

Bible deriving all the streams of mankind from the Plain of Shimar, and to find archæology bringing corroborative proof that probably all the greater streams of civilization do take their origin from this region? For that is the view to which the opinions of scholars now tend.

Glance now at the stories of Creation, of Paradise, and the Deluge. The story of Paradise and the Fall we may dismiss in this connection, for except in the case of the picture on an ancient seal which does bear some relation to the story of the temptation in Eden, there has yet been no proper parallel to the Bible story of the Fall. On the other hand, from the ruins of Assyrian libraries have been disinterred fragments of an account of Creation, and the Babylonian version of the story of the Deluge, both of which have been brought into comparison with the narratives of the Bible. Little need be said of the Babylonian Creation story. It is a debased, polytheistic, long-drawn-out, mythical affair, without order, only here and there suggesting analogies to the Divine works in Genesis. The Flood story has much more resemblance, but it too is debased and mythical, and lacks wholly in the higher ideas which give its character to the Biblical account. Yet this is the quarry from which our critical friends will have us derive the narratives in the Bible. The Israelites borrowed them, it is thought, and purified these confused polytheistic legends and made them the vehicles of nobler teaching. We need not discuss the time and manner of this borrowing, for I cannot see my way to accept this version of events at all. There is not only no proof that these stories were borrowed in their crude form from the Babylonians, but the contrast in spirit and character