

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

SECRETARY: E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S.

VOL. XLVII.



LONDON:

(Published by the Institute, 1, Central Buildings, Westminster, S.W.)

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

1915.

572ND ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, ON MONDAY, JUNE 21st, 1915,
AT 4.30 P.M.

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF HALSBURY, F.R.S., PRESIDENT
OF THE INSTITUTE, OCCUPIED THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the preceding meeting were read and confirmed. The SECRETARY announced the election of the Revd. James L. Evans as an Associate of the Institute. Also that the Council had selected as the subject for the Essay in the Gunning Prize Competition :—

“The Influence of Christianity upon other Religious Systems.”

THE PRESIDENT regretted to announce that Professor Naville was prevented by ill-health from being present with them, but he had sent his Address, which the Secretary would read.

ANNUAL ADDRESS.

THE UNITY OF GENESIS.

By H. EDOUARD NAVILLE, D.C.L., LL.D., Professor of Egyptology
at the University of Geneva.

WHO has not heard of the Higher Criticism and of the microscopical analysis it has made of the Old Testament, especially of the Pentateuch? Taking its rise in Germany, it has spread rapidly in the neighbouring countries, in France, in Holland, and even in the British universities. It asserts its authority, I may even say its dominancy, in a somewhat arrogant tone, pretending that its principles and systems are above discussion, and treating opposition with contempt. It is a relief to find that there are critics, particularly in England, who are not only thoroughly scientific, and I may add courteous, in discussion, but who approach these questions with a profound and innate reverence for what we call Holy Writ. I am thinking among others of the late Professor Driver and of Professor Skinner. It is the eminent Cambridge Professor whom I shall quote in preference in this lecture.

I intend neither to argue with the critics on general questions nor to show how weak, and even baseless, are some of

their arguments. My purpose is to consider the first book of the Pentateuch according to the principles of a school which is coming more and more to the front, especially in France, a school which does not found its claims chiefly and almost exclusively on philology or language, but on archæology, anthropology; in a word, on all sciences which may contribute to a better understanding of the past. Great literary works are explained by the customs and turn of mind, at the time, of the people amongst whom they were produced, by the geographical circumstances of the country, and very often also by what we see and hear at the present day.

For we do not admit that there is a deep break between the past and the present; the laws which govern the human mind continue in many respects the same from age to age. In my opinion, we often go very far astray in our interpretations of the past because we do not pay sufficient attention to what is seen or heard in our own time. We often resort to far-fetched explanations, we credit the ancients with inventions which rest on nothing but our imagination, or, in order to support certain theories, a great number of writers are *supposed* to have existed and worked, who have remained anonymous, and may have lived at epochs separated by centuries. In this way great poems are said to be the joint work of generations, which unconsciously created a work to which an author, also unknown or anonymous, is *supposed* to have given its unity.

In accordance with the other principles I have mentioned, the new school shows that a poem like the Odyssey proceeds from the thoughtful mind of one author, who is its creator, and from whom it springs.

I wish to show how admirably these principles apply to Genesis, how perfect is the unity of the book, and how no one but Moses could have been its author.

Let us look first at the Genesis of the critics. I shall use for that the form which is most generally accepted, that of Socin and Kautzsch, out of which Professor Bissell made the "rainbow" Genesis printed in various colours. In that form the book is represented as being a mosaic consisting of 264 fragments of seven different stones. The number of fragments would be much greater, if we added a quantity of what may be called chips, which in the written text are represented by less than a line or even by a single word. Genesis is a composite work, compiled by a redactor, of pieces selected here and there from the works of six different authors, with the addition of glosses of later time. Of these documents, those which have been used

the most are assigned to the so-called Priestly Code, a document which nearly all critics consider as post-exilian; some of them attribute it to Ezra. Wellhausen gives as its date the year 444. The first chapter of Genesis belongs to that document, but not the second, which was written by the Jahvist or Jehovist, an author belonging to the Southern kingdom, and said to have lived in the ninth century. The Jahvist begins at chapter ii, with the narrative of the Fall, which has been modified by the insertion of words or sentences by the redactor. A hundred years later arose, in the Northern kingdom, the Elohist, who appears first in one sentence of chapter xv, and to whom we owe many portions of the text relating the lives of Abraham and Joseph. To these principal documents must be added another, said to be an older source of the Jahvist. It appears first in the genealogy of the family of Cain, afterwards in the history of the Tower of Babel. Its most important fragment is that relating the blessing of Jacob's sons. Another document is called J.E., because it is impossible to separate in it the two elements; its fragments are not very numerous, they are chiefly found in the life of Abraham. Chapter xiv is a document apart; its author's sole contribution, to which the redactor has added a good deal out of his own wisdom. Besides, there are later glosses, some of which are obvious, they are explanations for later readers; others are called glosses merely because they do not agree with the critics' systems. The date of the redactor also is conjectural. It could not have been early, since he made use of the Priestly Code, which we saw Wellhausen assigns to the year 444, and it must be earlier than the Septuagint. Concerning the date of these translators, scholars disagree. It seems probable that the Law must have been the first to be translated into Greek, and that the traditional date, that of the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, 285-247, may be adopted. It is the earliest admitted by the critics. Thus the authors who may be said unconsciously to have contributed to the composition of this little book, Genesis, are scattered over a space of more than 600 years.

Let us now take a fragment of the book and see how it appears according to this theory. We have seen that chapter xiv is a document by itself; we shall have to revert, further on, to the circumstances in which it is said to have been written. We go on to chapter xv. It begins with words from J.E.:

After these things the word of the Lord
came unto Abram

. . . is mine heir.

J.E., unknown date.

In this fragment, the word "Dammesek"	is a late gloss.
And behold, the word of the Lord shall be thine heir.	Jahvist, Southern kingdom, middle of ninth century.
And he brought him shall thy seed be.	Elohism, Northern kingdom, eighth century.
And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness.	Jahvist again, ninth cen- tury.
And he said unto him . . . shall inherit it?	Redactor, fourth century.
And he said unto him: Take me an heifer . . . drove them away.	Jahvist again, ninth cen- tury.
And when the sun was going down is not yet full.	Redactor.
And it came to pass . . . the river Euphrates.	Jahvist.
The Kenite . . . and the Jebusite.	Redactor.
Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children.	Priestly Code, fifth cen- tury.
And she had a handmaid, an Egyptian.	Jahvist.

Leaving aside chapter xiv, in the twenty-one verses of the xv and the first verse of chapter xvi, we have no fewer than eleven changes of author. We pass from the unknown native place of J.E. to the Southern kingdom of the Jahvist, to the Northern of the Elohist, to the Southern again, to the unknown residence of the redactor, to the Northern kingdom again, to Babylon, where the Priestly Code was made, and we end in the Northern kingdom. The eleven various fragments correspond to the following dates: we pass from an unknown date to the ninth century, then to the eighth, to the ninth again, then to the fourth, again we go up to the ninth, come down to the fourth, up to the ninth, down to the fourth, then to the fifth and the ninth.

This is a picture of a part of Genesis which is the result of the labour of the most eminent critics. Moses does not appear in it, but at least five different authors absolutely unknown, all of them anonymous, without any one of the scholars who are responsible for their discovery saying where they lived, under what circumstances and for what purpose they wrote. They are nothing but literary creations; there is no clue whatever to their existence, except in the imagination of the critics.

On the other hand, we have the ever recurring testimony of the Old Testament that these books have an author, Moses; but this testimony is so completely thrust aside that now the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is called an hypothesis. The position of the question has been reversed, the critics do not consider themselves as having to bear the *onus probandi*, as having to establish by solid proofs that Moses cannot be the author of the Pentateuch; on the contrary, it is the duty of those who hold fast to the traditional view, to prove that Moses existed and wrote.

I am not going to challenge the Higher Criticism and the value of its conclusions for the whole of Pentateuch. I shall confine myself to Genesis, and what I shall now endeavour to show is that the reconstruction of the book from fragments separated by more than six centuries and coming from various countries implies total disregard of the nature and purpose of the book, I should even say ignorance of the distinct reason for which it has been written.

In the solemn prayer of Solomon, on the day when the ark was brought to the temple, the king says (1 Kings viii, 53): "Thou didst separate them from among all the peoples of the earth to be Thine inheritance, as Thou spakest by the hand of Moses Thy servant, when Thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt."

This is the mission of Moses, to which he remained faithful up to the day when he ascended Mount Pisgah. He has to teach the people that they have been chosen "to observe, to do all the Lord's commandments, and if they hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord, the Lord will set them on high above the nations of the earth" (Deuteronomy xxviii, 1): "This is the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which He made with them in Horeb" (*id.* xxix, 1). But then this covenant was not something new. It had been made long before with the fathers of the Israelites. At the time of the persecution, it is said that "God heard their groanings, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. And God saw the children of Israel, and God took knowledge of them" (Exodus ii, 24). When Moses is chosen for the glorious task of bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, when the oppressed people first turn a deaf ear to his voice, the Lord repeats to him: "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob as God Almighty . . . and I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land

of Canaan and I have remembered My covenant" (Exodus vi, 2).

Moses is the witness who has to teach the children of Israel what this covenant is, and constantly to remind them of its existence; and since the Lord tells him that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he has to leave to the Israelites a record of how this covenant was made with their forefathers, he has to relate to them who was first chosen among the nations, and who received the promise that his seed should be like the stars of heaven. Moses has to draft their titles of nobility, he has to show them how among the nations one man was set apart, how he had to settle in a foreign country, who were his descendants, and how this select family became a select nation. He has to explain to them that from the beginning events were directed towards that purpose: the setting apart of the Israelites to be the worshippers of Jehovah. This he can narrate only in a book, the form of which is mainly historical, and this book is Genesis. As Professor Skinner says, "the whole converges steadily on the line of descent from which Israel sprang, and which determined its providential position among the nations of the world."

Now this is a plan, the lines of which are clearly marked, easily recognizable, and from which, as we shall see, the author of the book does not deviate in the least. This plan, many of the critics either have not recognized, or do not take into consideration. For them it does not exist, and it cannot exist, for it would be the negation of their systems. For them, Genesis is a collection of so many loose stones gathered from various places, out of which they make one building or several, but certainly not the temple erected in the place chosen by the Lord.

But let us consult the critics who approach and study the question with a spirit of reverence for the Word of God. Professor Skinner, whom for this reason the present writer will quote in preference to any other critic, says that it is an error to confuse unity of plan with unity of authorship. "The view generally held reconciles the assumption of a diversity of sources with the indisputable fact of a clearly designed arrangement of the material: three main documents following substantially the same historical order are held to be combined by one or more redactors; one of these documents, being little more than an epitome of the history, was specially fitted to supply a framework into which the rest of the narrative could be fitted, and was selected by the redactor for this purpose; hence the plan

which we discover in the book is really the design of one particular writer.”*

Let us now test the value of the combination proposed by the learned commentator, leaving aside all philological arguments which, as we shall see further, are out of question, and weighing the system against the character of the book, its purpose and the historical circumstances in which it must have been written. The plan determines the position of Israel among the nations of the world, the book relates the origin of the covenant which is the *raison d'être* of Israel's existence. If they are faithful to the covenant, their number will be like that of the stars, and they will possess as an inheritance the land of Canaan. Who could draw these precise lines, and who had the necessary authority to hold this language? I have no hesitation in saying: one man only, Moses, the man who was put at the head of Israel, when out of a single family it had developed into a nation, the leader who took them out of Egypt, who was at their head during their wanderings in the wilderness, who gave them their laws, and who was taken from them when they were on the threshold of the Land of Promise.

Not only was he the only man in position to devise this definite plan, but the plan was the sanction given to his works and to his words. He kept in view the promise made to the forefathers: he had to remain faithful to the covenant, and to carry it out, whatever might be the murmurs and the opposition of the people who were under his command. When the laws of the Pentateuch were put in writing, they had to be prefaced by Genesis, because there only could the Israelites learn who they were and what was their special mission in the world. Moses alone could leave them this record, which was necessary, for otherwise they might easily have forgotten their origin and the duties which they had to fulfil.

Now let us turn to Professor Skinner's theory. It seems hardly possible that such a plan could have been designed by the writer to whom it is attributed. This author is supposed to be the redactor who lived probably in the fourth century, a man absolutely unknown. Was his abode in Palestine; did he share the trials which his countrymen had to endure at the hand of Alexander or his successors, or had he followed the example of many of his countrymen: had he taken refuge on the banks of the Nile? And what reason could he have for

* *Genesis*, Introd., p. xxxii.

writing a book like Genesis? He was not like Moses at the moment when the glorious promises were to be fulfilled, when the promised land was in sight, when they were to take possession of the inheritance which God Himself had guaranteed to his ancestor. On the contrary, he was part of a remnant of a people, the glory and power of which were gone. He could look back to the reigns of David and Solomon as being the most brilliant epochs of the nation's life, but after them the kingdom had been rent in twain, and from that day the decay had been going on fast; one of the kingdoms had disappeared, the inhabitants of the other had known again a life of bondage in a foreign land. A few of them had returned; they had rebuilt the temple, but they were not independent of the Persian king, and after the destruction of the Persian Empire they had to feel the heavy and cruel yoke of the Syrian kings. Was this a time when a writer would picture to his readers the glorious prospects which God had opened before their ancestor more than a thousand years before? Comparing the life of Abraham with the condition of his descendants after the return from the Captivity, the life of the patriarch could not appear otherwise than as a record of unfulfilled promises and baffled hopes.

Who was the author? Who gave him the authority to speak in the name of God? He was neither a legislator nor a prophet; and what special claim could he put forward to be listened to? Why should his countrymen believe him? It is true that he hides himself behind Moses; he puts his book at the beginning of the five Mosaic books; but it seems very doubtful whether the Moses of the critics could appeal to the redactor's contemporaries. It is one of the favourite arguments of the critics in all the domains of antiquity that a late author, in order to give his writing a weight of which, by itself, it would be completely destitute, puts it under the name of some undisputable authority. Here it is Moses. But the Moses whose mere name commands respect and obedience, and who would silence opposition, is the man whose character and actions come out of the traditional view of Pentateuch. One can hardly understand how the name of Moses had any weight with the post-exilian Jews, if Moses was the man who has been restored to us by the critics. His legislative work was nothing, since the oldest part of it, Deuteronomy, is a forgery dating from the year 621, and the bulk of his laws also are a forgery due to Ezra or one of his contemporaries. As for his biography, the record of it was contained in two documents, the earlier due to a man or to a school belonging

to the Southern kingdom, the later due to a man or a school belonging to the Northern kingdom. How little of his works and life was recorded in these two documents! Especially one of the most glorious episodes of Moses' life—the crossing of the Red Sea—is briefly mentioned, while it is given with most details in the post-exilic books. If the tradition of the Israelites had not preserved more than what there is in J. and E., certainly it could not give them the idea of one of those commanding heroes whose memory is a ruling power in a nation.

And how was this redactor to write his book with the definite plan he had in view; where was he to get his material? If he took the Priestly Code as his framework, he found there a tendency quite different from his, a spirit of legalism and institutionalism carried so far, as Professor Skinner says, "that it would have cut away the most precious and edifying narratives of the past, if the religious feeling of post-exilic Judaism had not compelled the author to combine such discordant elements."

As for the Jahvist and the Elohist, distant in place and in time, in some parts they are parallel, but their tendencies are not the same. The beginning of Genesis is supposed to show that they had not the same conception of divinity, since they did not call it by the same name. Nothing is known of the extent of their books, of the purpose for which they were written, of the way in which the Elohist could be preserved after the Northern kingdom had disappeared and had been replaced by the Samaritans.

Even admitting that the redactor filled a quantity of gaps, and, in order to cement together all these loose fragments, that he put in a great deal of matter for which he is responsible, we cannot admit that a book like Genesis, with a plan so clear, so definite, so admirably worked out from beginning to end, can be derived from a quantity of fragments put together, the origin of which is so different in time and in circumstances. Genesis is the work of one author, and this author, as we shall see, could only be Moses.

I cannot revert here to the arguments which I adduced before in a book devoted to show that Moses did not write in Hebrew. Everyone agrees that he did not use the characters called square Hebrew, which are those of our Bibles. This alphabet is, perhaps, a little earlier than the Christian era, but certainly not much older. But he did not use even the Hebrew language. In his time Hebrew was not a literary language: it may have been the dialect which the Hebrews had brought to Egypt from Canaan, but it was not the language of books.

Books, especially religious books, and all documents which had to be preserved, were written in Babylonian cuneiform on tablets of wet clay which generally were baked afterwards. The idea that the books of Moses were first cuneiform tablets has been put forward by others before me, especially by Col. Conder and Professor Sayce. This is a startling fact to many people, and a stumbling-block to the critics. Therefore, without entering on a lengthy discussion of this point, I feel bound to mention a few of the chief arguments in its favour.

The time of Moses is the nineteenth dynasty, a series of sovereigns who came to the throne after serious troubles, the cause of which was a religious revolution made by King Amenophis IV. The kings of the nineteenth dynasty were certainly far less powerful than their great predecessors of the eighteenth, the Thothmes and the Amenophis, the conquerors under whose dominion the Egyptian Empire reached its utmost territorial expansion.

The kings of the eighteenth dynasty had conquered Palestine, and had established in the principal cities native governors, who from time to time wrote to their sovereign, and reported what was going on in their cities. These letters and reports have been preserved to us in a city of Middle Egypt, now called Tel el Amarna, where the archives of the kings Amenophis III. and Amenophis IV. were discovered. And these archives contain not only their correspondence with their subordinates, but also letters to and from great kings of Mesopotamia. Every one of these documents, without a single exception, is a clay tablet written, or, rather, engraved in Babylonian cuneiform. It was certainly an archaeological event of first importance when the fellaheen of Tel el Amarna came upon this hoard of cuneiform tablets. It first revealed the surprising and absolutely unknown fact that Babylonian cuneiform was the usual written language in Palestine at the time of the eighteenth dynasty. It is quite natural that the kings of Mesopotamia should use that language and writing, which evidently were their own. But it was all the more surprising and unexpected from governors of the Palestinian cities, who had to write to their sovereign and report to him what was going on in the region they governed. Why did Abd-Hiba of Jerusalem, Abi-milki of Tyre, and all the prefects of Zidon, Megiddo, Ashkelon, Gaza write in Babylonian unless it was their own written language? For the King of Egypt did not understand it: he was obliged to resort to the help of a dragoman. Letters of that kind must be in the language either of the ruler or of the subject. Since it was not

that of the Pharaoh, it could only be that of the Canaanite governors.

The correspondence of Tel el Amarna, which is later than the first settlement of the Hebrews in Canaan, is not all we have of cuneiform documents from Palestine. A rich find of tablets was gathered at Boghaz Keui, in Asia Minor, the capital of the Hittites. From Palestine itself originated a series of letters and edicts, written both in Assyrian and Hittite, concerning the Amurru, the Amorites. In the land of the Israelites two contracts have been found at Gezer, of the years 650 and 647, and eight tablets or fragments at Taannek. As one of the excavators, Dr. Sellin, says: "Even supposing that Babylonian cuneiform was used only by the rulers and their officials, and that the people could not read or write, this fact is certain: in the already extensive excavations carried on in Palestine no document was ever found except in Babylonian writing. As for the Phœnician old Hebrew writing . . . it cannot be asserted with certainty that it existed before the ninth century."

Thus we know now for certain that at the time of Moses, and perhaps as late as the reign of David and Solomon, Babylonian cuneiform was the literary language and writing of the whole of Western Asia, and we do not know with certainty of any other book language at that time.

Let us now revert to Moses. He had been brought up at the court of Pharaoh, and instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. He could write, and certainly the Semitic writing which he learnt at Pharaoh's court was not the Canaanite or Phœnician or Old Hebrew, which did not exist, even in Phœnicia, otherwise the Phœnician officials would have used it in their letters and reports to their sovereign. The answers which Pharaoh sent to the officials, of which we have several, were not in Egyptian, which these officials would not have understood: they were in their own language, in Babylonian cuneiform. Therefore it was necessary that Pharaoh should have at his court men who could write the language of Abd-Hiba of Jerusalem, Gitia of Ashkelon, and all the other governors, dragomans like those of the embassies of the present day. If Moses was taught a Semitic writing, which seems natural considering his origin and position, it is obvious that he learnt Babylonian cuneiform, a writing which allowed him to have intercourse with the Semitic world of his time.

Besides, this language was eminently adapted to the books of Moses. He had to write God's words, God's commands, inspired laws, and Babylonian was not only the language spoken

and written in Mesopotamia, the land from which the Hebrews originated, but, above all, it had been used by the famous legislator Hammurabi, the great law-giver, to whom the god Shamash was said to have dictated his commands, and it would have been extraordinary if Moses had not known the existence of this remarkable code of laws. For Moses, Babylonian cuneiform must have been the only language worthy of recording God's words.

This fact of Moses having written in Babylonian cuneiform involves two consequences of the utmost importance. His writings were not in books, in rolls of skin or papyrus, but on clay tablets. This implies a complete change in our method of studying these writings. We have to do away with the description and nature of what we call a book. A book has a definite order. If it is divided into chapters, the middle ones or the last will not be written before the earlier ones, especially if it is written on a roll. The tablet is something quite different: it is a whole composition in itself. It is not connected with another so closely as two chapters of a book, and very often it has no fixed place in a series. Tablets are not always quite independent. They may form a running narrative, and then the connection from one to the other is indicated by the last word, or by the last sentence of one tablet being repeated on the next.

A cuneiform book is a collection of tablets, but such a collection, as in the case of Genesis, may have been made for a definite purpose with a plan, which the author keeps in view. This plan is not exactly like that of a book of the present day. It is more like that of a lecturer who has a series of lectures to deliver on a definite subject. He cannot do it without a very strict plan, without an exact outline in his mind of what he has to teach or to prove. Very often he will begin a lecture with a short summary of what he has said in the preceding one, or he will revert to a fact mentioned before, which will be the subject of further development, or, if he is reading a narrative of some piece of literature, he may merely read over again the last sentence where he stopped. It is exactly so with the cuneiform tablets and the apparent disconnection between them; the necessary repetitions from one to the other have been interpreted as showing the hands of various writers: they are the foundations on which rests, partly, the theory of the Elohist and the Jahvist.

It is possible that Moses had already set apart the tablets which form the book of Genesis, and which, as we said, are all

written with a definite purpose. Nevertheless, we do not know who divided his writings into five books. In this respect the Jewish tradition points to Ezra, and I see no reason to discard it. Ezra did more: he put these writings in book form and in book language, if it had not been done before.

Time does not allow us to speak here of the second discovery of the utmost importance, which has been made also in Egypt. The Jews who settled in Egypt during the last Pharaonic dynasties and the Persian dominion, spoke and wrote Aramaic, the book language and writing which succeeded to cuneiform. Therefore the first change made in the language and form of the books of Moses was to turn them into Aramaic before the second change took place, which I believe to have been simultaneous with the invention by the Rabbis of the square Hebrew alphabet, viz., turning the books into Hebrew, which was the language of Jerusalem. These changes were not translations: they were mere changes of dialects.

I wish I could mention here some of the arguments which seem to establish that before writing Hebrew the Jews wrote Aramaic; but, leaving this aside, I revert to the fact that Moses wrote in Babylonian cuneiform. The most serious conclusion derived from this fact, a conclusion the importance of which cannot be undervalued, is that the oldest Hebrew documents are not originals. In their present form they are transcriptions from another idiom: translations, not from different languages, but from different dialects, and changes of script. Philological criticism, on which the reconstruction of the books of the Old Testament rests for the most part, has been exercised on translations. The texts to which the critics have applied their microscopes, and which they dissect and cut up into small bits, are not originals. They are in a later form, after having undergone one or two transformations. One can readily understand what a blow the fact of the Pentateuch having been originally written in cuneiform deals to the theory of Wellhausen. No wonder that the High Critics are dead against it, and that the attempt to combat them with evidence derived, not from a host of supposed and anonymous authors, but from documents which we can hold in our hands, like the Tel el Amarna tablets, or the papyri of Elephantine, are called by them "extravagant conjectures," or "moving in a circle of errors" (Koenig).

We shall now briefly review the tablets which form the book of Genesis, and we shall see how everything converges towards this central idea, the choice of Israel as the chosen people with whom God made a covenant. This is the golden thread which

I see running through all the tablets from the first to the last.

The six first bring us down to the death of Terah, just before Abram is called out of his country. Abram is the man chosen by God; not only have we here his pedigree, but a summary of all the events which preceded this choice, as far back as the creation of the world.

Moses has not been a witness of these events, as he was for those of Exodus and the journey in the wilderness, and the question is: How could Moses have the knowledge of those facts, and how did he write these records? Here, whatever opinion is put forward cannot be anything but a conjecture, and this seems to be the most probable.

Abram came out of Mesopotamia, the country of tablets. The thousands of them which have been preserved give an idea how numerous they must have been. They deal with all kinds of subjects; but the religious tablets are in great number, and one may easily fancy that some of them were the religious books of families or tribes. The reason which induces Abram to leave his country is a religious one; this is implied by these words: "The Lord said unto Abram: Get thee out of thy country." It is a command of God. Why and in what measure his religious ideas differed from those of his surrounding countrymen, whether he was disliked, or perhaps persecuted by them for that reason, we do not know. But the departure of his tribe reminds us of what has been seen in modern as well as in ancient times: a tribe migrating into a distant land, to be able to worship in peace according to its faith. Such a tribe, if it has religious books, will take them on its journey. I believe Abram did the same. He took his tablets, which were his pedigree as far back as the creation of the world. It is well known how great an importance Orientals give to pedigrees: they are the beginnings of history. In the early past there was no other record of the events than those which concerned a man or a family. Besides, tablets were easy to carry on a journey: they were made of a tough and lasting material; they could travel a long way, and were not so easily damaged as papyrus or skin. The considerable number of them which have been preserved shows how well adapted they were for a document intended to last for generations.

I quite agree that I cannot give any positive proof of the idea that the first tablets of Genesis, which Moses had at his disposal, were brought by Abram when he left his country for Canaan; but this conjecture seems to me in accordance with

the circumstances and the customs of Oriental people. It is possible that there were more, and that Moses made a choice among them, and only took those which had a direct bearing on his plan, and which were necessary. He had to rewrite them, for there are in these chapters distinct traces of the hand of Moses which we shall notice. These traces are chiefly some Egyptian features, showing the man who had lived in Egypt and who knew it well.

The first tablet is the creation of the world. It is a short account of how the earth first appeared, and afterwards was fitted up with everything which gives it its present appearance; man comes last as the crowning work of the Creator, but his formation is not described at great length: his nature is given, and the reason for which he was created last. He is to have dominion over the whole earth. Here already we have something which points to Egypt: the six days of Creation. We must always remember when we interpret texts of a very early date that for those ancient people abstract ideas did not exist. They must always use a metaphor, have recourse to something falling under their senses. Take, for instance, the idea expressed by the word "period"; such a word does not exist for an ancient Egyptian, a space of time independent of something which touches his body or his life is a notion strange to him. He will understand the day, the month, the year and other measurements of time of the same kind. Therefore, if he wishes to speak of a certain duration of time, having a definite beginning and end, the most obvious metaphor at his disposal will be to call it a day. I cannot bring here the Egyptian proofs of this assertion, but they seem to me to show that the sense to be given here to the word "day" is a period with beginning and end.

The tablet ends with these words, which are erroneously put in the second chapter: "these are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created."

The following words are part of the second tablet: "In the day that the Lord made heaven and earth." Here the author reverts to something which has been said in the first, as a lecturer quotes again what he has said before, in order to unfold all its consequences. He goes back to the very beginning, "in the day when heaven and earth had been made," and he sums up briefly what came after. "There was yet no plant and no herb, for no rain watered the land and no men tilled the ground." He contrasts the primitive state of the earth when it was first created and before the existence of man, with the

time when man had been formed and had been put in the Garden of Eden. There vegetation was luxuriant, there was every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food, for two obvious reasons: a river went out of Eden to water the garden and man was there to dress it and keep it. At the beginning, no rain and utter barrenness; on the contrary, in the Garden of Eden, where man had been established, abundance of plants and fruits due, not to rain, but to a river which divided itself into four branches. I do not believe the critics have ever paid any attention to this fact, since they suppose that all which is said of the river is an interpolation due to a redactor. This, I do not hesitate to say, shows a strange lack of insight into the composition of the narrative. Why should the author have mentioned that special point—absence of rain, and the emptiness which resulted from it, if it was not to put it in contrast to the river in the garden and to the plenty derived from it?

This again reveals an author who had Egypt before his eyes. To him, fertility is not due to rain, but to a river, and curiously this river divides itself into various branches, like the Nile. There are other instances in which Moses quotes Egypt as the type of a fertile and rich country.

The critics consider that what has been called the first tablet belongs to the Priestly Code, it is therefore post-exilian, end of the fifth century. Chapters ii and iii, which are the beginning of the second tablet, are Jahvist. They belonged to the author who lived in the Southern kingdom in the ninth century. The second chapter is, therefore, four hundred years older than the first. The Jahvist or Jehovist is distinguished chiefly because he uses for the name of God Jahveh, which the Hebrew scholars since Ewald say is the right reading for the word which used to be read Jehovah, and which is translated "The Lord." The word for God is Elohim, the name used by the other writer a hundred years later in the Northern kingdom. But since throughout these chapters and the following both names are joined together, Jahveh Elohim, the Lord God, the word Elohim is supposed to have been added everywhere by the redactor.

The description of the river of Eden is said to have been inserted by the redactor. The third chapter, except the word "God," is entirely Jahvist. In the fourth, after the sixteenth verse, the descendants of Cain are part of what is called an older Jahvist, another unknown document, perhaps the oldest which is in Genesis.

In my opinion, the tablet ends with the first verse of

chapter v, which I translate, according to the Septuagint: "This is the book of the generation, not of Adam, but of mankind," ἀνθρωπιών. It ends exactly like the first tablet, by words wrongly attributed to the following chapter. Thus the second tablet, which is long, describes what happened to man when he was created: it is the development, the crowning act mentioned in the first tablet, the creation of man, who was made in order to have dominion over the earth. There it was said only that God created him male and female; but all the details about this creation: how God said that it was not good that the man should be alone, how Eve was formed out of Adam's rib, all this would have been out of place in the first tablet, where each work of the six days is summed up in a few words. Its place was in the second tablet, which is that of mankind; there also is the Fall, the description of their first children. Very soon one of these children, Cain, falls away. Cain and his descendants are mentioned once for all; we shall never again hear of him and his posterity; because Moses was not writing a book of history; he only recorded the events which have a bearing on Israel and his mission.

The critics are nearly unanimous in stating that chapters ii and iii are not of the same author as chapter i, and also that it is possible to trace two narratives which have been combined. As for the first point, Professor Skinner's chief arguments are the following: "From chapter i it differs fundamentally both in its conception of the primeval condition of the world as an arid waterless waste, and in the order Creation works: viz., man, trees, animals, woman. Alike in this arrangement and in the supplementary features—the garden, the miraculous trees, the appointment regarding man's position in the world, and the remarkable omissions (plants, fishes, etc.)."*

These arguments are derived from a totally different view of chapters ii and iii. For the learned commentator, these chapters are a mere narrative of Creation, which does not agree with the former, neither in the order of creative works, nor in the description of the earth, therefore this implies the existence of another author. But this seems to me a misconception. We have not here two parallel narratives of Creation, but only one. The first chapter is a short and, I may even say, dry summary of the events, which are divided into six days; for each day is recorded in a few words what took place, whatever duration

* *Genesis*, p. 51.

may be assigned to a day. The sixth is the crowning day: man is created, and the author cannot say less than that man was the aim and end of the whole work. It was for him that heaven and earth came out of nothing, and afterwards that plants grew and that animal beings of all kinds were born, therefore he was to have dominion over the whole. As to the special way in which he was made male and female, and to the place of the earth which was assigned to him for his abode, all that is left for another tablet. In the first chapter we do not hear much more about the creation of man than of animals, except that he is to be the ruler.

The second tablet is the generation of mankind. It is specially devoted to man, therefore there is no need to repeat everything which was in the first, there is absolutely no reason to speak of fishes, nor is there any necessity for following a chronological order of creation. On the large surface of earth, the general features of which were described in the first chapter, God had prepared a beautiful abode for man. The second chapter supplements the very scanty information which we had about the sixth day, and it very aptly begins with contrasting the beginning of the earth's formation with its appearance at the end, when man, the masterpiece of the whole fabric, was settled in his magnificent abode. An author who describes a superb palace in which a prince settles for the first time, may insist on the beauty of the furniture, but he is not obliged to revert to the way how it was built and to the various phases of the construction.

A great importance also has been attached to the fact that God is named there Jahveh (Jehovah). But this also seems quite natural. Moses, the writer, has been taught that in his dealings with men the usual name of God is Jahveh. When he relates what God said and did to man in the garden, he speaks of Jahveh, the God he knows under that name. In the first chapter, God is merely the Creator, the God of heaven and earth, who does not speak differently to man and beast, except in what has reference to man as the ruler of the earth, and even this may be considered as an ordinance concerning the whole created world. Therefore God will be called Elohim.

Another indication supposed to point to two different authors is the question of the two trees. The first description of the garden speaks of the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But the prohibition not to eat of its fruit applies only to the second, on which alone the story of the Fall turns. The tree of life is mentioned only once

again, when Adam and Eve are driven out of Eden. I agree with the critics, that the existence of these two trees is a difficulty; I should even call it one of the mysteries, of which there are several in this marvellous narrative of the Fall. But I cannot say that the supposed existence of two writers is an explanation; what light does it bring on this unintelligible question to admit that the tree of life is a creation of another writer? One can admit a late redactor adding a gloss in order to clear up in some way a vague point. But in this case, if he combined two versions, he only obscured that which seemed more simple, that which spoke only of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Certainly the result of this combination cannot be called satisfactory. Let us consider the two trees as being one of the difficulties which we cannot solve; but that has no bearing on the tablet itself, which is the natural sequel to the first: after the creation of the world, that of mankind.

The third tablet begins (chapter v, verse 1) like the first: "In the day that" . . . It is not long. It describes the generations of man as far as Noah (vi, 9) and it ends with these words, which we translate from the Hebrew like the end of the first tablet: "This is the generation of Noah." The words certainly do not refer to the following, which is the Deluge. Though the text is short, it is a perfect rainbow in the coloured Genesis: it has no fewer than four authors. But if we remember the plan which Moses had in view—the way of God's leading for the people of Israel—there can be no order more logical than to run quickly over the past, sum up the genealogies, leave aside what is useless, and end with Noah. The thread which goes through the two first tablets is easily recognizable in the third.

In the preamble, we notice the man who knew Egypt well: in the day that God created man male and female, He created them so that they might have children. This seems at first quite useless. But these words written by Moses in this place show that he repudiates some ideas current among the Egyptians. A god, in their mythology, may be said to give birth to his son from his own substance, or he says to men: "You are a tear from my eye." With these ideas Moses absolutely disagrees, and this is the reason why, when he is going to describe the generation of man, he begins with these simple words: "He had created them male and female."

The new tablet, that of the Deluge, begins with these words (vi, 5): "Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his generations." This tablet, more than any other, bears the character of

having been brought from Mesopotamia. It is supposed to be also a combination of two different writers. I cannot go into that question, in which philological arguments are mixed; I do not see why it must be attributed to more than one author. This is the most important event after the Creation, therefore the writer dwells at some length upon it. The tablet contains also the events at the close of Noah's life, and it ends with the death of Noah.

The following is the xth chapter, which is still open to a great deal of discussion. Time does not allow me to explain why one of the chief objections, the presence of Canaan among the sons of Ham, agrees perfectly with what we know of the first inhabitants of Canaan.

The tablet begins with these words: "Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah," and it ends thus: "These are the families of the sons of Noah after their generations, in their nations, and of these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood." This sums up the genealogy and teaches us that the division of nations took place after the Flood. The next tablet shows us how this division took place. It begins with the necessary introduction: "There was one time when the whole earth was of one language and of one speech." But when men tried to build the tower of Babel, the Lord confounded their languages, and scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Now in this vast confusion of nations and languages, where would the chosen people be found, those who were set apart? They sprang from one of the sons of Shem; therefore the writer reverts to this son of Noah, and to part of his descent which he had given more fully in the preceding tablet. Arpachsad was the ancestor of the elect, and the writer enumerates all his descendants as far as Abraham, and to the death of Terah, Abraham's father.

It seems to me a grievous error to attribute this tablet to three different authors. There is absolutely no inconsistency. Let us remember what the author has always in view, the chosen ones, the elect. When he has just described the complete confusion which reigns upon the face of all the earth, he must tell us where the chosen one will be discovered, and from whence he springs. It is from among the descendants of Shem, from Arpachsad. His genealogy down to Terah is the necessary sequel to the narrative of the dispersion at Babel, it is as strongly linked to it as possible, and therefore I do not understand why critics attribute the first episode to the first Jahvist and the genealogy to the Priestly Code, something like 500 years later. I cannot

consider it otherwise than another misconception of the leading idea of the writing.

We have now come to the end of the first part of Genesis, we have reached Abraham, the first elect, and the father of the chosen people. We have before our eyes his complete pedigree, as far back as the birth of heaven and earth, and let us consider how the whole narrative is directed towards Abraham. The earth is created, and man; in consequence of the Fall, the descendants of Adam become wicked and corrupt, except Noah. He escapes in the ark, and he has three sons; from these, all the nations are divided, they were scattered after the attempt to build the tower of Babel, but among all these nations who were dispersed over the earth, one family is chosen in Shem's posterity, the family of Arpachsad, the ancestor of Terah. We have in these six tablets all that is necessary, a sufficient introduction to show from where Terah originates, but nothing useless. The posterity of the three sons of Noah is necessary to show how the earth was replenished by a great number of nations after the Deluge, but after Arpachsad has been chosen, we shall hear no more of the posterity of Ham, Japheth and even Shem. Can such a remarkable unity of purpose and idea be expressed otherwise than by unity of composition?

As I said, these six tablets I consider as having been brought from Mesopotamia when Abram went to Canaan. There is nothing extraordinary in this assumption. We know how those tablets travelled, and we have seen now of what peculiar interest they were to Abram; it may be that they had for him a religious value which was disregarded by his countrymen. Anyhow they were his pedigree, they showed who were his ancestors as far as Adam; and such genealogies are greatly valued by Orientals, even at the present day, and not only for themselves, but, for instance, for their horses.

When I say that these tablets were brought from Mesopotamia, and that Moses merely rewrote them and embodied them in his own collection of documents, which for convenience we shall call a book, people will object that I only throw back the difficulty. Who first wrote them in Mesopotamia, and how came the author to have all this information about the Creation and the Fall, the Deluge, etc.? I intentionally do not touch this point, where I should have to speak of revelation; I do not go further back than the author of Genesis, Moses.

Abraham is the first elect, the father of the elect nation which has to go out of Egypt. One may fancy that Abraham's life is the most important narrative Moses has to write, his choice by

the Lord, the covenant which God made with him, the promise that he would receive Canaan as his inheritance, and that his seed would become a numerous nation possessing Canaan as an inheritance, this is the corner stone on which rests the whole future of Israel. No wonder, therefore, that Moses dwells at great length on his ancestor, on the various episodes of his life, on his character, on the nature of his intercourse with God. What he is aiming at is to make a good portrait of him, to have a faithful record of his deeds. The future generations must know who was the man whom God considered as fit to become the head of a posterity to which He would commit His laws, and whose chief mission would be to serve the Lord faithfully.

In writing such a biography, there was no need to follow a strictly chronological order. No doubt this order would be most convenient, but this was not the ruling principle. Moses was not writing a book of history. History, such as we understand it, did not exist in his time. There was nothing but biography. Even historical inscriptions in Egypt, or the books of Kings and Chronicles, are nothing but biographies of the king, or events connected with his person. In a biography, if the author has to emphasize an idea, or if he wishes to group certain facts, he will leave aside chronological order, which is no rule for him; we shall find at least one instance of this in Abraham's life.

Since Moses is going to write a running narrative, his tablets will be much more closely connected than the first six. He probably did as the Assyrians, and repeated at the beginning the last word or the last sentence of the former tablet. Therefore, his tablets are not as easy to distinguish as before. But here arises a question which is as difficult for the critics as for those who hold to the Biblical tradition. How did Moses know all he relates about Abraham? Were there any written records kept during Abraham's life? Perhaps there may have been, especially concerning his dealings with his neighbours, or his military expeditions against the kings who had carried Lot away. One can fancy one of his men, like Eliezer his servant, the elder of his house, that "ruled over all that he had," putting down in writing on a clay tablet the principal events of his master's life, which would be transmitted to his descendants, but the episodes which are most striking, those in which he was alone a witness, like the wonderful dialogue between Abraham and God about the impending destruction of Sodom, an episode to which we shall have to revert further, how are we to explain these? Here it seems impossible not to pronounce the word at which some of the critics scoff—revelation. Moses was directed by the Spirit to

describe what the intercourse between God and Abraham had been.

Here the critics have no explanation of the difficulty; to say that this dialogue is the work of the Jahvist, written down in the ninth century, is no solution. How did the Jahvist know it? Certainly not by tradition. This scene had no witness but Abraham himself. The Jahvist must, therefore, have invented it. The same may be said of many fragments of Abraham's life, in which all the colours of the rainbow have been profusely scattered, as one can see.

Abraham has left Haran in obedience to God's command, probably in order to remain faithful to the worship of Jahveh. Not knowing how he will be received in the foreign countries where he will settle, whether as an enemy or as a chief with whom an alliance can be made, he makes his wife a request which we shall quote in his own words (Gen. xx, 13): "It came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her: This is the kindness which thou shalt show unto me: at every place whither we shall come, say of me: He is my brother." So he fully expected what happened to him with Pharaoh and with Abimelech, and there is nothing extraordinary that it should have happened twice in his life, if we give to this episode the interpretation which we derive from the tablets of Tel el Amarna, and is in keeping with the customs of Oriental chiefs and kings about alliances and marriages.

I cannot go through the whole history of Abraham, which raises a great number of questions; I shall only dwell on a few points. One of the chapters which has caused the greatest number of discussions is chapter xiv, the war of the king of Sodom and his neighbours against four foreign kings coming from the East.

I may here quote the recently expressed opinion of a German scholar settled in America, Professor Haupt. His opinion may be considered as the last word of critical science. "The purpose of this chapter is an encouragement to rebel against foreign yoke. Just as Abraham with his 318 followers could rescue the booty from the mighty king of the Elamites, so Zerubbabel and his followers can set the great king of Persia at defiance. This chapter must have been written in the beginning of the year 519." This is certainly an extreme opinion, but it is a good instance of the way of reasoning of some of the critics. No argument at all, a mere subjective opinion. Rather than take the plain language as it stands, it is interpreted as a kind of moral cordial given to Zerubbabel when he attempts to

rebel against the great king. It is not brought straight to him: it is hidden in a biography of Abraham. What this biography was it is difficult to say. This chapter would be more than sixty years older than the Priestly Code, which is the framework of Genesis and the Pentateuch in general, and besides, we have to go down perhaps a hundred years before the redactor gave Genesis its present form. All Zerubbabel could know about Abraham, he got from the Jahvist and the Elohist.

Most critics consider this chapter as being a document by itself, which is generally said to be post-exilian. Such is Professor Skinner's opinion. But there is one point which seems to me to have been unduly left aside by the critics; it is the intimate connection between chapters xiv and xv. I beg Professor Skinner's pardon. To my mind not only is the connection between these two chapters neither "far-fetched" nor "misleading," but at first sight chapter xv appears as the natural outcome of chapter xiv.

Chapter xv, which was described before, is one in which the mincing process has been carried to the furthest limits. Its twenty-one verses are said to be made of nine fragments, four of which belong to the Jahvist, one to the Elohist, three to the redactor, and one to the document called J.E., which cannot be assigned either to J. or to E. This dissection of the chapter not only shows a lack of understanding of the leading thought of the writer, but it destroys a beautiful episode which unfolds itself admirably, and brings out in a remarkable way the faith of Abraham; so much so that the writing asserts it. Abraham has just achieved a marvellous feat of arms. With his own men he has routed the army of the Mesopotamian kings; he has delivered Lot; in the presence of the king of Sodom he has lifted up his hand unto the Lord not to take the slightest reward. On his return the Lord speaks to him in words which are used only on that occasion. Well might Abraham fear a return of the kings, some vengeance wrought upon him, or some attack from the Canaanite chiefs among whom he was living. The Lord says to him, "Fear not, I am thy shield, thou hast lifted up thine hand unto me that thou wouldst not take aught from the king of Sodom. I shall be thy reward." Quite naturally Abraham, who has plenty of wealth, says: "What wilt Thou give me? I go childless." And there comes the glorious promise and the covenant which is confirmed by a wonder. Is it not clear enough that chapter xv is the continuance, or rather the consequence, of the xivth? Surely the

author of Genesis himself wrote how the covenant was made with Abraham. This is the confirmation of the selection of Abraham, and perhaps the most solemn moment in his life. If Moses describes this covenant, he certainly also describes the occasion on which it was concluded.

In chapter xxv we have an example of the author going out of the chronological order. The chapter begins with these words: "And Abraham took another wife and her name was Keturah," and the text goes on giving the list of all Abraham's sons whose mother was Keturah. This tablet gave Abraham's posterity exclusive of Isaac's and Ishmael's descendants. We must picture to ourselves Abraham as one of those nomad chieftains, what we should now call a sheikh. With those men polygamy was the rule, as it still is. One of their wives was the predominant one: she had special rights, and her sons were the heirs. But a powerful and rich man might have slaves and concubines, wives of a lower rank, whose children would receive gifts like the children of Keturah, while to Isaac was given all that Abraham had.

We must not think, therefore, that Keturah became Abraham's wife only after Sarah's death. She is mentioned at the beginning of the tablet which relates the patriarch's end, and which gives the list of his posterity and the distribution of his wealth. We must remember that we have here not two chapters but two tablets; they are not the continuation of each other. Here the author recalls something in the past; the true meaning would be better rendered if we translated: "Abraham had taken another wife."

I cannot quote all the instances in which the hand of Moses is recognizable. I should like to mention one which shows what I may call his spirit, his faith, and especially his familiar intercourse with God. It is said of Moses that the Lord knew him face to face (Deuteronomy xxxiv, 10), that He spoke mouth to mouth to him (Numbers xii, 8). Is it not the same with Abraham? Certainly it is the same man who wrote the marvellous sort of discussion between Abram and God about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, when Abraham dared not plead for more than ten men, and Moses' own prayer when on the border of Canaan he besought the Lord, saying (Deuteronomy iii, 25): "Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan," and received the answer: "Let it suffice thee, speak no more unto Me of this matter." Or is it more likely that, while Abram's request is the work of the Jahvist who wrote in the ninth century, the prayer of Moses is that

of a forger who wrote Deuteronomy, a book revealed in the year 621 ?

We know little of Isaac's life; all the interest of the writer is focussed on his sons and especially on Jacob, who was to be the father of the twelve tribes, and who was to give his name to the nation. However, there was one point which could not be omitted, and which was of first-rate importance. It was absolutely necessary to say that the covenant had been renewed with Isaac, and that the promises made to his father held good for him. This is done in the episode of Isaac with Abimelech, when Isaac at first feels tempted to go to Egypt because of the famine, and he is told not to do so because the land which he inhabits is given to him and to his seed, and, says the Lord, "I will establish the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven . . . because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws" (Genesis xxvi, 5). These words are the renewal of the charter given by the Lord to His chosen people, and it seems quite erroneous not to attribute these words to the main part of the book, but to call them an addition made by the latest contributor, the redactor.

Though I consider Genesis as the work of Moses, the fact of its having been written on tablets and put in a book form and transcribed, in Aramaic first and in Hebrew afterwards, may have given occasion to those who made those changes to insert explanatory glosses, to replace here and there geographical names, putting that which was in use in their time instead of the old one which would have been forgotten, or would not have been understood. Perhaps also some of the genealogies were carried further than they had been originally, for instance (xxxvi, 31) it is said: "and these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel," where instead of these last words the LXX have "at Jerusalem."

One must remember also that with the history of Jacob the writer begins to have in view, not only one man, or one family, but the people which he was going to take to Canaan. The episode of Judah and Tamar, which seems a digression, explains why in the catalogue of Jacob's family the son of Judah, who seems to be his heir, is Perez. The genealogies of Edom in their present form contain probably late additions, but in the original they may have been part of them. Edom had much prospered, had become a nation which Israel would find on its way, and it was useful to show the Israelites how they were

their brethren, with whom they were not to contend, because Mount Seir had been given to Esau for a possession (Deuteronomy ii, 4).

With the arrival of Jacob's family in Egypt, we reach the country in which Moses lived, where he had been educated in particularly favourable circumstances, and in the wisdom of which he had been instructed. He had no difficulty in his intercourse with the Egyptians and his own countrymen, and I do not hesitate to say that he was the only author who could have written the history of Joseph such as we have it. That history is a running narrative of remarkable simplicity and beauty, containing some of the most striking pages of the Old Testament. It seems to me incredible that a sense of literary beauty did not prevent the critics from cutting it up into a considerable number of fragments written at several hundred years' interval. I shall not quote here sentences of which the first words are of the Elohist, the next of the Jahvist a hundred years earlier, and the end of the Elohist again. Let us take the two visits of the sons of Jacob. The first is said to be of the Elohist, the late writer of the seventh century, the second journey with the pathetic speech of Judah belongs to the Jahvist, a hundred years earlier. Yet it pre-supposes the first, it even alludes to it. Now, when the narrative of the second visit was written, what about the first? It certainly must have been described somewhere and the description has entirely disappeared. The second visit cannot be understood without the first, which is its introduction, and we are told that it was written a hundred years later. How strange are these two narratives: the Jahvist has no beginning, and the Elohist is a mere introduction followed by nothing! It is not possible to escape this extraordinary deduction, if it is contended that the narratives are inventions of two authors.

Moses alone could write the history of Joseph, and while he was in Egypt himself. There could not be any record of Joseph's life except with the Hebrews. Joseph had been a minister of foreign rulers, whose memory was detested by the Egyptians, who did what they could to wipe out the remembrance of the invaders. If Joseph had been an Egyptian, his biography would have been engraved on the walls of his tomb. But there was no rock tomb for him; he was embalmed in Egypt, he probably was put in a coffin, his body was preserved by his countrymen, but the account of his life, of his deeds, of his extraordinary exaltation from the rank of a slave to the second position in the kingdom, all that would be tradition preserved only by the Hebrews. And this tradition was undoubtedly very vivid, since

for these Hebrews Joseph must have been their great man, their hero. He had brought them to Egypt, to him they owed the position they had in Egypt, the favourable conditions in which they were placed and which allowed them to multiply and to become a nation. Joseph must have been a more popular figure among them than Abraham himself. And the tradition, such as it is recorded, is not one which is written down six or seven hundred years after the events, in a kingdom rent in two, under circumstances absolutely different. What interest could have Joseph's life to the Elohist writing in the Northern kingdom, in such troubled times as the seventh century?

Besides, this tradition is pictured with details so distinctly Egyptian in the dreams, in the names, in the numbers, that it cannot have been written anywhere else but in the country itself. A tradition six hundred years old retains the main lines of the events, but not the memory of small local details quite different from the conditions of the country in which the supposed writer lives. Moses wrote Joseph's life before he left Egypt. This agrees perfectly with the narrative and its character, and the hypothetical systems of the critics raise difficulties absolutely insuperable in regard of what we know about Egypt.

Joseph died at the age of 110 years, which in Egyptian is the limit of old age, and signifies as much as: much advanced in years and full of days. His last words were to remind his brethren that God would bring them to the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel. Thus the first book of the Old Testament ends with what it was written for, the solemn affirmation of the promise which had been sworn by God Himself.

The unity of Genesis is a subject which raises questions of such magnitude, that in a lecture like this I could only touch them lightly. What I hope to have shown to my hearers, is that criticism is not a High Court, the verdict of which is decisive. Criticism, especially philological criticism, is only a method of reaching the truth, a method which has often been very beneficial, but which in other cases has led us far astray. Let us study ancient documents like the books of the Old Testament in the light of the circumstances and events which they describe, of the people for whom they were written, of the country from which they originated, and I have the conviction, which I feel more strongly every day, that we shall find that these old books are really the work of the man whose name has been attached to them by a tradition of many centuries.

DISCUSSION.

The PRESIDENT said, I feel a great sympathy with one position of the writer of the paper to which we have just listened. I fear that I may be treading on the corns of some of my hearers, but I wish to make a general protest against the notion that a gentleman who calls himself a "professor," without any sufficient qualification, is thereby placed in a position of authority, and can make statements without a particle of evidence to prove them. I may be prejudiced in my view by my experience as a lawyer, but in court we are expected to give full proof in support of every assertion, and if we do not it is naturally assumed that it is because we cannot do so. A "professor," on the other hand, appears to consider himself relieved from any such anxiety. He seems to think that all that he has to do is to say that such and such is the case, and as he is a professor he cannot be contradicted or brought to book. If anyone brings forward an argument on the other side, the "professor" says that his opponent has made a mistake; but being a "professor," he does not consider himself obliged to substantiate even this assertion.

Our case is entirely different from that. Thus in the present instance, M. Naville finds himself obliged to answer statements which rested on no direct evidence:—certain portions of Scripture have been assigned to writers, the Jahvist, the Elohist, etc., of whose existence as men there is no proof at all. M. Naville might have made his position more clear if he had pointed out that the Jahvist, the Elohist, and so forth, are themselves merely the creations of certain "professors," rather than by assuming what the "professors" have chosen to lay down as if it were a fully established fact.

For my own part, I consider this assignment of different fragments of Genesis to a number of wholly imaginary authors, great rubbish. I do not understand the attitude of those men who base a whole theory of this kind on hypotheses for which there is no evidence whatsoever, and I am very glad that M. Naville began his paper by objecting to statements which were made without support.

I am glad to have relieved my own soul by this protest, but hope that it will not have hurt the feelings of any who are present.

I feel sure that all here will warmly support me in proposing a hearty vote of thanks to the author of the admirable paper to which you have listened, and to our Secretary for having read it.

Professor D. S. MARGOLIOUTH : I am sure you will all agree with me that my possessing the title of " professor " places me in a very advantageous position ; from what the President has told us, it is clear that I have an easy task before me : I can make any statement I choose without fear of contradiction or adverse argument. But I will not take full advantage of my position.

First of all, let me say how cordially I wish to second the vote of thanks to the author of the paper to which we have listened. Dr. Naville is one of the most eminent of Egyptologists ; in the very front rank. At an International Congress of Orientalists, many years ago, he was specially selected to make translations of a certain Egyptian book. I have had the pleasure of meeting him on several such congresses since,—at Geneva, in Paris, in Athens. At the last place, in the year 1912, he was chosen as a Member of the International Committee which was to decide on the place where the next Congress should be held, and which selected Oxford for the meeting of the coming September, before our first bulletin was issued. Since that decision was reached we have fallen on bad weather : the Chairman of the Committee, Dr. Driver, passed away, an irreparable loss, for he was certainly the first Hebraist of Great Britain, probably of his time. Our second bulletin announced the postponement of the Meeting till 1916, but I fear the hope that the Congress may be held next year is now almost as indistinct as that it should be held in this year. Even if it should be held, we are conscious that, owing to the War, the co-operation of European study has been broken up and will scarcely be resumed for some time after peace has been declared. Yet the black cloud has a silver lining, and it may be that in future we shall work with more courage and independence of thought, and may examine into the conclusions of the German critics with less fear of displeasing them. We are proud to see Lord Halsbury taking the Chair this afternoon, and I would thank him for the clear pronouncement which his unequalled legal experience has enabled him to give.

The essay to which we have listened is a most suggestive one, and there are two or three points in particular to which I would like to call attention.

First of all, Dr. Naville has endeavoured to enter into the mind of the author, and to place himself in the position of the man who wished to compose a book which has already existed for more than 2,000

years. He has endeavoured to account both for what the writer of the book has omitted and what he has admitted, and this is a good and right way in which to study any book.

Next, Dr. Naville has studied Genesis from the point of view of the first audience to which the book would appeal. Such an audience must be one which would be interested in Israel as a whole : Israel with a bright prospect before it, not with a long train of disasters behind it. Dr. Naville finds that this agrees with the traditional date, and whether he be right or wrong in his conclusions, this is the correct way of working ; the critics should try to envisage the surroundings of the book.

I will not criticise Dr. Naville's suggestion that Genesis was originally written on clay tablets ; and with regard to his other suggestion, that it was written in Babylonian, translated into Aramaic, and then into Hebrew, I do not feel free to discuss it, seeing that he is not present with us to reply. As Plato says : " A book always says the same thing, however often you consult it " ; if the writer of the paper were present with us he could add to what he has written or could explain it further.

But if Dr. Naville were present, there is one question that I should much like to ask, since I cannot answer it myself, even in my capacity of an infallible " professor."

The book of Genesis gives us a number of etymologies of names, and these are Hebrew etymologies of Hebrew names ; they do not mean what they are alleged to mean, except in Hebrew. Take, for example, the etymology of the name Jacob, which is given in Genesis xxvii, 36 :—" Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he hath supplanted me these two times ? " This means nothing in Babylonian or Aramaic, but it is most significant in Hebrew. I cannot imagine that that passage was written originally in any other language than Hebrew.

So again in Genesis xxxi, we have " the cairn which witnesses " ; Laban called it *Jegarsahadutha*, but Jacob called it *Galeed*. Laban's name was Aramaic, Jacob's Hebrew, but both names meant the same thing. This chapter, therefore, also seems to have been written originally in Hebrew.

Then when we come to the life of Joseph, we find that whereas his parents call him by a Hebrew name with a Hebrew etymology, he is called in Egypt by an Egyptian name ; we may not now be able to

explain the Egyptian meaning completely, but it is evidently Egyptian, and we are expressly told so. The names given to Eve and to Cain, on the other hand, are Hebrew, and the author has no occasion to tell us of the fact: he gives their interpretation.

I cannot conceive any valid answer to this argument. We have two Aramaic versions, and the significance of most of these proper names is lost in both of them, as it is in the other versions. But in Hebrew the meanings are precise.

With regard to the general tendency of the theory of the composite origin of Genesis, the essay has put it very clearly before us that the higher critical theory which assigns the book to seven different authors is a *reductio ad absurdum*. It seems to me scarcely possible to make any such separation of sources unless we have the original sources preserved to us. Some critics tell us that there is inconsistency between the first and second chapters of Genesis, and therefore that the two chapters should be assigned to two different authors. But in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, the first and second chapters contradict each other directly, yet they were by the same author. Now an argument must hold always, or it does not hold at all. May I give an example, drawn from my own experience, indicating the uncertainty which attaches to a *priori* argument of the kind employed? Perhaps I may be the more readily permitted to give it as it tells against myself. I was writing the lives of certain English Orientalists, for the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and among them that of Dr. Joseph White, my predecessor at Oxford. He had been called upon to give the Bampton Lectures, and, being much pressed for time, he obtained the assistance of a collaborator, the Rev. C. Badcock. Some, therefore, of the Lectures were by one author, and the others by another. The subject of the series was Mahomedanism and Christianity. In attempting to discriminate between the authors of the different Lectures, I assigned Lecture V to Professor White: it was on the Lives of Mahommed and Christ, and I thought that only an Orientalist such as he had the technical knowledge which that Lecture displayed. I also assigned the first Lecture to him, as I thought he would have been sure to have taken the first Lecture of the series himself. I think the reasoning was, as a *priori* reasoning, quite sound; but the conclusions were wrong in both cases, and therefore I have been very distrustful of a *priori* reasoning ever since.

I beg to second most cordially the vote of thanks to Dr. Naville.

Dr. WACE: I entirely sympathise with the remarks made by Lord Halsbury about the alleged writers, J., E., and P.

The xivth chapter of Genesis seems to me to stand out like a block of granite to prove to subsequent generations that here we have a contemporaneous record, and, if this chapter is authentic, it carries with it the probability that the rest of the book is authentic likewise. These discussions appear to me to have a high practical interest, and I feel that I can almost agree with our President's designation for the theory that assigns Genesis to a number of imaginary authors—J., E., and P. and the rest—as “rubbish.” That which is of real concern to us is the question, “Are these stories which we find in Genesis, true or not?” If they are not true then these books that we have been accustomed to regard as sacred are untrustworthy. Take, for example, what one writer has said in his remarks on the Pentateuch; that God's Covenant with the people of Israel began with Mt. Sinai; the Bible, on the contrary, states that it began four hundred years earlier, with Abraham. If we are to adopt the conclusions of the Higher Critics, we must face the fact that the Biblical narratives are not true, and that is a conclusion I cannot accept under any circumstances. As Voltaire put it, “If a sacred book contains falsehoods, can it be considered as sacred?” Dr. Naville uses the expression “the forgery of Deuteronomy.” The Higher Critics object to the use of such a term. But they make a very grave charge against the unknown author to whom they ascribe it, when they represent him as having put into the mouth of Moses records, documents, and laws with which Moses had nothing to do.

The value of Dr. Naville's suggestions is that if they can be generally substantiated, then they prove that we have, in Genesis, contemporary documents. As to the authorship of the Pentateuch, we have a uniform tradition which has lasted down to within one or two hundred years ago, that the Pentateuch was written by Moses. This is evidence: it is the testimony of the Jewish race to the authorship of the books. In law, we are accustomed to ask, “In whose custody did the document lie?” These documents have been throughout in the custody of the Jews. When the Speakers' Commentary was first written, a learned Hebraist, Dr. Brown, felt himself compelled to prove that Moses could write.

I would like to support most cordially the vote of thanks to the learned author of the paper.

The PRESIDENT put the vote to the meeting; after which Dr. WACE proposed, and Dr. T. G. PINCHES seconded, a hearty vote of thanks to Lord Halsbury for his presence in the Chair. Both votes were carried by acclamation.