moses in most instances to translate 'El Shaddai' by the word Jehovah – his distinguishing name, which separated him from the heathen gods around.

God's name on the tablets

When it is understood, as explained in earlier chapters, that Genesis is composed of a series of tablets as indicated by the formula: 'These are the origins of . . .', it will be seen that it aids in

a most significant way in explaining the remarkable use of the name and title given to Jehovah God. In our survey of the first tablet we saw that the only divine name on it was 'God', also that the contents of this tablet were a personal revelation to Adam. At the dawn of history it was sufficient to use the name 'God', for at that time there were no other 'gods', so that a name in addition to a title was obviously unnecessary in the first tablet.

The second tablet (2:4b-4:26), written, as we noticed, before the beginning of the Flood, contains both the title 'God' and the name 'Jehovah'. In this tablet the name and title are always used together except by the tempter and Eve, and this exclusive combined use is peculiar to this tablet. Is not this due to the revelation, given during this period, of the cuneiform equivalent of the title El Shaddai, now translated Jehovah? It was of the days of Adam's grandson, Enosh, that we read, 'then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah'. Hence, in this tablet, we have both a name and a title for God, for the most probable reason that at this time men began to worship other gods, so that then a distinguishing name became a necessity.

The writer of this book came to Genesis simply to find its natural divisions, and discovered that by adhering to the proper use of the formula: 'These are the origins of . . .', the book revealed its own original records, and thereafter the critical difficulties, especially those connected with the use of the name and title for God, were seen to be without support.

THE ATTITUDE OF OUR LORD AND THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

There can be no doubt whatever that the writers of the New Testament so believed the statements recorded in the book of Genesis, that they made its narratives the basis on which some of the most important doctrinal statements of Christianity are founded.

The attitude of our Lord

Critical scholars are unanimous that there is one person whose witness about Genesis always tells against them. They realise that their theories collapse unless the value of his testimony regarding Genesis is discredited. There is no attempt to question the kind of evidence our Lord Jesus Christ gives; they admit that his statements are opposed to their own, so two theories have been invented which result in refusing to admit him as a reliable witness. These are the 'Accommodation' and the 'Kenosis' theories. It is doubtful if they would have seen the light of day had not the critics seen that their theories were opposed to his plain statements. The effect of the first theory is to deny his truthfulness, and of the second, his knowledge.

The Accommodation theory

The first implies that even if he believed the book of Genesis to be a literary patchwork by unknown authors who lived long after the time of Moses, he would speak to the people in such a manner as to lead them to believe that Moses wrote it. In other words they allege that he accommodated himself to the errors he found around him. It is sufficient to say that he spent his public ministry cutting clean across the prevailing ideas and errors of his time;

there is not the slightest evidence whatever for the theory. It implies that Christ knew that Moses had little or nothing to do with the early books of the Old Testament, that, for instance, such a Flood as described therein had never occurred, but that he accommodated his speech to the ideas of the people who believed in the narratives of Genesis. Yet the astounding thing is that these very critics often say that when preaching or writing about Genesis they themselves cannot be absolutely honest unless they indicate that they have no belief in the literal fact or accuracy of these records. This surely implies that they feel they themselves must maintain a higher degree of honesty than they attribute to the Lord.

The Kenosis theory

The second or 'Kenosis theory', in effect asserts that our Lord did not know as much as the modern critic does about the book of Genesis. A critical Bible dictionary of the moderate school may be cited here: 'Both Christ and his Apostles or writers of the New Testament held the current Jewish notions respecting the Divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament' (Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*). This dictionary maintains that these 'current Jewish notions' were wholly unreliable. The consequence of this is, that the reliability of Christ is more insidiously undermined. They say that he may be relied upon for religious facts, but that his references to authorship or to certain narratives of the Old Testament cannot be relied on. On the other hand he said, 'If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?'

We find that our Lord Jesus Christ put his seal on the book of Genesis; the earlier chapters of it are most particularly, though incidentally, referred to by him. He quotes from the second chapter, and also refers to the Creation account, to the Fall, to Satan, Abel, Noah, the Flood, to Lot and the destruction of Sodom. We find that general or specific attestations are made to Genesis, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 to 9, and 11, as well as to incidents in the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as recorded in other chapters.

Let us examine this testimony in more detail. In Matthew 19:4 and 5 RV (also Mark 10:6–8) he refers to the creation of mankind: ‘He answered and said, Have ye not read, that he which made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and they twain shall become one flesh.’ A citation from Genesis 2:24.

He referred to Satan in John 8:44. ‘Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father thereof.’ The reference here is evidently to Satan in the Garden of Eden.

An explicit reference to the beginning was made in Luke 11:50 and 51, when he said, ‘that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias.’

He emphasised the lesson of Noah, the Ark and the Flood, in Luke 17:26 and 27: ‘And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the Ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all.’ He then went on to speak of Lot and the destruction of Sodom (v. 28): ‘Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.’

Abraham is repeatedly referred to. Our Lord said, ‘Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, before Abraham was, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him’ (John 8:56–59). In referring to the Patriarchs, he made it plain that though dead, they still had an existence, for he said, ‘God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.’ After the resurrection ‘beginning from Moses and from the prophets, he interpreted to

them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself' (Luke 24:27). A few days later he said unto them, 'These are my words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures' (Luke 24:44 and 45).

The New Testament writers

Outstanding instances of this use of Genesis are those made by the Apostle Paul in Romans 5, and 1 Corinthians 15. In Romans, he writes, 'Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin . . . nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression . . .'. He continues the contrast between Adam and Christ, in the effect of Adam's sinful act in the Garden and Christ's righteous act on the Cross. If a person assumes Adam and the Fall to be merely myths, then the great result attributed in this passage to the Lord Jesus Christ in dealing with the effects of that sin, is wholly negated.

In the second passage (1 Cor. 15) Adam is referred to as the head of the human race, 'For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive . . . so also it is written the first man Adam became a living soul, the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit . . . the first man is of the earth, earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven.' Reference is made to the Creation in 1 Timothy 2:12, and Hebrews 4:4. There can be no doubt that these passages are based upon the narratives of Genesis.

Paul, in 2 Corinthians 11:3, writes, 'the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty.' Hebrews 11:4 tells us how 'by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain', and 1 John 3:12 says, 'not as Cain who was of the wicked one and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.' Jude writes that 'Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied', and Hebrews 11:7, that 'By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark.' Peter in his first epistle (3:20)

refers to the time when 'the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved through water', and in his second epistle (2:5) he adds that God 'spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.'

References to Abraham

The outstanding passage in the New Testament illustrative of absolute faith in God, attributes that faith to Abraham. The sixth verse of the fifteenth chapter of Genesis reads, 'And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.' Not only Paul, but James used this statement; they make it the basis of their discussion. Again, in Romans 4:3, Paul appeals to this incident in the life of Abraham by asking, 'For what saith the Scripture?' Then he quotes this verse from Genesis. Moreover, he also makes it the foundation of his argument in his Galatian epistle. In addition, Stephen says (Acts 7:2): 'The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldees.' Unless we can rely upon the fact that Abraham actually lived and also that he acted with outstanding faith in God, these apostolic references are worse than useless for the purpose for which they are cited.

Other incidents in the life of Abraham are quoted as reliable history. In 2 Peter 2:6, we read that God 'turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly.' In a similar manner Jude also writes of these cities. Further, Hebrews (11:17) tells us that 'By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac, yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead,' and James writes, 'And was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac on the altar?'

Other references

Other persons and incidents related in Genesis are quoted in the same definitely historical manner. Paul refers (Gal. 4:22-31) to Abraham's two sons Ishmael and Isaac, and to the 'son of the bondwoman and the son of the freewoman'. We read in Hebrews 11:20, that Isaac 'blessed Jacob and Esau', and that 'By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, leaning upon the top of his staff.' And in the following chapter, of Esau selling his birthright and repenting of it. Stephen, in Acts 7, speaks of the way Jacob's sons 'moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt; and God was with him and delivered him out of all his afflictions and gave him wisdom and favour before Pharaoh, King of Egypt; and he made him Governor over Egypt and all his house.' This chapter also refers to the famine in Canaan and Jacob's moving down into Egypt. 2 Peter (2:7) refers to God having 'delivered righteous Lot sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked'. Hebrews 11:22 says 'that Joseph when his end was nigh made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones.'

Thus every prominent incident and person in Genesis is referred to in the New Testament, not merely in a vague and general way. They are introduced into the most decisive statements written. A scrutiny of these passages leaves upon the mind of the reader a most definite assurance that the Apostles regarded these narratives of Genesis as real and inspired history. In fact, the New Testament has its historical roots in Genesis.

CONCLUSION

In the first chapter it was emphasised that adequate confirmation was necessary in order to establish the statement that the book of Genesis:

- (1) Was originally written on tablets, in an ancient script.
- (2) By the Patriarchs intimately acquainted with the events related.
- (3) That Moses was the compiler of the book as we now have it.
- (4) That he plainly directs attention to the sources of his information.

It is submitted that the confirmation given has been fully adequate, and the promise that it would be 'attested by facts so numerous, and undesigned coincidences so overwhelming' has been amply fulfilled. Moreover, the corroboration presented is not of the subordinate kind which forms merely a number of separate links in a chain of evidence, the weakness in one link creating a weakness in the whole. It is rather a series of separate strands each strong in itself, but when woven together produces a confirmation of such strength and substance that the weight of evidence requires a decision in favour of the contemporary writing of Genesis.

Summary of the evidence

The various lines of evidence brought forward in these pages may be summarised as follows:

(1) Archaeological research (which commenced after 'Higher Criticism' had produced its theories) has, in recent years, given us the ancient and contemporary background of Genesis, which agrees with its contents (chapter 2).

(2) The Genesis narratives imply that rapid developments took place in early history. Archaeologists have dug down into virgin soil, and find that a high state of culture existed in times previously called 'prehistoric'. They even assert that long before the time of Abraham, Sumerian civilisation had reached its zenith (chapter 3).

(3) As far back as archaeology has been able to go, and in the earliest times, examples of writing have been found. During the period covered by the greater part of Genesis, writing has been discovered to be in common use even for ordinary commercial transactions (chapter 4).

(4) The contents of the earlier chapters of Genesis claim to have been written (chapter 5).

(5) Both Scripture and archaeology give evidence that the narratives and genealogies of Genesis were originally written on stone or clay *tablets*, and in the ancient script of the time (chapters 4 and 5).

(6) We now know something of the literary methods used by the ancients. Prominent among these was the colophon of the tablet. In our examination of Genesis we find a similar literary method, for the formula 'These are the origins of . . .' was the ancient conclusion which Moses inserted indicating the source from which he obtained the narratives and genealogies (chapters 5 and 6).

(7) Other literary methods were the use of 'titles' and 'catch-lines' in order to bring the tablets together in proper sequence. Although Genesis (as we know it) is a book compiled by Moses, there are still traces of the use of these literary means of preserving sequence (chapter 6).

(8) In some instances indications are provided giving the date when the tablet was written. This is given in a most archaic way and very similar to the method prevailing in very ancient times (chapter 6).

(9) In confirmation of (4) to (8) above, we have shown that in no instance is an event recorded which the person (or persons) named in chapter 5 could not have written from intimate personal knowledge, or have obtained absolutely unmistakable contemporary information. In chapter 7 the positive evidence is reviewed show-

ing that they were so written. The familiarity with which all the circumstances and details are described is noted.

(10) Additional corroboration is found in the significant fact that the history recorded in the sections written *over* the names of the Patriarchs ceases in all instances on the date on which the tablet is stated to have been written, or, where no date is given, before the death of that person. In most cases it is continued almost up to the date of the Patriarch's death (chapter 5).

(11) The presence of 'Babylonian' words in the first eleven chapters is further evidence that the contents of the earliest narratives and genealogies were written during the lifetime of the early Patriarchs of Genesis, for they used that language (chapter 6).

(12) The presence of Egyptian words and Egyptian environment in the last fourteen chapters of Genesis, adds its irresistible testimony that those chapters were written in Egypt (chapter 6).

(13) The first tablet – that of the Creation, seems to have been written at the very dawn of history. This is evidenced by its archaic expressions, for it was put into writing before names had been given to the sun and moon and before polytheism had arisen, or clans developed (chapter 7).

(14) There is no statement in Scripture to support the supposition that all the narratives and genealogies were handed down verbally – on the contrary they claim to have been written down (chapters 5, 7, 8).

(15) Many references are made to towns which had either ceased to exist or whose original names are so ancient that the compiler had to insert the names by which they were known in his day. These new names and explanations fit in exactly with the circumstances of a people then on the edge of the land of Canaan, and about to enter it; thus indicating that Moses used earlier records and that he was the compiler of the book (chapters 6 and 8).

(16) That Genesis should still contain archaic expressions and show traces of the literary aids associated with the use of clay tablets, is a witness to the fidelity with which the text has been handed down to us (chapter 6).

(17) It is clear that the ordinary Babylonian tablets of the Creation and the Flood are a corrupted form of the Genesis record. The narratives of Genesis are not merely a purified form of the Babylonian accounts (chapter 2).

(18) Archaeology has completely undermined the 'myth and legend' theory. Evidences of persons once thought by critics to be mythical, have been discovered by archaeologists (chapter 9).

(19) The difficulties alleged against Genesis by 'Higher Critics' vanish quite naturally when it is understood that the narratives and genealogies were first written on tablets in an ancient script, by the persons whose names they bear, and that the book was compiled by Moses. Any differences of phraseology and style are just what we should expect in these circumstances (chapter 10).

(20) The 'repetition of the same event' of which modern scholars speak, is shown to harmonise exactly with the arrangement of the tablets from which the book was composed and to conform to ancient Sumarian usage (chapter 10).

(21) The outstanding examples brought forward by critics to suggest a late date for Genesis are shown to prove the reverse (chapter 10).

(22) The documentary theory was originated in order to account for the use of the name Jehovah in Genesis and the exclusive use in certain sections (which we claim to have been tablets) of one particular name or title for God. On the basis of the documentary theory the unwieldy structure of 'Higher Criticism' has been reared, it can, however, be shown that there are other possible explanations for the varying use of the divine names. This is especially the case when it is seen that in the book of Genesis we have contemporary and translated records (chapter 11).

(23) The writers of the New Testament base important arguments and illustrations on the narratives of Genesis. These arguments and illustrations would be worse than useless, they would be misleading, unless these narratives rest on historical facts (chapter 12).

(24) The testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to the narratives contained in Genesis is of greater value than all the preceding evidence, and constitutes the pinnacle of these eviden-

tial verifications of its history. To the Christian mind the testimony of Christ must be decisive (chapter 12).

These twenty-four strands woven together make a cumulative muster of evidences, so exceptional both in character and importance, that they establish the antiquity of Genesis as a contemporary record of events upon a sure foundation. This foundation is the internal testimony of the book itself, supported by the external corroboration of archaeology.

PART TWO
CREATION REVEALED IN SIX DAYS

INTRODUCTION

A new endeavour is made in the following pages to trace the biblical Creation narrative back to its source and to ascertain why it is divided by six 'evenings and mornings'.

The reader may doubt whether it is possible – after centuries of discussion – to write anything new about this first page of the Bible. I take, however, the same view as Butler did when he wrote, 'Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered' (*Analogy* II.3).

There are, I believe, several undiscovered truths regarding this first narrative of Creation which hitherto have remained unnoticed in modern times. One of these is so important, yet so simple and obvious, that our failure to recognise it is all the more surprising, seeing that this oversight has created considerable difficulties, has resulted in continued misinterpretation, and caused the narrative to be rejected by many. This misunderstanding is certainly not due to any want of clarity in the narrative itself but to our failure to recognise the extremely ancient character of the document. Consequently its interpretation has become distorted by speculations concerning the time occupied by God in the processes of Creation.

The chief difficulties

The most outstanding literary problem on the first page of the Bible is the precise meaning of the 'six days' separated as they are from each other by an 'evening and a morning'. Also there is the problem of the 'rest' on the seventh day. These 'days' have perplexed almost everyone who has read the narrative of Crea-

tion. Were they days of twenty-four hours each? Or can they be interpreted as being long periods of time? Why are these days separated from each other by an 'evening and a morning'?

In whatever way these questions are answered it is obvious that the record implies that God did something for six days and ceased doing it on the seventh day. What did God do on those six days? and why did he cease on the seventh? Whilst the modern critical scholar and scientist reject the account as 'impossible', the answer usually given by those who regard the Bible as trustworthy is that during those six days God created or re-created the world, and (because he had finished it at the end of the sixth day) he rested on the seventh. Whatever meaning is given to the word 'day', whether literal or symbolic, we must ask is such an answer in accordance with the facts? I do not think so, and this book will endeavour to explain why it cannot be the true interpretation. It disagrees not only with the Bible but with all we now know about the literary methods of scribes in ancient times.

A brief summary will make clear what the following pages set out to explain. It is that:

(1) The six 'days' divided from each other by an evening and morning, do not refer to the time occupied by God in his acts and the duration of the processes of Creation.

(2) The six days refer to the time occupied in revealing to man the account of Creation.

(3) God rested (lit. ceased) on the seventh day not for his own sake but for man's sake, and because this revelation about Creation was finished on the sixth day, not because on that day (or period) the creation of the world was finished.

(4) The narrative of Creation was probably written on six tablets. Later, it also appears to have become the custom in Babylonia to write the story of Creation on six tablets.

(5) There is good and sufficient evidence to show that the first page of the Bible is the oldest document which has come down to us.

The evidence on which these statements are based will be stated as fully as is possible without the introduction of too much detail. Until the evidence has been read, is it too much to ask that judgment on these statements be suspended?

It can be said with assurance that none of the explanations hitherto given either of these days, or of the phrase 'evenings and mornings', have really proved satisfactory. That proposed in the following pages is simple because the statements made in the narrative are accepted in their natural ancient sense and setting. It is an attempt to restore 'a commonplace truth to its first uncommon lustre'.

The importance of the enquiry

We need a faith that enquires. There should be no need for an apology for a fresh investigation into the meaning of the narrative. Its importance can scarcely be over-emphasised. Estimated simply as a piece of descriptive writing, the first chapter of Genesis constantly challenges attention, for it is unquestionably unique in the world's literature concerning the origin of things. That it is regarded both in the Old and New Testaments as the foundation of faith in God as Creator few will deny. Although the writer of these pages has no doubt that the greater and more convincing revelation of God to man was made through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord, he has noticed that philosophers as well as thoughtful students in our universities are apt to go back, not only to Christ, but to the first page of the Bible in order to secure a sure foundation for their thinking and faith. Thinking men cannot regard it as a matter of secondary importance whether God was or was not in a real and definite sense the Creator of the universe and man. Neither can they think it an enquiry of little consequence whether this narrative of Creation is a revelation from God or merely a myth, or nothing more than a series of guesses made by some man at an unknown date.

My purpose here is not that of a reconciler of Scripture with science, important as that may be in its place; nor is it an attempt to bring the narrative of Creation into harmony with modern thought. God's thought and modern thought are not at all the same thing. It often happens that they are not in harmony. 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts' (Isa. 55 : 8-9). Modern thought about the origin of things

is still in its usual state of flux, and there is nothing that can become out-of-date so quickly as an up-to-date scientific explanation of the first chapter of Genesis. This narrative has often been 'harmonised' with modern scientific theories, only to find that scientists have necessarily changed their position, leaving the 'explanation' quite out-of-date. H. G. Wells, for instance, complained that 'we do not rewrite and retell Genesis in the light and language of modern knowledge'. Later (p. 231) his version of the origin of life will be stated, but had the Genesis account been subjected to constant amendment in accordance with modern thought, the various editions of it would make an interesting history of the changes in human thought on this subject, but it certainly would not impress us with the sum of human wisdom about origins. My thesis is that there is no disagreement between accurate scientific findings and an accurate interpretation of Genesis based on the available evidence. When rightly interpreted both can look after themselves. The Bible account of Creation will see the disappearance of many scientific and philosophic theories, and yet remain in harmony with the great *facts* discovered by scientists.

The central aim

Mine is the more modest, though not less important task of attempting to find out how the *account* of Creation came into existence, not how the universe came to be. It aims to take careful note about what the first chapter of Genesis actually says and to test the validity of current interpretations concerning its meaning. The investigation began some time ago with as open a mind as was possible; certainly the conclusions reached are different from those expected.

Until, as explained in Part I of this volume, the results of modern archaeological research became known it was not possible to understand *fully* the literary methods in use in early days. During the years that I was living in Babylonia, I spent much time in examining on the one hand the text of Genesis, and on the other the ancient methods of writing prevailing there 5,000 years ago.

We are often told that the only scientific way to study the Bible narratives is to read them in their ancient literary setting as pieces

of contemporary literature. In one respect at least this advice is essential, because much of the criticism of this Creation narrative betrays a lack of knowledge of the literary methods of ancient times. Probably no passage in the whole range of literature, ancient or modern, sacred or secular, has been subjected to such detailed, continuous and critical examination as this first page of the Bible. But this criticism originated before scholars were aware of early literary methods. Every advance in archaeological discovery has enabled us better to understand these ancient writings. There has been a vast growth in our knowledge of the remote past, particularly about the old ways of writing. The present reinterpretation is made in the light of the methods customary in early times.

It should not therefore surprise us that there should be a new understanding of the meaning of the narratives. As knowledge has advanced it has been possible to see how this ancient document agrees with the ascertained facts of science and disagrees with some scientific theories.

Some have imagined that the growth of scientific knowledge has already dealt a death blow to the Scripture narrative of Creation. Indeed, not a few have written as if all that now remained to be done – some have already done it – is to hold a post-mortem examination as to which writer was mostly responsible for its destruction. Just when a verdict is about to be pronounced, further evidence, often that of archaeology, is produced in favour of the Scripture narrative, and it is then found to be more vitally alive and accurate than had been assumed.

Basic attitudes

In stating the results of our inquiry it is obviously impracticable within the limits of this book to do more than put forward certain reasoned convictions as a basis. These are that:

(1) There is a God, (2) He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. (3) He could, if he so desired, reveal to man all that is necessary about Creation. In other words we begin where the narrative of Creation begins, 'In the beginning God created . . .' and, like the Bible, accept the statement that God was the Creator. The Bible point of view that he not only could, but did reveal

himself to man is also accepted. But no assumptions are made as to his methods of creation, or speculations indulged in as to the length of time occupied by him in his acts or processes. It is submitted that the Genesis narrative details neither the methods he used, nor the time taken. All we are told is that God commanded and 'it was so'. The only exception is that concerning the creation of man where details are given, and these, though few, are important.

Sir Ambrose Fleming has said (*Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, 1927), 'The majority of persons take their opinion on difficult subjects ready made from those they deem special authorities, and hence, when once a certain view of a subject has been broadcast and widely accepted as the right and fashionable one, it is very difficult to secure an unbiased reconsideration of it.' This first page of the Bible has suffered badly from traditional misinterpretations and misconceptions which should never have occurred, and some of these popular errors have made shipwreck of faith in God as Creator, and in the Bible as his revelation to man. While sufficient reasons are seen for adhering to the narrative, there are good reasons for rejecting some of the current interpretations of it.

As Dr Andrew Murray has written, 'We cannot, of course, escape the necessity of theorising, if we are to define to ourselves and to others the message which Holy Scripture conveys to us. But the abiding wonder of the gift of God to us in the Bible is the way it remains permanently ahead of all its interpreters. We are terribly prone to make idols of our theories, and to identify them with the Truth that we are trying to interpret. But as each generation of students goes back to the original deposit and tests the theories it has inherited in the light of it, the Bible seems to have an inexhaustible power to help us clear out of the way difficulties that are not inherent in the Truth itself, but have been introduced into our statement of it by a lack of proportion in our treatment of the evidence, either by ignoring what we can now see to be the vital elements in it, or by overstressing the implications of earthly metaphors, which can only correspond very partially to the spiritual reality.'

THE LITERARY FORM OF GENESIS

CHAPTER 1

The account of Creation on the first page of the Bible is written in a literary form quite unlike any other narrative in it. Even to the most casual reader it is obvious that there is something very exceptional in its structure. Not only is it divided into six sections by the use of the words 'and there was evening and there was morning' but the sections are serially numbered from one to six. The whole record is fitted into a unique framework composed of words and phrases which are repeated six or more times. This framework is constructed in the following manner:

DAY FIRST

Verse

- 3 God said let . . . and there was.
- 4 God saw . . . that it was good.
God divided . . .
- 5 God called . . .
And there was evening and there was morning day first.

DAY SECOND

- 6 God said let . . .
- 7 God made . . .
God divided . . . and it was so.
- 8 God called . . .
God saw that it was good (Septuagint Version).¹
And there was evening and there was morning day second.

DAY THIRD

- 9 God said let . . . and it was so.
- 10 God called . . .
God saw that it was good.

- 11 God said let . . . and it was so.
- 12 God saw that it was good.
- 13 And there was evening and there was morning day third.

DAY FOURTH

- 14 God said let . . . and it was so.
- 16 God made . . .
- 17 God set . . .
- 18 God saw that it was good . . .
- 19 And there was evening and there was morning day fourth.

DAY FIFTH

- 20 God said let . . . and it was so (Septuagint Version).
- 21 God created . . .
God saw that it was good.
- 22 God blessed . . .
- 23 And there was evening and there was morning day fifth.

DAY SIXTH

- 24 God said let . . . and it was so.
- 25 God made . . .
God saw that it was good.
- 26 God said let . . .
- 27 God created . . .
God created . . . created . . .
- 28 God blessed . . .
God said . . .
- 29 God said . . . and it was so.
- 31 God 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 remarkably few and simple. This is all the more surprising seeing that it is an outline of the origin of the heavens and the earth; of vegetable, marine and animal life, and also of the instruction given by God to first man. The principal words used in addition to the framework are those translated, light, darkness, night, firmament, waters, heavens, dry, earth, seas, grass, herb, seed, winged creature, cattle, creeping things, man, image, male, female, replenish,

dominion, meat. It will be noticed that 'God said' ten times (four times on the sixth day). In this number there is a similarity to the 'Ten Words' (as the Ten Commandments are called by the Hebrews).

If this record of Creation is carefully examined it will be seen that the six days fall into two clearly parallel parts, the events recorded in the last three days being parallel with the first three. Those best acquainted with ancient Hebrew literary methods will recognise a feature frequent in the Old Testament of a balanced symmetry due to a repetition of thought expressed in almost synonymous words. The parallelism is as follows:

Parallelism

On the first day it was revealed how light came into existence, on the fourth day, about the sources and purposes of the light, the greater light for the day and the lesser light for the night.

On the second day God explains how the atmosphere came to be, and how it separated the waters above from those below the expanse. On the fifth day how the waters below were populated with fish and the atmosphere with birds.

On the third day God tells how he gathered the waters together so as to form areas of dry land, and then how the various forms of vegetation came to be. On the sixth day it is said how the dry land was populated with animal life, how man was created, and explains how the first of the forms of green vegetation was for animal life, and both green vegetation and trees were assigned to man for food.

The framework of the chapter

The second three days tells how space, water, air and land are populated. Notwithstanding the simplicity of the record it is comprehensive, and later it will be seen how this parallel arrangement agrees with science. It may be summarised as follows:

1 Light

Separating the light from the darkness, effecting day and night.

4 Lights

(Sun, Moon and Stars) to divide the day from the night and for seasons and for days and years.

2 *Water and atmosphere*
Atmosphere separating the
waters below from those
above.

5 *Water and atmosphere*
Life in the water (fish).
Life in the atmosphere (birds).

3 *Land and green vegetation*
(a) Land.
(b) Green vegetation and
trees.

6 *Land, green vegetation, man*
(a) Land animals. Man.
(b) Green vegetation and
trees assigned to
animals and man.

The key to the arrangement may be seen in the words ‘without form and void’ (v. 2). In the first three days we are told of the *formation* of the heaven and earth, and on the second three days of the furnishing of the void. Thus the *formlessness* takes shape or *form* in the narration of the first three days and the *void* becomes occupied and inhabited in the second three days’ narrative.

We must notice one other feature of the structure of this narrative; while the complete section extends from chapter 1 : 1 to 2 : 4, it will be seen that this special framework of the days is confined to verses 3 to 31 of chapter 1. The first two verses being an introduction or superscription, and the last four verses (2 : 1–4) an appendix (i.e. a colophon). As explained in Part I, when writing on clay tablets it was customary to add a colophon giving information regarding the ‘title’ of a tablet or series of tablets, the date when written, the name of the writer, and other literary information (see pp. 31–33).

Does the colophon (or title phrase) at the end of this Genesis Creation narrative contain any of this valuable information? Before this question is answered it is necessary to review the other important passage where the six days are mentioned.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

It is significant that the only references elsewhere in Scripture to the six days of work and one of 'rest' in connection with the narrative of Creation are those attached to the fourth commandment. In no other connection are these six days mentioned. The fourth commandment requires that mankind should work for six days and rest on the seventh, because God did something for six days and ceased doing it on the seventh. It is very necessary therefore that we ascertain what God did on the six days and why he ceased to do this on the seventh day.

The fourth commandment reads: 'Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy, six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it' (Exod. 20: 8-11).

The impression conveyed by this passage is of ordinary days. Certainly the fourth commandment's six days' work and one day's rest for the Israelites refer to normal days. Why is it then that no system of interpretation reads both the six days and the seventh day, that is both the whole of the Creation narrative and the whole of the fourth commandment *consistently*?

I submit that the answer is plain if we examine carefully the context and wording of both the Creation narrative and the commandment concerning what God was *actually* doing during these six days. A simple but serious misinterpretation has led to an

assumption that both Genesis and the fourth commandment were intended to teach that God *created* the heaven and the earth and all plant, marine and animal life, as well as man, in six 'days' of some sort. Because of this false supposition some reject the 'days' of whatever length (and also the whole narrative). Others deny either the literalness of the six, or else that of the seventh day. Others lengthen either the sixth or the seventh day to thousands or millions of years. Even the group of expositors who suggest that someone saw creation in a vision usually explain the six days literally, but interpret the 'rest' on the seventh day as a long period of unknown duration. At the same time, they all appear to interpret the six days of work and one of rest, which the Israelites were to observe, as literal days.

I suggest that every time the days are mentioned in both the Genesis and Exodus verses they are intended to be taken literally as ordinary days.

Because of the incorrect assumption that what God did on the six days was to *create* all life and man, five main variant interpretations have been adopted in an attempt to harmonise the Genesis narrative and the fourth commandment with scientific ideas concerning the origin of the heavens and the earth. These may be summarised as follows:

- (1) The geological 'day' theory.
- (2) The six days *re*-creation theory.
- (3) The vision theory.
- (4) The antedate (or artificial week) theory.
- (5) The myth or legend theory.

We are all liable to identify our own particular interpretation of the meaning of a Bible statement with the Bible statement itself. Consequently, when our own special theory as to its interpretation is doubted, we are sometimes apt to assume that the doubter is challenging not merely our interpretation but also the accuracy of the Bible narrative. For reasons which I hope to explain later, I believe that the days in both the narrative of Creation and the fourth commandment are *literal*. But ever since I have considered these passages in the light of what is said about them in the rest of

the Bible, and of what is known of literary methods prevailing in ancient times, none of the theories mentioned above have appeared to me to be satisfactory.

Each of these theories will now be subjected to the following tests: Does it agree with

- (1) All the statements in the Genesis narrative?
- (2) All the statements in the fourth commandment?
- (3) All the facts (not theories) of science?

The geological age theory

This popular theory is that each 'day' is a long geological age. The geologist Sir William Dawson was one of the leading exponents of this interpretation.

If the 'days' are interpreted as geological periods of unknown length, then the explanation does what those who adopt it desire to do: it enables Genesis to be reconciled with science in regard to the slow and gradual formation of the heavens and the earth, and of the appearance of life on it. As to the time occupied by these geological days, Sir William Dawson in his *Meeting Place of Geology and History* says: 'Man is of recent introduction on the earth. For millions of years the slow process of world-making has been going on with reference to the physical structure and to the lower grades of living creatures.'

But is this explanation in general agreement with science? Sir William thinks that he can relate the last three geological ages with the last three 'days' of Genesis. Even if it is conceded that this explanation makes Genesis agree with science, does it agree with the Bible? Can we interpret either the Genesis narrative or the fourth commandment consistently so as to give the word 'day' the significance of an untold number of millions of years? We may well believe that the geological formation of the earth occupied a very long period of time, but is it not difficult to interpret the seventh day as lasting for an equivalently long period of millions of years? And if all the days are to be interpreted as millions of years then the application to the fourth commandment is difficult to imagine.

In fairness to the advocates of this theory, it must be emphasised that it was not invented in recent times simply in order to harmon-

ise Scripture with science. The interpretation is at least 1,600 years old. Before Christian thought was pressed by science to allocate a very long time to the geological formation of the earth, men felt that there was something wrong with an interpretation of Genesis which involved the creation of all things within a period of 144 hours. Professor Dickie in *The Organism of Christian Truth*, says, 'The theory was widely held that the six days of creation meant six extended periods of time. It commended itself among others to Augustine . . . but neither Augustine nor modern harmonisers of Genesis and science get the theory, whether true or false, from Scripture. There is nothing in the Bible even to suggest it. On the contrary it has always been read into the Bible from without, on scientific or quasi-scientific grounds.'

Is this theory able to give a satisfactory explanation of the seventh day on which God ceased from his work? If the six 'days' are intended to be read as six long geological periods extending to millions of years, how long a period are we to assign to the seventh day which God sanctified or set apart by ceasing from his work? No one doubts that the six days' work and the seventh day's rest which the Israelites were enjoined to observe were just ordinary days. Why then should we assume that the seventh day is used for a period amounting to thousands of years? And in what sense is the present age which has continued since Creation hallowed or sanctified? And can we say that God has rested or ceased from creation ever since?

On the use of this word 'day' the great Hebraist, C. D. Ginsburg, wrote, 'There is nothing in the first chapter of Genesis to justify the spiritualisation of the expression "day". On the contrary, the definition given in verse 5 of the word in question imperatively demands that *yôm* (the Hebrew for "day") should be understood in the same sense as we understand the word "day" in common parlance, i.e. as a natural day.

'The institution of the sabbath on the seventh day, which if understood as an indefinite period would have no meaning for man, and the constant usage of this expression in Scripture to denote an ordinary day, with the few exceptions of poetical or oratorical diction, and the literal meaning which all commentators

and Bible readers have assigned to it till within the last century, are additional proofs that the primitive record purports to intimate by the expression *yôm* a natural day.

‘The arguments generally produced by those who ascribe to the word “day” here an unlimited duration of time are untenable. They say (1) that the word “day” is not to be taken here in its literal meaning is evident from chapter 2:4, “for the portion of time spoken of in the first chapter of Genesis as six days is spoken of in the second chapter as one day” (Hugh Miller). But the word used in the hexaemeron is the simple noun, whereas in chapter 2:4 it is a compound of “the day of” with the preposition “in”, which, according to the genius of the Hebrew language, makes it an adverb, and must be translated, “when”, “at the time”, “after”. They say (2) that the Psalm of Moses, 90:4, is decisive for the spiritual meaning. But the reference to that Psalm is inapposite; for the matter here in question is not how God regards the days of creation, but how man ought to regard them.’

But the greatest defect of this theory is that it does not satisfactorily account for the six ‘evenings and mornings’. It either ignores, or fails to make any reasonable interpretation of them. Was each of them an indefinitely long night in which there was no light? Was the geological ‘night’ as long or almost as long as the geological ‘day’? The words ‘evening and morning’ seem very unnatural to describe such a geological night. Was there in any sense an evening and morning to that kind of day, and in what sense has there been a hallowing of the sabbath day which is alleged to have lasted from Creation till now?

A variation of the geological age interpretation should be mentioned – it is that put forward by Mr Hugh Capron in his *Conflict of Truth*. He says that on each of the six ordinary days God issued a commandment, or pronounced the laws upon which the production of phenomena depends, that just as a man might say ‘I will build a house’ or ‘I will make a garden’ the resolution takes but a moment; but its accomplishment may take a long time. While Mr Capron has rightly emphasised the reiterated statement that Genesis purports to be an account of what God *said*, he also fails to deal with the ‘evenings and mornings’. While an ‘evening and

morning' is a most natural phrase to separate one day from the next, Mr Capron's interpretation does not convince that an 'evening and morning' is an appropriate method of dividing periods which may have occupied millions of years.

The six days re-creation theory

The second theory – that of six days *re-creation* – puts forward the idea that there has been two quite distinct creations and that these were separated by an unknown period lasting possibly millions of years. It interprets the first chapter of Genesis thus; the first sentence 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth' is presumed to be a completed account of (or at least all we are told about) the first or original creation of the heaven and the earth. The theory assumes that plant, animal and human life were included in that creation notwithstanding that no mention is made of the creation of *life* until later in the chapter.

The second verse is said to leave room for, or to assume that a catastrophe came upon the earth affecting the sun and moon, resulting in the earth becoming 'darkness and waters', chaos and ruin, involving the destruction of all plant, animal and human life.

The remaining verses (3–31) are said to refer to the six literal days in which God *re-created* the earth. The light is made to appear again, the waters which had covered the earth are made to recede so that dry land appeared and all plant, animal and human life are recreated – all in six ordinary days of twenty-four hours each. This theory then assumes that chapter 2: 1–4 refers only to the second or *re-creation* period.

Again, it is obvious that this interpretation has been adopted because of the impossibility of compressing the geological formation of the earth into a period of six ordinary days.¹ This difficulty is obviated by stating what is doubtless true, that the period occupied by the events of verse 2 may be a vast number of millions of years. But it is equally obvious that the theory creates more difficulties than it attempts to solve.² While it provides the long periods required by geology, and also adheres to the Scripture narrative as to the literalness of the six days, it gives no satisfactory reason for the 'evenings and the mornings'. Notwithstanding G. H.

Pember's insistence that those who adopt the geological ages theory fail to explain these 'evenings and mornings', it is very significant that he himself fails to do so. Are we to suppose that God re-created the earth and all life upon it in six ordinary days, and then only during the *daylight* hours of those six days?

It is submitted that Scripture gives us no information whatever about these alleged two quite distinct and complete creations separated from each other by millions of years. And science for its part has no knowledge of the alleged universal destruction of all marine, animal and human life in one catastrophe. Nor is it aware of an infinitely long period of perhaps millions of years – when, after all forms of life had existed on the earth, there was left no kind of life whatever on it. Isaiah 45 : 18 is sometimes quoted as evidence that the second verse in Genesis refers to a catastrophic ruin which had overwhelmed the earth and all life on it. Does the statement 'He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited' imply such a thing? Is not this verse in entire agreement with Genesis 1 : 2, that the formlessness and emptiness does not express God's final purpose for the world? It must be borne in mind that the second verse in Genesis refers to a time when the Spirit of God is said to be already working on the earth.

Those who adopt this re-creation theory say that subsequent to the second verse (except presumably the reference to the sun and the moon in verses 14–18) the whole passage relates to the earth. It is said that it is the earth only, not the heavens, which were re-created in the six days. Seeing that they assume the fourth commandment refers to the six days as being the time occupied by God in creation, they appear to have overlooked the fact that according to this assumption the fourth commandment says that God did something relating not only to the earth, but *also the heavens* during the six days.

The vision theory

Another explanation – the vision theory – has been advanced 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 creation or re-

creation of all things in 144 hours or use the word 'day' to indicate a long geological period. But can it be sustained? I think not in its present form, because one significant fact about this first narrative is that all the marks of a vision are absent. We do not read 'I beheld', 'I saw', as we do for visions later recorded in the Bible. On the contrary, we read that 'God saw'. The difference between a normal narrative and a vision may be seen when we compare this record with such a passage as Jeremiah 4:23-4, which has been used in order to illustrate verse 2, 'I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.'

It has sometimes been suggested that the earlier chapters of the Bible resemble its last chapters. They do. But there is this important difference. The one is a narrative; the other a vision. A comparison quickly shows the difference in style. In the book of Revelation we read, '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 . . .' Phrases such as 'I turned to see', 'after this I looked and lo', and the constantly repeated 'I saw' are entirely absent from the Genesis account. Dr S. R. Driver (*Genesis*) stated, 'The narrative contains no indication of its being the relation of a vision (which in other cases is regularly noted, e.g. Amos 7-9; Isa. 6; Ezek. 1, etc.); it purports to describe not appearances ('And I saw and behold . . .'), but facts ('let the earth . . . and it was so'), and to substitute one for the other is consequently illegitimate.' It is important to note his statement that 'it purports to describe not appearances but facts'.

A still less satisfactory way of dealing with the narrative is to say that 'it must be read as poetry'. It is sufficient to cite Dr Ginsburg's comment on this, 'there is in this chapter none of the peculiarities of Hebrew poetry'. It is prose, not poetry, and purports to be an account of what 'God said'.

The antedate or artificial week theory

The fourth theory is that which found favour with such moderately critical scholars as S. R. Driver and J. Skinner. It is said by

this school of thought that the Creation narrative is nothing else than the common stock of oral traditions of the Israelite nation which had been originally borrowed from Babylonian sources and that it was put into writing about the eighth century BC. That this is not the case will be seen in later chapters. S. R. Driver tells us that, 'Genesis 2 : 1-3, it will be observed, does not *name* the sabbath, or lay down any law for its observance by 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 the introduction of the seventh day as simply part of the writer's representation, and that its sanctity is in reality antedated, 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 six days, followed by a day of rest, *because* the week, ended by the sabbath, existed already as an institution. 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.'

S. R. Driver having adopted the theory that the Genesis narrative in its present form is a comparatively late production and that the fourth commandment pre-dated it, some such explanation became necessary. But I suggest that it is a most remarkable fact that the alleged unknown writer of Genesis does not mention the word 'sabbath'. Surely he would have done so if he had been engaged on such an attempt to 'fake' the narrative as described. Not to have done so would be fatal to his purpose. This antedate theory generally rejects the Genesis narrative as real history.

The myth or legend theory

The last of the theories is not very different. It is that the Genesis narrative is mythological or legendary in character and does not warrant serious attention as a reputable historical document. This theory would have merited greater scrutiny if a satisfactory explanation had been given as to why the account has been written without mythological or legendary elements. E. Kautzsch, who is otherwise critical of these early narratives, says, 'it avoids all intermixture of a mythological character in particular, all thought

of an evolution such as is usually bound up inseparably with the cosmogonies of ancient religions' (*Hastings Bible Dictionary*). The idea popularised by C. Wolff two centuries ago, by which he endeavoured to explain all ancient stories as myths, has been generally discarded by scholars, though it sometimes reappears in surprising places. As L. R. Farnell says, 'There has come in recent years, to aid both our sanity and our science, the conviction that the most potent cause of the type of myths just referred to *has been the actual reality or historic matter of fact.*'

There is also the person who tells us that religious truthfulness and scientific truthfulness are not the same thing. If what is meant by this is that biblical and scientific explanations of events are not at all likely to be made in the same way, we agree. But, if it means that the truth of one may in reality be misleading error, then we disagree.³

I submit that all these theories and 'explanations' fail to determine in a complete and reasonable way what God did for six days and why he ceased on the seventh day.

What then is the explanation?

Before an answer can be given we must again take note of precisely what the fourth commandment says and also what Genesis says. In the remaining part of this chapter we will examine the words used in the fourth commandment, leaving the Genesis account to the next chapter.

If words mean anything, it is obvious that the revelation from God on Mount Sinai was of the greatest possible significance. Nowhere in the Old Testament is there anything to equal it in awe and solemnity. If the nineteenth chapter of Exodus is carefully read, it will be seen how important was the occasion. Nearly two centuries had passed without any exceptional revelation from heaven. Then we read, 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the Mount and be there: and I will give thee tables (tablets) of stone, and a law, and Commandments which I have written' (Exod. 24:12). Those 'Ten words' thereafter came to have a special significance. 'Thus saith the Lord' prefaces the utterances of the prophets. Yet a clear distinction was drawn between these prophetic revelations and the giving of the law on

Sinai. It is a difference not so much in degree of the revelation, as in its status and circumstances. The law had been given by God speaking 'face to face' with Moses; it is said to have been personally communicated to him in a most exceptional manner.

When did the seventh day's rest originate? There can be no doubt that it was introduced at a very early date. That this could not have been on the first day after the creation of the first man will later become evident. For many important incidents are stated to have occurred in the interval between the creation of the man and that of the woman. But obviously the rest period had lost much of its proper significance by the time of the Exodus, for on Mount Sinai God called upon the Israelites to '*Remember* the sabbath day to keep it holy.' Specific directions were then given concerning the manner in which it should be kept. Unlike the early Babylonians the Egyptians apparently did not keep a seventh day's rest, so that the Israelites who had been slaves in Egypt had not been permitted this rest. The fact that the seventh day had a recognised significance, prior to the introduction of the sabbath, may be clearly seen by reference to Exodus 16, where the cessation of the manna is recorded, for this incident happened before the fourth commandment was given. Moreover, evidence of the institution of an observance of the seventh day may also be seen during the Flood (Gen. 7:4; 8:10). The division into weeks can also be seen in the history of Jacob (Gen. 29:27-8). There is however no sufficient reason to suppose that the Patriarchs were required to keep the seventh day in precisely the same way as the Israelites were commanded to keep the sabbath after the giving of the law.⁴

The words of commandment four

Precisely what does the fourth commandment say about the seven days? The Authorised Version translates Exodus 20:11: 'For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.' First we notice that in the Hebrew version we find that the word 'in' does not appear. And the best manuscripts of the Septuagint Version omit 'the sea'. In editions such as Professor Swete's *Cambridge Septuagint* these

words form no part of the text. Moreover, the word 'seventh' is found instead of 'sabbath'.

The word translated *rested*, like the same word in Genesis 2:3, simply means 'ceased', or 'desisted'. It does not necessarily mean the rest of relaxation. For this, quite a different Hebrew word is used. In Arabic the word *sabbat* means 'to cut off', 'to interrupt', and in Assyrian 'to cease'. Another word which needs comment is the Hebrew word *malak* translated 'work'. It expressly refers to *ordinary* work and S. R. Driver renders it *business*; it simply means *occupation*. Delitzsch says of it, 'It is not so much a term denoting a lighter kind of labour as a general comprehensive term applied to the performance of any task whether easy or severe.' The idea of creation is not in any way inherent in it.

Finally the precise significance of the word 'made' must be understood, because the *meaning of the passage is dependent upon the sense in which it is used in this verse*. It is a translation of the Hebrew word 'āsâ, a very common Hebrew word which is used over 2,500 times in the Old Testament. On more than 1,500 occasions it is translated 'do' or 'did'. The word itself does not in any way explain what the person 'did' or what was 'done'. As R. Young says, 'The original word has great latitude of meaning and application. In verse 11 it means to make or *yield* fruit. In 2 Samuel 19:24, to dress (or trim) a beard.' Yet notwithstanding that this word has such a wide application, there has been a tendency to elevate its meaning in this fourth commandment to the equivalent of the word 'created'. It necessarily means no such thing. It simply says that God *did* something and what God *did* on the six days can only be discovered by the context in which the word originally appeared. One thing however is quite clear, the fourth commandment does not use the word *bārâ* 'or create, or say that God *created* the heavens and the earth in six days.

The use of the word 'āsâ in the immediate context of Exodus 20 is illuminating:

- verse 9 Six days shalt thou *do* ('āsâ) all thy work.
- 10 In it thou shalt not *do* ('āsâ) any work.
- 11 For in six days the Lord *made* ('āsâ) the heaven and earth.

If only the translators of the Authorised Version had translated the word 'āsâ in verse 11 in precisely the same way as they had the two preceding verses, the difficulties we have experienced might possibly never have arisen. Its literal translation would then have read 'For in six days the Lord *did* the heavens and the earth . . . and rested on the seventh day.' We should then have asked from Genesis 1 what the Lord *did* for the six days, and why he rested on the seventh day. Instead of which it has been incorrectly assumed that during the six days he was creating the earth.

The meaning of the word 'āsâ

Further instances of the exceptionally wide meaning possessed by the Hebrew word 'āsâ, translated 'made', may be seen by reference to any good Hebrew concordance. In Brown, Driver, and Briggs edition of *Gesenius* the following meanings are assigned to it: 'do', 'make', 'produce', 'yield', 'acquire', 'appoint', 'ordain', and 'prepare'. It is therefore obvious that the word must be translated in the light of its context. Here are some translations of this word as they appear elsewhere in the Authorised Version.

Genesis 18:8 the calf he had *dressed*
20:9 thou hast *done* deeds unto me.
20:10 that thou has *done* this thing.
21:23 kindness which *I have done* unto thee.
27:17 the savoury meat and bread which she had
prepared.

Exodus 19:4 ye have seen what *I did* unto the Egyptians.
23:22 obey his voice and *do* all that I speak.

It is obvious that in such an instance as occurs in Genesis 18:8 the word 'āsâ is not intended to convey the idea that Abraham either *created* or *made* the calf he was preparing for a meal.

There certainly would have been no difficulty, for instance, if this word had been rendered in exactly the same way as it was by the translators of the Authorised Version (and as the Revisers did 250 years later) in the following passages:

Genesis 19:19 which thou hast *shewed*.

24:14 thou hast *shewed* kindness.

32:10 the truth which thou hast *shewed* unto thy servant.

Judges 6:17 then *shew* me a sign that thou talkest with me.

If the fourth commandment had been similarly translated it would have read, 'For in six days the Lord *shewed* the heavens and the earth and all that in them is and rested on the seventh day.'

What did the Israelites of that day understand by the fourth commandment? Surely this, that because God did something for six literal days and ceased on a seventh day, they too were required to work for six days and to cease on the seventh. There is not the slightest indication, or impression that there had been some miracle of speed in creation. It does not imply that the Creator of the heavens and the earth had need of a day's rest after six days' work, or that the commandment referred to six long geological ages, or that the day of God's cessation was also a correspondingly long geological period of time. Neither here nor anywhere else is there anything which would lead Israel to infer that all had been accomplished as in a flash, or that Creation occupied a limited period of time. Nor would they think it referred to a second Creation, or to six literal days of *re-creation* and then a very long period for the seventh day. They accepted the plain meaning that God did something for six ordinary days and ceased on a seventh literal day.

Read in the sense of its use in other passages in the same documents, the word '*āsâ*' would not convey to them the meaning of *Creation* in six days, but of something *done* in six days. If then God was not creating the heaven and the earth during these six days what was he *doing*?

The Genesis narrative considered in the next two chapters will help us to answer this question.

A SUGGESTED SOLUTION

On the first page of the Bible there is an additional statement about the six 'days'. It is that each of them is divided by an 'evening and a morning'. Therefore an interpretation which would make these days other than ordinary twenty-four-hour days seems impossible, and must be set aside. To a modern reader, as to those of ancient times, these days (each with their evenings and mornings) imply six days of ordinary length.

What did God do on those six days? and why did he cease on the seventh?

I submit that the answers usually given to these questions have not been very satisfactory. This is all the more remarkable, *seeing that it is possible to give an entirely convincing answer to the second question without any hesitation whatever, because our Lord himself answered it. In a weighty statement, made on an important occasion, he declared that 'the sabbath was made for man' (Mark 2:27).¹ He was the Lord of the sabbath (v. 28) and claimed to be the one who from Creation exercised authority over the seventh day and therefore could authoritatively state both its purpose and origin. In this context he is referring here to the introduction of the sabbath at the beginning, for mankind generally, not to the Sinai laws.*

It is clear therefore that the seventh day was originally introduced by God *in order that man could rest for a day and not in order that God could rest for a day.* The Creator did not need a seventh day's rest; its introduction, said our Lord, was for man's benefit, not God's. That this is abundantly clear may be seen from every reference in the fourth commandment to the purpose of the seventh day. It was to be a day's rest after six days of work or

business, and it extended even to the trained cattle which had worked for six days. Our Lord's attitude to the sabbath is illuminating. Everything he said about it was to the effect that should there be anything in keeping the sabbath day inconsistent with man's true welfare in relation to the Creator, then he was prepared in that respect to have it broken. As J. A. Bengel says, 'The origin and end of things must be kept in view; the blessing of the sabbath in Genesis 2:3 *has regard to man.*'

Every Bible commentator has realised the difficulty created by the assumption that the seventh day was instituted by God for his own rest. They have all seen that it is necessary to 'explain' such a remarkable idea which has been thoughtlessly assumed. The usual 'explanation' is that God did not really rest, or cease, on the seventh day; but he has rested, or ceased from creation, ever since. Is such an idea true either to Scripture or science?

Had our Lord's statement been borne in mind, we should be saved from thinking that this seventh day's rest was instituted by God as being necessary for himself. Such a conception is clearly contrary to the rest of Scripture. In the description of the Creation in Isaiah 40, we read, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not neither is weary."

So the answer to our second question, why did God cease on the seventh day, is quite simple and unquestionable: He ceased for man's sake in order that *man* might rest.

The above answer assists us in answering the former question, What did God do on the six days? As the seventh day was undoubtedly introduced for man's benefit, then it is only reasonable to suppose that what was done on the 'six days' also *had to do with man*; and if with man, then obviously on the six days God was *not creating* the earth and all life, because man was not in the world when these were being created.

The evenings and mornings

Fortunately it is not necessary to rely on 'reasonable suppositions' and 'assumptions', for we are expressly told that each of the six days was divided by 'an evening and a morning'. Why these six

'evenings and mornings'? Why were they introduced? For God's sake or for man? It seems not to have occurred to the Bible commentators to ask this simple question. If they had, there could have been no doubt about the answer. Endless difficulties have been created in thinking that Almighty God the Creator, ceased his work of creating the world as the evening drew on, and recommenced it as morning light appeared.

An instance of the difficulty caused by this false assumption may be seen when that capable writer on this subject, Sir Robert Anderson, wrote in his *Bible and Modern Criticism*, 'The problem may be stated thus. As man is to God so his day of four and twenty hours is to the Divine day of creation, and here I would suggest that the "evening and the morning" represent the interval of cessation from work which succeeds and completes the day. The words are, "and there was evening and there was morning, one day". The symbolism is maintained throughout. As man's working day is brought to a close by evening, which ushers in a period of repose, lasting till morning calls him back to his daily toil, so the great Artificer is represented as turning aside from His work at the end of each "day" of creation and again resuming it when another morning dawned.' Because Sir Robert assumed that during those six days God was creating the universe, he found it necessary to explain the six evenings and mornings as symbolic nights on which *God* rested and not man. That they are rightly regarded as nightly periods of rest may be seen by the comment made 1900 years ago by Josephus (who, in this matter, represents the Jewish opinion of that time) that 'these evenings and mornings were times of rest'.

We agree, but for *whom*? If the seventh day's rest was introduced for *man's* sake, are we to represent the six nightly periods of cessation as being introduced to meet *God's* need of rest? He who did not need a *seventh* day's rest, did he need a *nightly* one? Was it necessary for God to cease from his work of creation when darkness came on, and to wait till morning light dawned before he could resume? The idea needs only to be stated in this blunt fashion in order to enable us to see that the cessation of the six mornings and evenings was to meet man's necessity for rest. God himself had no need of a nightly rest, 'He fainteth not, neither is

weariness.' So it is evident that, during these six days preceding it, God must have been doing something which also occupied the attention of *man*, and that on each of these six nights God ceased for man's sake.

What was God doing?

How unworthy of God has been the idea that this record of Creation was ever intended to teach that, at sunset, the Almighty God turned aside from creating the world and resumed it at sunrise! Evenings and mornings have to do with the inhabitants of this planet earth: God, who dwelleth in light, is not limited by periods of darkness over half the earth, but *man* is. Is it legitimate to think of the God of heaven, when creating, being unable to continue because of the turning of the earth upon its axis, or by its movements in relation to the sun? These things affect man's time, not God's. As the creation Psalm (139 : 12) says, 'Darkness hideth not from Thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and light are both alike to Thee,' but of man it says (Ps. 104 : 23), 'Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until evening.'

It should have been obvious to us by the very mention of the 'evening and morning' in those six days, and of the cessation on the seventh day, that *God was doing something with man during each of the six days*. It is clear, therefore, that *he was not creating the heavens and the earth*. When he called light out of darkness, when he made the atmospheric firmament, when he caused the waters to recede and dry land to appear, man was not there to know anything about it. Evenings and mornings were unknown, and man had then not been created. The activities of the days in the first chapter of Genesis cannot therefore refer to the period of time occupied by God in the creation of the world. Those six nightly periods of rest, as well as the seventh day's rest, were introduced after man had been created. Consequently the first page of the Bible must refer to six days during which God did something in relation to Creation *after man was on the earth*.

Thus far we have reached a partial answer to our first question. We know what God did *not* do for the six days; he was not creating the heavens and the earth; the narrative certainly does not teach

that. Better, we have some positive information. He was doing something after man had been created and in which man was concerned.

What did God do in the presence of man for six days? The record gives a very simple answer. God was saying something about Creation. Each of those six days commences with 'God said', and it is a record of what God *said to man*, as stated in verse 28, 'And God said unto them'. The word is used in the present tense, 'God saith'. It is therefore not only a statement of a command given by God in the past; it is more; it is a record of what he then was saying to man about Creation. These two things have always been evident; there is the conjoint repetition of 'God created' and 'God said'. This double aspect has puzzled many. For instance, J. Skinner says, 'The occurrence of the "so" before the execution of the fiat produces a redundancy which may be concealed, but is not removed by substituting "so" for "and" in the interpretation.' This feature has been called 'the two-fold conception of creation'. I submit that the textual statement is an account of what 'God said' about the things God made. In other words, it is his revelation to man about his creative acts which were already completed.

The giving of names

Consequently this narrative is a series of statements to man about what God had done in the ages past. It is a record of the six days occupied by God in revealing to man the story of Creation. We are told what God *said* on the first day about the separation of light from darkness, then came the evening and the morning. The second day God said how he had made the atmosphere with its waters below and above it, and on the third day how he had caused the waters to recede so that dry land appeared. It is a narrative of what 'God said' to man. *There is no suggestion that the acts or processes of God had* occupied those six days. During the daylight hours of those six days God told man how in the ages past he had 'commanded and it stood fast'. God explained in such a clear way that man could understand how he had created the world and introduced life upon it, including finally man himself.

Another significant thing should be noticed. At the time 'God said' to man about Creation, *he gave names to the things he spoke about*. On the first day he called the light 'day' and the darkness he called 'night'; on the second day, when telling about the firmament, he called it 'heaven' and then we read how on the third day 'God called the dry land earth and the gathering together of the waters *called* he seas'. Why did God give names to these things? A name to identify a thing is not necessary to God, but it is necessary for man. The supposition that God gave names to things, before man had been created, has been a great perplexity to all commentators. When we see that *the names were given for man's sake* still another difficulty which has embarrassed many commentators disappears.

During the daylight hours of each of the six successive days (each divided by an evening and a morning, when man rested), God revealed to him something new about Creation, and during the first three days gave to man the names of the things he had revealed. When at the end of the six days God had finished talking with man he instituted the seventh day as a rest day for man's sake. In six days God had revealed 'the heavens and the earth and all that in them is', and the six days occupied in this work were followed by a day of rest. As Dillman says, 'God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, that is not later on, but just then on the seventh day.'

It may be said that all this is very anthropomorphic. Of course it is. It is God giving names for the instruction of man and recognising man's need of rest. The whole of the Bible is frankly anthropomorphic. At one time it was used as an argument against this narrative of Creation that it looks at everything from man's point of view; that this planet earth is regarded as the thing of greatest consequence in Creation.

What else should we expect in the circumstances? It was this planet, and not the sun, or Mars, or Jupiter that man was interested in. Besides, modern science has shown that human life as we know it exists only on this planet. 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and

the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou has put all things under his feet' (Ps. 8: 3-6). In past interpretations this anthropomorphism has been applied to God apart from man. It has been assumed that before man existed God gave objects names. Whereas it was, on the contrary, that God was in the process of explaining his works of creation to man.

In the second narrative of Genesis we read how God talked with man, instructed him in language, and taught him to give names to created things, and in the choice between good and evil. The Bible account of the origin of man is that of a person who was made in the image and likeness of God, his maker, with a capable mind. It is in this that he mostly differs from the animal creation. It is the conceptual qualities of his mind which enable him to use language, and gives him ideas of space and time. Man became possessed of this knowledge by what God *said*, especially during those six days.

The reasons for the revelation

It may be asked, why should God talk to man about Creation? Just because it was the one subject about which man could know nothing with certainty except God revealed it to him. Other things he may be able to find out for himself, and his accumulated human experience and acquired knowledge could be handed down. But if man was to know anything trustworthy about the important subject of the origin of things around him, it was vitally necessary that God should tell it to him in such a simple way as would enable him to understand. This is just what the Genesis narrative does. We are often told that no part of the Bible was revealed in order to tell man what he could find out for himself. If that is true, then the first chapter of Genesis would need to be revealed by God, because it was not possible for a writer either in the eighth or any earlier century to discover by reflection or research the facts of Creation as given in this narrative. The attitude of the Old Testament is that man knew about these things, because God had revealed them to him, and not because some man had the ability to think it out for himself. As J. Denney wrote, 'To begin with

creation in Scripture constantly appears as an inspiration to worship. The contemplation of heaven and the earth fills the mind with adoring thoughts of God. We see it in Psalms like the 8th, the 19th, the 29th, the 34th, and the 104th and many more. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night teacheth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone in to all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world." The Psalmist did not mean that he came to know God by studying astronomy.'

It has been assumed by some that God waited until the time of Moses, or even later, before revealing this account of Creation. This assumption implies that God left men in the dark for a considerable period of time. When Moses lived there were in Egypt alone nearly two thousand gods, as well as hopeless ideas concerning Creation. A long period of time elapsed between the creation of man and Moses. Had these ages no revelation of God as Creator?

There are many reasons why God should not leave man in the early days to grope in the dark concerning the origin and significance of created things around him. Subsequent events teach us that it is just on this very subject – the otherwise unknown – that man speculated and went wrong; worshipping created things instead of the Creator. In New Testament words (Rom. 1 : 21–5), 'Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.' They 'changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator'. Early history is sufficient illustration of the way in which the facts about God as Creator and of his creation were changed into the worship of the sun and the moon, and how mixed representations of man, animals and birds became endowed by man with the attributes of god – a god made not merely in the image of man, but of beasts and creeping things.

So it is not at all difficult to understand why God should tell man about himself and about Creation in the earliest days. Even A. Dillman, who is critical of the Genesis account and rejects the possibility of a primitive narrative concerning Creation (because he assumes that early man was not sufficiently intelligent to understand anything regarding Creation), says, 'There exists in the spirit of man as soon as he attains to a certain maturity an unavoidable necessity which compels the formation of opinions regarding religious themes on which experience throws no light. One of these themes concerns the beginning of things.' Where there is intelligence, the question was bound to arise; even a child will ask who made the stars and other visible things.

A new attitude required

A deistical outlook has developed in the mind of many in the present day. It seems to imagine that God, having given the world some sort of start in the immeasurably distant past and having placed within it an infinite potentiality, then left both the world and man in it to evolve without his supervision or care. Needless to say this is contrary to the Bible view. God has never ceased from his creation. 'My Father worketh hitherto and I work' (John 5:17).

Because the six days have been misunderstood as though they were periods occupied by God in his creative acts, instead of the time occupied by him revealing what he had created in the past, the first page of the Bible has fallen into not a little reproach, and has become a stumbling-block to many. The misunderstanding may not have mattered gravely until this last century. Now there is a serious conflict between the interpretations made by Christians of *God's words*, and by scientists of *his works*. The writer believes that this should never have occurred. Nor should those interminable 'explanations' have arisen concerning how there could have been 'days' and 'evenings and mornings' before the sun and moon were functioning in relation to the earth. They – if the reader agrees with our thesis – are seen to have been entirely irrelevant.

The foregoing interpretation has not been presented as a method of escape from the difficulties of the six days. It arises both

from the implicit statement made by our Lord about the origin of the seventh day of rest and from the repeated statements made about the 'evenings and mornings' in the Genesis narrative. It is submitted that this new interpretation explains these statements – not by explaining them away, but by accepting them in the most literal manner, and in accordance with the general usage of the ancient words.

○ A further question naturally arises – when and to whom was the revelation regarding Creation made?

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COLOPHON

It has been explained that a colophon is a note added at the end of an account, giving particulars of the title, date, name of writer or owner, together with other details relating to the contents of a tablet, manuscript, or book. When used on ancient tablets its purpose was similar to that which may be seen in old manuscripts and books. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as 'the inscription or device, *formerly placed at the end of a book or manuscript*, and containing the title, the scribe's or printer's name, date and place of printing'. Instances of its use may still be seen at the end of some modern magazines and newspapers where the names of the printers, the place where printed, and sometimes the date of the printing are given. In modern books the colophon has fallen into disuse; the information originally given in a colophon having been transferred to the first or title-page.

It is often said that the only reasonable way to read the Bible is to read it in the same way as we do an ordinary book. Presumably what is meant by this is that any book should be read in the light of the times and circumstances in which it was written, and there can be no question as to the wisdom of this advice. But in the case of the oldest pieces of writing, this has scarcely been possible until the last century when excavation and decipherment of ancient writing has enabled scholars to become acquainted with the literary methods prevailing in the Tigris and Euphrates districts in early times. Consequently it has only been possible in more recent times to compare the literary construction of this Genesis narrative with other ancient methods of writing. But it cannot be regarded as other than serious that notwithstanding archaeological discoveries many still read this Creation record, not as ancient, but as though it

had been written in relatively modern times. This mistake has been made notwithstanding the very obvious fact that the narrative itself is constructed in a most antique manner by use of a framework of repeated phrases. However, almost every scholar in modern times has recognised that Genesis 2:1–4 is a *colophon* or appendix to the first narrative of Creation. We do not know who wrote the colophon as we now have it; that is whether part was copied from the ancient tablet or whether, when compiling Genesis, Moses or some early writer added it.

Until the time of Alexander the Great (indeed as long as documents continued to be written in Babylonia and Assyria) they were generally written on stone or clay tablets, and the colophon, with its important literary information, was added in a very distinctive manner. There can be no reasonable doubt that any account of Creation read by Abraham in Babylonia, would in the usual way be written on tablets similar to these.¹ The colophon often contains the following information:

- (1) The 'title' or designation given to the narrative.
- (2) The date of writing.
- (3) The serial number of the tablet, when it formed part of a series.
- (4) If part of a series of tablets, a statement whether the tablet did or did not *finish* the series.
- (5) The name of the scribe or owner.

When we turn to the colophon to the Creation tablets (Gen. 2:1–4) this is what we find:

- (1) The title – 'the heavens and the earth'.
- (2) The date – 'in the day that the Lord did ('*āsâ*) the earth and heavens'.
- (3) That it was written on a series of tablets (numbered one to six).
- (4) It states that after the sixth tablet the writing was *finished*.
- (5) The only name appearing on this colophon is the name of the Lord God. (In this instance can it possibly be intended to indicate the author or writer?)

The literary aids in the colophon

We will look at these literary aids in the order mentioned above.

The title

The 'title' given to an ancient piece of writing was usually taken from the opening words of the first tablet. In this instance the title is 'the heavens and the earth'. Long before the time of Abraham the cuneiform or wedge-shaped script was in general use, but earlier still the simpler method of pictographic or picture writing was used. Therefore any document written in Babylonia would later need to be translated into Hebrew. When translations are made the position of words in a sentence often undergo a change; this may be seen from the difference between the Hebrew order of the words, 'In the beginning created God the heavens and the earth', and the English order as in our Bible. That the phrase 'the heavens and the earth' is a title may be seen from verse 4, which reads, 'These are the generations (lit. histories) of the heavens and the earth.' On pages 34–45 is explained the significance of this phrase which occurs at the end of each section of the Genesis narratives. Ample evidence is also given that the great Hebrew scholars agree that the word translated 'generations' means 'history of . . .' 'an account of . . .' That this phrase 'heavens and earth' was actually used as a *title* in ancient times may be seen by such statements as that by A. Jeremias in his *The Old Testament in the light of the Ancient East*, when referring to ancient Babylonian tablets. He writes, 'This "tablet of the secrets of the heaven and earth" . . . represented in fable, according to Berossus, the celestial book of revelation.'

The date

The second piece of literary information referred to, is that ancient colophons often include the *date* when tablets were written. The *date* in the Genesis colophon is contained in the phrase 'when they were created in the day that the Lord God did the earth and heavens'. This verse has perplexed commentators of every school of thought. All seem to suggest that it implies a contradiction of the *six* days, by stating that Creation only occupied *one*

day. This date, however, does not refer to the time when the world was created but, as it states, to the day when the *histories* or records were *finished*.

Those acquainted with the method of 'dating' tablets in the ancient world will readily recognise this phrase 'in the day the Lord God did the earth and heavens' as indicating the *date* of the Genesis Creation tablets. Both the Babylonians, Egyptians and Assyrians gave the year a name by identifying it with some important happening in that year. There is a sense in which we have done something similar, when we date from the greatest of all events, the birth of our Lord. Here are some ancient instances of 'dating' taken from ancient tablets:

'Year Sumu-el the King built the wall of Sippar.'

'Year the canal Tutu-hengal (i.e. the year the canal was dug).'

Although almost every commentator has recognised the phrase 'in the day . . .' as a date, they have wrongly assumed that it is the date on which the world was created. Long ago A. Dillman translated the phrase by the words 'at the time of . . .' As the Hebraist, C. D. Ginsburg, pointed out, the word 'day' as used in the first chapter of Genesis 'is the simple noun, whereas in chapter 2:4 it is a compound of 'day' with the preposition 'in' which according to the genius of the Hebrew language makes it an adverb, so it must be translated '*when*' or 'at the time'.

The series

Next we noticed that it was often necessary to use a series of tablets in order to write a narrative. In Babylonia the account of Creation was generally written on *six tablets* and these were serially numbered at the end of each tablet. The evidence for this will be given in the next chapter. At the end of each of the six sections of the first narrative of Creation we see that these same serial numbers 'one to six' are given. The Hebrew word used for 'one' indicates that this is the *first of a series* and the article is employed in connection with 'day sixth' to indicate the *close of a series*.

The finish of the series

In regard to the fourth piece of information given on the colophon, we know that when more than one tablet was necessary in order to record a narrative, it was a custom to state on the last of the series of tablets that the narrative was *finished* and sometimes to indicate on the earlier tablets of the same series that the narrative was '*not finished*'. A significant instance of this appears on tablet No. 93016 in the British collection. This tablet is the fourth in the celebrated series of six Babylonian Creation tablets, and the colophon reads, '*àm šumāti tuppū 4-kām-ma enuma eliš ul qati*', that is, 'tablet 4 of "when on high" (that is the title given to the series of tablets) *not finished*'. Unfortunately the colophon of the sixth tablet of the same Creation series is badly damaged. The only words which remain legible are 'sixth of "when on high" . . .' Had we access to the original text of this colophon or had this one been in a more decipherable state it would probably have read 'sixth tablet of "when on high" *finished*', just as final tablets of other series do. An example of this may be seen in S. H. Langdon's *Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms* where he reproduces a series of liturgical tablets. These are often composed in a set of six tablets. The last tablet of one series reads, 'Tablet six of . . . which is finished', indicating that the series was finished or completed at the end of the sixth tablet.

It has been assumed that the reference to 'finished' is to the acts or processes of Creation.² What was finished on the sixth day was the revelation and recording of the acts of Creation long past. And I suggest that the reason why the Babylonians and Assyrians clung so tenaciously throughout the centuries of their history to this particular number of tablets, six, on which they recorded their Creation stories, was that it was originally written on six tablets.

If we look at the opening words of the colophon attached to the Genesis narrative we read 'and were *finished* the "heaven and the earth"' (the title given to the series). The verb *finished* occupies the first position in the Hebrew. So the Genesis text uses the word in a manner similar to the literary custom which prevailed in ancient times, thus indicating that the sixth tablet concluded the series of tablets on which the account of the creation of 'the heaven

and the earth' had been recorded. Compare our older printed books, which ended with 'Finis'.

Additional indication

An additional indication that we are dealing with a *series* of tablets may be seen by the use immediately afterwards of the Hebrew word *ṣābā*, translated *host*. We often read of the 'host of heaven' but never of the host of the 'heaven and earth', or of the 'host of earth'; nor is the word ever used of plant or animal life or of the other created things mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis. This is significant. It cannot be therefore, as is so often supposed, a summary of the creation of all things, for life and man are not mentioned. The Hebrew word translated 'host' conveys the idea of an orderly muster or arrangement, or orderly collection of things. J. Fürst suggested 'joined together for service' as a meaning; but the root meaning appears to be 'to set in order'. Translators have usually given the word the meaning of 'contain' or 'contents', assuming that all the orderly or arranged contents of the heaven and earth are referred to. But S. R. Driver points out that to use it in this sense of the heaven and earth is to give it an exceptional meaning. The meaning of the Greek words used in the Septuagint translation is, 'to order, arrange, set an army in array', 'to marshal'.

M. Jastrow in his Talmudic Hebrew Dictionary gives the primary sense as 'to join', 'to follow'. The sense of the Hebrew and Greek words is therefore to join or 'arrange in order', it is appropriate to an ordered arrangement or series of tablets one to six. The meaning of this verse is therefore, 'And were finished (indicating the finish of a series of tablets) "the heavens and the earth" (the title given to the six tablets) and all their arranged order.'

What God had 'done' (Hebrew *āsâ*) in the six days, the context will help us to understand better still. The Authorised Version reads, 'on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made', or as S. R. Driver translates it, 'His *business* which he had *done*'. About this word 'work' Driver says, 'It is the word used regularly for "work" or "business" forbidden on the sabbath.' It

does not in any sense imply creation; it refers to ordinary daily transactions. It is significant that the word translated 'work' in Exodus 20:10 is from precisely the same root as the word 'made' in Genesis 2:4. Thus, what had been made or done was an orderly collection or arrangement, a *finished* series of tablets numbered one to six. That which had been *finished* was the concluding tablet of the series of tablets entitled 'the heavens and the earth'. We would submit that it was not that on some particular seventh day or seventh period God had finished the universe. The Hebrew word 'rested' is the same as that translated 'ceased' in reference to the discontinuance of the manna (Joshua 5:12) when the food of Canaan became available.

Reference to the Creation earlier

At the end of verse three is the phrase 'which God created and made'; this also seems to have perplexed every commentator. The Hebrew construction makes it very difficult to translate into English. It is a '*lamed* of reference'; the stating of a motive in order to define more exactly. S. R. Driver translates it 'in doing which God had created, i.e. which he had creatively done'. In revealing the narrative of Creation, he had instructed man who had been made in his own image and likeness. He had made man acquainted with his purposes, given him knowledge and made known his acts and mind concerning the creation of the heavens and the earth. The Septuagint Version (the oldest translation of the Old Testament from which so many of the O.T. quotations are incorporated into the N.T.) reads ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ θεὸς ποιῆσαι, i.e., 'which at first God made this the written account (or book) of the genesis (or origin) of the heavens and the earth. That is, the Septuagint reads 'which God made in the beginning'.

The failure to recognise that we are here dealing with a *history* or *account* of Creation (as the Septuagint plainly puts it) written in accordance with ancient literary usages has made this colophon more than difficult for commentators to explain. For instance, J. Skinner wrote that this 'half verse is in the last degree perplexing'. But the perplexity vanishes when we bear in mind the literary methods in use in early times. There is then no need of this

perplexity about the 'descendants' of the heavens and the earth. Given its proper significance of 'histories' or 'written account of the heavens and the earth', the meaning becomes plain.

Having examined every important word in this colophon we find its literal translation is:

'And were finished "the heavens and the earth" and all their series, and on the seventh day God finished His business which He had done, and He desisted on the seventh day from all His business which He had done. And God blessed the seventh day, and set it apart, for in it He ceased from all His business which God created in reference to making these the histories of "the heavens and the earth" in their being created, in the day when Jehovah God did "earth and heavens".'³

Name of author

There remains the fifth and last of the pieces of literary information usually given in the colophon – that of the name of the author or writer. Here we are met with the fact that the only name mentioned in the colophon is that of the Lord God. Yet seeing that what he did in the six days was clearly not the creation of the universe, but the *account* of its creation, the phrase 'in the day that the Lord God made the earth and heaven', would seem to indicate that God was the author of the record concerning Creation. Perhaps the evidence is insufficient to state that God *wrote* the tablets, but there is enough internal evidence that he revealed the account in the first chapter of Genesis. Was there a similarity of circumstances in the revelation of the 'Ten Words' and the ten times repeated 'God said'? In the account of the giving of the commandments we read, 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up into the mount, and be there; and I will give thee tables (tablets) of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written' (Exod. 24:12). 'And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tablets of testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God' (Exod. 31:18). 'And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tablets of testimony were in his hands. The tablets were written on both their sides, on the one side and on the other were

they written, and the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tablets' (Exod. 32:15). The parallel is much the same, note, 'the work of God... writing... tablets...'

Did something similar take place when God revealed the account of Creation?

It is worthy of note that there is no subsequent reference to *God having written* the Ten Commandments. It is therefore quite obvious that the Jews were not very interested in the literary methods through which the record came, but were rightly concerned with the narrative itself. They did not think so much of the *method* of revelation, as the fact that it had been revealed by God.

References to early revelation

There are, of course, indications in both Old and New Testaments of a revelation made in the beginning. In such creation passages as that of Isaiah 40 we read, 'Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? (lit. from the first), have ye not understood from the foundation of the earth?' (v. 21). And Hebrews 4:4 says, 'For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.' Bishop B. F. Westcott's comment on this verse is, 'The subject is simply "God" and not Scripture.' In his Greek Testament H. Alford says, 'He (God, not Moses, nor the writings) hath spoken.' The words are emphatic: *God* spake. This implies a direct revelation. R. F. Weymouth translates it thus, 'For as we know, when speaking of the seventh day, *He* used the words.' There can be no question that the reference in this verse is to Genesis 2:3 and not to the fourth commandment. It implies that God himself is the narrator of the account of Creation on the first page of the Bible, and says it is a record of what God said *to them* (Gen. 1:28).

In his *God the Creator* G. S. Hendry says, 'The first step of a scientific approach to theology must consist of an examination of this fundamental notion of revelation'; again, 'The concept of revelation has come to be generally employed with a meaning

which is quite spurious. It has ceased to be an act of Divine disclosure and it has become an act of human perception.'

A review of the evidence given in this colophon of the Creation narrative (Gen. 2:1-4) takes us back to the older view of a primeval revelation. The explanation given in this chapter enables us to understand why it is that the narrative is so sublime in its elevated simplicity, so concise yet expressive in its language, so pregnant in meaning yet uncontaminated by human speculation. It stands as God intended it should, as the first page of Scripture, as the basis of belief in God the Creator and as the original and primitive revelation from God to man.

BABYLONIAN CREATION TABLETS AND OTHER DATA FROM ARCHAEOLOGY

In 1872 Mr George Smith was deciphering some tablets in the British Museum when he noticed in one, numbered K36, a reference to 'creation'. Thereafter, he concentrated his attention on the search for further tablets which might throw light on the early narratives of Genesis. The clay literature at his disposal was immense; it consisted of nearly 20,000 tablets and fragments of tablets. Most of them had been discovered by A. H. Layard, H. Rassam and W. K. Loftus in the ruined library of Ashurbanipal, at Nineveh, nearly twenty years before. Although little more was found referring to 'creation', several fragments relating to a 'deluge' were deciphered. On 3rd December, 1872, Mr Smith read before the Society of Biblical Archaeology his translation of these tablets. General Sir Henry Rawlinson, who had been the first to recognise the value of several of the larger fragments, presided. The place was crowded with archaeologists, theologians and other scholars, including the Prime Minister. This distinguished company is described as 'listening breathlessly' while the able archaeologist detailed the finding and deciphering of these early Babylonian writings.

The paper read that day was enthusiastically discussed in Europe and America. It produced a confident expectation that further archaeological research would reveal the source from which the early chapters of Genesis had been derived, or at least show that the Babylonians had similar accounts. Consequently a sum of money was placed at Mr Smith's disposal by the *Daily Telegraph* so that he could himself go to Assyria in search of the missing parts of the so-called 'Genesis narratives'. Some fragments of the Deluge account were soon discovered in the same

ruined library at Nineveh. Mr Smith thus described 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 a 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 recognize the importance of these fragments, excepting the one with the account of the creation of animals. As I had immediately afterwards to return to England, I made no further discoveries in this direction.'

Summary of Babylonian finds

Two years later the results of his efforts to recover the Genesis stories were summarised in a volume entitled *Chaldean Account of Genesis* ('containing the description of the Creation, the Fall of Man, the Deluge, the Tower of Babel, the Times of the Patriarchs and Nimrod, Babylonian fables and legends of the gods from the cuneiform inscriptions') When it was published, some people imagined that these Babylonian legends would ultimately prove to be the source from which the Genesis narratives had been derived and the long title certainly suggests it. Others boldly asserted that by the discovery of these Assyrian tablets the origin of the early chapters of Genesis had already been ascertained. It is now known that the tablets Smith found represent not an original source, but one of the Babylonian records which have been corrupted from the simplicity of the original source, which we would suggest is preserved in Genesis.

Writing of the Assyrian creation record he said that 'the tablets composing it are in a 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 tablets, 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) Fragment 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*).

I have cited this able Assyriologist because of his interest in the discovery of a Babylonian equivalent to the Genesis Creation narrative, and in order that we may see the origin and growth of the expectation that a parallel account to that in the first chapter of Genesis would one day be recovered from the soil of Mesopotamia. Notwithstanding unremitting search by numerous scholars for over a period of seventy years, that expectation has never been realised. On the contrary, as more and more of the missing parts of these so-called tablets have come to light, the wider grows the chasm which separates the Babylonian and Genesis records.

Subsequent discoveries gradually provided many of the missing parts of the Babylonian story. In 1888 A. H. Sayce deciphered tablet No. 93016, and in 1890 P. Jensen, of Marburg, published an up-to-date text in his *Die Kosmologie de Babylonier*. Five years later H. Zimmern gave a still more complete translation in Gunkel's *Schöpfung und Chaos*. L. W. King added much material in 1902. Up to that time only a few lines of the sixth tablet had been recovered, but so long as parts were missing, the hope of archaeologists remained that, when found, the tablets would contain matter similar to that in the Creation narratives of Genesis. The view prevailing at the time may be seen, for instance, in H. E. Ryle's *The Early Narratives of Genesis*, '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 Creation. But the German excavators at the old capital of Assyria, Ashur (Qalat 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 E. Ebeling in *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*; but the newly discovered sixth tablet did not contain any of the matter which H. E. Ryle said it 'must have recorded'.

Comparisons with Genesis

Over sixty copies of the tablets and fragments have now been recovered and, except for the astronomical poem (tablet 5), the so-called Babylonian 'Creation' series is now sufficiently complete to make a full comparison with the Genesis narrative. The two accounts are as follows:

<i>Bible</i>	<i>Babylonian Creation Tablets</i>
1 Light	1 Birth of the gods, their rebellion and threatened destruction.
2 Atmosphere and water.	2 Tiamat prepares for battle, Marduk agrees to fight her.
3 Land, 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 makes heaven and earth.

- 5 Fish and birds. 5 Astronomical poem.
 6 Land animals. 6 Kingu who made Tiamat to 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 tablets. Perhaps it is not surprising to find as the various fragments were discovered, pieced together, and deciphered, that the more comprehensive knowledge about these tablets did not overtake the old false conjectures and expectations as to their probable contents. Earlier, many archaeologists were inclined to agree with Smith that the probable origin of the Bible narrative was the Babylonian legend; but when these completed tablets came to light it became obvious that the Genesis account was not derived from the Babylonian. Thus in *The Babylonian Legends of the Creation and the Fight between Bel and the Dragon*, issued by the Trustees of the British Museum, we read 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*).

It is more than a pity that many theologians, instead of keeping abreast of modern archaeological research, continue to repeat the now disproved theory of Hebrew 'borrowings' from Babylonian sources. For instance, we find the following paragraph even in the late editions of S. R. Driver's *Genesis*, '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 S. R. Driver's final statement, and I submit that there was no evidence whatever to support it. Even A. Jeremias who argues that both Bible and Babylonian tablets had a common origin says (*The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*), 'The prevailing assumption of a *literary dependence* of the Biblical records of creation upon Babylonian texts is very frail.' But this deposed theory, rejected by archaeologists, remains a popular impression to this day, as may be seen from the report on *Doctrine in the Church of England*, where it is stated that 'it is generally agreed among educated Christians that these (Gen. 1 and 2) are mythological in origin.'

In order that we may test the widespread assumption that the Genesis record is based on the mythological Babylonian accounts, I select from nearly 800 lines of polytheistic and mythological matter, those lines which bear the closest resemblance to Genesis 1, though to my mind they have no more similarity than a mud hut has to a palace.¹

TABLET 1

Line

- 1 When above the heaven had not (yet) been named.
- 2 (And) below the earth had not (yet) been called by a name;
- 3 (When) Apsû primeval, their begetter,
- 4 Mummu (The 'Form', *Logos*), (and) Tiamat, she who gave birth to them all,
- 5 (Still) mingled their waters together,
- 6 And no pasture land had been formed (and) not even a reed marsh was to be seen;
- 7 When none of the (other) gods had been brought into being,

- 8 (When) they had not (yet) been called by (their) names and
 (their) destinies had not yet been fixed.,
 9 (At that time) were the gods created within them.
 81 Within the Apsû Marduk was born,
 95 Four were his eyes, four were his ears.
 132 Mother Hubur, who fashions all things,
 133 Added (thereto) irresistible weapons, bearing monster
 serpents
 134 (Sharp) of tooth (and) not sparing the fang
 135 With poison instead of blood she filled their bodies.
- Colophon 1* First tablet of 'when above'; written like its original and collated. The tablet of Nābû-balatsū-Iqbi . . . by the hand of Nābû-balatsū-Iqbi.
- Colophon 2* (on another copy) First tablet of 'When above', after the tablet . . . mushetiḫ-ûmi A copy from Babylon; written like its original and collated. The tablet of Nabû-mushētlq-ûmi (5th) month Iyyar, 9th day, 27th year of Darius.

TABLET 4

ine

- 128 And then he returned to Tiamat, whom he had subdued.
 129 The Lord trod upon the hind part of Tiamat,
 130 And with his unsparing club he split (her) skull.
 131 He cut the arteries of her blood
 132 And caused the north wind to carry (it) to out-of-the-way
 places.
 133 When his fathers saw (this), they were glad and rejoiced
 134 (And) sent him dues (and) greeting-gifts.
 135 The Lord rested, examining her dead body,
 136 To divide the abortion (and) to create ingenious things
 (therewith)
 137 He split her open like a mussel (?) into two (parts);
 138 Half of her he set in place and formed the sky (therewith) as
 a roof.
 139 He fixed the crossbar (and) posted guards;
 140 He commanded them not to let her waters escape

Colophon 146 lines. Fourth tablet of 'when above'. Not finished. Written according to a tablet whose text was crossed out. Written by Nabû-bēlshu . . . and deposited in the temple Ezida.

TABLET 6

- 1 As Marduk hears the words of the gods,
- 2 His heart prompts (him) to create ingenious things.
- 3 He conveys his idea to Ea,
- 4 Imparting the plan which he had conceived in his heart:
- 5 'Blood' will I form and cause bone to be;
- 6 Then will I set up Lullu: 'Man' shall be his name.
- 7 Yes, I will create Lullu: Man.
- 8 (Upon) him shall the services of the gods be imposed that they may be at rest.
- 9 Moreover, I will ingeniously arrange the ways of the gods.
- 10 They shall be honoured alike, but they shall be divided into two (groups).
- 13 Let a brother of theirs be given up;
- 14 Let him be destroyed and men fashioned.
- 15 Let the great gods assemble hither,
- 16 Let the guilty one be delivered up, and let them be established.
- 17 Marduk assembled the great gods,
- 29 'Kingu it was who created the strife
- 30 And caused Tiamat to revolt and prepare for battle.'
- 31 They bound him and held him before Ea;
- 32 Punishment they inflicted upon him by cutting (the arteries) of his blood.
- 33 With his blood they created mankind;
- 34 He imposed the service of the gods upon them –

Colophon 6th tablet of 'when above'. Owner Nabû-balatsu-iqbi.

Genesis account unique

I submit that the continued propagation of these legends as the source from which the Genesis narrative is derived is entirely unjustifiable. It is not reasonable to imagine these crude accounts

of gods and goddesses plotting war amongst themselves, smashing skulls, getting drunk and similar activities, as the basis of the first chapters of the Bible. When Mr George Smith discovered the first fragment in the British Museum he imagined that it referred to the creation of animals; now we know the animals referred to 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 provide the missing links; excavation has proved this hope to be false.

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

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*, S. H. 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 exists 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.' George Smith and others had conjectured that the Assur 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.' As S. H. Langdon says (*Epic of Creation*), 'The Epic was undoubtedly written in the period of the First Babylonian Dynasty 2225-1926.' This date will, however, have to be reduced if Dr Sidney Smith's dates in *Alalakh and Chronology* are adopted.

Six tablets

The closest resemblance, and certainly the most significant one, is that from the days of Abraham (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, the similarity ends there. Long ago E. Schrader wrote in his *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, '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.' S. H. Langdon summarised the Epic in these words, 'The arrangement of the poem in six books was probably taken from the rules of liturgical compositions. When the Babylonians edited the canonical Sumerian liturgies for their own use and provided the Sumerian text with an inter-linear Semitic version, the material was almost invariably distributed over six tablets.'

It is important that we should notice that nowhere in the Babylonian account is there any suggestion of the creation of the world in six days, or in six periods. After seventy years of search into supposed likenesses between the Bible and Babylonian tablets the only valid similarity is that the Genesis narrative is divided into six days, numbered one to six, and that the Babylonian accounts of Creation are almost invariably written on six tablets.

Why six?

Other data from archaeology

Archaeology, the science of ancient things, provides additional information and we are now in a much better position to assess the value of its evidence than when clay tablets were first discovered. We have already noticed that references found in the Babylonian 'Creation' tablets were once thought to be the source from which the Genesis narrative had been derived. Now it can be seen clearly that the Babylonian stories have little in common with Genesis, except that literary methods of writing and transmission in early days were probably similar. There is nothing either in Babylonian or Egyptian literature comparable with the first page of the Bible. We can see that other early accounts, even if stripped of their

crude polytheism, could not conceivably take the place of the present introduction to the Bible (see Appendix III).

This does not necessarily mean that no gleam of light or truth remained in these accounts as transmitted by the Babylonians, because some of them seem to give indications of a widespread knowledge of an ancient revelation on this subject of Creation. The Babylonians asserted that original knowledge had been received from 'on high', but such similarities as exist are so overlaid with crude polytheistic ideas that it is difficult to discover any reasonable references to Creation on their tablets. Besides the Babylonian accounts already referred to, other fragments have been preserved which tell us of the ancient beliefs of the Sumerians and Babylonians regarding the creation of the world and man.

Berosus, a priest of Bel at Babylon, who lived at the time of Alexander the Great, translated into Greek some of the ancient history of the Babylonians, including the story of Creation. Only fragments of this history remain, and what has survived is known to us only through second-hand sources; it is from the works of Eusebius and Josephus that we learn what he wrote. Since excavation has made us familiar with the story of Babylonia, we know – what was previously doubted – that he accurately reproduced the ancient Babylonian stories current in his day. The account of the primitive revelation which he copied from some ancient source reads in the version which has come down to us as follows: 'In the first year (after creation) there appeared from the Erythrean sea which borders on Babylonia, a Being gifted with reason whose name was Oannes . . . his voice and language were human and his picture is still preserved. This Being, they say, abode during the day with mankind, eating nothing, he taught them the knowledge of writing and numbers and arts of every kind. He taught them to construct houses, to found temples, how laws should be made and the land cultivated. He explained seeds and harvesting of crops, things necessary to civilised life he taught men. Since that time nothing has surpassed this instruction. At sunset this being, Oannes, went again into the sea. Oannes wrote a book (logos) concerning creation and citizenship' (see I. P. Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, and R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*).

How much of this reflects the original story and how much later legend? Oannes is stated to have been the original instructor of mankind. An old Babylonian account said that '*for six days he instructed Alorus* (according to the story, Alorus was the first man who reigned) and when the sun went down he withdrew until next morning.' The Babylonians knew nothing whatever of a *Creation* in six days. The reference is quite clearly to an occasion when *six days instruction* was given and according to Berossus this *instruction* represents the original book of revelation.

That the Babylonians regarded these tablets of destiny as a revelation there can be little question, for we are told that 'Enmeduranki, one of the seven primeval kings, received the secrets of Anu (Ea), the tablet of the gods, the tablet of . . . the mystery of the heaven, and taught them to his son.'² The title given on the colophon of this Babylonian tablet is 'tablet of the secrets of the heaven and earth'; according to Berossus it is the celestial book of revelation. The similarity of this title and that in the Genesis colophon will be noted.

Egyptian parallels

The place occupied by Oannes and Ea in Babylonian stories is, in Egyptian traditions, taken by Thoth. This god, whom the Egyptians represented as having a human body with the head of an Ibis, was regarded as the source of all wisdom. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge says that Thoth 'was thought to be a form of the mind and intellect and wisdom of God who created the heavens and the earth, the picture characters or hieroglyphs as they are called, were held to be holy, or divine, or sacred'; 'He was lord of wisdom and possessor of all knowledge, both heavenly and earthly, divine and human' (*The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*). To him is ascribed the origination of speech, writing and civilisation. In the early days the Egyptians invented gods by the hundred, yet, amongst the most ancient of these, Thoth is represented as holding a writing palette and a reed pen.

As far back as it is possible to go in Egyptian history, to the First Dynasty, we find a perfected system of writing. At first this picture writing was probably not difficult to understand, but when it

became semi-alphabetic, the signs lost much if not all their meaning and became far from easy to decipher. It was called picture writing because every sign is a picture of some creature or thing. It must be understood however that the Egyptians did not express their ideas merely by drawings or pictures, they wrote down words even in the earliest times, words which can be spelt and grammar which can be studied, just as one can Greek or Latin. The Egyptians maintained it was Thoth who taught mankind to write, that he was also 'lord of the voice', master of speech. In Genesis 1: 14 we read, 'And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs.' The word used for 'signs' is 'othoth' and means 'to mark', or 'describe with a mark'.

Eusebius in his *Praeparatio Evangelica* says in regard to the ancient Phoenician ideas of the origin of the world that 'Tauthe' (the Thoth of the Egyptians) 'invented writing and recorded the history of the first Cause'.

Another ancient document is 'The Asatir', the Samaritan *Book of the Secrets of Moses*. It was first translated from the Samaritan script and became known by T. H. Gaster's publication of it in 1927. He says, 'I claim for the *Secrets of Moses* that it is the oldest book in existence of this kind of literature.' It was compiled, he says, 'about the middle or end of the third century BC'. The Samaritans hold the book in high esteem and ascribe it to Moses, and say that the old tradition 'has been preserved unaltered down to our very days'. In chapter iii.9 of this book it states that Adam possessed three books and that 'In seven years he (Noah) learned the three books of creation: the Book of Signs, the Book of Astronomy and the Book of the Wars which is the Book of the generations of Adam'. T. H. Gaster says that the Samaritans 'declared the calculation of the Calendar to be a Divine revelation made to Adam. Genesis 1: 14, where the luminaries are set into the heavens to be for "signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years", has been taken by the Samaritans to prove that from the very beginning . . . this knowledge had been imparted to Adam.'

Much is written about the Book of Signs which was given to Adam (ii.7), and Enoch is said to have 'learned from the Book of

Signs' which was given to Adam. In ii.12 it is said that 'Adam started reading the Book of Signs before his sons.' Noah obtained possession of it (iii.9) and in iv.15 it is said that Noah gave it to Arpachshad, from Arpachshad the knowledge was handed down to Abraham, to Joseph, to Moses. This *Book of Asatir* shows that there were glimmerings of truth which had become overlaid by tradition. It contains absurd corruptions and in this respect is a manifest contrast to the first page of the Bible. If the Book of Signs was, as the Samaritans teach, that referred to in Genesis 1:14, then it is possible that '*the Book of the Wars which is the Book of the generations of Adam*' is our Genesis 2:5 to 5:1, which in our English translation is called 'the book of the generations of Adam'. It is significant that not a little of this section has to do with warfare, first against the tempter in Eden, next with the expulsion from Paradise, then the murder of Abel by Cain, resulting in the sentence against Cain a 'fugitive and vagabond shalt thou be in the earth' (4:12), and Cain's lament that 'it shall come to pass that everyone that findeth me shall slay me'. It is clear that as early as the third century BC the Samaritans held that the contents of the first chapter of Genesis had been communicated to Adam.

With the common Hebrew and Samaritan tradition about these ancient records as having been handed down to Noah, the oldest Babylonian accounts generally agree. Berossus writing also in the third century BC gives the Babylonian account of the ten rulers who lived 'before the Flood' and relates that the seventh (comparable with Enoch) was named Edoranchus, the equivalent of Enmeduranki. A fragmentary text which was found has been published by H. Zimmern (*Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Babylonischen Religion*); it describes how this person was given the secret of the gods Anu, Bel and Ea, the written tablets of the gods, 'the mystery of the heaven and earth'. These ancient stories make it impossible to resist the oldest convictions of men that they have come down to us from the earliest times of mankind.

To whom was it revealed?

The question will be asked to whom was this Creation narrative revealed in the six days? The Babylonians said it was to first man

and this was known to the Egyptians. More than two thousand years ago the Jews had their own beliefs about it, and in more recent years some additional ancient books containing these beliefs have been discovered.

One of these books has been lost to scholars for over 1,200 years. It is known as *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, or as the title of one version renders it, 'These are the secret books of God which were shown unto Enoch.' It is known as the 'Slavonic' Enoch, and was discovered in 1892: parts of it were originally written in Hebrew and Greek. It is old enough to be quoted in the first century for it was written before the Christian era. Its chief interest to us is the information it gives of the beliefs about the revelation of the account of Creation current in the days of our Lord. Amongst much irrational extravagance and senseless fantasy it purports to be a description of Enoch's translation to the seventh heaven and says, 'And the Lord spake to me Enoch . . . I will tell thee now, even from the first, what things I created . . . not even to the angels have I told my secrets, nor have I informed them of their origin, nor have they understood my infinite creation which I tell thee of to-day . . . And I separated between the light and the darkness . . . and it was so . . . and I said to the light "let it be day" and to the darkness "let it be night". And the evening and the morning were the first day . . . and thus I caused the waters below which are under the heaven to be gathered in one place and the waves should be dried up and it was so. Then it was evening and again morning the second day.'

One version states, 'On it God showed to Enoch all His wisdom and power: during all the seven days how He created the powers of the heaven and earth and all moving things and at last man.' Again chapter 33, 'And now Enoch what things I have told thee and what thou hast understood and what heavenly things thou hast seen upon the earth and what thou hast (one version has "I have") written in the books of My wisdom all these things I devised so as to create them . . . do thou take the books which thou thyself hath written . . . and go with them upon the earth and tell thy sons what things I have said to thee . . . Give them the works written out by thee and they shall read them and know Me to be the Creator of all

and shall understand that there is no other God beside Me.' On this R. H. Charles comments, 'This was the ancient belief of the Jews, from being the scribe of God's works as he is universally in the Ethiopic and Slavonic Enoch.'

It was the popular belief that Enoch who prophesied of a second coming referred the first coming to the time when God came to Adam. It is stated thus, 'Listen, my sons, In those days when the Lord came upon the earth for the sake of Adam and visited all his creation which He Himself had made, the Lord called all the cattle . . .' Again (chapter 64), 'For thou art before the face of the Lord for ever, since God hath chosen thee above all men upon the earth, and has appointed thee as the *scribe of His creation* of visible and invisible things.'

It is clear therefore that in Old Testament times the current belief was of a *revelation* to first man and to Enoch and of 'heavenly tablets'. Constant reference is made to God teaching man to write. This is further illustrated in another book called I Enoch or the Ethiopic Enoch which was written in the second century before Christ. It tells of Enoch the scribe and much about the 'heavenly tablets' which had been written and passed down to succeeding generations by Enoch. It will be seen that the testimony which archaeology has to give is of considerable importance.

Unexpectedly, our investigation has brought us back to a revelation in the earliest times of man. Both the Hebrew, the Samaritan, the Greek writings current in Palestine during the two centuries before Christ, and the old Babylonian traditions, assert a transmission of writings about Creation down from the beginning of time to Enoch and Noah.

FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE ANTIQUITY OF GENESIS

There has been general agreement among biblical scholars that the first narrative of Genesis is very ancient, but divergent views have been held as to the date it was first put into writing.

The view current from the Middle Ages to the early part of the nineteenth century was that the account of Creation was based on a primitive revelation made known to the Patriarchs and first put into writing by Moses, though some held that the narrative was first revealed to Moses. The main reason for this view was that before the days of excavation few could conceive that writing was sufficiently known in the time of the Genesis Patriarchs to enable them to possess a *written* account. Indeed, commentators in the early part of the last century found it difficult to assert – for there was then very little evidence to support it – that writing was practised even as early as the time of Moses.

The ‘liberal critical’ view is that the first chapter of Genesis was put into writing by an unknown writer, or school of writers, about the eighth century BC (see pp. 75–8). But many of them, however, freely concede that this alleged unknown writer took an earlier account, or an oral tradition which had been handed down among the Hebrews from the remote past, and put it into the form in which it appears at the beginning of the Bible. A more extreme critical view (which in Part II, chapter 6 we have seen to be unreasonable) is that after the Exile some unknown writer took the crude Babylonian accounts and purified them of their absurdities and so constructed this account.

CLUES CONCERNING DATE

Does the narrative itself give any clue as to the time when it was written? In addition to the ancient literary method referred to in

Part II, chapter 5, there are, I think, some pieces of evidence which should assist us in ascertaining its chronological place in the Old Testament.

No anachronisms

Perhaps the most significant fact about it is that *it contains no reference whatever to any event subsequent to the creation of man and woman, and of what God then said to them* (see pp. 58–60). The significance of the omission of all later events may best be judged by comparing this record with every other account extant (not merely those existing in the eighth century BC but those current centuries later), it then becomes impressive. It has been said that ‘every religion has tried to give some explanation of the universe in which we live. All are either fantastic or puerile or else disgusting.’ For instance, the Babylonian version, which is known to go back to a period before the days of Abraham, contains references to events of a relatively late date, such as the building of Babylon, and the erection of various city temples.

Universality

Another thing of considerable significance is that all the references in this first chapter *are universal in their application and unlimited in their scope. We find no mention of any particular tribe or nation or country, or of any merely local ideas or customs. Everything relates to the earth as a whole and to mankind without reference to race.* Compared with the second narrative, the difference in this respect is very illuminating. In the second there are historical notes. We are told that the cradle of the human race was near the rivers Hiddekel, Euphrates, Pison and Gihon. References are made to later developments, to Ethiopia, to Assyria, to gold, and bdellium. These notes regarding countries, rivers and minerals have been included in the second narrative in order to explain the geographical situation and circumstances. They are absent from the first narrative. Every other account of Creation extant contains some references to a limited historical or purely national outlook. All those who handled this account throughout these

earlier ages must have regarded it as so sacred that they refrained from altering its primitive character by adding anything to it.

Simplicity

Another instance of its unique antiquity may be seen in the childlike simplicity with which reference is made to the sun and the moon. These are referred to simply as the 'greater and lesser lights'. It is well known that astronomy is one of the most ancient, if not the oldest of all the branches of knowledge. It originated in Babylonia – the land from whence the Father of the Hebrew race came. Long before the days of Abraham Babylonian writers had given names to both the sun and moon; moreover we cannot disregard the persistent tradition that Abraham was well versed in the astronomy of his day. When he lived at Ur certainly that city was renowned for its worship of the moon god named *Sin*, while the sun god named *Shamash* was one of the oldest and best known of all the gods in the Babylonian pantheon. We have many seals and tablets written long before Abraham was born, on which the Babylonian names *Shamash* and *Sin* occur. Yet this account must have been written before these ancient names had been given to the sun and the moon, which means it must have been written before the days of Noah.

Brevity

The brevity of the narrative is a further indication of its ancient character. If this account is compared with the Babylonian series of six tablets of 'Creation', it will be seen that the Bible uses only one-fortieth the number of words. Writing in the earliest days was necessarily brief and later became more extended.

Two untenable criticisms

The idea that an alleged eighth-century writer eliminated not only all mythical and legendary matter, but also any reference subsequent to the creation of first man, is not tenable in the light of certain other characteristics of the narrative. For instance, there is the statement, 'Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness.' This has often been explained as the 'plural of majesty', but, as

Professor J. Skinner says, 'The difficulty of the first person plural has always been felt.' Surely it is impossible to imagine an Hebrew writer of the eighth or any century originating such a sentence. Neither is it reasonable to suppose that any Hebrew into whose hands this document fell would leave it there if he knew that he had the right either to edit or suppress it. The narrative must have been ancient and held to be so sacred that notwithstanding their belief in one God this statement was regarded as unalterable. The main characteristic of the Old Testament writers, living as they did in a country surrounded by nations whose ideas were polytheistic, was their intense monotheistic faith, summarised in the statement, 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.'

An argument precisely the opposite to that which asserts deletions and corrections of an ancient text, is that put forward by S. R. Driver and J. Skinner and others, in an endeavour to explain the narrative as an attempt by an alleged eighth-century writer to incorporate into this ancient account of Creation a reference to the sabbath day. They say that he did this by artificially dividing the narrative into six days of work and one of rest, so as to enable him to make a dramatic reference to rest on the sabbath day. Thus we find one school of writers asserting that everything which is subsequent to Creation has been expunged from the original account, while the other says that this unknown writer deliberately introduced into it something which they think is of a later date. When we turn from these speculations about the sabbath to the narrative itself we see that the *sabbath* is never referred to. It is simply called the *seventh day*. On any rational and even 'critical' grounds this would be regarded as clear evidence that the narrative had been written before the word *sabbath* had been introduced, or at least before it had become a common name in the vocabulary of the people to describe the seventh day's rest. It is surely more reasonable to say that the document is ancient than that the alleged eighth-century writer set himself the task of intertwining the idea of six days' work and a sabbath rest into the narrative of Creation, yet avoiding even mentioning the word sabbath. The omission of the all-important word is clear evidence against this theory, and good evidence of the antiquity of Genesis.

Oral transmission?

In previous chapters we have noticed that for six days God told man about Creation, and that from the earliest times in Babylonia the story of Creation was written on six tablets. The assumption at present prevailing is that early ideas about Creation were transmitted orally and there can be no doubt that this did often happen, though one thing that archaeology has shown us is that the ancients committed even trivial things to writing at a very early period and that their traditions often refer to a primeval revelation to first man.

Was this Genesis record transmitted to subsequent generations by word of mouth? A Dillman, arguing against any possibility of accuracy in an oral transmission, writes, 'The creation of the world was certainly never a matter of human experience. Where, then, can anyone get knowledge of it, to tell us? This question must be faced. On its answer depends our whole conception of the passage. First of all, it is evident that the account is not a free poetic invention of the author. In his whole work he represents himself always as a historian, not as a poet. What he narrates, he held also to have happened, or found it reported as having happened' (*Genesis*). 'Important external events, highly influential in the history of man, are forgotten; how then should an occurrence, so purely in the mental sphere as the one here under consideration, be preserved and transmitted by human memory? Besides there would be poor guarantee for the truth of this narrative if, like that of all other history, it had to be founded upon the credibility of a chain of external tradition.' But if as he says, 'in the main the authority gives what has been handed down by tradition, still the question arises, when has this tradition its origin? To this formerly it was simply answered that it rested ultimately on a special Divine revelation . . . but that hypothesis of a Divine revelation about the process of creation does not merely fail to furnish what it should, because on account of the length of the chain of tradition a guarantee for the undistorted tradition could not possibly exist, but is in itself untenable.' He then explains why a primitive revelation is considered by him to be impossible because 'it is dependent upon the formation of language' and 'full development

of the thinking faculty. Before these powers existed there could be no word of revelation dealing with such a question', and adds rather weakly 'that we should not look for light on this'.

A. Dillman is of course right in implying that a revelation is useless unless the man to whom it is made can understand speech, and meaningless unless he has a mind capable of comprehending such a revelation. Probably he is also right when he doubts the possibility of the human memory retaining in a pure state a revelation which is transmitted orally over a long period. It must however be remembered that Dillman's assumptions are clearly contrary to the Bible statements as to first man, for the Genesis narratives explicitly state that he was made in the image and likeness of God, endowed with a brain and given the faculty of speech, and made capable of assigning names to animals.

Speculation

It has been said that early man speculated about the origin of things and that this first chapter of Genesis is the result of these speculations. Is it possible to imagine that some writer thought things out as best he could, writing this narrative as the result of his reflections? To suggest this as a solution would imply that the speculations of this alleged eighth-century writer are nothing less than miraculous in their insight. If the chapter is no more than the ideas of a human mind, how comes it that, in the words of Professor G. W. Wade, the account is so accurate that he writes 'of the inherent improbability of an ancient writing anticipating accurately the conclusions of modern science' (*Old Testament History*). It is not practicable to suppose that this chapter is merely a miracle of literary insight, seeing how absurd were all the other prevailing ideas of a Creation. It is far more reasonable to believe that it is a revelation than that some unknown writer made so perfect a guess at it.

Apart from the Genesis record, does the Bible throw any light on how man originally became possessed of his wisdom? Some information on this will be found in Appendix II.

The fact that this account of Creation (1) does not contain any reference whatever to any event subsequent to the creation of first

man and woman and what God said to them, and (2) all its references are universal in their application and scope, no mention being made of any particular tribe or country or customs and (3) that the current names for the sun and moon do not appear but that they are simply called the greater and lesser lights, and (4) it contains the plural 'us' which no late writer would ever have dared to use, and (5) the use of the word 'seventh' instead of 'sabbath' all show that this first page of the Bible is very ancient indeed.

CREATION – GRADUAL OR INSTANTANEOUS?

Does the Bible anywhere suggest a measurement or limit of time for the acts or processes of Creation? Is Creation in its comprehensiveness as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis stated to have been accomplished suddenly, as instantaneously say as a flash of lightning, at a given moment of time, or does the Genesis narrative imply that God worked gradually, by successive acts or processes extending over an unspecified period of time? In other words, does Genesis state whether the Creator of the heavens and the earth worked by a sudden or by a gradual method?

I submit that the only references to time in connection with creation are those relating to the six days of *revelation* of the narrative, and that there is no reference whatever to the time occupied by God in creating the universe and all things on it. The significance of the six divisions of the narrative has already been discussed, and we have seen that neither in Old nor in New Testament times were men interested in the speculations as to how long the heavens and the earth and life had existed. Nor did they concern themselves with the precise methods or processes by which God caused things to be. For them it was sufficient that the first narrative of the Bible meant that God was, in the most real sense, the Creator of all things in heaven and earth.

On one point all commentators have been in general agreement, that obviously the narrative tells of successive acts, and it is quite clear that all acts of Creation were not accomplished all at once. In this sense they were gradual and it is significant that there is no appeal in the Bible to any speed of action on the part of God. In all the references to Creation the impression produced is of a considerable period of time. An instance may be seen in Psalm 90, 'Thou

Lord has been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God . . . For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.' In Psalm 145 : 13 we read, 'Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations', or 'of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of thy hands' (Ps. 102 : 25). Here the impression left on the mind is not that of brevity of time; there is order and succession on a vast scale. There is no suggestion of crowding into a few hours the great works of Creation, and not the slightest implication anywhere that material things were of comparatively recent creation. The references are to eternities in the past.

Milton: A sudden creation

Even subsequent to biblical times there was very little speculation concerning the age of the universe, or of the time taken for the formation of the earth's crust, or of the length of time man had been on the earth. Until inquiry by scientific methods had been developed, men were not very much concerned with a quest for knowledge in these directions. But long before science had awakened questions on these problems, men like Origen in the third, and Augustine in the fourth century, held that the days of Genesis were not normal twenty-four-hour days, but that Creation had extended over long periods of time. On the other hand writers like Milton had adopted the 'instantaneous or sudden' view which he represents in *Paradise Lost* in this way:

The sixth and of Creation last, arose
With evening harps and matin; when God said,
Let the earth bring forth soul living in her kind,
Cattle and creeping things, and beast of the earth,
Each in their kind. The earth obeyed, and, straight
Opening her fertile womb, teemed at a birth
Innumerable living creatures perfect forms
Limbed and full grown. Out of the ground uprose,

As from his lair, the wild beast, where he was
In forest wild, in thicket, brake or den
Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walked;
The cattle in the fields and meadows green:
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks
Pasturing at once and in broad herds, upsprung.
The grassy clods now calved: now half appeared
The tawny lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts – then springs, as broke from bonds
And rampart shakes his brinded mane; the ounce
The libbard, and the tiger; as the mole
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks; the swift stag from underground
Bore up his branching head; scarce from his mould
Behemoth, the biggest born of earth, upheaved.

If this does not mean instantaneous creation, then it implies something very nearly approaching it, for the poet is endeavouring to represent the completion of animal creation before nightfall on the sixth day. It is surely significant that there is nothing whatever in Scripture comparable with Milton's description of Creation 'limbed and full grown, out of the ground uprose'; or of the 'tawny lion pawing to get free his hinder parts'; or of 'the tiger, as the mole rising the crumbled earth above them threw'.

A contemporary of Milton, Dr John Lightfoot, a great scholar and Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University, wrote that man was created 'at nine o'clock in the morning'.

Nineteenth century reaction

This Miltonic idea of 'speed' in Creation became current and it was against the poet's conception that the nineteenth century reacted so extravagantly. As frequently happens in such a burst of impetuosity, the pendulum was violently swung out of control in the opposite direction. Even scientists vied with each other in adding hundreds of millions of years to the time they required for the origin and development of the earth and of life on it, including human life. This was taken to such extremes that the process

known as 'throwing away the baby with the bath water' took place, men jettisoned not only their fallible human interpretations of what they imagined the first chapter of Genesis to mean, a six days' creation; they went further, some abandoned all real belief in God, substituting 'evolution' as a merely mechanical process in place of a Creator, as though this could be an alternative creative agency. All that was needed, it was said, is a sufficient number of millions of years, and an explanation can be given of the development of the heavens and the formation of the earth, the variety and distribution of plant and animal life including man, all without reference to God. The mental refuge in this attempt to eliminate God as Creator was an unstinted number of millions of years. Given a figure of sufficient magnitude, it was assumed that almost anything could have happened in such a period of time without requiring a First or Continuing Cause. Of course the real scientists were careful to explain that the vast number of millions of years of which they wrote were merely speculations, and their ideas only theories. When however their time periods and theories were disseminated in popular form, they were often believed by the general public to be scientifically ascertained facts.

But it has been seen that scientific research, instead of strengthening, has often weakened these theories, and some scientists have made it plain that they retain their antipathy to Genesis, not on scientific grounds, but just because they cannot reconcile their unbelief in the existence of God, or their idea of what the six days mean with their scientific findings. An instance of this may be seen in Professor D. M. S. Watson's statement to a British Association meeting in 1929, that 'the theory of evolution is a theory universally accepted not because it can be proved to be true, but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible.'

Greater scientific understanding

Although the reaction against the idea of an instantaneous Creation, which had grown up during the medieval ages, reached its climax in the nineteenth century, its gradually diminishing acceptance was in part due to a more scientific understanding of

the heavens and the earth. When Galileo explained that the earth moved round the sun and not the sun round the earth, the opposition was due not to any time factor, but to false astronomical assumptions not derivable from the Bible. When Newton published his ideas about gravitation and the movements of the heavenly bodies, the criticism was not on grounds of Scripture, for the believer in a Creator could then with even greater meaning use the words of the Psalmist and say that 'the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork' and Newton, devout believer as he was, also took this point of view. However, some interpreted his discovery in such a way as to say that 'the heavens now declare the glory of the laws of mechanics, and the firmament showeth that they are held together by gravitation.' It was this substitution of scientific laws, as though they could take the place of a Creator, which prompted Laplace to say that he could explain the movements of the heavens without reference to God.

When Herschel made the nebular hypothesis popular as an explanation of the formation of the earth, it seemed to some that it implied an accidental origin and therefore that it was contrary to Scripture. That theory supposed that the sun while in a gaseous state threw off a section which had protruded from its rim, and that this detached portion, while still travelling at a distance from the sun, condensed over an enormously long period of time, gradually forming into the planet earth. Modern astronomers, however, have declared that this theory is scientifically untenable, but at that time it served its purpose in some minds as an account of the origin of the earth without mentioning God.

Meanwhile those engaged in the study of geology wrote of the enormous length of time necessary for the formation of the various layers in the crust of the earth. When C. Lyell produced his *Antiquity of Man*, it was the time element which was regarded as a direct challenge to the Genesis narrative. Soon after Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, insisting on millions of years for the process of selection and variation, it was this time note again, in addition to its merely mechanistic explanation, which was seized upon as a direct contradiction to the six days of Genesis.

Those who maintained that the days in the Genesis record were literal twenty-four-hour periods found their interpretation increasingly difficult to defend, for the current of scientific opinion was flowing strongly against them, but strangely enough it never seems to have occurred to them that they should test and verify their assumption that God had confided all his creative actions to a period of less than a week. An instance may be seen in the way Philip Henry Gosse, an eminent zoologist and Fellow of the Royal Society, and a convinced believer in the integrity of the Genesis narrative, tried to stem the rising tide of criticism by a book he wrote in 1858 called *Omphalos* in which he maintained that Creation was accomplished in 144 hours. His son, Sir Edmund Gosse, describes its contents as follows: 'It was, very briefly, that there has been no gradual modification of the surface of the earth, or slow development of organic forms, but that when the catastrophic act of creation took place the world presented, instantly, the structural appearance of a planet on which life had long existed.' The popular press of the time said that this book assumed 'that God hid the fossils in the rocks in order to tempt geologists into infidelity', and his friend, the celebrated Charles Kingsley, wrote to Gosse that he could not 'give up the painful and slow conclusion of five and twenty years' study of geology and believe that God had written on the rocks one enormous and superfluous lie'.

It will be seen therefore that the divergence of thought between the Bible and science is almost entirely concerned with the problem of *the time occupied* by the Creator in *his* Creation. It is true that some scientists have produced a far greater divergence by attempting to account for all things without any Creator at all. But it is this time factor, and not any question as to the order in which things appeared, which has created the main conflict, for the order is remarkably accurate. The disagreement is between the doubtful interpretation which alleges 'speed' on the part of God in his creation and the findings of science which assert that these things occurred over immensely long periods of time.

We have already noted that many Christian thinkers agreed that the creation of the universe did occupy an immense period of time, but their solution of the days of Genesis was not convincing.

The key from archaeology

It is significant that just at the time when science was producing its evidence of a slow succession of events – the very year that Charles Darwin published his *Descent of Man* – Mr George Smith issued his *Chaldean Genesis* in which he explained as much as was at that time known of the literary methods of writing used in the then recently discovered fragments of tablets recording the Babylonian story of the Creation. Had the literary information which archaeology has brought to light been applied to the problem of the ‘days’, few scholars would have continued to interpret the first chapter of Genesis other than as six days’ *narration or revelation* and not as a six days’ *creation*.

It would take us too far from our purpose to discuss the philosophic ideas of time in relation to God. The ninetieth Psalm already quoted makes it plain that man’s ideas of time can have no place in regard to God’s creative work.

No suggested time element

In the light of the evidence already given that the ‘days’ refer to the *period of revelation* and not of *acts of creation*, and if we bear in mind that ‘a miracle is not necessarily something quick’, the difficulties are resolved. No one can doubt that God could create instantaneously, that is not the point at issue; the question is, did he so act? Some of the older theologians assumed that he did. If, however, we discover from the record that this assumption is incorrect, and if accurate scientific research shows that this is not the way he so acted, there cannot be any conflict between his work and his Word. The clash is between our interpretation either of Genesis or of science.

Does Genesis imply that God created instantaneously or gradually? I contend that the Bible narrative gives clear evidence against the former view. In the first place the record certainly implies that God created things successively in time as well as in

order; next the statements, 'Let there be . . . and there was', do not in any way imply an instantaneous completion. Light, for instance, is swift in its movement but it takes nine hours for the light of the sun travelling at 186,000 miles a second to reach the earth. When we read, 'Let the waters bring forth abundantly', there is not the slightest suggestion of a time limit, no hint that the teeming abundance was accomplished in a flash, or in other than God's normal way of working.

Those who held that each of the days commenced with an ordinary night got into serious difficulties at the very beginning. When did the darkness of that first night begin seeing that before light was created there had been nothing but darkness? Yet if it is impossible to say when the ordinary night began on this first day, it is not possible to determine the beginning of the first day. When we read, 'Let the waters under the heaven be gathered unto one place and let the dry land appear and it was so', or, 'Let the earth bring forth grass and herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind', there is not the slightest reason for supposing that it all took place in a few hours; there is no suggestion of a miraculous drying of the earth, so that grass and vegetable life could be full grown within twenty-four hours of the time when the earth had been covered with waters.

Fifteen hundred years ago Augustine wrote in his *De Genesi ad Litteram*, 'Let us, therefore, consider the beauty of any tree you like, in respect of its trunk, branches, leaves, fruit; this species did not, of course, suddenly spring up of this character and size, but in that order with which we are familiar. For it rose from the root which the first sprout fixed in the earth, and from this all these formed and distinct parts grew. Further the sprout sprung from seed.'

The creation of woman

There is very definite evidence that speed was *not* an element in the creation for instance of the man and woman; both were not created on the same day. In the twenty-seventh verse of the first chapter of Genesis, it is said, 'Male and female created he them.' Had this verse stood alone it might have been assumed that this

creation of the first pair was something done together and quickly. But it is very obvious from the second chapter that a great deal happened between the creation of the man and the creation of the woman. After the account of the creation of the man and before the creation of woman, we read that 'the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed, and out of the ground made the Lord God to *grow* (no suggestion of haste here, but the very reverse) every tree,' etc., 'And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.' It was not until after these events that we read of God saying, 'it is not good that man should be *alone*, I will make an help meet for him.' Still another incident is recorded before woman was made for man. 'God brought every beast of the field and every fowl of the air' to him 'to see what he would call them and whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found any help meet for him.'

So in regard to the creation of man and woman – about which there is more information than concerning the making of the heaven and earth – instead of any statement which would imply a completion in one day, there is definite evidence to the contrary. It is therefore quite obvious from this one instance that the acts and processes narrated on the days had not been completed on ordinary days, so that the twenty-four-hour day Creation or re-creation is *contrary to Scripture*. How God made man we are not told, apart from the fact that he was an exceptional creation made in the image and likeness of his maker. Body and soul were so made that the completed product was in God's image, a person to whom God could talk, and who could talk to God.

It is surely significant that nowhere in the Bible is any event dated from the beginning of creation of the earth. Yet some have assumed that 'suddenness' is an essential element of it. Sir William Dawson, the geologist, referring to Psalm 104, which is the poetic version of the first chapter of Genesis, says (*Expositor*, 3rd Series, Vol. 3, p. 289), 'The work marches on in slow and solemn grandeur without any reference to the days. Again there is not

anywhere in the Bible a hint that the work of creation was remarkable as being done in a short time. Some of us have no doubt been taught in childhood that God's power was wonderfully shown in His creating the world in a short space of six days, but there is nothing of this in the Old or the New Testament.'

Precisely how long ago God created the heavens and the earth we do not know. Astronomers and geologists have made suggestions as to times and methods. Except in the case of man the narrative of Genesis does not tell us any detail of the process, or state what period of time was involved. Genesis tells us something that scientists cannot. Science can know little or nothing about origins. In the very nature of the case they are quite unable to say what happened 'in the beginning'. Genesis however does tell us that God was the originator and controller.

A COMMENTARY AND SUGGESTED TRANSLATION

VERSE 1 *'In the beginning'*

In the beginning, at the commencement of time. It does not say when this was, but does imply that there was a beginning. No date is given, it expresses the earliest time imaginable, and is equivalent to 'at the beginning of time'.

It is not to be understood in a merely relative sense as 'first of all', or 'first in order' to a second or subsequent thing, for 'heaven and earth' include all. It is not here used adverbially in the sense of 'first of all God', or 'in the first place God'. It is the beginning of all material things in the indefinite past. Compare John 1 : 1 where the words translated 'in the beginning' in the Septuagint Version of Genesis and the Greek of the Gospel are the same, but there is an addition in the Gospel, the Word '*was* in the beginning with God'.

'God'

There is no attempt to explain the existence of God, this is not considered necessary, his reality is simply stated.

Some scholars translate the Hebrew word *Elohim* by 'The Eternal'. *Elohim* is always in the plural, but accompanied by a verb in the singular. God is before all time and all material; the heavens and the earth had a beginning but no beginning is of course suggested in regard to God. The emphasis is on the word 'God'. Note the continued repetition of the divine title in this narrative, it occurs thirty-five times. This first sentence implies that God is other than his universe and beyond it, it is the foundation of the biblical philosophy of Creation.

'created'

Hebrew *bārā*'. In its *primary* form it is used only of an act of God, never of a human production, or to describe the work of

man. In this exclusive use, it is probably unique in any language of the world. The root of this word is commonly considered to mean 'to cut', or 'to hew', or 'to fashion by cutting', and its use in this sense may be seen in Joshua 17: 15 and 18.

The word *bārā'* does not invariably mean creation from nothing, this idea is not necessarily inherent in it, but may be implied. There is no other single word in Hebrew which could express creation out of nothing. No word is stronger in expressing absolute creation. Perhaps in its biblical use it implies effortless (but not necessarily instantaneous) production. The word is sparingly used even in this chapter. It occurs again in verse 21 in connection with living organisms, and in verse 27 in regard to the creation of man.

The statement that *God created* shows that the universe is not an emanation from God as pantheists have taught. It implies that matter is not eternal and that the heaven and earth are not the result of an accident, or series of accidents, or 'a fortuitous concourse of atoms'. It obviously means that the heavens and the earth have not existed throughout all eternity past. In Hebrews 11: 3, we read that the 'things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.' *Bārā'* is one of three words used in this chapter to describe God's work, the others are *yāšar* formed and *'āsā* made.

'the heaven and the earth'

In the Hebrew the word 'heaven' is in the plural form. This phrase is often used to describe created things apart from the earth, as there is no single Hebrew word which expresses the totality of all created things. Even in the New Testament the phrase is retained, 'a new heaven and a new earth'. Its meaning may be seen from Genesis 15: 5, 'Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them.' The heavens and the earth later became the acknowledged phrase for the universe.

The majority of scholars regard the first verse as an independent sentence, summarising the whole creative process narrated in this chapter. It has been stated thus: 'The verse gives a summary of the description which follows stating the broad general fact of the

universe, the details of the process then form the subject of the rest of the chapter.' Rashi, E. Schrader, and others, however, regard the word 'created' as a noun and not as a verb, and read it as follows: 'in the beginning of God's creating the heavens and the earth, the earth was without form and void and then . . .'

VERSE 2 'And'

The simple Hebrew conjunction; it cannot mean 'in contrast to'; it could mean, 'but the earth was waste'.

'the earth'

The Hebrew word translated earth is emphasised by its position in the sentence. It is the common word for land or earth as contrasted with the sea or heavens. As the sequel shows, reference is to this planet earth, in its state before God brought about the condition successively described in verses 3–31.

'was'

Some have wished to translate this 'became' or 'had become'; but such a rendering is not permissible here. 'Was' is correctly given in both the AV and RV and is so translated by the overwhelming majority of Hebrew scholars. We should not assume that a thought, such as a catastrophe, has been dropped out or intentionally not mentioned, and that the subsequent words cannot be properly understood, unless we introduce it.

'without form and void'

Tohu-wa-bohu: *tohu* expresses formlessness, nothingness, something unsubstantial; *bohu* means void, empty, tenantless, unfinished. The words are almost synonymous, and in Hebrew this repetition is one of the methods used to express intensity of meaning. The like-sounding Hebrew words can be rendered in English by 'formless and void'. Absence of form and order is conveyed by their use, rather than shapelessness and disorder. The word *tohu* is used in the Old Testament of a desert and expresses emptiness. As J. P. Lange remarks, 'The first word denotes rather the lack of form, the second the lack of content in the earliest condition of the earth; uncompleted as regards order, and bareness as regards life.' The chapter gives an account of God's

creative work relating to this earth, and also of the heavens as they affect the earth. The opening words of this verse refer therefore to the earth in a state of emptiness and the AV and RV translation expresses the sense as nearly as possible. G. J. Spurrell translates the words as 'bareness and emptiness'. The AV and the RV use the latter word in Isaiah 34 : 11.

There is no reason (except as a theory in attempting to reconcile the narrative with science) for introducing the idea that something or someone wrecked the earth as created by God. Isaiah 45 : 18 expressly refers to the earth which God had made and established, that is, the completed earth referred to in the chapter as a whole. The prophet says of this completed earth, 'he created it not in vain (*tohu*), he formed it to be inhabited.' As T. Whitelaw wrote in his *Commentary on Genesis*, 'He created it not *tohu*, he formed it to be inhabited, i.e., the Creator did not intend the earth to be a desolate region, but an inhabited planet. There can scarcely be a doubt, then, that the expression portrays the condition in which the newly created earth was, not innumerable ages, but very shortly, after it was summoned into existence. It was formless and lifeless; a huge shapeless, objectless, tenantless, mass of matter, the gaseous and solid elements commingled, in which neither organised structure, nor animated form, nor even distinctly traced outline of any kind appeared.' F. Delitzch (*New Commentary*) says, 'being only a means to an end, only the substratum and not properly such a creative work itself; God made it the foundation of his creative agency.'

'and darkness'

The absence of light.

'was upon'

It is the same Hebrew word as is used in Deuteronomy 32 : 11, of a bird 'hovering over'. On this formless and bare earth the Spirit of God moved in controlling motion.

'and the Spirit of God'

The idea of a manifestation of an invisible power. It is the usual word for the Spirit of God. Just as God is mentioned in the first verse without any attempt at explanation, so here the Spirit of God

(who throughout Scripture is represented as the source of life) is not defined. It would be idle to suggest 'wind' as the creative agent affecting the change in the state of the earth. There is no indication whatever how long the earth was in the state described in this verse, during which the creative Spirit of God was active.

'the face of the waters'

The Hebrew word is *tehōm*; it means, not merely the sea or the deep, but the undefined, unformed watery mass.

WHAT GOD SAID – FIRST DAY. Verses 3–5

'And God said'

These words are placed at the beginning of each day's narrative. On this first day there follows the narrative of what God said. God speaks and this implies that he speaks to some person. To whom? We do not know to whom God spoke these words on the six successive days, but in chapter 7 we have seen that the narrative bears unmistakable evidence of having been a revelation given and written down at the very earliest period.

'Let there be light: and there was light'

These words constitute the creative fiat. Creation by fiat is referred to throughout Scripture. It implies the effortless realisation of his thought and purpose. 'In the beginning was the Word . . . all things were made by him' (John 1 : 1–3). In Hebrew only two very short words are used, *yehî* or 'let light be', or 'let light exist'. The words used are as simple as it is possible for them to be; there is no reference to any scientific hypothesis regarding the nature or source of light and no astronomical explanation. Light is the indispensable condition to the life of things which are stated in the succeeding verses to have been successively created.

In regard to the alleged contradiction of this verse with verses 14–18 see chapter 2 and the comment on the fourth day's narration. 'The exigences of the text, as well as the ascertained facts of physical science, require the first day's work to be the original production of light throughout the universe and in particular throughout the planetary system' (Whitelaw, *Genesis*).

'And God saw the light'

This phrase 'and God saw' occurs each day.

'that it was good'

These words are also repeated regarding each day. The Hebrew word includes the idea of beauty with goodness.

'and God divided the light from the darkness'

Better 'and God separated'; we divide one thing and separate two. No mention is made of the origin of darkness because it is simply the absence of light, and here it is not regarded in itself as evil. In fact God had a specific use for darkness, and assigned to both light and darkness their own proper sphere, purpose and limits.

'And God called'

Dr Ryle says, 'That God should give names to things is to our minds a strange and almost unintelligible thought', and commentators have hitherto been perplexed as to its meaning. When, however, it is realised that the names were being given for the sake of *man*, it is neither strange nor unintelligible, but obviously necessary for an intelligent being. Compare chapter 2: 19-20 and 31: 47. God gave things names in order to reveal, so that *these words indicate that God is telling the story of Creation to man*. A name is given in order to communicate a thought by language. This narrative is therefore a record, in simple terms, of God's explanation of the origin of the heaven and earth. Naming is necessary as a notion for man's sake, not God's.

'the light Day'

That is the part of the day when light shone on a particular part of the earth.

'And the darkness he called Night'

'Night' was the name God gave to the period which preceded or succeeded daylight. Again the only conceivable reason for God giving names to such phenomena is for man's instruction.

'And the evening and the morning'

Or more exactly 'and evening came and morning came'. This phrase has been the subject of considerable debate. It occurs six

times, dividing the narrative into six days. It has been wrongly assumed that it sets a time limit to the *acts* of creation described, consequently numerous attempts have been made to explain the 'day' as a sufficiently long period. As H. Bullinger says, 'The word "day" may refer to a prolonged period, when used without qualifying words. But when qualified by a numeral (cardinal or ordinal) it is defined and limited by it to a day of twenty-four hours. It is further limited here by its boundaries "evening and morning" as well as by the seventh day.' So F. Delitzsch and others.

That a normal 'evening and morning' is intended may be seen by the words used; the word for 'evening', like the relative words in the Akkadian and Arabic, means 'to go in', that is the setting of the sun. While the root idea of the Hebrew word translated 'morning' means 'a penetration' of light of day into the darkness of night, a breaking forth, daybreak, the coming of dawn, sunrise, it is never used in the sense of the English forenoon or morning. As Delitzsch says, 'The Hebrew word means without doubt properly "the breaking", viz. "of light", the first appearance, the early, is everywhere the fundamental notion.' So that 'evening and morning' combined means the period between sunset and sunrise.¹

It was an ancient custom for the 'day', that is the twenty-four-hour period, to begin at sunset, but, of course, it does not finish at sunrise the next morning, but at sunset. As J. Skinner writes, 'It is impossible to take the words as meaning that the evening and the morning *formed* the first (second, etc.) day. The sentence must refer to the *close* of the first day with the first evening and the night that followed'; so F. Delitzsch, H. Holzinger, A. Dillman, etc.

Was the earth, as yet, astronomically arranged for a normal sunset and sunrise? The source of the light is not stated, for until the relation of the sun and moon to the earth, as described in verses 14–18, had been introduced there could have been no daily sunset or sunrise as required by these words 'evening and morning'. There can therefore be no question of an evening and morning dividing the *acts of creation*. These six days must have been days on which the revelation was given, the narrative of the creative acts of God long ages before, for the reason why God ceased as each of the six evenings, or sunsets came on, was for man's sake.

'were the first day'

More literally, 'day one', or 'one day', as in the RV. The cardinal is used instead of the ordinal; this is customary to indicate the first of a series.

WHAT GOD SAID - SECOND DAY. Verses 6-8

'And God said, Let there be a firmament,' etc.

The Hebrew word *rāqī'a*, and its root meaning is 'to stretch out', 'to extend'. A more accurate translation would be, 'Let there be an expanse.' It refers to the atmosphere surrounding the earth which bears up the clouds. Compare Psalm 148:4. 'Praise him, ye heaven of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens,' and Proverbs 8:28 where mention is made of the 'clouds above' instead of the 'waters above'. Elsewhere Scripture often refers to clouds as waters. (See 2 Sam. 22:12; Job 36:28; 37:11; 38:37.)

'And God made the firmament'

The process is not stated, only the fact.

'and divided'

Lit. 'let it be dividing', expressing continuity of action and describing more fully its purpose.

'and it was so'

The Hebrew root means 'to be fixed' and thus indicates that it was right, honest, true. God's expressed will was truly accomplished.

'And God called the firmament Heaven'

The word heaven is always in the plural and apparently comes from a root which means 'to be high'.

WHAT GOD SAID - THIRD DAY. Verses 9-13

'And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together in one place'

That is the waters on the earth; how this was effected is not stated, whether by elevation or a subsidence, nor is it stated how long the procedure took. There is a poetical description in Psalm 104:6-8, 'Thou coverest it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast

founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over, that they turn again to cover the earth.'

'and let the dry land appear'

Lit. 'the dry', hitherto covered with water.

'And God called the dry land Earth'

Lit. God called 'the dry', earth. Again, God gives a name for the information of man.

'and the gathering together of the waters called he seas'

The account is brief, there is no specific mention of rivers, lakes, etc.

There is a second 'And God said' on this third day.

'Let the earth bring forth grass'

Lit. let the earth sprout 'green', a comprehensive term for all young verdure. God does not say 'let there shoot forth on the earth', but 'let the earth cause to shoot forth or sprout'. This is the beginning of life on the earth.

'the herb yielding seed'

Plants, vegetables and grain crops, seed-forming plants.

'and the fruit tree yielding fruit'

Self-propagating or producing fruits whose seed is within them.

'after his kind'

The word is antique; it can very well mean 'species'; the word is not used in the plural.

'whose seed is in itself'

The distinction is in the method of seeding, the vegetation which produces seed and the fruit which contains the seed.

WHAT GOD SAID - FOURTH DAY. Verses 14-19

'And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven'

Luminaries; the word is different to that translated 'light' in verse 3. That word means light itself, this means 'bearers of light', or 'places of light', the 'instruments of light', though the word is a simple one referring to light derived from an instrument.

There is an entire absence of personification and deification which occurs in almost every other ancient account of the sun,

moon and stars. Those best acquainted with the old accounts handed down from Babylonia and Egypt will recognise how pure this record is.

On this day God appears to have ceased to give names to the things he had created. No more is it stated 'And God called', no name is assigned to the greater and lesser lights, nor are animals named in this narrative. In the second narrative there is an account of how God arranged for first man to give the names to animals and birds.

There is no necessity, in view of what has been written in chapters 2 and 3, to discuss (as all commentators have felt bound to do) the mention of the sun and the moon on the fourth day, seeing that this narrative gives the order of *revelation*. The things revealed on each of the last three days are parallel with the first three, so that the first and the fourth are connected.

'to divide the day from the night'

This is the first time that the purpose is explained at any length. The 'greater and lesser lights' are the regulators of the day and night referred to in verse 5.

'and let them be for signs'

Hebrew *tôth*, means 'marks', or 'tokens', and presumably means to mark off the days. S. R. Driver says, 'by their appearance betokening the future state of the weather', but surely in Palestine, and still less in Babylonia, where the weather is fixed, can this be the meaning here. In Babylonia neither the sun nor the moon indicate a change in the weather on 300 days in the year. The cloud formation before the rare rain is sufficiently noticeable apart from the sun and the moon. Neither can Spurrell's interpretation, 'through eclipses of the sun and moon, the appearances of comets as showing extraordinary events', be accepted. The account is free from anything like astrology.

'and for seasons and for days and years'

The word translated seasons means 'to appoint', 'to fix'. Although some have stated that the record was written in order to introduce the seven days ending with the sabbath, it should be noted that there is no mention here of a week, as the sun and the moon have no direct relation to a week of seven days.

'and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth'

The reference is to the way the sun and the moon affect the earth; the account admittedly has the earth as its viewpoint; what other point of view would or should it have for man?

'And God made two great lights,' etc.

Note the extreme simplicity of the statement; there is no suggestion that these are the only or even the largest lights.

'And God set them'

It conveys the idea of 'placing' in such a way as to accomplish the purpose of giving light to the earth.

'to rule,' etc.

To control, and so dominate. Compare Job 38:33.

'the stars also'

The original is short, almost abrupt, being two Hebrew words only. There is nothing of the ancient superstition about stars and their supposed influence on persons and creatures.

WHAT GOD SAID—FIFTH DAY. Verses 20–23

'And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly,' etc.

Lit. 'let the waters swarm forth with a swarm of sea creatures', to teem in abundance. A new form of life different in kind and degree to vegetation. The word 'swarm' conveys the impression of a great multitude.

'the fowl that may fly above the earth,' etc.

Every flying thing; this probably included insects.

'And God created great whales'

More accurately reptiles; the idea behind the word is of a long and big animal. It includes big land, as well as sea monsters.

'And every living creature that moveth'

Lit. 'and every soul of life' or living thing; the principle of life and sensibility, something which moves lightly along or glides, as the swimming movement of fish.

'And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living thing after his kind; cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind'

Lit. 'the earth shall cause to go forth living soul'.

- (1) Cattle, chiefly four-footed domestic animals.
- (2) Creeping animals.
- (3) Untamed animals.

'And God said, Let us make man'

There is a significant difference between the statements introducing the preceding acts of creation and this last and supreme act, the creation of man. Previously there had been a fiat such as, 'let the waters go forth' . . . 'let the earth bring forth' . . . Here there is no 'let there be man', or 'let the earth bring forth man.' It is 'Let us make man.' If words mean anything they surely imply that God did a new thing when he created man; a new order of being was brought into existence by means which made him distinct from that of animals.

Let *us*. The first person plural is used. The Jews attempt various explanations to account for this plural. Maimonides and Ibn Ezra say that the angels are referred to, but angels are not mentioned in this record. Philo speaks of 'the Father of all things addressing His own powers', but such an explanation is far-fetched and generally unacceptable. Some have said that here the plural of majesty is used; just as some modern monarchs use the plural on official occasions. This explanation cannot be accepted seeing that it is not a usual biblical custom for kings to do this. It is normal for the singular to be used, for instance, 'is not this great Babylon which *I* have built', '*I* am Pharaoh', etc. This use of the plural is in accord with the prologue of the Fourth Gospel which indicates the presence of the creative Word. (See Appendix II.) 'All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made.' The 'us' is also used in Genesis 3:22, 'And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of *us*', and in Genesis 11:7, 'Go to, let *us* go down and there confound their language', and Isaiah 6:8, 'And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for *us*?' It is a remarkable testimony to

the care with which the text of Scripture has been handed down to us that this plural occurs. The Jews with their knowledge that 'the Lord our God is one Lord' had difficulty in explaining this plural, yet did not attempt to alter the text. The coming of Christ, and the opening statement of the Fourth Gospel makes the meaning plain.

'*man*'

Hebrew, 'Adam', the name given by God. As there is no definite article, the word is here used in a general sense, and denotes mankind.

'*in our image, after our likeness*'

'Image' and 'likeness' are almost synonymous words. What in man constituted the image and likeness of God? Before this question can be answered we must ask what God is like? We are told that he is Spirit (John 4:24), Light (1 John 1:5), He is the King eternal, immortal, invisible (1 Tim. 1:17). No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son . . . hath declared him (John 1:18). Paul speaks of him as 'dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see' (1 Tim. 6:16). It is in the Word, the Son of God, that we have the answer, for he, before being made 'in the likeness of man', when he came to this earth at Bethlehem, was in 'the *form* of God' (Phil. 2:6). First man saw and talked with the Word who 'Was in the beginning with God', and without him 'was not anything made that was made' (John 1:3).

He was the *image* of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation (Col. 1:15), and man was made in his image.

The image refers to the outward form, and usually expresses the idea of shape or resemblance as to body while 'likeness' is applied to the immaterial resemblance or the things of the mind, but perhaps the distinction cannot be pressed. 'By him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible . . . all things were created by him' (Col. 1:16). The Son being 'the express *image* of his person, and upholding all things' (Heb. 1:3) created man as an intelligent being with a capacity for communion with the eternal God. S. R. Driver says of this image and likeness that 'it can be nothing but the gift of *self-conscious reason* which is possessed by man'.

'male and female created he them'

The creation of the female is more fully stated in chapter 2:18–25, and it seems obvious that after the creation of man several events which occupied much time happened before the woman was created.

'and let them have dominion,' etc.

The impression conveyed is that the dominion or rule is consequent upon the creation of man in the image and likeness of God. We know that man's outstanding position is not due to his greater physical strength, or size; his superiority was due to the mental qualities with which he was endowed by God. The thought is repeated in Psalm 8:6, 'Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, Thou hast put all things under his feet.'

'replenish'

The root word means 'to be full', or 'to fill'; the same Hebrew word is translated 'fill' in verse 22.

'and subdue it'

A strong word; man has been placed in a position of supremacy on the earth, and authority has been given to him (see Psalm 115:16). 'The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men.'

'I have given you every herb', etc.

The word includes plants, vegetables and green crops.

'for meat'

Means, 'for food'; meat was an old English term for food.

'and behold, it was very good'

There is purpose in the world; matter and material things are not in themselves, as originally created, hostile to God. His Creation is very good. Evil appeared on the earth later.

'the sixth day'

Here, unlike the other five days, the article is used. (The colophon, or appendix to this record (2:1–4), has been dealt with in Part II, chapter 5, p. 143.)

A TRANSLATION OF GENESIS 1:1 – 2:4

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was formless and empty and darkness was upon the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the surface of the waters.

And God said, let light be, and light was, and God saw the light that it was good. And God separated the light and the darkness, and God called the light 'day', and the darkness called he 'night'. And evening came and morning came, day one.

And God said, let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters and let it separate waters from the waters. And God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were under the expanse, from the waters which were above the expanse, and it was so, and God called the expanse 'heavens'. And evening came and morning came, day second.

And God said, let the waters under the heavens be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so, and God called the dry land 'earth', and the gathering together of the waters he called 'seas', and God saw that it was good.

And God said, let the earth sprout grass of green herbage, seeding seed, and the fruit tree making fruit, after its kind, whose seed is within it upon the earth, and it was so. And the earth caused to go forth grass of green herbage, seeding seed after its kind and the fruit-bearing tree whose seed is within it, after its kind, and God saw that it was good. And evening came and morning came, day third.

And God said, let luminaries be in the expanse of the heavens, to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, for set times, for days and years. And let them be for luminaries in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth, and it was so. And God made two great luminaries, the great luminary for the rule of the day and the small luminary for the rule of the night, and the stars. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light and the darkness, and God saw that it was good. And evening came and morning came, day fourth.

And God said, let the waters swarm with living swarming creatures, and flying creatures that fly about above the earth over the face of the expanse of the heavens. And God created great sea creatures and every living soul of life that glideth, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged flying creature after its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them saying, be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas and the flying creature let it multiply in the earth. And evening came and morning came, day fifth.

And God said, let the earth bring forth living creatures, cattle, creeping things, and beast of the earth, after its kind, and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after its kind, and the cattle after its kind, and every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, and God saw that it was good.

And God said, let us make man in our image according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the flying creature of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over the earth, and over all the gliding things that glideth over the earth. And God created man in his image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and exercise dominion over the the fish of the sea, and over the flying creatures of the heavens, and over every beast which glideth upon the earth.

And God said, behold I have given you every herb that soweth upon the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has in it the fruit of a tree which sows seed, to you it shall be for food. And to every beast of the earth and every flying creature of the heavens, and to every thing which glideth upon the earth in which is the soul of life, every grass of green herbage for food, and it was so. And God saw all that he had made, and behold it was exceedingly good. And evening came and morning came, day the sixth.

And were finished the heavens and the earth and all their arranged order (or series), and on the seventh day God finished his business which he had done and he desisted on the seventh day from all his business which he had done. And God blessed the seventh day and set it apart, for in it he ceased from all his business

which God did creatively in reference to making these the histories² of the heavens and the earth, in their being created in the day when the Lord God did the earth and the heavens.

CONCLUSION

We have endeavoured to marshal all the known facts about the first chapter of the Bible, and to ascertain why the narrative is divided by the six evenings and mornings, ending with a seventh day's rest. Having examined all the evidence available to us, it may be useful at this concluding stage to recall some of the main facts observed during our investigation. The several converging lines of evidence may perhaps be more clearly seen if these are summarised without detail.

The seventh day's rest – for whom?

Unquestionably the most important and illuminating disclosure regarding the meaning of the days is that made by our Lord when he explained that the sabbath had, at the beginning, been introduced by God for *man's* sake. Men have always believed this theoretically, it is therefore all the more surprising that every interpretation, of which I am aware, has assumed that the seventh day's rest was originated by God *for his own rest*. Assured by our Lord's pronouncement as to the reason for the introduction of the seventh day's rest and seeing that the fourth commandment implies that for the six days immediately preceding the institution of that seventh day God had done work of some kind *with man*, it became obvious that the six nightly periods – the evenings and the mornings – of cessation or rest were also *for man's sake*.

Consequently there was one thing our Lord was not doing on those six days, he was not creating the heavens and the earth and all life on it. Of this we can be quite sure. It is not only because man was on the earth during those six days and it was he who needed the nightly periods of rest as well as the seventh day's rest; but in

addition, we have the clear evidence of Scripture that woman was not created on the same day or time as man, for many incidents of great importance are recorded as having occurred between these two events. Scripture does not teach a six-day Creation or re-creation. Nowhere in the Bible, not even in the fourth commandment, does it say that God *created* the heaven and earth in six days.

It is a record of what 'God said'

The Creation narrative is a statement of what God said to man about the things he had already created. This is quite evident from the incident where the first man and woman are addressed, '*And God said to them*'. There is a conjoint repetition of what 'God created' and also of what 'God said'. On each of the six days God told man about some aspect of his creative work, much of which had apparently been accomplished in ages past. We have to face a fundamental issue from which there is no escape; this first page of the Bible is either the guesswork of some man, or it is a revelation made by God to man. We cannot honestly shrink from this issue, and every examination of its character has impressed us that we can do no other than accept the evidence that here we have the account of a revelation made by God to man, and made very early in the history of man. If any reader doubts this, I suggest that he reads all the accounts of Creation or the origin of things known to man (some of which are listed in Appendix III) and compare them with the first page of the Bible.

God gave names to the things he had created

Obviously these names were given for man's sake, for names could surely have no other purpose. This is important, for it is evidence that what we have in this record is both God's revelation of the narrative and his explanation of it to man.

Marks of antiquity

In Part II, chapter 7 we considered the marks of extreme antiquity which the narrative bears. Unlike any other account known to man, this first chapter of Genesis contains no reference whatever to any subsequent event. We observed that the account was universal in character and not limited in scope to any particular people or country, but refers to mankind as a whole. Next we

noticed the child-like simplicity of its statements, even to the omission in the last three days of revelation of the giving of names. No names are assigned to the sun and the moon. In Genesis 2 we are told how Adam gave names to animals. We saw that the record has the marks of having been originally written down in some form at a very early date.

The colophon states that it was written

In Part II, chapter 5 we examined the final words of the narrative and observed that they are a colophon (or title-appendix) which in accordance with ancient usage gives literary information concerning the writing. We saw that the title given to the narrative was 'the heavens and the earth' and that which was *finished* was the *writing of the narrative*. Similar instances were seen of the use in ancient times of these words 'the heavens and the earth' and 'finished', the former as a 'title' and the latter to mark the completion of a series of tablets.

Other ancient evidence

In the section on archaeology (Part II, chapter 6) we reviewed the available evidence regarding the ancient beliefs and traditions of men and saw that at the time of our Lord the prevailing belief of the Jews was that the account of Creation had been given in the earliest times by direct revelation from God, and that it had been written down. The Samaritan evidence, dated the third century before Christ, is of a written revelation to Adam which was handed down to Enoch and Noah. With this the oldest translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, agrees in that it clearly states that the account was written. We also saw that the Babylonians taught that on one occasion a Being *instructed* first man for the *daylight* hours of six successive days. But it appears quite obvious that the Bible account was not derived from the Babylonian, but that the Babylonian tradition was due to the reality of the event.

Summary of findings

It is hoped that we have succeeded in lifting the meaning of this first page of the Bible out of the confusion of opposing and conventional interpretations into which it has unhappily fallen. There is a great difference between reading something into the

Bible – this we have no right to do – and in discovering in the Bible things which are undoubtedly there, but which have hitherto been overlooked. As H. M. Gwatkin has said (*The Knowledge of God*), ‘A theory is easily fitted to any one difficulty; the test of it is its explanation of other difficulties.’ Current interpretations only meet one difficulty.

I submit that the following *seven* difficulties are eliminated by the above interpretation. (1) God’s giving names – we now see the reason for this. (2) ‘God said’ – the whole account was a revelation to man, just as the two final statements of what ‘God said’ are stated to have been. (3) The ‘evenings and the mornings’ are now seen to be, quite naturally, for *man’s* nightly rest. (4) The seventh day on which God ‘ceased’ was for *man’s* sake. While (5) all the days, including those in the fourth commandment and the seventh day’s rest, are seen to be natural days, there is no need to give these days exceptional duration, and this (6) disposes of the idea that (a) the day of rest was instituted a few hours after Adam had been created (b) that it was at the end of a long geological age, or that this seventh day is one of some thousands of years. And (7) it resolves the old conflicting ideas about the ‘light’ of day one being present before the ‘sun and moon’ of day four and all its related problems.

The first chapter of Genesis, I therefore suggest, does not say anything about the period taken by God in *creating* the universe, but it does tell us about the period taken in *revealing* to man the account of Creation. This has wide implications, for it rids the record not only of the perplexities produced by various misinterpretations; but what is even more important, it means that we have a God-given record of the origin of things imparted to man in simple language. It is a revelation of the things which man by his unaided efforts could not have known.¹ Genesis 1, disencumbered of its misinterpretations, stands out in its sublime grandeur, its remarkable accuracy, its concise comprehensiveness, quite unique in the creation literature of the world.

I am aware that more might have been written relating to this subject, for instance, on the origin of the idea of God, and the problem of the way in which language and writing originated. The

scope of this book precludes anything approaching an adequate discussion of these other important subjects. I hope, however, what I have written at least justifies the remark of Descartes that 'the origin of the idea of God may well be God Himself'. This first page of the Bible claims that this is so. It is very important that we interpret it aright, for it is the great fundamental basis of our knowledge of God as Creator. False interpretations bring it into disrepute. The approach of this book we believe leads to the recovery of the original interpretation current in ancient times. What seems to be a new and modern interpretation, we claim, was the one current millenniums ago.

When our search began we were not attached to any of the prevailing schools of interpretation. Our attitude was not unlike that of Irenaeus (Ep. 82: 3), when he wrote of the Bible 'If in any one of these books I stumble upon something which appears to be opposed to truth, I have no hesitation in saying that either my copy is at fault, or that the translator has not fully grasped what was said, or that I myself have not understood.'

Is it too much to hope that these pages may become an eirenic, reconciling the two types of explanation now prevailing, which contend the one against the other? The one, which explains the days as six long geological periods with geological nights, contradicts the other which insists that creation proper is not referred to in the six days, but only a subsequent (yet entire) re-creation of the earth and all life in six literal days. The foregoing interpretation recognises that one main feature in what both opposing interpretations have been insisting upon is true. The days of Genesis are intended to be literal days, but not of Creation. Also, the time occupied in the events described may well be as long as the 'geological' interpretation asserts.

APPENDIX 1

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES TO CREATION

GENERAL

Nehemiah 9:6. Thou, even thou art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all.

Job 38:4, 7. Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding . . . when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Psalms 8:3. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers the moon and the stars, which thou has ordained . . .

33:6. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

33:9. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast.

89:11. The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou has founded them.

90:2. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

102:25. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

104:6. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment.

136:5. To him that by wisdom made the heavens . . .

121:2. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

(*see also* 124:8).

146:6. Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is.

Proverbs 8 : 22–31. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth: when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth. While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth; then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

Isaiah 40. Behold the Lord . . . (v 10), Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? (v. 12). It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in (v. 22). To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by their names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth (v. 25 and 26).

42 : 5. Thus saith the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein.

44 : 24 I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.

Jeremiah 10 : 12. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.

Zechariah 12 : 1. The Lord which stretcheth forth the heavens, and

layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

John 1 : 1–4. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

1 : 10. He was in the world and the world was made by him.

17. O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was (v. 5). Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world (v. 24).

Acts 7:49–50. Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool . . . Hath not my hand made all these things?

14 : 15. The living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.

17 : 24–8. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Romans 1 : 20. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

1 Corinthians 8 : 6. One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.

Ephesians 3 : 9. Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1 : 16–17. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible . . . all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Hebrews 1. His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world (v. 2). Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands (v. 10). 11: 3. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

2 Peter 3: 5. By the word of God the heavens were of old.

Revelation 3: 14. These things saith . . . the beginning of the creation of God.

4: 11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

10: 6. Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein.

14: 7. Worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

DAY ONE

Psalm 74: 16. The day is thine, the night also is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun.

104: 20. Thou makest darkness and it is night.

2 Corinthians 4: 6. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness . . .

DAY TWO

Job 36: 32. With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine, by the cloud that cometh betwixt.

Psalm 19: 1. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.

24: 1–2. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

136: 6. To him that stretched the earth above the waters.

147: 8. Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth.

148: 4. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord for he

commanded and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever; he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

Jeremiah 51 : 15–16. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding. When he uttereth his voice there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

DAY THREE

Genesis 2 : 5 (RV). And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth. 2 : 9. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.

Job 26 : 10. He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end, 38 : 8, 11. Who shut up the sea with doors . . . and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

Psalms 33 : 7–9. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap; he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. 95 : 5. The sea is his and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land.

104 : 6–14. The waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth . . . the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man.

148 : 4. Praise the Lord . . . ye waters that be above the heavens.

Isaiah 40 : 12. Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?

Jeremiah 5 : 22. Fear ye not me? saith the Lord; will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail, though they roar, yet can they not pass over it.

DAY FOUR

Deuteronomy 4 : 19. Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto the heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.

Psalms 19 : 6. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

74 : 17. Thou hast made summer and winter.

104 : 19–20. He appointeth the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down. Thou makest darkness, and it is night.

136 : 7–9. To him that made great lights . . . the sun to rule by day, the moon and stars to rule by night.

148 : 1–3. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights . . . Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.

Jeremiah 31 : 35. Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night.

DAY FIVE

Genesis 2 : 19. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air.

DAY SIX

Genesis 2 : 7–8. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul . . . the man whom he had formed.

2 : 18. And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground

the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

3: 22–3. And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

5: 1–2. God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam.

9: 6. In the image of God made he man.

Job 10: 8–9. Thine hands have made me and fashioned me . . . Thou has made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?

33: 4. The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

Psalms 8: 4–9. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

100: 3 Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves.

104: 23–7. Man goeth forth unto his work, and to his labour, until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches. So is the great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts . . . These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

119: 73. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me.

136:25. O give thanks unto the Lord . . . who giveth food to all flesh.

145:15–17. Thou openest thine hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works.

147:9. He givest to the beast his food.

Ecclesiastes 3:11. He hath made every thing beautiful in his time; also he hath set the world (eternity) in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

7:29. Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

12:7. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it.

Isaiah 64:8. But now, O Lord, thou art our father, we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

Zechariah 12:1. The Lord . . . formeth the spirit of man within him.

Malachi 2:14–15. She is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did he not make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit.

Matthew 19:4. And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female? (see also Mark 10:6).

Acts 17:25–8. He giveth to all life and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth . . . for in him we live, and move, and have our being . . . for we are also his offspring.

1 Corinthians 11:7. For a man . . . is the image and glory of God. 11:9. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman of the man.

15:45. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul.

15:47. The first man is of the earth, earthy.

Colossians 3:10. The new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

1 Timothy 2:13. For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

4:3-4. Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good.

James 3:9. Men, which are made after the similitude of God.

APPENDIX II

THE 'WISDOM' AND 'WORD' OF GOD AT CREATION

There are two other passages of outstanding importance to which reference should be made: one is in the Old Testament (Prov. 8) and the other is in the New Testament (John 1). The former refers to the 'Wisdom' of God, and the latter to the 'Word' of God, in connection with Creation.

The Old Testament passage has been the subject of much comment, and has played a not unimportant part in the history of the doctrine of the Lord before his incarnation at Bethlehem. It refers to One who was designated 'Wisdom', who was with God at Creation 'while as yet he had not made the earth . . . when he prepared the heavens . . . when he established the clouds . . . when he gave to the sea his decree'; we read, 'Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I (Wisdom) was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.' He is said to be 'from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was'.

That these verses and the prologue to the Gospel of John relate to the same person and events there can be little doubt. On one occasion our Lord, referring to the messengers sent in Old Testament times, said (Luke 11 : 49), 'Therefore also said the *Wisdom of God*, I will send them prophets.'

The Old Testament writers did not indulge in metaphysical speculations about God and the universe. As W. Fairweather has written, 'Wisdom is spoken of in such a way as to make it impossible to believe that only the Divine attribute of wisdom is meant.' So that when we read, 'The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth' (Prov. 3 : 19), the reference is to a person. So in Psalm 104 : 24, 'O Lord how manifold are thy works! by wisdom hath

thou made them all.' The description suggests the use of a personal and universal agent.

If there could be any valid doubt as to the meaning of the 'Wisdom' passage, there can be none whatever regarding the introduction to John's Gospel. This expressly refers to the Creation narrative. The Apostle used the Greek word *logos*, translated 'Word', without attempting to explain it; he must therefore have assumed that those who would read his gospel were well acquainted with its meaning. He is about to write the record of the earthly life of the Lord and, realising the importance of what he is to do, says that this life did not begin with his birth at Bethlehem; it extends back to eternity in the past. So he prefaces the narrative of his life on earth with this great and sublime statement, a declaration which above any other in the Gospels has been recognised as having no authority except as a revelation from God. He states that the One who was the Word of God at Creation is the One who became incarnate at Bethlehem and writes 'all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.' As S. R. Driver says (*Genesis*), 'The "word" being the mediating principle of creation, the means or agency through which His will takes effect (cf. Psalm 33 : 6, 9; also 107 : 20, 147 : 15, 18) in which passages the word is regarded as a messenger between God and His creatures. This usage of the OT is a preparation for the personal sense of the term "The Word" which appears in the NT (John 1 : 1).'

Luther said, 'God has decreed that he will be unknowable and unapproachable apart from Christ'; and in his Bampton Lectures J. Medd writes, 'The Father has ever worked through the person of the Son. The Son is the one *Mediator*. The thought of mediation becomes necessary, as soon as from the absolute thought of God we pass to the related thought of creation, and the Bible revelation distinctly attaches mediation to the person of the Eternal Son in respect alike of the works of Creation, of Administration, and Redemption.'

The necessity of a mediator between God and man is seen from the fact that the Father always has been 'the Invisible God' who dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto. 'No man hath

seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him' (John 1 : 18). The Son, the 'Word', is the *image* of the invisible God; an image is a likeness or representation. We read of him in eternity past as 'being in the *form* of God' (Phil. 2 : 6). The 'form' as J. B. Lightfoot says, denotes figures, shape, fashion; He 'took on him the *form* of a servant'. The only other use of this word 'form' in the New Testament is in Mark 16 : 12 when after his resurrection, 'He appeared in another *form* to two of them' and talked with them as they walked along the road to Emmaus. The 'image', the 'form' which he had at Creation seems to be similar to that of his resurrection body. By means of this form he was the image of the invisible God and so visible to man. Man was made in the likeness of this 'Word', and the Apostle says this Word was God (not just God's word) and thus the infinite God talked to finite man.

At Creation he was the utterance, the Mediator. 'In the New Testament the "logos" signifies a verbal utterance, then discourse, speech, instruction, narrative, and when applied to God either a specific Divine utterance, or revelation in general or the Scriptures as the communication of God's mind and will' (G. T. Purves). Not only is he referred to as Creator, but as the Light and Life of *men*. As G. T. Purves says, 'Hence to men, endowed with intelligence, the life possessed by the "logos", and manifested in creation, was originally the illuminating truth (the light) by which they apprehended God and duty; but when man became immersed in darkness (by sin) the Divine light, though still continuing to shine, was not comprehended' (*Hastings Bible Dictionary*). At Creation the 'Word' was not only the 'Life' – God breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life – but also the 'Light', the True (or more literally 'the original') light which lightens every man coming into the world. It is this enlightenment that made man in the image of God. Mind, reason, understanding, came to first man as to all men subsequently from him who was the 'Logos', the speech of God. B. F. Westcott quotes Theophylact, 'Man as made in the image of God stood in a special relation to the Word. He saith not the light of the Jews only, but of all men, for all of us, insofar as we have received intellect and reason from that Word which created us, are

said to be illumined by Him. Without Him was not anything made or, more literally, “not even one thing”, neither man’s body nor his mind.’

In this prologue, which is a historical survey of the past, John writes, ‘the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not’, or more accurately, the darkness did not overtake or overwhelm the light which had originally shone into man’s mind. Periods of darkness soon came; at the very beginning man sinned and began to doubt God, ‘men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil’. First man attempted to hide from God, yet notwithstanding his fall his reason remained. Even in the state of affairs which preceded the Flood the darkness did not succeed in overwhelming the Light; in subsequent periods of backsliding and idolatry he, ‘who hath put wisdom in the inward parts and who hath given understanding to the heart’ (Job 38 : 36), never permitted the Light to be eclipsed or extinguished. We have already noted that all the corruption of the Babylonian or Egyptian mythologies did not completely succeed in blotting out the idea of an original revelation from God. Nor have the false speculations of more modern days overwhelmed ‘the light which lighteth every man coming into the world’, and which illuminates the soul of man made in the image and likeness of God. There is always more light breaking forth from his word. The original revelation of God to man is the basis of both the Old and the New Testament. This enlightenment was not something external but something immediate. This Light was the light of men; we are told that God *talked with first man* – not in a remote and uncertain way, but directly and positively face to face ‘in the garden in the cool of the day’.

Some philosophical theories assume that man groped in the darkness over a period of thousands of millions of years, knowing nothing at first of God the Creator of the heavens and the earth. On the other hand, the prologue to this gospel states that he who later came to be the saviour of men was originally at Creation both the Word and the Light of men. Genesis tells of God speaking to man and telling him about his purposes for him. In recent years there has been a serious and continuous degradation of the use of

the word 'revelation'. As Dr G. S. Hendry says (*God the Creator*) 'the necessity of revelation is formally acknowledged but it is deprived of its essential content because it is taken for granted that its substance is of the same order as the substance of philosophical knowledge, and that the God of revelation is identical with the philosophical idea of God and potentially knowable by the human mind.' Attempts are made to bend and mould this word into a semblance quite different from its Scripture usage, so we must define our terms. By revelation in this instance we mean a direct speaking to men by him who is called the Word. If it is said that this is impossible then the person who says it is in conflict with the statements in the second chapter of Genesis.

E. Brunner says, 'Revelation in the Biblical sense means that in this event of revelation something is said to me which, apart from this event, is and remains inaccessible to me, hidden from me, which accordingly does not reside in some depth of my being and which I can neither control nor judge.' 'Nothing can be discovered by man about God apart from the revelation of Himself by God to man, nor can anything be effectively revealed by God to man apart from the activity of human reason in apprehending it' (*Doctrine in the Church of England*). The Bible says of first man that he was made in the image and likeness of God, a being sufficiently intelligent to whom God could speak.

The Bible consistently represents first man as the specially created crowning climax of the Creator's work; it has no place for the speculations which assume a time when there was an ape-like man or a man-like ape.

As A. Plummer has written in the *Cambridge Greek Testament* on John, 'In the Old Testament we find the Word or Wisdom of God personified, generally as an instrument for executing the Divine Will, as if it were distinct from that Will. We have the first traces of it in the "God said" of Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, etc. The personification of the Word of God begins to appear in the Psalms 33:6, 107:20, 119:89, 147:15. In Proverbs 8 and 9 the Wisdom of God is personified in very striking terms. The Wisdom is manifested in the *power* and *mighty works* of God; that God is *love* is a revelation yet to come. In the *Targums* or Aramaic para-

phrases of the OT the development is carried still further. These, though not yet written down, were in common use among the Jews in our Lord's time; and they strongly influenced the growing tendency to separate the Divine Essence from the immediate contact with the material world. Where Scripture speaks of a direct communication from God to man, the Targums substituted the *Memra*, or the "Word of God". Thus in Genesis 3 : 8, 9, instead of "they heard the voice of the Lord God", the Targums read, "they heard the *Word* of the Lord God", and instead of "God called unto Adam", they put, "the Word of the Lord called unto Adam", and so on.' The usage may be seen in such a passage as Deuteronomy 5: 5, 'I stood between the Word (*Memra*) of the Lord and you, to announce to you at that time the word (*pith-gama*) of the Lord.' As Medd says (*One Mediator*), 'The human intellect is part of that image of God wherein man was created. It is the finite counterpart and miniature of the intellect of God.'

APPENDIX III

OTHER ANCIENT ACCOUNTS OF CREATION

Babylonian and Assyrian

The oldest accounts of Creation (other than the Bible) which have come down to us are the Sumerian. The Sumerians were a dying race when Abraham lived at Ur, but we know that for a century or two before he was born the scribes had been occupied in reproducing on clay tablets the old Sumerian literature. Many of the ideas that the Babylonians and Assyrians had about Creation came from this source.

I have cited in chapter 6 of Part II the relevant parts of the most popular of the Babylonian Creation stories, and have referred to the account which came down through Berossus relating to a primitive revelation made to first man.

Eusebius¹ has preserved another ancient story of Creation. 'There was a time when all was darkness and water and these gave birth to fearful creatures with strange appearances, for men with two wings were born and some with four wings and two faces, they had only one body but two heads, a man's and also a woman's. . . . And other men had goats' legs and horns and the fore parts of men looked like hippocentaurs. Bulls with human heads were born, and dogs with four bodies, with fish tails on their hind quarters, and horses and men with god's heads and other beings had the heads and bodies of horses but with the tails of fish, and others with the shapes of all kinds of beasts.

'In addition to these, there were fish, creeping things, serpents and many other wonderful beings that had appearances derived from one another. Images of these are set up in the Temple of Bel. The ruler of them all was a woman named Omorka, which in Chaldean is interpreted "Thallata", in Greek Thalassa (sea) but

numerically equivalent to Salene (the moon). After the universe had come to be, Bel appeared and divided the woman into two parts, he made half of her earth and the other half heaven, and did away with the creatures in her. This, he says, is the material truth set forth allegorically, for when the universe was watery and only animals had come to be, this god cut off his own head, and the other gods mixed the earth with the blood which flowed and moulded men, because of this they are intelligent and have a part in the wisdom of the gods.'

Another account of the beliefs of the Babylonians about Creation has come down to us from Damascius,² a Neo-Platonist.

'The Babylonians seem to pass over without notice the one origin of all things and make two, Tauthe and Apason, her husband, and named her the mother of the gods. Of these only one son was born, Moymis – which I take to be the word produced from two origins. From these came a further issue, Lache and Lachos, and from these a third, Kissare and Assorus. From these three children were born Anos, Illinos, and Aos. To Aos and Dauke, Belos was born who they call the Creator.'

Egyptian

Stories of Creation were numerous in Egyptian literature, but it is very difficult to find any account which was generally accepted. They are often contradictory because almost every town had its own god or gods and these produced a great variety of stories. Maspero in his *Dawn of Civilisation* writes, 'It was narrated at Hermopolis, and the legend was ultimately universally accepted, even by the Heliopolitans, that the separation of Nuit and Sibou had taken place at a certain spot on the site of the city where Sibou had ascended the mound on which the feudal temple was afterwards built, in order that he might better sustain the goddess and uphold the sky at the proper height.'

It was, he says, the belief of the Egyptians that 'Their forefathers had appeared upon the banks of the Nile even before the Creator had completed his work, so eager were the gods to behold their birth. No Egyptian disputed the reality of this right of the firstborn, which ennobled the whole race; but if they were asked the name of

their divine father, then the harmony was broken, and each advanced the claims of a different personage. Phtah had modelled man with his own hands; Khnumu had formed him on a potters table. Ra, at his first rising, seeing the earth desert and bare, had flooded it with his rays as with a flood of tears; all living things, vegetable and animal, and man himself, had sprung pell-mell from his eyes, and were scattered abroad over the surface of the world with the light. Sometimes the facts were presented under a less poetic aspect. The mud of the Nile, heated to excess by the burning sun, fermented and brought forth the various races of men and animals by spontaneous generation, having moulded itself into a thousand living forms . . . It was not Ra alone whose tears were endowed with vitalising power. All divinities, whether beneficent or malevolent, Sit as well as Osiris or Isis, could give life by weeping, and the work of their eyes, when once it had fallen upon earth, flourished and multiplied as vigorously as that which came from the eyes of Ra. The individual character of the creator was not without bearing upon the nature of his creatures; good was the necessary outcome of the good gods, evil of the evil ones.'

Phoenician

The Phoenician story has been given to us by Eusebius in his *Praeparatio Evangelica*, i.10. Eusebius's source was Philo of Byblos, who learned it from Sanchuniathon. 'The beginning of all things was dark air and slimy dark chaos, and these were boundless and limitless for limitless ages. The dark air flamed into love for the prime principle and a connection came about, and from the embrace the dark air produced Mot or muddy slime. From this all creation was produced. Then came beings without consciousness, then reasonable beings and they were called Zophesamin' or beholders of heaven, and their shape was that of an egg. And Mot gave light to the sun and moon and the great heavenly bodies.

'When the air became radiant through the burning of the sea and the earth, there arose winds and clouds and great outpourings of waters. After these had been separated they were torn away by the burning heat of the sun and met together again creating thunder and lightning. The din of the thunder awoke the living beings and they moved on the earth, male and female.'

Chinese

The main legends are of a world egg, and there are many of them. In the third century BC Kūh-Yuan, a Chinese poet, says that 'in the beginning above and below had no form only pictures. In the earliest times a Chinese Emperor warred against Kung Kung and thrust towards the Pillar of heaven, destroys it and cuts the cords of earth, then the Empress Kü-Kna, who has the body of a serpent, made good the damage done to heaven and earth.'

Persian

Ahuramazda created the world of light and Ahriman the world of darkness, 'and the world of darkness threatened the world of light'.

The oldest Avesta traditions have been lost but the Benduesh says that 'Ahuramazda has settled 12,000 years for the reign of the hostile powers. In the first 3,000 years he created pure spirits, in the second 3,000 years he created six Amashāspands who sit on golden thrones. Six demons of fury oppose these six Amashāspands. Amuramazda then created heaven, then water, then earth, plants, animals, and then he destroyed everything but the sun's light, made the seed clean, and there emerged from death animals and man.'

Indian

Here again there is much uncertainty and the accounts vary. There are over 120 so-called creation hymns in the tenth book of the Rig-Veda, but it is very difficult to get any clear conception of Indian ideas from these very contradictory stories. One is that a woman gave birth to heaven and earth. Another that 'At first all was dark and indistinguishable, then the eternal One thought "I will create worlds" and at once water came into existence and water contained the germ of all life. This light came and the water gradually became a wonderful egg in which Braham (the creator) created himself. After hundreds of millions of years he split the egg into two parts making heaven out of one and the earth out of the other.'

Greek

One of the earliest attempts to state the Greek view was made by Hesiod in his *Theogony*. 'At first Chaos came to be, but next wide-bosomed Earth, the foundation of those who do not know death, who hold the peaks of snowy Olympus and dark Tartarus in the depths of the Earth and Eros, fairest among the gods, who unnerves the limbs and overcomes the mind and counsel of wisdom of all gods, and all men within them. From Chaos, Erebus came forth and black night, but night gave birth to Aether and Day whom she conceived and bare from union in love with Erebus. And Earth gave birth to the starry heaven, equal to herself, to cover her on every side, and to be a sure place of abode for the blessed gods. And she gave birth to long hills, the haunts of the goddess Nymphs who live in the valleys of the hills. She also gave birth to the fruitless deep and his stormy swell.'

It is difficult after reading these stories to account for the very widespread belief that the ideas which were current among other nations in regard to creation do not differ substantially from that in the Bible. I submit that the difference is not merely one of degree but of kind. To use Professor A. H. Sayce's words in his Gifford Lectures on *The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, 'Between Judaism and the coarsely polytheistic religion of Babylonia, as between Christianity and the old Egyptian faith – in spite of its high morality and spiritual insight – there lies an impassable gulf. I can find only one explanation, unfashionable and antiquated though it be. In the language of a former generation, it marks the dividing line between revelation and unrevealed religion.'

Although occasionally one can catch glimpses of truth in these accounts, obviously they have been so corrupted as to appear grotesque. So great is the difference between them and Scripture that we are compelled to acknowledge the first page of the Bible as a revelation from God.

But it is sometimes said that there is another alternative to revelation which can account for the purity of the Bible record; it is the 'religious genius of the Hebrews'. I submit that this is only

begging the question, for was not the 'religious genius of the Hebrews' due to the revelation made by God to them of his nature and thoughts?

Supposing that any of the so-called stories of Creation which have come down to us from any source (apart from the Bible) had been found on its first page, would we have learned anything about Creation? I submit that a careful reading of these accounts which contain all that men knew about Creation will impress us with the unique character of the biblical record. To my mind this ignorance about Creation outside the Bible is a challenging testimony to the reality of revelation.

NOTES

Foreword

1 Air Commodore P. J. Wiseman, CBE, RAF (1888–1948). He was also President of the Victoria Institute and The Crusaders' Union.

Chapter 2

1 Published by the British Museum, *Ur Excavations* vol. 4 (1956), Sir C. L. Woolley. cf. also M. E. L. Mallowan, 'Noah's Flood Reconsidered', *Iraq* 26 (1964), pp. 62–82.

2 Now dated c. 2650 BC.

Chapter 3

1 This has been discussed most recently by C. F. Larsen, 'The Mesopotamia Delta Region' in *Journal of American Oriental Society* 95 (1975), pp. 43–57.

Chapter 4

1 This has now been confirmed by studies in the education of a scribe e.g. S. N. Kramer, *Schooldays* (1949); C. J. Gadd, *Teachers and Students in the Oldest Schools* (1956).

2 and, more, recently, R. A. Briggs, *The Abu Šalabikh Tablets* (1975).

3 D. J. Wiseman, *The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon* (1958), 1ff.

Chapter 5

1 R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Tyndale Press, 1970), discusses this mistake by some modern scholars (pp. 545–53) and the thesis of this book as applied to Genesis (p. 64).

Chapter 8

1 This may well be elucidated by the find of about 16,000 tablets at Ebla (Tell Mardih in Syria) in 1975–7, dated c. 2300 BC.

Chapter 9

1 The same can be argued for other aspects of ancient Near Eastern history. Gilgamesh, the hero of a number of Babylonian epics, and once considered a merely legendary figure, has now been identified from named inscriptions as the ruler and restorer of the city of Erech, about 2600 BC.

Part Two

Chapter 2

1 The Septuagint Version is a Greek translation of the Old Testament made in Alexandria in the third century BC by seventy Jewish scholars. It is valuable

because of its having been translated from earlier texts of the Hebrew Old Testament than were available later in the Christian era. – Ed.

Chapter 3

1 It may be mentioned that the length of the day in the remote past was, according to the mathematical astronomers, little different from that of the present day. 'The moon causes tides to sweep round the earth in just under twenty-five hours. In the deep oceans little friction is caused by such action; but in shallow seas tidal action causes much fluid friction, which leads to the dissipation of energy as heat. This energy comes mainly from the earth's energy of rotation, so that tidal friction lessens the rate of rotation of the earth and therefore lengthens the day. Of course the effect is very small. The earth has a vast stock of rotational energy; and, even though it has been calculated that the tidal friction leads to a rate of dissipation of energy equal to some two thousand million horse-power, the day is therefore only lengthened by 1/1200 of a second per century' (*Scientific Theory and Religion*, p. 329).

2 'This identity even to small details (so far as is possible in so simple and condensed account) of the written and geological record coupled with the fact that the fossil record merges without break into modern times, can mean only one thing, and that is that the written account describes the record of the rocks. The evidence all points against the interpretation that the geological record can be dropped in between the first and second verses of the chapter. This theory was formulated over a hundred years ago to fit in with the ideas of the time, and was not held by either Hugh Miller or Sir J. W. Dawson who were in a better position to assess the value of the evidence than was Dr Chalmers in 1833' (A. Stuart, MSc, FGS, in *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, 1937, pp. 105–6).

3 There lurks behind this attitude the nineteenth century distinction between judgments of fact and judgments of *value*. This may be valid in some contexts but certainly is not here. It is comparable to the New Testament's critics who in their dislike of the miraculous elements in the Gospels will claim that the facts are in doubt, but the *value* of the statement is still to be received. Historical fact and value are not divisible. – Ed.

4 There are clear indications that long before the time of Moses or even Abraham, the seventh day had a peculiar meaning in Babylon. They observed the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st and 28th days of the month, but in a very different way from that of the Hebrews. Other nations such as the Egyptians used it. They certainly would not have borrowed it from the Israelites after Sinai.

Its recognition was so widespread that Josephus could write in the first century, 'There is not any city of the Grecians, nor any of the Barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the seventh day hath not come' (*Contra Apion*. ii.40). Obviously therefore it has a universal and not merely a national significance.

Before it was known that the Babylonians kept a seventh day there were some who thought that the seventh day's rest of Genesis 2:3 was an isolated instance, and the remaining references to a seventh day in the lives of the Patriarchs an accident. Now that it is generally known that a seventh day's observance existed long before the Mosaic era, the testimony of Genesis is generally accepted that it was an institution from the beginning. Three-quarters of a century ago Dean Burgon clearly showed that a seventh day's rest was known to the Patriarchs.

Chapter 4

1 'At the root of the Sabbath law was the love of God for mankind, and not for Israel only. Cf. Ephrem: "the Sabbath was appointed, not for God's sake, but for the sake of man"' (Prof. H. B. Swete, *Commentary on Mark*). 'One of the simplest and most obvious, but yet one of the deepest and most important, of the apophthegms of our Lord. The verb rendered *was made* (*ἐγένετο*) means *was brought into existence*. The preposition somewhat barely rendered *for* means *because of*, or *on account of*. The idea is that the reason or (occasioning) cause of the existence of the Sabbath is to be found in man, not *vice versa*. Man needs a Sabbath, man universal. The sabbath is a *means* in order to some *end* or *ends* terminating in man' (J. Morison in *Commentary on Mark*).

'We find here rather the most emphatic confirmation of the inviolably-continuing *σαββατον* in the all-expressive *ἐγένετο*. Not, "Moses gave you the Sabbath" – but, "the Sabbath *was* from the first, when all things came into being, when the world and *man* were created". As already in the reception of this commandment into the decalogue, which contains only what is original and permanent law for all men, not what was temporarily designed for Israel alone, so again does Christ, in the words *διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον*, set forth the universal validity of the Sabbath as originating from the creation' (R. E. Steir, *The Words of the Lord Jesus*).

Dean Alford said, 'Peculiar to Mark and highly important. The sabbath was an ordinance *for man*; for man's rest, both actually and typically as setting forth the rest which remains for God's people (Heb. 4:9).'

Chapter 5

1 The thesis of this book and the indications in the text of Genesis for the underlying structure of Genesis are helpfully discussed by R. K. Harrison; Introduction to the Old Testament (Tyndale Press, 1970, pp. 545–53) – D.J.W.

2 In Hebrews 4:3 *γενηθέντων* is the First Aorist passive and does not mean finished in the same sense referred to in Genesis 2:1.

3 No word has been used in this translation which has not the support of the best Hebrew scholarship.

Chapter 6

1 The translation used is that of A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (University of Chicago Press, 1942).

2 A. Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*.

Chapter 9

1 The Hebrew words *erebh* and *boker* do not signify night and day but the *early* evening (say between sunset and actual darkness) and *early* morning (say between dawn and sunrise). These do not make up a "day" of twenty-four hours.' (A. H. Finn, *Creation, Fall and Deluge*).

2 The Septuagint Version has 'written account'.

1 'Many scientific men have speculated about the first beginning of life and their speculations are often of great interest, but there is no absolutely definite knowledge and no convincing guess yet of the way in which life began. But nearly all authorities are agreed that it probably began upon mud or sand in warm sunlit shallow brackish water, and that it spread up the beaches to the intertidal lines and out to the open waters' (H. G. Wells, *A Short History of the World*). According to this statement 'all authorities' are agreed about the probability of something about which they have 'no convincing guess'.

Appendix III

- 1 The text can be seen in Schoene, *Eusebi Chronicorum*, Liber Prior, pp. 14–18.
- 2 Damascii Successoris Dubitationes et Solutiones de Primus principii. Paris, 1889, p. 321, 322.

Suggested further reading

by D. J. Wiseman

1. ON ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA
A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1964).
H. W. F. Saggs, *The Greatness that was Babylon* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1962).
2. ON ANCIENT WRITING
I. J. Gelb, *A Study of Writing* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1963).
G. R. Driver, *Semitic Writing* (The British Academy, London, revised edition 1976).
3. ON COLOPHONS
H. Hunger, *Babylonische und assyrische Kolophone* (Alter Orient und altes Testament Band 2, Verlag Butzon, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968).
E. Leichty, 'The Colophon' in R. M. Adams (ed.) *From the Workshop of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary: Studies presented to A. Leo Oppenheim* (Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, 1964), pp. 147–54.
S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1970).
4. ON ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ACCOUNTS OF CREATION
J. B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1955, revised 1969). See pp. 3–11 Egyptian Creation and myths of Origins (J. A. Wilson), pp. 37–50 Sumerian myths (S. N. Kramer), pp. 60–72 Akkadian Creation Epics (E. A. Speiser), pp. 501–3 Akkadian Creation Epics (additions A. K. Grayson).

CLUES TO CREATION IN GENESIS

This book is the outcome of studies in archaeology and Genesis undertaken by the author in Babylonia. It investigates the literary problems of the book in its ancient environment and in the light of the mass of relatively new facts regarding ancient literary methods, throwing new light on the problem of its authorship.

P. J. Wiseman convincingly argues that the literary form of Genesis tells us a great deal concerning its origin and composition. Archaeological discoveries have revealed similar ancient literary forms strongly supporting the hypothesis that Genesis was written on clay tablets by the Patriarchs who were intimately concerned with the events related, and whose names are clearly stated.

In Part Two the author tackles the problem of Genesis 1 regarding the Creation and the six days. Applying the evidence of ancient literary forms to this chapter, the author argues that the most reasonable explanation is that the six days refer to the time occupied by God in revealing the origins of the universe to man.

'We can recollect few books so startlingly convincing or so helpful in clearing up many difficulties connected with the Old Testament. Fortunately it is a book easily read and understood . . .

'After reading it one realises how inadequate one's previous understanding of Genesis had been. Read it and pass it on. It is one of the best books we have seen.' *The Inter-Varsity Magazine*

Cover photograph—a Babylonian clay tablet containing part of the story of the Flood



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