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PROFESSOR SAYCE AND THE HIGHER
CRITICISM.

WHAT we mean by inspiration is that holy men of old—illumined not only by the ordinary light of the Holy Spirit, which lighteth every man who is born into the world, but by His special grace—were used by God to make known to us those truths respecting Him, and His relation to the souls which He has made, which were of supreme moment, and which we could not have discovered by our unaided powers. Thus much respecting the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is capable of ample proof, and has been verified by the age-long experience of mankind. The *form* assumed by this revelation—the question whether, in any part of these sacred books, the truth was set forth in poetry or in legend, or in that ethopœic manner which may be most briefly described by the word “the Haggada”—is, in any case, of incomparably less importance than the idea which the revelation unfolds. The view taken by many most learned and faithful seekers after the absolute truth as to the date, origin, and real character of the Biblical records has, during the last half century, undergone an immense though silent revolution. The late Archbishop of York once said to me that the silence and certainty with which this change of view had been accomplished was one of the most remarkable features in the life of the present generation. Even fifty years ago there were millions of educated Christians who—looking upon the Bible with the eyes of præ-critical dogmatists like Calovius—regarded it almost as a miraculous fetish, possessed of a separate and inherent Divine entity; much as the Mussulman still degrades his Qur’an into a sort of automatic amulet. The Bible was *rightly* valued as *containing* all things necessary to salvation; it was *wrongly*

regarded as verbally dictated, inerrant, and free from every element of human limitation. Even had this view been as correct, as it is contrary to every phenomenon of the Bible itself, and to all that we learn from history, from science, from criticism, from psychology, from comparative religion, from the plain results of literary and linguistic criticism—results have clearly shown that this imagined stupendous and abnormal miracle has turned out to be purely useless. For, taking this book in hand, millions of Christians who have held the view that it *is* in every word, syllable, and letter the very and direct utterance of God, have yet proved themselves so unable to ascertain its true meaning that they have drawn from it, not only the most antagonistic, but, in some cases, even the most pestilent and abhorrent conclusions. The doctrine of the Church of England, and of every true branch of the Church of Christ, is that, while in matters of history, chronology, science, its details are not exempt from the possibilities of error; while its revelation is progressive, and in its earlier stages avowedly imperfect; while the moral conceptions of its writers, under the old Dispensation, did not always rise above the incomplete ideal of their own day, and in some instances reflect “the days of ignorance which God winked at”; yet the Holy Scriptures *contain* the messages of God, and alone are capable of teaching us all things necessary to salvation. If this vast, blessed, and irrefragable conclusion, which has made the Bible so inestimably precious to all sorts and conditions of men in every age and in every country, be entangled with humanly-invented theories as to what the Bible might have been *a priori* expected to be rather than what it is, then its unique influence will be seriously imperilled by these false theories, which sober and unbiassed reason cannot but repudiate. By claiming for the Bible, in the interests of mere human dogma, far more than it ever

claims for itself, and far more than wise and competent faithfulness, aided by the slowly widening light of God, can now admit, we shall inevitably endanger the unique and legitimate authority of the Divine messages.

It is therefore a duty for all thoughtful Christians in the present age to prevent the injury which might arise from any sudden shock of disturbance in the inevitable change which must come—as certainly as the change from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican system of the universe—in the abandonment of untenable theories and dogmas about the true nature of Scripture inspiration.

When a scholar, who has acquired high reputation as a philologist, as Professor Sayce has done, says “that the belief that Moses wrote the Pentateuch seems to me to involve considerably fewer difficulties than does the contrary belief of the higher criticism”; and when he adds, “I see no reason for denying that the Pentateuch is substantially the work of Moses” (*Cont. Rev.*, p. 483), his remark cannot but come with a shock of surprise to that army of devoted inquirers and learned scholars in Germany, England, and America who have been forced to the conclusion—now admitted *in substance* by many critics and apologists of the old school—that the existence of at least three separate documents, as well as the work of at least one redactor, is clearly demonstrated by the phenomena presented by the Pentateuch; and that parts of these documents, at least in their present form, cannot be much, if at all, anterior to the epoch of the Return from the Exile.

It seems therefore a duty to state in the simplest way, and for ordinary readers, the reasons which have forced this view on most of the great learned and original inquirers of the day, and which have compelled many who have followed the course of their investigations to render an unhesitating consent to their main conclusions.

It is no part of my task to give even a meagre sketch of the history of Biblical criticism. In its modern developments it may be said chiefly to date from the year 1753. In that year Jean Astruc, the physician of Louis XIV., discovered and published a luminous principle, which, though it long lay buried under the white embers of perfunctory assumption and casuistical "explanation," could not finally be quenched. He discovered, and by his very discovery may be said to have finally and conclusively *proved*, that the Book of Genesis is *not a homogeneous composition*. It is a remarkable and a deeply humiliating fact that, after at least two thousand years, during which Jews and Christians had accepted the Old Testament Scriptures as "the oracles of God," all of them alike—Rabbis, Fathers, Theologians, Schoolmen, and numbers of Angelic, Seraphic, Cherubic, Irrefragable, and most Christian Doctors—had piled mountain-loads of exegesis on the sacred books, and yet had read them so carelessly, so superficially, so disconnectedly, so uncritically, as not even to notice the obvious linguistic facts which lie upon their surface. It was left for an accidental physician in 1753—a physician who prided himself only on his *medical* books—to point out the circumstance—so self-evident when once it has been noticed—that there are *at least* two main and separate documents running side by side in the first books of the Bible. Vitringa, in his *Observationes Sacrae* (i. 4 § 2), seems to have been hovering on the verge of the discovery,¹ but it was left for Astruc to enunciate it in his anonymous *Conjectures sur les Mémoires Originaux dont il est permis de croire que Moïse s'est servi pour composer le Livre de la Genèse, avec des Remarques qui éclaircissent ces Conjectures*. He thought that Genesis had

¹ "Schedas et scrinia Patrum apud Israelitas conservata, Mosem collegisse, digessisse, ornasse, et ubi deficiebant complere." This is perhaps the earliest germ of the documentary hypothesis.

consisted of two principal works, marked respectively by the use of the names *Elohim* and *Jahveh*, and mixed up with the fragments of ten other documents.¹ He supposed that these had been put together by Moses in twelve columns side by side, and had subsequently been amalgamated by transcribers in a confused and sometimes erroneous manner. His book, so far from being a contribution to scepticism or "rationalism" (except in the best sense of that ill-used word), was an avowed answer to the hitherto unanswerable objections of keen-sighted unbelievers.

The fruitful element of truth which lay in this crude, fragmentary hypothesis was too certain and too valuable to be forgotten. Its sifting, testing, elucidation, and completion required the ardent self-devotion of generations of open-minded and gifted toilers; and since scholars of unwearied diligence, and of unbiassed passion for the pure, simple, unsophisticated truth, are rare, it has taken nearly a century and a half to utilize and develop the discovery of Astruc. In our own lifetime, it has been finally elaborated into those conclusions which now furnish a common basis for the Biblical studies of all the leading scholars of Germany, and which, in their main outlines, even avowed apologists of the archaic style of Biblical criticism no longer venture to reject. In England, such is the ignorance of professed interpreters, the belief that the Elohist and Jehovistic documents were separate can hardly even yet be said to be generally accepted; but I heard it familiarly taught, as a matter of universal knowledge, to a large class of German boys at Naumburg, in the *Schulpforta*—"the Eton of Prussia"—in a visit which I paid to that school with the present Archbishop of Canterbury forty years ago.

Those who wish to learn how the first suggestion of the

¹ See Quarry *On Genesis*, p. 401.

documentary hypothesis has been quickened to its present proportions by subsequent writers, must read the story in various modern Introductions. Among the leading critics we may mention Semler († 1791), Herder († 1803), Eichhorn († 1827), Ilgen († 1834), De Wette († 1849), Bleek († 1859), Graf († 1869), Bishop Colenso (1883), Vatke († 1882), Ewald († 1875), Kuenen († 1891). The attempts of learned but reactionary theologians, such as Hengstenberg († 1869), Hävernick († 1846), and Keil († 1888), to stem these views have so completely failed that these theologians can hardly be said to have left any successors or representatives, at any rate in Germany. A host of other learned writers, most of them now living, or who have only died recently, while they differ as to many minor details, are now at one as to the main facts. Among them we may mention Hupfeld, Knobel, Ewald, Strack, Kayser, Nöldeke, Schrader, König, Cornill, Dillmann, Holzinger, Kautzsch, Socin, Stade, Kittel, Wellhausen, Reuss, Addis, Prof. Driver, Prof. Cheyne, Prof. Briggs, Prof. Sanday, Prof. Ryle, Prof. Bevan, and the late Prof. W. Robertson Smith.

These, and multitudes of other scholars, have treated the books of the Bible in the only way in which we can arrive at the truth respecting them. They have made them speak for themselves and reveal their own secrets. They have discovered their real nature from their actual phenomena. They have tabulated the results which they furnish to the microscope and spectrum-analysis of that impartial inductive study, which firmly believes that the evolution of true knowledge is light from heaven. They have been guided by fearless confidence in that revealing light of God, "which shows all things in the slow history of their ripening," and which can never lead astray.

As the result of the labours of all these indefatigable scholars and profound Hebraists, one broad and general

result may now be regarded as absolutely *proven*; namely, that, leaving out of sight all minor details, and the incorporation of glosses, traditional fragments of song, and various explanatory clauses by later redactors, the *Pentateuch*, as a whole,¹ together with the Book of Joshua, which properly belongs to it, is based on the combination of THREE independent, original, and in most instances easily distinguishable documents. By the existence of these documents we can explain not only a mass of other historic *data*, but also the repeated occurrence in the same book of deutero-graphs, repetitions, variations, contradictions incapable of any honest or scientific reconciliation; of divergent and self-contradictory laws; of divergent names; and of many chronological difficulties. None of these variations are of any *religious* or *spiritual* importance, and they need no explanation when we trace them to the co-existence of differing traditions, and to the records of different authors, preserved by rough incorporation into books, which, in some instances at least, did not assume their final form till long years after the appearance of the documents of which they are composed.

These constituent documents of the Hexateuch are not only marked by the existence of minor repetitions and divergencies, but each of them has its own moral and religious colouring; its own prominent conception; its own predominant aim; its own marked style, method, outline, and favourite expressions. They are thus separated from each other by material differences in the substance and object, and also by formal differences in style, in phraseology, in numbers, in facts, and in the predominant religious standpoint, as well as in the names by which they normally speak of God. And these differentiating marks,

¹ Ἡ πεντάτευχος βιβλος, "the book in five volumes," is a name which originated among the Alexandrian Jews. The Palestinian Jews called it "the five-fifths of the Law."

as Prof. Driver says, are *concomitant*. They "are not isolated, nor do they occur in the narrative indiscriminately. They are numerous, and reappear with singular persistency *in combination with each other*; they are, in a word, so marked that they can only be accounted for upon the supposition that the sections in which they occur are by different hands."¹ It is even possible, with approximate probability, to conjecture the age in which each of the documents was written, the regions in which they first saw the light, and the schools of thought from which they respectively emanated.² The induction which has led to their separation is based on many different lines of observation, especially the study of the history of worship, of the Hebrew language, and of Hebrew literature.

The main documents of the Hexateuch are as follows:—

1. P. There is one document which forms the predominant *stratum* in which all the others are embedded, and which is traceable throughout the Hexateuch. It was long called in Germany the *Grundschrift*,³ or "Book of Origins." Dillmann refers to it as A; Wellhausen calls it Q, because it prominently emphasizes *four* (*Quatuor*) Covenants of God with the Holy People. It is most commonly and conveniently designated by the letter P, as being connected with the Priestly Code. It is in its main purpose a book of laws. It is much later than E and J, and it told the story of Israel, from the creation, from the standpoint of priestly enactments, of which some are considered to be

¹ *Introd.*, p. 8.

² Prof. Ives Curtiss (*EXPOSITOR*, 1886) remarks that if we did not possess the Gospels, but only Tatian's *Diatessaron*, we should have before us a problem similar to that presented by Genesis. "The books of Genesis and Leviticus contain no statement as to how or by whom they were committed to writing" (Kuenen, *Hexateuch*, p. 12).

³ A name given it by Tuch and Nöldeke. It was also at one time distinguished as E (Ewald's mistaken *elder* Elohist), from its use of *Elohim* or *El Shaddai* for God up to Exodus vi. 3. Ewald called it The Book of Origins (*Ursprünge*), by which he translated the Hebrew word *Tôldôth*, which marks one of its main characteristic divisions.

post-exilic,¹ and of which, at any rate, there were very few traces till the return from the Exile.

2. E. A narrative of an Elohist writer, who most commonly uses the name *Elohim*. It is predominantly a book of Judaic history, or of legends, beginning with the patriarchs and extending through the Book of Joshua.

3. J. A narrative by a writer who from the first uses the name *Yahveh*, and is therefore called the Yahvist or Jehovist. It is an outcome of the prophetic schools, and breaks off, according to Wellhausen, with the blessing of Balaam.²

4. J E.³ The additions of an editor who appears to have combined the works of the Elohist and the Yahvist (E and J) into one narrative before they were interwoven with P by one or more later editors. The separate traces of this redactor are, however, less easily and less certainly distinguishable than those of the others, and are, from the nature of his task, of subordinate importance.⁴ The result of his labours was that "there were two historico-legal works in existence (P and J E), both running parallel from the creation to the settlement of Israel in Canaan."⁵ The history of worship alone involves four marked stages of progress—the Jehovistic (B.C. 850), the Deuteronomic (B.C. 621), the Ezekielian (B.C. 573), the Priestly (B.C. 444).

¹ This is the view of Budde, Stade, Duhm, Schultz, König, Cornill, Kayser, Kautzsch, Smend, etc.

² "The Yahvist and Elohist, with differences in detail, breathe the same spirit. They are historians, or 'collectors of national myths and legends,' rather than legalists. But there are differences between them. The Yahvist uses *Yahveh* throughout, the Elohist never till Exodus iii. The Yahvist calls Jacob in his later life Israel, the Elohist retains the name Jacob. The Yahvist speaks of Sinai, the Elohist of Horeb," etc. (See Addis, pp. lv., lvi.).

³ Wellhausen somewhat confusingly calls J E the *Jehovist*, and J the *Yahvist*. (*Einleit. in das Alte Test.*, p. 178).

⁴ The two theories which prevailed during the dawn of criticism—(1) that the Hexateuch was a book of *fragments*; (2) that it was one main narrative (P) *supplemented* by others—are now seen to be incorrect. The book is a whole made up of distinct documents.

⁵ Prof. Curtiss (*Expositor*, 1886).

These vary from each other as to the four particulars of time, place, mode, and persons of Jewish cult; and there is an observable difference not only as to the institutions, but also as to the *tone* and *spirit* of the worship.¹

The main distinguishing characteristics of these four documents are as follows:—

1. P. The Priestly narrative.

This document is specially important in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, because it forms a large part of them.

It runs through the entire Hexateuch, and is essentially the *Lawbook* of Israel. It was designed to set forth the ordinances, rites, customs, and usages which prevailed, or were intended to prevail, among the chosen people as a congregation rather than as a kingdom. The history is only used as the basis of institutions, or as the explanation of their origin. Thus the opening chapters of Genesis are intended as a sketch of the great phases of Divine government, by which, even from the foundation of the world, the holy nation was elected by God to be “a people of His own possession,” and was separated by marked epochs of advancing disseverment from the other tribes and nations of the world. It is with this view, and not solely for their own importance, that the writer narrates the Creation, the Deluge, the Covenant with Noah, the Dispersion of mankind, the overthrow of haughty world-empires, the call of Abraham, the covenant with Abraham, and the covenant with Israel.

One indication of this purpose in P is the tenfold recurrence of the phrase, *These are the generations (tôldôth) of*—literally, “the begettings” or “genealogies.” This phrase forms a sort of running headline, to mark off the stories of

1. The creation of heaven and earth. Gen. ii. 4 ff.

¹ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, pp. 117-124 and *passim*. Kautzsch and Socin have printed the documents of Genesis in different types (*Die Genesis*, 1888), and Bacon (*The Genesis of Genesis*, 1891) has printed them apart.

2. The story of the descendants of Adam through Seth to Noah. v. 1 ff.
3. The story of Noah and his sons. vi. 9 ff.
4. The story of the sons of Noah, and the nations descended from them. x. 1 ff.
5. The line of Shem down to Terah, the father of Abram. xi. 10 ff.
6. The line and descendants of Terah to the death of Abram. xi. 27 ff.
7. The line of Ishmael and the Arab tribes which sprang from him. xxv. 12 ff.
8. The line of Isaac and the story of his two sons, till Isaac's death. xxvi. 1 ff.
9. The line of Esau and his descendants. xxxvi. 9 ff.
10. The line of Jacob and the story of his descendants till the death of Joseph. xxxvii. 2 ff.

Another characteristic of P is its annalistic style. The narratives are presented in a somewhat bare and dry form, with systematic statistics, genealogies, and chronological statements, which are in entire subservience to a juristic purpose. The writer dislikes all gross anthropomorphism, and omits stories of the patriarchs which offended his moral sense. He abounds in recurrent and somewhat technical expressions.¹ His work is systematic in its structure and concrete in its delineations. It avoids poetic turns and pictures. We infer, especially from large parts of Leviticus which belong to it, that this narrative took its present form among the Priesthood of Jerusalem, in all probability after the days of Ezekiel and in the epoch of the Exiles. The writer is chiefly occupied with the theocracy rather than with humanity. His promises are limited to Israel, and his interest is in Levitic ceremonialism rather than in the

¹ For 50 phrases characteristic of P, see Driver, *Introd.*, pp. 123-128; Briggs, *Hexateuch*, pp. 175-180.

deep universal problems of theology and the passionate yearnings of the human heart.

This document (P) is marked in character and singularly homogeneous. The part of it contained in the first eleven chapters of Genesis is meant as the vestibule to the great temple which it desires to construct. It dwells on the Creation, the Deluge, and the Covenant with Noah as preludes to the covenants with Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, and "as an introduction to the systematic view of the theocratic institutions which is to follow in Exodus to Numbers, and which it is the main object of the author to exhibit."

2. E. The Elohist.

The document E is distinguishable by the use of the name Elohim for God till Exodus iii., together with other characteristics which separate it decisively from P.¹ Dillmann describes it as the Legendary History of Israel,² and believes it to be largely based on oral tradition. It is generally agreed that the writer was a citizen of the northern kingdom. It abounds in special details about names, incidents, antiquities, sacred rites, and facts of local interest, and shows special regard for the dominance of Joseph and of the tribe of Ephraim. Unlike P, it refers freely to angels and dream-revelations, and has none of the marked antipathy of the priestly code for local sanctuaries, nor even for pillars (*Matstseboth*) and Teraphim. This document is of less importance for the earlier chapters of Genesis, since it first makes its distinct and continuous appearance in chapter xx. Its narratives seem to be often mingled up with those of J, and the ultimate analysis of these two documents is not certain in details though agreed upon in general outlines. E is more objective than P, and

¹ The writer sometimes uses *Elohim* even after Exodus iii.; and Dillmann thinks that originally he may have used that name throughout.

² Dillmann, *Genesis*, p. xi.

less consciously tinged with moral and doctrinal thoughts. In the matchless narrative of Joseph the writer shows his delight in didactic history.¹

3. J. The Yahvist or Jehovist.

The third or Jehovistic document adopts from the first the name Yahveh, and may be described as distinctively the Prophetic narrative.² In Dillmann's opinion it emanated from Judah, a conclusion which he deduces from the exaltation of Judah (xxxvii. 26 ff., xliii. 4 ff., etc.), and from the interest displayed in the Negeb, or south country (xxi. 33, xxvi. 23-25, etc.). The Yahvist goes over many of the same facts as the author of P—the Creation, the Flood, the race of Noah, parts of the history of Abraham, etc. His narrative is the most graphic and literary in form. Many of his passages are "masterpieces of narration"; they are flowing, eloquent, tender, graceful, and marked by an infinite charm and pathos. He is also a deeper and more earnest psychologist than the other writers, as is shown by his account of the origin of sin and the method of God's compassion in dealing with it, and obliterating its ominous effects on the world and man. At the same time he speaks of Jehovah with frank and anthropomorphic simplicity (ii. 15 ff., vi. 6, vii. 16, viii. 21, etc.). "His characteristic feature," says Prof. Driver, "may be said to be the fine vein of ethical and theological reflexion which pervades his work throughout, and the manner in which his narrative, even more than that of E, becomes the vehicle of religious teaching."

¹ For other characteristics which distinguish E from J, see Addis, pp. lv., lvi.; Dillmann, pp. 617, 623 ff.

² "Jehovah" only occurs four times *by itself* in the A.V., and five times in proper names. It is generally rendered "the Lord." The parallel accounts of E and P respectively as to the revelation of the name are found in Exodus iii. 12-15 (E); Exodus vi. 2-7 (P). In the latter short paragraph alone there are twelve of P's characteristic phrases (Briggs, *Hexateuch*, p. 166). It may be said briefly that the name *Elohim* represents "the God of Nature," and *Jehovah* represents "the God of Revelation" (Driver, p. 11). The Yahvist freely uses *Elohim* when qualified by another word, e.g., "God of Israel," etc.

It is by no means easy to settle the relative ages of E and J. The latest writers — Wellhausen, Kuenen, and Stade—think that the date of J is about B.C. 850–800, and the date of E not later than B.C. 750.

4. J E. The Redactor.

The Redactor, whose work it was to unite the separate narratives of J and E, naturally occupies a place of subordinate importance. He was rather an editor than an independent author. Critics, however, think that they can point to distinct traces of his handiwork. It is not impossible that this Redactor was Ezra himself, about B.C. 444.¹ All Hebrew tradition points to the important part which he played in the “writing” and editing of the canonical books.²

Schrader calls P “the annalistic narrator,” and E “the theocratic narrator.” He thinks that they wrote in complete independence of each other. J, “the prophetic narrator,” weaves them together and fills them up by narratives of his own.³ “It is agreed among critics that E is brief, terse, and archaic in his style. J is poetic and descriptive; as Wellhausen says, ‘the best narrator in the Bible.’ His imagination and fancy are ever active. P is annalistic and diffuse; he aims at precision and completeness. The logical faculty prevails. There is little colour.”⁴

Meanwhile it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the traditional view which sufficed during the apparently total abeyance of the critical faculty for thousands of years, has, for every thoughtful and competent scholar, become absolutely and finally untenable. To maintain it is to maintain a literary impossibility, and an historic error. If we take an ancient book, subject it to careful analysis, and

¹ See König, *Einleit.*, p. 48.

² The Mishnic Rabbis say that Ezra and the men of the Great Synagogue “wrote” the Books of Moses, etc.

³ Schrader (De Wette, *Einleit.*); Kuenen, *Hexateuch*, p. 162.

⁴ Briggs, p. 74.

find that it contains the plainest and most unmistakable traces of

- Differences of style ;
- Differences of statement ;
- Differences of conception ; and
- Differences of phraseology,

in two or more markedly distinct and easily separable documents, it is a folly for off-hand dogmatists or reactionary theologians to ask us to be untrue to the light of reason which God has given us and still to maintain the idle notion that the Pentateuch was all, or nearly all, the work of Moses about B.C. 1491. Such a view must be finally abandoned.

Let us glance at some of these differences as we find them even in the first eleven chapters of Genesis and up to xii. 6.

1. *Differences of Language.*

To show how closely, how laboriously, how microscopically this subject has been studied, I append a summary of the facts as furnished by Professors Green and Harper in *Hebraica*, vol. v.

Hebrew, it must be remembered, is a language singularly poor in its vocabulary, and remarkable for its inflexibility; yet out of 485 words—the total vocabulary of this section—118 are used by P alone, 246 by J alone, and only 121 are used by P and J in common.

P	uses	239	words	in	1,858	forms	; each	word	7.77	times.
J	„	367	„	„	1,762	„	„	„	4.8	„
P	„	239	„	in	about	150	verses	; for	each	verse
J	„	367	„	„	140	„	„	„	2.62	„
Of	the	118	„	used	by	P	alone,	56	are	fairly
„	„	246	„	„	J	„	104	„	„	„

Such facts cannot possibly be accidental.

2. As to *Differences of Style*, we have already seen that P is systematic, chronological, statistical, precise, stereo-

typed and rigid in conception, but verbose and iterative in form, and generic rather than individual; while J is free, flowing, general, picturesque, poetic, anthropomorphic, didactic, individual.

3. As regards *Differences of Material*, we find both in P and J, with variant detail, an account of the creation; a genealogical table; a statement of the world's wickedness; a great flood; the deliverance of one family with representatives of all kinds of beasts; a promise that there should be no more deluge; a table of nations; a more or less full genealogy of Terah; and the family and migration of Abraham.¹

How can these duplicate narratives be accounted for except on the hypothesis of different authors?

4. And in these duplicate narratives there are *Differences of Statement*, amounting in some instances to distinct discrepancies and contradictions.

Such, for instance, are, among others,—

The order of events in Creation;

The creation of Eve;

The number of clean and unclean beasts which went into the Ark.

The dates for the continuance of the rain, etc.

5. There are *Differences of Conception*.

P is rigidly monotheistic, and, so to speak, distantly reticent in his conception of, and all his allusions to, God, whom he calls Elohim, or El Shaddai.

J is anthropomorphic to an extent which often leads the early versions to modify his daring expressions.

To quote, then, the summary of Prof. W. K. Harper:

¹ There are, further, two accounts of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; two of the name Beersheba; two of the name Bethel, of the name Israel, of the names of Esau's wives, of Esau's settlement in Seir. See for further details Kuenen, *The Hexateuch*, p. 39; Briggs, pp. 75-80; Kittel, *Gesch. d. Hebräer*, i. 123-151.

“(1) We divide these chapters into two divisions, simply on the basis of the use of the Divine names, regarding as doubtful chapters ii., iii., which have the double phrase Yahweh-Elohim. (2) We go through each division and note the language; we discover many words and phrases which occur in one but not in the other; words and phrases, too, for which, in the other division, corresponding expressions are found. It seems strange that wherever Elohim is used, it is accompanied by a certain series of words, and that it is just so in the use of Yahweh. (3) We go through again, and we discover that one division has everywhere a certain style (rigid, stereotyped, etc.), and that the other has a style quite the opposite (free, flowing, poetical). (4) We examine the passages again, and this time discover that really each division takes up the same events, the same history (creation, deluge, etc.). (5) We take it up again, and, to our surprise, notice that each division, in spite of the similarity of material, has its own peculiar and widely different conception of God, etc. What must be the result of this five-fold examination? Is this the work of one man or two?”

If it be asked, What, then, becomes of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, which was implicitly believed for so many centuries? the answer is that it must of course be given up. But, as Luther said more than three centuries ago, “What does it matter to religion whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch or not?”¹ The book nowhere lays claim, even indirectly, much less directly, to having been written by Moses. He is merely bidden in one or two places (Exod. xvii. 14, xxxiv. 27; Num. xxxiii. 2, etc.) to write down certain things “in a book”; and we are told in Deuteronomy xxxi. 9 that “Moses wrote the words of this (Deuteronomic) law.” Throughout the history Moses is spoken of in the third person, and often in a way which he would not himself have used (Exod. vi. 26, 27, xi. 3, etc.). Early Jewish tradition (2 Esdr. xiv. 22-45) attributes to Ezra a large share in the reproduction of the Pentateuch after the law had been burnt; and some work in the collection of the sacred books is assigned to Nehemiah in 2 Macc.

¹ So Melchior Canus, quoted by Matthew Poole, said, “It is not much material to the Catholick faith that any book was written by this or that author so long as the Spirit of God is believed to be the author of it.”

ii. 13 (comp. Ezra vii. 6). The Fathers accepted the view of the great share which Ezra took in the editing of the law. "God inspired Ezra," says Irenæus (*Haer.*, iii. 21, 2), "to recast all the words of former prophets." "Whether you wish to say that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch, and that Ezra restores it," says St. Jerome, "is indifferent to me."¹

If it be further asked, In what way do these irrefragable critical conclusions affect our estimate of the Bible, and modify our traditional views of the dogma of inspiration? the question deserves, on every ground, a serious answer.

1. As regards the Bible, those who love the Bible most, those who have most deeply profited by the Divine teaching which it contains, ought to be more jealously careful than any others that they do not blindly and wilfully adopt for it a claim which it never makes for itself. They should strive not to mingle their conception of it with things which, as earnest and prayerful consideration ought to convince the most stereotyped intelligence, are wholly incapable of proof, even if they be not—as the vast majority of the ablest Christian scholars and thinkers are now convinced—demonstrable falsities. To worship a book as absolutely Divine throughout, when it abounds in traces of human handiwork and human limitations, is nothing short of idolatry, even if it be disguised under the name of bibliolatry.² The extravagant fiction that the sacred writers were "not only penmen, but pens of the Holy Ghost," and that all they say is infallibly true and equally Divine, is directly contrary to the teaching of Christ and His apostles.

¹ *Jer. adv. Helvid.* See other passages quoted in Briggs, *Hexateuch*, p. 33.

² That this was the tendency of some post-Reformation theologians may be illustrated by the fact that some dogmatists almost elevated the Bible into a sort of "Fourth Person of the Holy Trinity," and in all respects argued as if God wrote every word. Nietzsche seriously questioned whether Holy Scripture could be called a creature, and decided that it could not. See ample proofs in my "Bampton Lectures" (*Hist. of Interpretation*, pp. 369-376).

It is an error which has been fruitful of many of the darkest superstitions and crimes which have tortured and degraded the human race. Monstrous superstructures of priestly tyranny and usurpation have, to the curse of nations, been built like inverted pyramids on the narrow apex of perverted texts. The treatment of partially human documents which enshrine divine lessons as though those documents were themselves, throughout their whole extent, supernatural, has led to the unnatural systems of exegesis which have prevailed for centuries of ignorance. Such a dogma, in many instances, degrades the words of Holy Scripture into meaningless or insoluble enigmas.

Such, then, is a brief and most imperfect sketch of the phenomena of the Hexateuch. They are capable of verification by any student who has the patience to test them. There may be minute errors of detail in the statement; there may be elaborately tortuous trains of casuistical 'apologetic' by which we may seemably explain away some of the phenomena; but can any one doubt what would be the conclusions formed on such evidence if no vague traditions and dogmatic shibboleths tended to prevent their acceptance?

God is the God of the Amen; the God of essential and eternal verity. If we are driven to inferences respecting the Holy Book which enshrines His messages such as are at variance with traditional conceptions, what is our plain duty? Which is the better and nobler course—to accept those inferences, and correct by their means our previous mistaken views, or to harden and sophisticate our reason against them, and so—as far as we ourselves are concerned, and without for a moment pretending to sit in judgment on others—to go before this God of truth with the unclean sacrifice of a lie in our right hands?

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