

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

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

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



Buy me a coffee

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



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

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

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

JOURNAL OF  
THE TRANSACTIONS

OF

The Victoria Institute,

OR,

Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

---

VOL. LXIV.



LONDON :

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

---

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

1932

757TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE' ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, APRIL 18TH, 1932,

AT 4.30 P.M.

DR. JAMES W. THIRTLE, M.R.A.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the election of Mrs. K. G. Tapp as an Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Prof. Theophilus G. Pinches, LL.D., M.R.A.S., to present his paper on "The Tablet of the Epic of the Golden Age"; and the same was read by the Chairman.

---

*THE TABLET OF THE EPIC OF THE GOLDEN AGE.*

By PROFESSOR THEOPHILUS G. PINCHES, LL.D., M.R.A.S

THIS inscription of the Golden Age, or, as Professor Langdon calls it, the Epic of Paradise, was recognized by him in the collection of the Museum at Philadelphia, U.S.A., in the year 1912. It was not complete, but other fragments were found and joined thereto afterwards, and he was enabled to complete his copy, and his description and translation of the text appeared in the Publications of the Babylonian Section of that Museum in 1915. The tablet is about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches high by 5 inches wide, and has three columns on each side, with a total of about 270 lines—possibly more. The style of the writing suggests a date of about 2200 years before Christ. The language, as my title suggests, is Sumerian—that tongue which preceded Semitic Babylonian or Akkadian—the Semitic tongue spoken in Accad, the state mentioned in the tenth chapter of Genesis as one of the cities of Nimrod's (Merodach's) kingdom. As is well known, this name, which also appears under the form of Akad or Agad, is regarded as being the Semiticized form of the Sumerian Agade. It would be interesting to know what is the meaning

of this now well-known Sumerian place-name, but this I can only give in a very uncertain way. If it has any connection with *aga*, meaning "after," it may indicate the fact that the Akkadians were the people who came at a late date into Mesopotamia—a theory which is generally accepted by Assyriologists and other students of ethnology.

I have called this legend or poem the "Babylonian Epic of the Golden Age," but Professor S. Langdon entitled it the *Sumerian Epic of Paradise, the Flood, and the Fall of Man*. Professor Fried. Delitzsch pointed out—proved, in fact—that Babylonia was, in very truth, the "Paradise-land" of Genesis—the place of the "garden eastward in Eden," for was not that land the *edina*, the Babylonian plain, the land wherein lay Êridu, the city of the four streams and the sacred vine, emblem of the Tree of Life? And besides Êridu, there was the city of Babylon itself, for one of the Sumerian names which it bore was Tin-tir, which Delitzsch translated as *Lebenshain*, "the Grove of Life."

Neither of these names is to be found in this poem given to us by S. Langdon—neither Êridu, nor Tin-tir, nor Êdina. Yet it was a poem descriptive of what the Babylonians believed to have been the condition of the southern portion of their land in prehistoric times, beginning with "the good old days" when everything was as it *should* be, but changing soon for the worse, when men and the conditions of life were no longer perfect, but even as they are now. In all probability several of the states of Babylonia in those remote days had legends of earlier periods when greater perfection prevailed—just as they had legends of the Creation.

In the tablet now before us the Babylonian province dealt with is neither Babel, nor Erech, nor Accad, nor Calneh—nor, indeed, any of the less-known provincial capitals (Kish, Sippar, Ur of the Chaldees, Lagash, etc.), but the mysterious province and capital called Tilmun, in the extreme southern part of Babylonia, on the shores of the Persian Gulf. The name of this city, and probably of the province itself, is indicated by means of a character which, owing to its being divisible (wrongly) into two parts, was read differently. That the first syllable is *tîl*, and not *dîl*, is proved by the name of a slave, Tilmunû (Tilmunî, oblique case, in the original, where it occurs). The name means the Tilmunite. As to the meaning of Tilmun, there is much uncertainty, but it may be noted that the final syllable

means "salt," and as *til* means "to end," "to complete," and the like, it is not impossible that Tilmun means "the salt end," or "seashore." As we shall see, the changing of a salt spring to a fresh one was regarded as an important and most desirable work. The tablet begins with a description of the land and its inhabitants, and though there are many repetitions, the composition is poetically expressed.

*The holy land of Tilmun.*

1. [They who are holy], they who are bright, are ye.
2. [The land of Tilm]un is holy.
3. [In the holy] place they are who bright are ye.
4. [For] the land of Tilmun is holy.
5. The land of Tilmun is holy, the land of Tilmun is pure.
6. The land of Tilmun is holy, the land of Tilmun is resplendent.
7. Alone in Tilmun one reposed.
8. Where divine Enki with his spouse reposed.
9. That place is pure (that place is resplendent).
10. Alone (in Tilmun one reposed).
11. Where Enki (and) Nin-ella (reposed).
12. That place is pure (that place is resplendent).

*The harmless ness of the denizens of Tilmun.*

13. In Tilmun the raven croaked not.
14. The kite-bird with the voice of a kite cried not.
15. The lion\* committed not slaughter.
16. The wolf ravished not the lamb.
17. The dog worried not the kid.
18. The dam eating grain he disturbed not.
19. The agriculturalist [reaped] the increase of his land.
20. The birds of heaven forsook not their progeny.
21. The doves were not put to flight.
22. To the sore-eyed "Thou art a sore-eye," one said not.
23. To the sore of head "Thou art a sore-head," (one said) not.
24. (To) the old woman "Thou art an old woman" (one said) not.

---

\* Or, "the great dog."

25. (To) the old man "Thou art an old man," (one said) not.
26. (As to) the virgin, one caused not her desecration in the city.
27. "A man has changed a canal by night," one said not.
28. The prudent minister withheld not his gift.
29. The bewailer uttered not lamentation.
30. (On) the high place of the city one [uttered] not word of grief.

*The goddess Nin-ella asks her father Enki to fix the destiny of Tilmun, the city which he had founded.*

31. Nin-ella to her father Enki speaks :
32. "(Of) my city thou founder, my city thou founder, give thou (it) a destiny.
33. (Of) Tilmun my city thou founder (my) city (thou founder, give it a destiny)."

At this point the lines are imperfect, but the goddess repeats her request, adding thereto the need of the city to possess a stream or canal.

The end of the column is incomplete, but there was probably further references to the canal and possibly to the need of a water supply in the final lines.

## COLUMN II.

*The goddess Nin-ella asks for "sweet water" for the city which Enki had founded for her.*

1. At the foot of thy great fountain (?) may the water flow forth.
2. May thy city drink abundant water.
3. (May) Tilmun (drink) abund(dant) water.
4. May thy well of bitter water (gush forth) a well of sweet water.
5. May thy city be the meeting-house of the land.
6. (May) Tilmun, (thy) city, (be the meeting-house of the land).
7. Thereon Shamash shineth.
8. "Shamash, in heaven stand thou !"
9. In (his) course beginneth the festival in his domain.

10. In the chapter (?)—house of Nannar.
11. From the mouth of the earth flowing, from earth's sweet waters he cometh unto thee.
12. At the foot of his fountain (?) the waters flowed forth.
13. His city drank abundant water ;
14. Tilmun (drank) abu(ndant water).
15. The well of bitter water became sweet water.
16. The field, the enclosure, produced (?) its crop of grain.
17. His city became the meeting-house of the land—
18. Tilmun (became) the meeting-house (of the land).
19. Thereon Shamash shineth—May it ever be thus !

*Ur hennanamma*, "May it ever be thus!"—"Amen, so be it!" as we often say now, though there may be some slight difference of meaning in the old Sumerian expression.

*"Unto me a man entereth not."*

At line 20 of the second column, a fresh section seemingly begins, and Enki tells Nin-tu, "the Dame-begetter"—the earth-mother—his designs. For some reason, the god is represented as forbidding men to approach him. Probably it was because the prayers of men troubled him, for he is twice designated "He alone possessing ear," or the like. "Rest for me, rest for me!" he seems to say. However, the father of Dam-gal-nunna ("the great princely spouse") here announces that Ninhursag, "the Dame of the fertile downs," had "opened out the field"—probably the Babylonian plain—for cultivation, and the field received the waters of Enki.

"It was day 1, its month 1,  
It was day 2, its month 2,"

and so on, until we come to

"It was day 9, its month 9, the month-period of a woman."

Evidently this is a symbolism derived from the period of pregnancy. Following this come the mysterious lines :

"Like pure oil, like pure oil, like fine sweet oil,  
[Nin-tu], the mother of the land, brought forth."

What Nin-tu brought forth does not appear, but it may be supposed that she, being the earth-mother, produced the inhabitants of the waters as well as of the land, including men. At this point (column iii, line 1) it is stated that Nin-tu returned

to the bank of the river or canal which had been constructed (? by Enki), and said to the god with emphasis, that they (? created things) were to be reckoned as hers. She also called out to Isimu her minister, saying that she was not wroth with the "pious" sons of men. These words were repeated by her minister, apparently to those "pious sons of men," probably to reassure them. As the next line is couched in the first person, it is probably the goddess who is speaking, though the reason for this abrupt change of subject is not clear :—

" My king, with cloud enclosed, with cloud enclosed,  
Set foot alone upon the ship.  
Let not the two spirit-handmaids stand there."

The words of this last line seem to be *Mina gimma gidimma nam-mingub*, and the doubtful word is the second, *gimma*. This I take to be a variant of , *gina*, "female servant"—perhaps here they were to be kept aloof in order that they should not have intercourse with, seemingly, the chosen man, who is mentioned later under the name of Takku or Utu, but future discoveries can alone decide this.

Enki's revelations for the necessities of the human race in what seems to have been a new sphere, follow. "He doubled fruitfulness, he kindled fire." Enki flooded the field, and the field received his water. After this the enumeration of the days and the months is repeated—"It was day 1, its month 1—It was day 2, its month 2—It was day 9, its month 9." (The reader has to fill in what is omitted.) Here again come the references to the pure oil and the rich sweet oil. The goddess mentioned in connection with this seems to be still Nin-tu, but the name in line 21 changes to Nin-kurra, "the lady of the land," or "of the mountain." The wording is now, for the second time, the same as in the case of Nin-tu. Like her, Nin-kurra returns to the bank of the river (or canal), claims that the created things should be held as hers, and she, too, was not wroth with the pious sons of men. Enki, apparently by his irrigating streams, again floods the land, and the field receives his water. Then we are told, for the third time, that "It was day 1, its month 1—It was day 9, its month 9" :—

37. Like pure oil, like pure oil, [like] fine sweet oil,

38. Nin-kurra (like) pure oil, (like) pure oil, like fine sweet oil).

39. (To) Takku\* gave increase.

Here the name of the goddess again changes, for in line 40 she is called Nin-turi, according to Langdon, to be read Nin-tudri. She tells what she has done for him—she had tilled (?) for him, and she had spoken. She then addresses Enki, the creator of mankind :

43. "Lonely one,\* for me they are held, for me they are held.  
 44. Enki, for me they are [held, for me they are held]."  
 45. He raised his eyes (?) . . . .

Here comes a considerable gap, owing to the mutilation of the inscription. There are recognizable characters in line 12, from which it would seem that the deity provided increase for [Takku and his woman ?]. After this, in line 16, there is a reference to "the middle of the orchard," introducing us to the "garden" of this Eden, wherein wonderful things were to take place. But it seems to have been a place where the gods were worshipped, for two temples seem to be mentioned—the house Ê-bara-gu-dudu, "the house of the shrine of plant-perfection," and Ê-rab-garan, a name of which I hope to find the meaning later.

20. "At the temple may my leader dwell—  
 21. May Enki, my leader, dwell therein."

There the two handmaids (they are not called "spirit handmaids") were to supply water. One was to fill the waterway with water, one was to fill the canal with water, and one had irrigated the farmland.

After the orchard comes naturally the orchardman, but the line in which this word occurs is too mutilated to translate. The next seems to mention a hidden place "on the bank" (of a canal or river). The next line has the question "Who art thou?" followed by the word "orchard." Then Enki apparently addresses the orchardman, and there is a gap of five lines. Connected phrases begin again at line 35 :—

35. In Ê-bara-gu-dudu he stood.  
 36. In Ê-rab-garan he stood—(there) his seat he made.  
 37. Enki beheld him—the sceptre he laid aside.  
 38. Enki waited for Takku.†  
 39. At his house‡ he cried "Open, open!"  
 40. "Who is it (that) thou art?"

\* Or, "lonely man."

† Or Utu.

‡ Or "temple."

41. "I am an orchardman rejoicing (in) the tree (?)."
42. "I will cause the skill (?) of a god to be given to thee."
43. Takku\* in the joy of his heart opened the house.

Enki now seems to give Takku something, and "joyously he gave him his reward (?)." These gifts took place in the two temples named, Ê-bara-gu-dudu and Ê-rab-garan. Takku seems to have acknowledged the gift by raising his left (hand) and advancing (?) his (right).

This ends the first column of the reverse, and the second begins with a list of the plants made to grow (by Enki). They were seven in number, but their names are in every case broken away. These, too, the goddess asks to be regarded as hers. She then calls to her minister Isimu, whose name occurs so often in this inscription, saying that she had decided the fate of the plants for ever. By this she apparently claims to have given them their names, indicating thereby their characteristics. As to their fate, she declared it, "Whatever that be—whatever that be!"

Her herald Isimu now returns to her, apparently with Enki's pronouncements with regard to the plants, giving (or withholding) permission to cut or pluck and eat them. One alone seems to be excepted:—

20. My king as to the woody plant has announced :
21. "He may cut, he may eat."
22. My king as to the fruit-plant has announced :
23. "He may pluck, he may eat."
24. My king as to the . . . -plant has announced :
25. "He may cut, he may eat."
26. My king as to the *a-gug* (water-plant) has announced :
27. "He may pluck, he may eat."
28. [My king as to the] *uttutu* (?) -plant has announced :
29. ["He may cut], he (may eat)."
30. [My king as to the *pi*] *pi*-plant has announced :
31. ["He may pluck], he (may eat)."
32. [My king as to the . . . -plant has announced :]
33. ["He may pluck]. he (may eat)."
34. [Takku] the *amhara*-plant approached—
35. [He pluck]ed, he ate.
36. [Nin-kur]ra (as to) the plant its fate had decided, therein she encountered it.

---

\* Or Utu.

37. Nin-ĥursagga (in) the name of Enki uttered a curse :  
 38. " The face of life until he dieth shall he not see."

Here we have it—the Fall of Man—but how different from the Fall as related in Genesis. The fall in this text came because " the divine dame of the fertile slopes," obeying Enki, had uttered a curse against anyone who should pluck and eat, apparently, the *Amĥara*-plant, which Professor Langdon identifies with the cassia. With this identification I have no fault to find—it may be the *kasia* of the late contract-tablets and letters, and also of an early list of temple-offerings which I included in the Catalogue of the Amherst Tablets, but it can only be described as a *parallel* to the Tree of Life in Genesis. Every incident here, in fact, is as unlike as it could be.

Owing to the doom brought upon Takku by Nin-ĥursagga's curse, the Anunnaki—that is, the gods of the earth and the deep waters—are represented as sitting down in the dust, and the goddess reproached the god Enlila rather angrily, saying :

41. " I, Nin-ĥursagga, have brought forth children for thee,  
 and what is my reward ? "

But Enlila was unwilling to let her have the last word :

43. " Thou, Nin-ĥursagga, hast indeed brought forth—  
 44. " In my city let me create two beings, shall thy name be called."

This was apparently to be her reward—the two creatures—the first couple, male and female—were to be credited to her by this gift of a special name, making up a descriptive phrase. Names of this class were not uncommon in Babylonia and Assyria, and were apparently accepted, notwithstanding their strangeness and cumbersomeness. Similar names are those of two of Merodach's attendants, one of whom was called " What will my lord eat ? " and the other " What will my lord drink ? "

En-lila is regarded as one of the older gods—" the older Bel," but Nin-ĥursagga must have preceded him, and was, in fact, his creator. This appears from the three lines which follow, in which she seems to be described as she who had once modelled his head, devised his foot, and had first made his eye to glow with fire.

Who shall say that the Sumerians of Tilmun did not possess a glorious mythology ?

We now come to the last column of the reverse, which is the final one of this remarkable text. As it is one of the "outside" columns, it has suffered more than those of the centre of each side, especially in its upper part. Four lines are wanting, and with regard to the 13 immediately following, mere scraps of text appear. This part still deals with "the lord En lila." The words "they went" occur more than once, there is a reference to "the lord of the gods," and the name of Nin-hursagga appears again, and is repeated in line 18. The men (?) reposed in the protection (?) of En-lila, and rejoiced. (The gods) decided the fates (of intelligent beings existing), and rejoicing, they set them free. Though this seems to be part of the narrative of the poem, it is probable that it forms part of a pronouncement by some divine personage, probably Nin-hursagga, who then continues, probably addressing Takku :—

24. "My brother, what of thee is ill ?"
25. "My pasture is ill."
26. "Ab-šam I have brought forth for thee."
27. "My brother, what of thee is ill ?"
28. "My flock is ill."
29. "I have brought forth Nin-tulla (the divine dame of the flock) for thee."
30. "My brother, what of thee is ill ?" "My command is ill."
31. "Nin-ka-utu I have brought forth for thee."
32. "My brother, what of thee is ill ?" "My mouth is ill."
33. "Nin-ka-si I have brought forth for thee."

The text goes on with similar questions and answers for eight lines more, and we learn that the goddess had brought forth Na-zi, "the divine man of life," Da-zi-mâ, "the divine life-strength-producer," for him because the strength of his life was defective. Because his health was defective, she brought forth Nin-ti, "the divine lady of health," for him. As his gladness was "ill," she had brought forth En-šag-ša, "the Lord making glad."

42. To be great were they born, (and thus) [they] act.
43. Let Ab-šam be the King of Vegetation ;
44. Let Nin-tulla be the lord of Makan ;
45. Let Nin-azu (the lord physician) possess Nin-ka-utu (the begetter of the word).

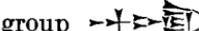
46. Let Nin-ka-si be she who filleth the heart.
47. Let Na-zi be held as Lord of Produce.
48. Let Da-zi-mâ be held the . . .
49. Let Nin-ti be the lady of the month.
50. Let En-šag-ša be the Lord of Tilmun.
51. "Praise."

Naturally, there are many difficulties in translating a text like this. It is written in what is known as the "dialect" of Sumerian, and is not accompanied by any translation in Akkadian—that is, Semitic Babylonian or Assyrian. The Assyriologist of to-day, therefore, has to depend for the sense on the Assyro-Babylonian syllabaries (sign-lists) and bilingual lists, which give the pronunciation of the Sumerian characters or words. To add to the difficulties of translating, each character has generally more than one meaning, and sometimes as many as ten or more. In these inscriptions unaccompanied by any Semitic rendering there are, moreover, always expressions which are not to be found in the linguistic inscriptions, and these we have to reason out as well as we can. It is needless to say that the original tablet has suffered greatly during its long existence of more than four thousand years.

The land of Tilmun, to which this inscription properly belongs, had a very special position—it was the tract at the head of the Persian Gulf, as already stated, and the god of the waters was, to them, the all-important deity of the tract. This was the god Enki, who is mentioned so often in this poem. His name really means "lord of the earth," but according to the important list of the names of Enki printed on pl. 58 of the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of W. Asia*, vol. ii, he was so called as "Êa of the whole (universe)." The next line of that list gives us his name as "lord of heaven and earth," *Anna-an-ki*. His third name is *En-engur*, and he was so called as "Êa of the Deep"—the Apsû. This extension of his domain to the waters, both fresh and salt, is doubtless due to the destruction of the evil god called Apsû, the spouse of Tiawath, the Dragon of Chaos, by Merodach, when the rebellion of the demons of evil was quelled. (See the completed Legend of Bel and the Dragon, in *Victoria Institute Transactions* for March 7th, 1927, pp. 6 and 14, where the death of Apsû and the abodes of the gods are described.)

Enki's interest in earthly things was not bounded, however, by these three descriptive titles—he had many others. Among

his interests were many occupations of men, of which he was patron. Thus the list to which I have referred tells us that he was Nudimmud as god of creation, Nadimmud as god of every (single) thing, Nin-igi-azag, "the lord of the bright eye," as god of wisdom. He was also the god of the potter as the assembler and moulder of the clay, god of the smith, when called Nin-â-gal, "god of the great (brawny) arm," or the like. He was also the god of the intoner and the psalmist, of the mariner and the weaver. Other arts of which he was patron were those of the metal-worker and the washerman or fuller.

But one of the most interesting of his names for the discussion of the present paper was Utu—a name which possibly occurs in column iii of the obverse, line 39, and which may have been also in column i of the reverse, line 13. See also lines 43 and 48 of that column. These passages, however, give us the form —the divine prefix followed by the characters *tak-ku*. In the list of the names and attributes of Enki or Êa, however, *ku* is written within *tak*, and we are told to read this combined group  as *Utu\** in *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, II., pl. 58, and the duplicates. The question naturally arises, however, whether *Tak-ku* and *Utu* be really one and the same. The *Takku* (or *Tag-tug*, as Professor Langdon originally read it) would seem to be the name of a man, whilst *Utu* was certainly one of the gods of the Babylonian pantheon, and is identified, as we have seen, with Enki.

Other lines of this list describe Enki or Êa as god of irrigation (as is clear from this text of Tilmun). As here, again, he was god of the agriculturalist and the orchardman. Finally, he was god of the fisherman, the shoemaker and the barber.

We thus see how important, in Babylonian mythology, the god of wisdom and all the other things mentioned, the god Enki or Êa, was. And it is worthy of note here, because the name of Êa has been compared with *ia* or *ya*, in its fullest form *yau*, the Hebrew *Yah* (Jah). I have never believed that there was any connection between Êa and Yah or Jah, either by derivation or mythological borrowing. Êa and Yau are utterly different names.

Considerations of time and space stand in the way of making comparisons to any great extent with the Greek and other legends

---

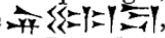
\* I gave this character in my *Texts in the Babylonian Wedge Writing* (London, 1882), pl. v, "Less used characters," "Utu, a name of Êa."

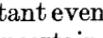
of the Golden Age, or with other legends of the Flood, such as that of Deucalion and Pyrrha, but before coming to that, I will make a few additional notes upon certain difficult words or characters, dealing more especially with those passages in which my rendering differs from that of Dr. Langdon.

In column i, line 13, the name of the raven is the usual one, but there is doubt as to the rendering of the word for "kite," *dare*, in line 14. *Ur-gula*, "great dog," = "lion" in line 15 is probably correct. *Ur-barra* (line 16) has been rendered as "hyæna."

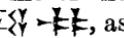
*Ki-el* in line 26 may be rendered as "pure place," as Professor Langdon has translated it. The desecration of a "pure spot" within the pure city of Tilmun would be just as improper as the desecration of a vestal virgin.

It is noteworthy that in line 31 Enki is described as the father (*aa* for *ada*), and not the spouse, of Nin-ella. In column ii, line 31, he is called the son (*a*) of Damgal-nunna.

With Professor Langdon I restore line 43 of column ii as indicated by lines 18 and 37 of column iii. In all three passages, however, instead of reading *ia-luma-dim*, I think I see , *ia-guba-dim*, "like pure oil." The character that I read as *gub*—it has also the value of *li*—is the same as in lines 20 and 22 of the reverse, column iii, read thus, correctly, by Professor Langdon. *Li* means "joy" or "rejoicing."

I pass over another reading which I suggest, of , *gin-ma*, instead of , *gu-ma*, as being too unimportant even though it may be correct—the meaning, in any case, is uncertain.

The plant mentioned in line 26 of the reverse, column ii, seems to be that called, in Akkadian, *ēlpit mē burki*, possibly a plant growing in "water (of the depth) of the knees." In line 29, I imagine that the plant referred to should be completed as , *šam pipi*. I cannot suggest any identification.

In column iii of the reverse, line 41, I read the name of the deity brought forth by the earth-goddess, , as *En-šag-ša*,\* "the lord making joy" or "luck." This has to be restored in line 50, and appropriately closes the poem—"May the god producing joy (or prosperity) be the god of Tilmun." The group *zag-sal* in line 51 is regarded as standing

\* Other possible readings of this last syllable are *me*, *ag*, *na*, and *ki*. Professor Langdon has chosen the first of these, and translates the name: "The lord who renders the understanding good."

for a musical instrument, and may indicate that music or singing, or both, followed the recital of this poem.

It is uncertain as to what the 9 days like 9 months, symbolizing the 9 months of pregnancy, really refer to in the irrigation of the fields of Babylonia. Three goddesses are mentioned in the three sections of the inscription following the nine days, namely, Nin-tu, Nin-kurra, "the Lady of the land" or "of the mountain," and Nin-hursagga, "the Lady of the (cultivated) heights." The first, Nin-tu, bears the descriptive title of "the mother of the (inhabited) land (of Tilmun or of Babylonia in general)." All three, therefore, seem to have had similar influence in the land, and might naturally be three aspects of the same goddess. Other goddesses who might, and probably were, identified with them are Ištar, the goddess of love, Nin-maḥ, "the supreme lady," also called Aruru, who was Merodach's spouse, and created the "seed of mankind" with him, and Zêr-panîtu (for Zêr-banîtu), the "seed creatress," which was her name in that province of divine influence.

As already stated, after the enumeration of the nine days as the nine months, three in number, there are three practically identical sections, the names of the goddesses differing somewhat. A more interesting variation in the 27th line of column iii, however, instead of the words stating that Nin-tu was not wroth with the pious sons of men, we find the words *su-inninni* instead of *nu-munzubbi*—a positive phrase instead of a negative one. In the next line the goddess's name differs—it is Nin-kurra, "the Lady of the mountain" instead of Nin-tu. *Su-inninni* is evidently a compound verb, consisting of a noun and a verb, *su* and *ninni*, in which *su* would mean "increase," and *ninni* might mean "great" or "to be great" = *rabû*.

Nin-tu, therefore, was not wroth with the pious (or happy) sons of men, and Nin-kurra "greatly increased" them.

Concerning Deucalion and Pyrrha, I quote the following from Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology. "When Zeus, after the treatment he had received from Lycaon, had resolved to destroy the degenerate race of men who inhabited the earth, Deucalion, on the advice of his father (Prometheus) built a ship, and carried into it stores of provisions; and when Zeus sent a flood all over Hellas, which destroyed all its inhabitants, Deucalion and Pyrrha alone were saved. After their ship had been floating about for nine days, it landed, according to common tradition, on Mount Parnassus.

“On the request of Deucalion that mankind might be restored, the goddess Themis bade them to cover their heads and throw the bones of their mother behind them when walking from the temple. After some doubts and scruples respecting the meaning of this command, they agreed in interpreting this command to mean the stones of the earth. They accordingly threw some stones behind them, and from those thrown by Deucalion there sprang up men, and from those of Pyrrha women.”

Professor Langdon's monograph upon this old inscription: *Sumerian Epic of Paradise, the Flood, and the Fall of Man*, Philadelphia, 1915, is a small storehouse of information upon parallels from ancient sources (including Genesis) to this archaic text.

But we need more light from the East, especially Babylonia, to show the possible bearing of these legends upon the Epic of Enki, the earth goddesses, the nine days, the ship on which the god stood, and also the two “spirit-handmaids.” To these we must add Takku or Utu, the plants which he was allowed to eat, and the *ambara*-plant which he ate without permission, and the curse ordaining that he should not see life until the day when he died.

We owe much to Professor Langdon, as well as to the old Babylonian scribe who wrote this wonderful Epic more than 4,000 years ago.

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Dr. Thirtle) said: I am sure I carry the meeting with me when I move that the best thanks of the Institute be given to Dr. Pinches for the paper which he prepared for this afternoon. We could have wished that he had been able to read the paper in his own expressive manner; but at any rate the paper, in substance, has been presented to this gathering, and what has not been read has been given in printed form, after the custom of the Institute.

In the course of the years, Dr. Pinches has on many occasions honoured the Victoria Institute with papers on Assyriological researches, and we have endeavoured from time to time to recognize, by formal vote, the great value of his services rendered to Oriental investigation. Now he has come before us with a subject which cannot but have a peculiar attraction to thoughtful people in a day when, from the point of view of anthropological inquiry no

less than the pursuit of antiquarian investigation, men seek a more thorough acquaintance with primitive conceptions ; in other words, with things that take us back to early developments in civilized life.

Only in an indirect manner do we reach, through Babylonian thought, any clear contact with Biblical story, not to say with Divine revelation as we find it in the Sacred Scriptures ; but all the same, the epic of the Golden Age, as we have traced it in part this afternoon, supplies ideas that in some measure bring us into association with mythology, and what is commonly known as comparative religion. Quite obviously, the representation is of men and races struggling, as it were in the dark, with problems on which, in other regions, as we have the right to believe, the All-wise God has sent forth light and truth which have brought spiritual guidance, of which hardly a trace can be discovered in the document which has been sampled to us by our learned lecturer this afternoon.

By temperament and training I find myself in deep sympathy with Dr. Pinches in the trials that he has encountered in some sections of his work. The investigator may labour hard in the translation of documents, but when it comes to a case in which omissions in the text have to be supplied, by the help of higher criticism or the exercise of powers of imagination, then supposition has to take the place of a more reliable rendering of the ancient writing into a modern English counterpart. We are thankful that in such circumstances we have so reliable and accomplished a scholar as Dr. Pinches, to lead us through the mazes of translation and to supply deficiencies in the broken text. With these circumstances in mind, we are able in some measure to weigh the value of the result as a whole, and one point at least seems clear to Christian men and women in the twentieth century ; and that is, that some aspects, though broken, of the Golden Age, as it was cherished in Babylonian thought, have assuredly been handed down in the inscription which has engaged our attention this afternoon.

It is usual with ourselves to project the Golden Age into a time yet to come and more or less remote ; but people whose portion was in the present life—so it would seem to us—were content with a Golden Age as conceived in the distant past. Going back four thousand years, we may seek for light in the East ; but compared with the light which we are privileged to enjoy, the light in old-time

Babylon would appear to have been dim, if not dusky dark. With gods and goddesses in conflict, and powers of earth and other regions engaged in base intrigue, what else could we expect ?

These things notwithstanding, we are deeply thankful to Dr. Pinches for the paper which he has prepared, and which, to say the least, brings to us a message of thankfulness that we did not live in a land and at a time in which the things set forth were enacted—enacted in conditions not to be compared with the age that dawned upon mankind when the light of God broke upon peoples that are now permitted to anticipate the coming of a Golden Age, more rich and joyous, in which light and truth will prevail in a measure more full than has entered the mind of mortal man.

Lieut.-Col. F. MOLONY asked if he was right in concluding that this old poem represents an ancient monotheism becoming corrupted with polytheism ? And that it represents the Deity as beneficent ?

Mr. WILLIAM C. EDWARDS said : We have all enjoyed this most interesting and instructive paper. There is another relic of the widespread tradition of a golden age—a paradise of Righteousness, and this one reminds us of the prophecy of its return (Isa. ii, 7), when again the lion shall eat straw (grass) like the ox, and no animal shall prey upon another.

As regards the date of this fragment, I think that it must be very early. The beginning of the prostitution of virgins, described at length by Herodotus (Clio/199/200), was still a subject of regret and protest by a few at any rate. The great Greek historian was horrified to find it, and calls it the most disgraceful of the Babylonian customs. Every native woman is obliged once in her life to sit in the temple of Venus, and have intercourse with some stranger—who coming in shall throw into her lap a piece of silver, saying : “ I beseech the goddess Mylitta (*i.e.* Venus) to favour thee !” The woman has to follow the first man that throws, and to refuse no one.” He adds : “ That this custom was also followed in Cyprus, and we recall something similar in Marco Polo’s Chinese experiences.” Now this epic says that, in that purer and happier age, this did not obtain. Herodotus’ date of birth is 484 B.C., and therefore we may easily place this fragment more than 1,000 years before his time.

Lieut.-Col. SKINNER asked if the *amhara*-plant, which the Professor would appear to connect with the Tree of Life in Genesis, might not perhaps be identified with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the Tree of Temptation, about which the crisis arose? In the Genesis narrative there was no prohibition as regards the Tree of Life till *after* Adam's fall and eviction from the Garden; but if the *amhara*-plant be understood to be the Tree of Knowledge, in place of the Tree of Life, then the correspondence between the epic and the inspired account would appear to be very close.

#### LECTURER'S REPLY.

In reply to Col. Molony, it seems to me to be doubtful whether this poem of the Golden Age points to a primitive Monotheism or not. I should like to believe that this was the case, but the god Enki or Êa already has a spouse and a daughter, and the earth-mother seems to appear in two or three different forms. In both Babylonia and Assyria we find many gods and many lords. That there were sages who believed in a single God and Creator of the world is possible, but I am inclined to think that this conception took place at a later date, when all the deities were identified with Merodach.\*

Mr. Edwards' reference to the widespread tradition of a Golden Age, and its return, as recorded by Isaiah, is quite to the point. It is gratifying to think that Tilmun (and probably other cities of Babylonia) was a place where every inhabitant was expected to keep himself pure and undefiled—this was a great contrast to what Herodotus says about Babylon, and to what we learn in the Gilgamesh legend about Êrech.

Lieut.-Col. Skinner asks about the *amhara*-plant. This is apparently a Sumerian word, and is explained as the Semitic *kasû*, which Professor Langdon compares with the *kasia* of the late Babylonian letters. From the determinative prefix *šam*, it would seem to be a herb, and not a tree. The Tree of Life finds its closest analogy in the *giš-kin*, Semiticized as *kiskanû*, which grew in Êridu,

\* See the *Journal* of this Institute for 1894-5, p. 10. The God identified with Merodach in line 1 is Uraš, in the second line it seems to be Lugal-akiata, and in the third line, En-urta (the true reading for Ninip). These three are possibly gods of agriculture.

the "Paradise-city" on the Persian Gulf. The prefix *giš* indicates a tree, and that in Êridu, the *kiskanū*, bore fruit which was black (*šalmu*). For this reason it is generally rendered as "the dark vine," and on account of its healing qualities it has been compared with the Tree of Life.

One of my audience referred to the line (38 in col. 2 of the reverse): "The face of life until he dieth shall he not see." The following is the original Sumerian, word for word:—

*Ine nagtila enna ba-uggia ine-baranbarrien.*

The face (of) life until he dieth eye-not-beholdeth.

Many thanks to my audience for their kind interest in this difficult text, and renewed thanks also to my old friend Dr. Thirtle for so kindly reading my paper for me.