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The Ministry and Music

Address delivered at the opening of the Seminary Year, Sept. 20, 1916.

By Professor David R. Breed, D. D., LL. D.

The acquisition of the Warrington Musical Library is a notable event in the history of the Western Theological Seminary. It marks a distinct epoch in its life. So far forth it establishes here a school of sacred music and thereby gives to this institution a unique character and place among the seminaries of the land. Moreover, it is the culmination of a long course of purpose and effort ever looking forward to that which has now been accomplished; and it is also the prophecy of further purpose and effort which we believe will inure to the larger life and greater usefulness of the young men who are to be trained for the Gospel ministry within these walls. Under such circumstances I thought it well to speak to you on this occasion upon this subject, *The Ministry and Music*, and attempt to show the importance of such training as we propose to give our students in this department and the influence which our course in sacred music may be expected to exert upon the church at large.

First of all, however, I wish to relate the history of this department from the beginning, and, although it is

Were the Early Books of the Old Testament Written in Cuneiform?

JAMES A. KELSO

Until very recently scholars have unanimously maintained that the autographs of the Old Testament books were written in an alphabetic script, variously designated as the 'Phoenician' or the 'Old Semitic Alphabet'. For the actual appearance of the Hebrew Scriptures as they came from the pens of the writers or redactors, the student was referred to such an inscription as that of Tabnith, King of Zidon.¹ Jewish tradition, as embodied in the Talmud (Tract. Sanhedrin 21 b), had preserved the recollection of a change from an older type of script to the one used in later times and familiar to all scholars in every modern edition of the Hebrew Bible. The latter is designated either 'square' (מרבוע) or Assyrian (מאשר) which is also interpreted as straight; the former or old characters are termed Hebrew (עברי). Just when or how the change from the one form of writing to the other took place, or what influence displaced the older script, are questions interesting in themselves but they do not concern us here. It is sufficient to note the theory and the basal facts tersely expressed above, and to realize that until the last decade they have been unanimously accepted.

In 1902 a new theory raised its head in the arena of Semitic scholarship and has attempted to contest the field with the one which has been outlined in the opening paragraph. It was first put forth as a brilliant hypothesis by that accomplished Assyriologist and Historian, Hugo Winckler, who made the brilliant guess that all religious

¹ An inscription discovered at Zidon in 1887 and assigned to the fourth century B. C. Compare Driver, Books of Samuel, p. XXIII ff.

and official documents among the ancient Hebrews were written in the cuneiform script.¹ He did not deny the existence or use of the old Semitic alphabet in Canaan, but maintained it was employed only for commercial and other non-official purposes. As in all ancient civilizations church and state are one (a condition familiar to a European but strange to an American), religious writings are as much official documents as state papers, and as the Old Testament books were the official documents of the Hebrew religion, they were consequently written in cuneiform. Put as briefly as possible, this was Winckler's argument.

For the moment let us pass by the grounds presented by Winckler for his hypothesis and notice what favor it has found with other scholars, and how they have modified the theory by new evidence which, they think, has been secured. Four years after the publication of Winckler's hypothesis (1906), Professor Jeremias, in his well-known work 'The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient Orient', set forth a similar view.² While his statement was that the Hebrews originally used the cuneiform script, he did not go further with reference to the Old Testament than to say that the Mosiac tables of stone were inscribed in the cuneiform character and not in the 'old Semitic Script'. Professor Jeremias makes no explicit statement about the external form of Hebrew literature, but permits us to draw our own inference from his assertion that down to the days of Isaiah two forms of writing were current in Israel, one in cuneiform script, intelligible only to priests and scholars, and the other in the Phœnician alphabet, used by the masses for the needs of everyday life.

Such a view of the prevalence of the cuneiform style of writing has more recently passed into some German text-books on the Old Testament as a well established

1 Winckler, *Altorientalische Forschungen* III, 1902, p. 165 ff.

2 Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients*, 1906, p. 423 f.

fact, notably in the case of a work on Hebrew Archæology by Dr. J. Benzinger.¹ With this author the idea that the Hebrews used cuneiform characters in their religious writings is no longer hazarded as a guess or hypothesis, but presented as if it were one of the fundamental and generally recognized facts of the science of Semitic philology. Dr. Benzinger elaborates his theory with much greater detail and exactness than its earlier advocates attempted. According to him, cuneiform was the regular form of writing current in Canaan as early as the fifteenth century B. C. and continued to be used in that land during the entire period of the Hebrew monarchy. He assumes that the Hebrew tribes were illiterate nomads when they crossed the Jordan under Joshua; that they possessed no system of writing of their own and hence adopted the one that was current in Canaan. Dr. Benzinger, however, agrees with the scholars whose names we have already mentioned in acknowledging that alphabetic writing was current in Canaan during the period of Israelitish occupation, but its employment was restricted to private use, as all official writings, whether laws, contracts, or religious texts, were written in cuneiform. It is further maintained that the Babylonian form of writing continued to prevail in official circles in Israel until the reign of King Josiah. The reformation inaugurated by this godly monarch swept away every symbol of heathenism, and with this revolution went the cuneiform writing with its associations of a foreign domination and a pagan cult. To put it in a simple sentence and modern American phraseology: Israel's form of writing was changed by *executive order* about the year 622 B. C. A recent American President attempted a similar change when he ordered the reformed spelling to be used in all official documents.

We may now ask: What are the grounds for this attractive but revolutionary theory? In it one is justified

¹ J. Benzinger, *Hebraische Archäologie*, 1907, p. 178.

in seeing the influence of the Pan-Babylonian School, which attempts to trace all of Israel's civilization, as well as her religious rites and institutions, to a Babylonian foundation. If the contention of this group of Old Testament interpreters is correct, the art of writing—constituting the foundation of culture—could scarcely be assigned any other origin than the ancient empire of the Mesopotamian Valley.

Turning to the Old Testament itself, we discover that these three scholars are agreed as to the Scriptural passages on which they rest their case. They are Ex. 31, 18 and 32, 16, combined with Is. 8, 1. The two former relate to the tables of stone, concerning which the reader is informed that they were written with 'the finger of God'¹ or inscribed with the 'writing of God'.² Instead of taking these phrases as concrete, vivid, anthropomorphic statements of the divine origin of the decalogue, they interpret them in the sense of a language especially belonging to God and therefore sacred or priestly. In their opinion, cuneiform script, with which the decalogue was inscribed, constituted an esoteric, or priestly script. In criticism it may be said that as an isolated phrase the term 'writing of God' might suggest what these scholars maintain, but from the context they can secure no support for their view.

In addition they bring forth Is. 8, 1 as corroborative evidence. This verse runs: "And Yahweh said unto me (to the prophet Isaiah), take thee a great tablet and write thereon in plain script (literally 'a mortal's stylus') For Maher-shalal-hash-baz". The crucial phrase is 'a mortal's stylus'³ and by these scholars it is contrasted with the expression 'writing of God' as used in Exodus, and is interpreted as meaning the common or vulgar form of writing. There is no question that the inscription which

¹ לחות אבן כתבים באצבע אלהים Ex. 31, 18.

² והמכתב מכתב אלהים הוא Ex. 32, 16.

³ בחרט אנוש

the prophet is directed to set up had to be put in a form of writing familiar to the masses, and the great commentators are agreed in paraphrasing this expression to mean 'in common character, easily legible, and understood by the people'. It is the view of the three scholars mentioned above that this inscription of Isaiah was written in the old Semitic alphabet, because this script was generally understood by the people in that age. They draw as an inference from his statement that there was another form of writing employed by priests and prophets in all sacred texts, which Isaiah, educated man that he was, could have used. Of course this esoteric writing was cuneiform.

This theory has been stated in a slightly different form by Professor EDOUARD NAVILLE, Professor of Egyptology at the University of Geneva. He first presented his views in a paper before the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres at Paris in 1910,¹ and more recently he has put his hypothesis into English dress.² Professor NAVILLE approaches the question partially from the standpoint of an Egyptologist and bases his arguments on passages of the Old Testament which the writers first proposing the theory did not touch. The Swiss scholar, as a two-fold foundation for his theory, associates an Egyptian custom with the finding of the 'Book of the Law' by Hilkiah in the reign of Josiah. Recent archaeological investigation has brought to light a striking Egyptian practice of depositing a portion of their sacred book (the Book of the Dead), either under the pedestal of a god or in the foundation of a sanctuary. These extracts from the Book of the Dead are found to be written in the archaic and sacred characters. Professor NAVILLE believes that the Hebrews practiced a similar custom, and consequently, when Solomon laid the foundation of the

1 E. Naville, *La Découverte de la Loi sous le Roi Josias*, 1910.

2 E. Naville, *Archæology of the Old Testament, Was the Old Testament written in Hebrew?*, 1913.

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Temple, a copy of the Book of Deuteronomy written in the archaic cuneiform, the sacred script of the Hebrews, was built into the wall. In passing we must remark that this Egyptologist does not seem to be consistent as to the origin of Deuteronomy. At one time he appears to write as if it had been produced in the reign of Solomon; at others, he ascribes the Pentateuch expressly to Moses; but to brush aside Professor NAVILLE's view by saying that according to the critical hypothesis Deuteronomy was not written until the seventh century is scarcely satisfactory. It seems to us that all that is essential to this form of the theory, is the deposition of some portion of the sacred writings of the Hebrews in the walls or foundation of the Temple.

Making an Egyptian custom his starting point,¹ this scholar passes on to his Biblical proof texts. He rests his argument largely upon two passages: II Kg. 22 and II Ch. 34, 14 f., both of which narrate the discovery of the Book of the Law in the Temple during the reign of Josiah. The sacred edifice had been neglected during the reign of the godless Manasseh and had fallen into a dilapidated condition. The workmen, in making the repairs commanded by the new king, ran across Deuteronomy, or the Book of the Law, written on a clay tablet and stored away in a cavity of the wall. Let us hear Professor NAVILLE's own words in regard to this discovery in his latest book 'Archæology of the Old Testament' p. 129: "The Temple was in the hands of a great number of workmen and masons, repairing cracks in the walls and using for that purpose hewn stone. One may fancy that they came upon the cuneiform tablet and did not pay any attention to it as common workmen or masons would do now, not only in repairing old walls but even in excavations. Hilkiyah found it in the rubbish or he picked it out when it fell out of its hiding place."

¹ For a discussion of the Egyptian custom the reader is referred to the French work, *La Découverte de la Loi*, p. 3ff.

For the sake of the argument let us note a couple of the pertinent verses of the Scripture narrative: "Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan, and he read it (v. 8). . . . And Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king" (v. 10). Heretofore scholars have never found any traces of cuneiform in this passage, and it has remained for NAVILLE's sharp eyes to detect them. His exegesis is simplicity itself: The reason Hilkiah delivers the newly discovered book to Shaphan the scribe, instead of reading it himself, is the simple fact that he could not read it, as it was written in the Babylonian script. After the days of Solomon the priests had accustomed themselves to the Phœnician alphabet and had forgotten cuneiform, formerly the sacred tongue, but Shaphan the courtier could read it, as it was still the medium of diplomatic communications. This contention is based upon a rather far-fetched interpretation of the statement, 'Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law given by Moses' II Ch. 34, 14. The entire argument depends upon the far-fetched force which is assigned to the words 'given by Moses', lit. 'by the hand of Moses' (בִּיד מֹשֶׁה) The usual interpretation of the phrase 'by the hand', which is common enough in the Old Testament, takes it in the sense of 'agency', but NAVILLE twists it to mean 'as Moses would write, or as they wrote in his age'.¹ This is certainly fanciful exegesis, and Hilkiah's inability to read the book discovered in the Temple is a gratuitous assumption.

Both at the building of the Temple and in connection with the finding of the Book of the Law about three centuries later, events may have happened as Prof. NAVILLE suggests but there is very slender foundation for it in the Biblical records. The Hebrew historian has given pos-

¹ בִּיד מֹשֶׁה Naville paraphrases this phrase by 'Comme l'aurait écrit Moïse' or 'Comme l'on écrit vait de son temps'; cf. Naville op. cit. p. 23.

terity a circumstantial account of the erection of the Temple. Consequently, it appears incredible that the Hebrews could have practiced a custom, analogous to that of the Egyptians, of burying portions of their Scriptures in the walls of their sacred edifices without our receiving at least a hint of this usage in the Biblical narrative.

It now remains for us to test these theories by the results of archaeological investigations and Old Testament facts. The conclusion that the oldest documents of Hebrew literature have been written neither in the Hebrew language nor with the Hebrew script, but in the idiom and with the characters of the tablets of Tel-el-Amarna, namely Babylonian cuneiform, is not quite as baseless as it appears at first sight.¹ No one will attempt to deny the widespread influence of Babylonian civilization and the use of the Babylonian language as a medium of diplomatic correspondence in Western Asia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries B. C., but the facts in regard to methods of writing in Palestine must be examined with great care as they bear directly upon this theory. The seal found at Taanach with the inscription '*Atanahili son of Habsi, servant of Nergal*', because it is assigned to 2000 B. C., and the tablet discovered at Lachish, as it belongs to the Tel-el-Amarna period, may be passed by: but at Taanach a number of tablets, including four letters, were brought to light by the spade.² Their significance for our argument consists in their not being diplomatic documents, but private records, and also of Canaanitish origin. Their existence clearly indicates that cuneiform writing was used in the thirteenth century for the ordinary purposes of life in Canaan. A fragment of a cuneiform tablet was discovered by the Harvard University Expedition at Samaria but it has not been published. At Gezer Mr. MACALISTER unearthed three tablets, two being contract tablets in Assyrian, and the third a fragment of one in Neo-Babylonian. These three do not bear

¹ Naville, *Archæology of the O. T.*, p. 4.

² Hrozný in Sellin's *Tell Ta'annek*, Vienna 1904, p. 113 ff.

on our problem because the first two are Assyrian in their origin, dated according to the official Eponym Canon. Winckler himself regards them as a relic of the Assyrian occupation of the city during the reign of Assurbanipal (649—647), although he allows a possibility of their being Israelitish and due to the custom of using cuneiform in official records.¹

If it were not for recent investigations and discoveries with reference to the origin and use of the Old Semitic alphabet, the archaeological evidence would incline the scholar to assign this larger role to cuneiform writing among the Hebrews. All the evidence that has come to hand justifies the assertion that alphabetic writing originated among the Semites as early as the middle of the second millenium B.C. The earliest inscription in the Phœnician alphabet, known as the Baal Lebanon inscription, found on the Island of Cyprus, is assigned by competent authorities to the year 1000 B. C. The famous Moabite Stone of the 9th century, the later Siloah inscription, and the calendar discovered at Gezer in 1908, must not be forgotten, together with the numerous ostraca unearthed by the American explorers at Samaria. In this connection it is not the contents of these inscriptions but the forms of the letters which are of significance. The letters of the old Semitic alphabet, as found in these products of ancient literary activity, are not crude as if they were a recent invention, but are cursive in character suggesting long use. A writer in a recent volume of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* calls attention to the tendency to cursiveness in the letters of the Mesha Stone, and states: "Its alphabet manifests a maturity which could only have been acquired after a practice of several centuries."²

¹ H. Winckler, *Keilinschriftliches Textbuch zum Alten Testament*, 1909, p. XIX. Winckler's own words are: "Die Datierung nach assyrischer Weise würde vermuten lassen, dass Gezer zu assyrischem Provinzgebiete gehörte, da man für die Tributärstaaten eine heimische Datierung voraussetzen würde".

² Hirschfeld: *Recent Theories on the Origin of the Alphabet*, *JRAS.*, 1911, p. 963 ff.

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Writing material to a very large extent determines the character of the writing itself. Cuneiform can be conveniently written only on clay with a stylus. At least nothing could be more ill adapted to the wedge shape of the Babylonian characters than papyrus. We now have evidence that papyrus was commonly used in Syria as early as 1100 B. C. and probably for centuries before that date. In the Golénischeff Papyrus, discovered in 1891 at El-Khibeh in Upper Egypt and belonging to the 12th century B. C., we find an account of an Egyptian envoy, Wen-Amon by name, who was sent to the king of Byblus to procure cedars of Lebanon. The writer records his adventures and his misfortune in losing the treasure which he carried as purchase money. This necessitates sending for a new installment of articles in order to effect the exchange. The list of things offered in payment is given in detail and among these we find 500 rolls of papyrus.¹ Now papyrus served the same purpose in antiquity that paper does to-day. We have already noticed that this writing material practically excludes the use of cuneiform, and points unmistakably to the employment of characters of the alphabetic type. KITTEL is certainly correct when he speaks of the implication of this Egyptian evidence, as necessarily compelling us to the hypothesis that the North Semitic Canaanitish script was in general use in the closing centuries of the 2nd millenium B. C.²

The discoveries made by the Harvard Expedition at Samaria give substantial support to this hypothesis.³ The Samaritan ostraca are assigned to the year 900 and the forms of the letters show maturity and indicate a long history. The art of writing was unquestionably prac-

1 Breasted in Ancient Records of Egypt, IV, p. 277, discusses the bearing of these facts on the history of writing, and remarks, "Of course the Phœnicians did not write cuneiform with pen and ink upon these rolls", and then goes on to argue for the use of the Egyptian hieratic. cf. Am. Journ. Sem. Langs., July, 1916, p. 230 ff.

2 R. Kittel, Geschichte des Volkes Israel, 1912, I. Vol., p. 179.

3 Compare Harvard Theol. Review, Jan. 1911, and Theol. Lit.-Blatt 1911, Nr. 3 u. 4.

ticed in stone and bronze and on leather and papyrus long before ink and the reed pen were used on pottery.

In the past the Phœnician alphabet has been traced back either as a development from the Egyptian hieroglyphs or the Babylonian cuneiform, but the evidence that both these hypotheses are untenable is gradually increasing. The 'Old Semitic alphabet' has an ancestry of its own and is a descendant of a more ancient alphabetic script of which another daughter is the South Semitic form of writing.¹ The antiquity and the use of the Phœnician alphabet as early as the age of the Judges is as well established as any other similar fact of ancient life.

In view of all this evidence, let us return to the O. T. to see if there is any definite statement, or even any hint that points to such a strong influence of Babylonian art and civilization as to lead us to the conclusion that any portion of the O. T. was written in the language of these people. (1) It has been claimed that Prov. 25, 1 contains the record of a translation from one language into another. This passage tells of the 'Proverbs of Solomon, which Hezekiah king of Judah copied out', and the Hebrew verb *העתיקו* is interpreted in the sense of 'translate' rather than 'transcribe'. NAVILLE has recourse to the LXX to make out his case; in the Greek the phrase 'Proverbs of Solomon' is qualified by the adjective *αἱ ἀδιάρητοι* which the Swiss scholar renders 'unintelligible ones' and boldly asserts that this does not refer to the sense but to the form of writing. They were unintelligible because they were written in cuneiform. In criticism of this interpretation it may be said that the Hiphil of *עתיק*, not only in the O. T. but also in post-Biblical Hebrew, means 'transcribe' not 'translate', and the Greek adjective more frequently signifies 'mixed; not to be separated'. Again, in Neh. 8, 8, where Ezra's reading of the law is described,

¹ Prætorius' conclusion, based on palæographical evidence, is as follows: "dass Südsemitisch und Mesa uralte Gabelungen von einer noch nicht ganz festen einheitlichen Schrift sind"; cf. ZMDG., 1909, p. 191.

we find the statement: "And they read in the book of the law of God distinctly (מפרש) and they gave the sense so that they understood the reading". The Hebrew word for 'distinctly' has been taken as meaning 'interpreted', and it has been thought that the interpretation was necessary because the law was originally written in Babylonian. Had the Hebrew writer intended to give this sense unequivocally, he could have done so by using another word מתרגם. (2) More than one passage in the book of Isaiah makes it plain that the Assyro-Babylonian was an unknown tongue to the Hebrews in the 8th century. In Is. 28, 11 there is a clear allusion to the Assyrian, and his language is designated as barbarous and unknown.¹ Again, when the envoys of the Assyrian king hold a parley with the Israelitish officials, Aramaic is spoken (Is. 36, 11). If both parties had been able to converse in Assyrian, it seems strange that they resorted to Aramaic. RIESZLER tries without success to break the force of this Biblical evidence by taking Aramaic as equivalent to Assyrian.² For this assertion he gives no proof except bringing forward an analogy, namely, the application of the designation 'Assyrian' to the empires that rose on the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon. He claims that Aramaic was an interchangeable term, but without justification. (3) The absence of Assyro-Babylonian words in the vocabulary of the early writings of the O. T. is the most serious argument against this theory. In documents indisputably early, Babylonian words are not found, practically the only exception being in Gen. 14, 14, where Abraham's household warriors are designated הַנִּיכָיִי, cf. *hanaku-ka* Taanach 61. 8. But from the 7th century on, the influence of these languages on the Hebrew vocabulary be-

¹ Is. 28, 11.... חֲרָת וּבְלִשׁוֹן אַחֲרָת Note the remark of Delitzsch in his commentary *ad. loc.* "Das assyrische Semitisch klang den Irealiten etwa wie uns das Alemannische oder Niedersächsische".

² Rieszler, Das A. T. und die bab. Keilschrift, Theol. Quartalschrift, 1911, p. 245 f. 'Im Talmudtraktat Sanhedrin 21 b wird die aramäische Schrift assyrisch geheissen; warum kann hier nicht das Umgekehrte der Fall sein und Aramäisch für Assyrisch stehen?'

comes quite manifest. The prophet Ezekiel uses many words which do not occur in earlier writings and are found to be technical Babylonian expressions. Notable examples of these are: *agappi*^m אגפּ 'band or army' found only in Ez. seven times, Ez. 12, 14; 39, 4, Bab. word *agappu*, 'a wing of an army'; אילם 'porch' Ez.40, 10 ff.; נרנים equal to Assyrian *nudnu*, 'gift or bribe from harlot', Ez. 16,33. Especially significant is the use of עשתי עשרה, 'eleven'. The *astê* is generally taken as equivalent to the Assyro-Babylonian *istin* or *istên*.¹ This form of the numeral is evidently a loan word and occurs first in writings that can be accurately dated; the earliest of these is the Book of Jeremiah and the passages are Jer. 1, 3; 39, 2; 52, 5. In the Pentateuch it is only found in the introduction to Deuteronomy (Dt. 1, 3) and the Priestly Code, but becomes quite common in exilic and post-exilic writings. Zech. 1, 7; I. Ch. 12, 14; 24, 12; 25, 18; 27, 14.

In considering the exegetical evidence it is necessary to notice the argument of RIESZLER, who supports the hypothesis of WINCKLER *et. al.* by an examination of Gen. 1—11.² The arguments of this scholar are different from anything that we have as yet touched upon, consequently a brief separate treatment is necessary. His contention is that the Massoretic Text of the first eleven chapters of Genesis contains many evidences of being a translation from an Assyro-Babylonian original. RIESZLER argues that in many passages the difficulties and obscurities are due to the confusion by the translator of two Babylonian roots or words that were similar in sound or spelling. Two examples of his method and reasoning must suffice. He asserts that there is a contradiction between Gen. 2, 5 and 2, 6. In the former verse the absence of vegetation is attributed to the lack of rain and the absence of men

1 Ges-Kautzsch, Hebr. Grammatik, footnote p. 300.

2 Rieszler, *op. cit.* The full list of passages is: Gen. 2, 5; 2, 21; 2, 17; 3, 5; 3, 7; 4, 1 (the last four constitute one group); 3, 21; 4, 7; 4, 12; 4, 15; 4, 20; 4, 23; 5, 3; 6, 2; 6, 3; 6, 13; 9, 5; 7, 7; 9, 20; 9, 27; 11, 4.

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to till the soil, while in the latter the earth is abundantly supplied with moisture. This contradiction is entirely removed if we recognize that the Hebrew translator confused two words in the Babylonian original of verse 5. The mistake consisted in taking *zanânu*—‘adorn’ for *zanânu*—‘rain’; for, according to RIESZLER, God did not supply the lack of vegetation by giving rain, but by planting trees (cf. v. 9.). The correct translation of the relevant clause v. 5 would be ‘Yahweh Elohim had not adorned the earth, i. e. with trees’. Instead of making up the lack of vegetation by the rain, God plants trees. The weakness of this presentation is due to the assertion of a contradiction (between 2, 5 and 2, 6) which does not exist — none of the great commentators have even hinted at it — and then offering an explanation which convicts the translator of either ignorance or carelessness. It also does not account for the Hebrew preposition *עַל*, and reduces the verse to tautology. We leave it to the reader to decide whether the new translation of Gen. 2, 5 is an improvement: “And no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up for Yahweh Elohim *had not adorned the earth with plants*”.

In similar fashion the famous passage Gn. 2, 21 is changed to read, “And he took one of his spirits of life (Lebensgeistern) and he formed out of the flesh a dwelling place for her (spirit of life)”.¹ The word ‘rib’ of the received text, is due to misunderstanding of the common ideogram ‘TIL’ current under the name *šilu* and also representing the word *balatu*—‘life’. This has led to confusing the Semitic *sl*—Hebrew *šela* (life) with Hebrew *sēla*—‘rib’² Again, in the second clause of the verse the translator has made two mistakes: he has taken

1 Rieszler’s rendering of Gen. 2, 21. 22 runs: ‘Er (der Herr) nahm Etwas von seinen (Adams) Lebensgeistern, er füllte unterhalb ihrer mit Fleisch aus. So gestaltete der Jahve Gottes den Lebensgeist, den er dem Menschen entnommen hatte, zu einem Weibe’.

2 The standard Assyrian lexicons of Delitzsch and Muss-Arnolt know no such meaning for *selu*. According to these authorities this word may signify: (1) ‘rib of an animal or ship’; (2) ‘side’.

eşeru='close' instead of *eşeru*='form'; and read *kumu*='dwelling' as a particle *kum*='instead of, in place of'.

RIESZLER's only difficulty in this verse is the word 'rib'. "Why the rib?" he asks, and then gets rid of it as we have described; but the *textus receptus* is in harmony with Semitic ideas. The Arabs use the word 'rib' in a sense analogous to that of Gen. 2, 21: *hua lizki* or *hua bilizki*—he is my rib) i. e., 'he is my bosom companion'. RIESZLER's change also destroys the suggestive allegory which sets forth the moral and social relation of the sexes to each other. Two illustrations of RIESZLER's unconvincing exegesis must suffice, but, to do full justice to his theory, all the passages ought to be carefully examined; this has been thoroughly done by KÖNIG, with negative results.¹

The Biblical data, together with the archæological evidence, have been carefully reviewed and it has become apparent that the new hypothesis, which maintains that the early writings of the O. T. were first written in the Babylonian language with cuneiform script, does not rest on very substantial foundations. The old view, that they were originally composed in Hebrew with the old Semitic or Phœnician alphabet, is still to be held until some new discovery clearly demonstrates the truth of the newer theory.

¹ König, *Das A. T.*, Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift, 1913, 101 ff.