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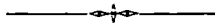
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Conclusion.

In fine, Holy Scripture does not teach us to expect reunion or uniformity; it teaches the opposite. The Church of this dispensation is not one golden candlestick with seven branches; its seven golden candlesticks and the bond of union is "the Son of Man walking in the midst of them." As with the member, so with the body, the path of unity is plain: "With all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love," "let each esteem other better than himself." The Church which boasts herself on the length of her pedigree, and not on apostolic doctrine and practice, is the real schismatic. Other Reformed Churches, such as the Moravian and many others, find no difficulty whatsoever in practising intercommunion one with another, and manifesting to the world the true unity of the Spirit. Why should we do so? The difficulty is entirely of our own creation; the offspring, we fear, of our pride and of the fear of man. By the grace of the Holy Spirit we can have and hold fast the unity of the Spirit with all who love the Lord in every branch of the Universal Church; and we can manifest that unity, as other Reformed Churches do, by practising intercommunion with all who are willing to do so with us. If they are willing and we are unwilling, the sin of schism lies at our door, and *vice versâ*. The Word of the Lord is true of Churches now as it was of Israel of old: "A people which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in My nose, a fire that burneth all the day" (Isa. lxv. 5).

ROBERT BRUCE.



ART. III.—THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH.

No. II.—THE STORY OF THE CREATION.

IN this and the following papers I propose mainly to confine my attention to the so-called "priestly code." My reason is this. It is no longer categorically asserted that the narratives of the Jehovist and the Elohist as they stand, can be separated into their component parts. Professor Driver, though he believes the narrative which has been drawn up from them to be composite, does not, as we have seen, deny that it may have been fused together in such a way that many of the individual traits of the two narratives so compounded have been lost.¹

¹ Introduction, p. 110.

It may be well to repeat once more the remark I have already made—that the phenomena presented by JE, it is thus admitted, do not necessarily conform to the rule he has elsewhere laid down, that the Hebrew historians were not writers, but simple compilers.¹ For JE, he is compelled to grant, was very possibly *not* simply compiled, but may have been composed in much the same way as our modern histories were composed. That is to say, the facts were taken by the writer from his authorities,² but the form in which they were related may have been, to a considerable extent at least, his own. Thus another of the favourite positions of the critical school is practically given up. We have therefore to deal with a history which is supposed to have been compiled out of two other histories, one of some antiquity, the other of a date little anterior to that of the compiler. I do not propose to say anything whatever in regard to the date at which the various portions of the Pentateuch were written. I simply wish to examine the reasons for detaching the rest of the history from this supposed earliest account, and assigning it to a post-exilic writer, designated by the symbol P.

I have already disclaimed all title to the term "scholar" or "critic" in the German sense of the word. I am quite content that in that sense those titles should be monopolized by the Germans and their disciples in this country. I am writing for simple people who love their Bible. And however much able and learned men may attempt to throw dust in people's eyes by saying that the contents of the Bible are unaffected by any theories about the time at which it is written, I know perfectly well that it is impossible on the new theories for an honest man to teach the Old Testament and preserve his people's reverence for it. For if the critics are right, the Old Testament *simply states what is not true*. Whatever excuses may be made for it, whether its errors are intentional or unintentional, there is no escape from the fact that *its statements are false*. It says Moses gave the Law, as we now have it in the Pentateuch. If the critics are right, *he did not*. It says Joshua had this Book of the Law when he entered the Promised Land. *He had nothing of the kind*. It says that worship at the one sanctuary was prescribed in the days of the Judges, of Samuel, of Saul, of David, and was carried out in the days of Solomon. *This is a misstatement published in the days of Josiah, in order to induce people to worship at one sanctuary in Jerusalem*. This is the critical view of the Old Testament when stripped of all verbiage which serves to conceal its real character. It is impossible for those

¹ Introduction, p. 3.

² Usually described as J and E.

who dissent from it to leave it to perish from its own intrinsic weakness. We must do our best to make known its real character. For if these views are true, then it is practically certain that no clergyman, no Sunday-school teacher who disseminates them, can long prevent the Old Testament Scriptures from sinking into contempt. Scholars may split hairs, but ordinary English folk have more rough and ready methods. Moreover, I find that German methods of criticism, though the industry and ingenuity of those who employ them is fully admitted, and though it is not denied that occasionally they lead to important discoveries, do not, as a rule, find much favour with our best English critics and scholars in the department either of New Testament criticism, or of early ecclesiastical or secular history.¹ They are too fanciful, too arbitrary, too *willkürlich*, to use a favourite word of their own, to suit the more practical and common-sense character of our best English investigators. I am content to adopt English methods of inquiry, such as have been tested and approved in other departments of historical and literary inquiry, and to incur the contempt of those who imagine it to be a first requisite of scholarship to be able to quote a score or so of German authorities. I have studied German Old Testament criticism, and I am convinced that, quite apart from any question of Inspiration, its methods are radically unsound. I have the hardihood to believe that for the last hundred years or so German ingenuity, so far as the Old Testament is concerned, has been led off by French vivacity upon an altogether false scent. I believe that whatever documents may have been used by the writer or writers of the Pentateuch, the occurrence of the names Jehovah and Elohim are in no sense indications of authorship, any more than the occurrence of the words "Jesus" or "Christ" would be an indication of distinct authorship in an Epistle of St. Paul, or in the sermon I wrote last week. The first step toward a discovery of the sources of the Pentateuch is, I am firmly persuaded, to discard altogether the "Jehovist" and

¹ The writer of the article in the *Quarterly Review* of last July on Tischendorf's Greek Testament seems to have the same feeling in regard to specialist critics in the department of textual criticism. "The great value of Lord Salisbury's address to the British Association," it says—and it will be remembered that Lord Salisbury in that address expressed precisely similar sentiments in regard to the dogmatism of a certain class of scientific investigators—"consisted in his combination in his own person of the knowledge of an expert and of a mind trained outside science in the best methods of the world. If any school of textual critics were possessed of a similar combination of special knowledge, sound scholarship, and practical experience, we should be more confident in the present, and more hopeful of the future of textual criticism" (p. 203).

"Elohists" theory; the second, to abandon the delusion that a story which cannot be denied to have been on the whole consistent and coherent—a story the literary excellence of which has repeatedly been acknowledged by persons well capable of judging—was pieced together in the extraordinary manner in which the critics would persuade us it was composed. When once we have made a clean sweep of the "cycles and epicycles" with which the Germans have striven to save the credit of the supposed discoverer Astruc—when once we revert to the ordinary and well-established principles of historical and literary criticism, then there will be a chance that the true components of our present histories will be discovered, and the approximate date at which they were written ascertained.

One assumption which underlies a good deal of the reasoning of critics of the German school, the unsoundness of which has not been so clearly perceived as it might have been, is this: It is asserted, and asserted reasonably enough, that the extant Hebrew histories were probably compilations. This assumption granted, as it may very fairly be, the critical school goes on to say: "These which we present to you are the various portions of their compilation." But this is not a conclusion from their first assumption; it is simply assumption No. 2. No proof of it is even attempted. When proof of it is demanded, the critics point to the general agreement of most of the leading German and some of the leading English critical scholars. But it is obvious that an agreement such as this falls very far short of actual proof. If we grant that the Pentateuch is undoubtedly a compilation, it does not follow that any critic or set of critics can pretend to point out infallibly the portions to be assigned to the various sources, especially when these portions include half verses supposed to be interpolated in the midst of a flowing and consecutive narrative. If we grant, again, that Genesis is, as it must have necessarily been, a compilation, it does not follow in the least that any of the subsequent books were either compiled at all in the sense of being copied bodily from more ancient records, or, if so compiled, compiled by the same editor or "redactor" as Genesis. A genuine investigation demands some evidence for this supposition before we can accept it as fact. As was shown in the introductory paper, what evidence there is would point rather in the opposite direction.¹ There are also some serious difficulties in the way of the theory, as will, I trust, be

¹ *I.e.*, the conversion of the Elohist in Genesis into a Jehovist in Exodus and the following books. The supposed author of the "priestly code" should surely have been a Jehovist throughout.

seen before this inquiry has been carried to any great length. First of all, there will be found to be *signs of a common authorship of the whole Pentateuch*, in spite of the remarkably ingenious way in which special phrases and terms of expression have been detached and assigned to P. Next, besides the difficulty to which I have already referred of understanding what principles guided the "redactor" in his unaccountable method of swaying backwards and forwards between his authorities in a consecutive narrative, there is the fact that, inasmuch as JE is supposed to have been written centuries before P, any divergencies on P's part from JE must have been intentional. So far as I know, no one has ever mentioned this obvious fact. But if it *be* a fact, we are bound in the next place to ask from what sources P's narrative was derived. Was it a pure invention, or was it founded on inventions, or did he derive it from sources as authentic as those at the disposal of JE? If it was an invention, or founded on inventions, how did he induce the Jews to accept it? If it was derived from authentic sources, why did the "redactor" combine the two narratives in the strange way he is supposed to have done, when in either of them he had a coherent, consistent story at hand, derived from ancient and trustworthy authorities? Why did he not at least follow each in turn to the end of each particular section of his story? Or, if he were a supporter of the "priestly code," why did he refer to JE at all? If, on the other hand, he wished to tell the truth, and knew the narrative of P to have been later, and less authentic than JE, why did he embody any of it into his account? We are yet without sufficient information concerning the objects of the author or authors of the "priestly code," and their follower, the "redactor," supposing such persons to have had an actual existence. We do not know whether they were inventors or historians. If the former, the "redactor" at least would have made a clean sweep of all antiquated documents which conflicted with his purpose. He certainly would not have abridged, as he is declared to have done,¹ the history written by his own "guide, philosopher, and friend," in order to make way for passages from a history which it was apparently P's special object to supersede. If the redactor were simply anxious to hand down the truth, he would surely have discarded P altogether, and have copied the venerable pages of a story which he knew to have been in existence for some five hundred years. Or, once more, his object may have been to

¹ It is quite clear that if P be, as *ex hypothesi* it is, a separate document, the whole of it has not come down to us. This will be proved, if it needs proof, in the pages which follow.

obtain a workable compromise between new and old. But then how did he manage to induce the priestly party, whose influence had secured the triumph of that codification of ancient law, Ezekiel tradition, and post-exilic legislation, which is supposed to form three out of the five books of the Pentateuch, to accept his weak compromise, instead of the thorough-going narrative of P, written as it was from their own standpoint, and having their own special objects at heart? There are other questions, such as the entire disappearance of the rest of JE and P—after the commencement of the fifth century B.C., remember—and the survival of the singular compilation which has come down to us. These will well repay investigation, for if the account of the post-exilic period by the critical school be even approximately correct, it must have been, indeed, a remarkable one in the history of human thought. Such questions as these have repeatedly been asked, but as yet no one has deigned to give any answer whatever to them. But it is obvious that until these difficulties are cleared up, we may have a considerable consensus of opinion among scholars of the German school; but we have not a definite and intelligible *rationale* of the origin of our present Hebrew narratives, still less of the historical facts those narratives contain. Lastly, we have been told in authoritative language that Ezekiel was “the father of Judaism”; in other words, that the religion of the Jews as it has now come down to us was mainly shaped and even invented by him. But as proof after proof is accumulated that Jewish institutions were to a very large extent in existence *before* Ezekiel’s time—I have myself shown in your pages that there is scarcely a law, however trifling, in Leviticus, a supposed post-exilic compilation, which is not mentioned in the history of Israel¹—the theory that P is simply a “codification of pre-exilic legislation” gains ground; and as it gains ground, the “original legislation of P” will be found to shrink continually into a smaller compass, until, to use mathematical language, it becomes so indefinitely small that it may safely be neglected. Thus, as the date of the composition of the Gospel of St. John, once confidently assigned by critics, principally Germans, to the second half of the second century, was steadily driven back by incontrovertible arguments to between A.D. 110 and A.D. 100, so the original legislation of P will eventually be found to diminish alike in quantity and quality, until it does not matter in the least whether there were any such original legislation or not.

I now proceed to consider the question of the account of

¹ In August, 1893.

creation given us in Gen. i.-ii. 3. This is assigned by critics of the school to which I have referred to the author of the "priestly code," and, as such, is supposed to have been composed subsequent to the captivity. There are some *a priori* arguments against this theory, apart from considerations of phraseology, which I postpone to a future paper. First and foremost, we are told that the style of P is bald and formal—"juristisch, pünktlich, und formelhaft," as Dillmann puts it,¹ with the assent of other critics. A vast host of literary critics of proved capacity, including persons as competent on the one hand, and as far removed in point of date and point of view on the other, as Longinus and De Quincey, have come to a precisely opposite conclusion. They have regarded the Mosaic account of creation as one of the sublimest passages to be found in the whole range of the world's literature. Nor can minute critics of the German school be allowed any weight in broader aspects of literary criticism such as these, any more than we should look for a full comprehension of the sublimity of the Alps on the part of a *savant* engaged in mineralogical or geological researches at their base. The point of view of the investigator into detail is too contracted and its range too minute for any satisfactory general impressions affecting the whole. Readers of De Quincey will remember the passage in which he regards the founder of the Israelite polity, in his forty days communing with God on the Mount, as seeing in a series of magnificent consecutive visions the evolution of the primæval world. Whether in the forty days on Sinai, or during his forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, it is by no means unreasonable or unlikely that the inspired sage, to whose meditations a great religious and political system was owing, should have reflected deeply on the origin of things, as brought about by the wisdom of Him whose mouthpiece and interpreter he felt himself to be. Nor need we, with Mr. Gladstone in his memorable controversy with the late Professor Huxley, imagine that these visions of the inception of things which floated before the mind of Moses were of necessity in exact chronological order. That they were very nearly exact chronologically, Mr. Gladstone has fully proved; but on one or two points the Professor appeared to have the best of the argument. The matter is in reality of no moment whatever. The chronological sequence is in the English version only. The Hebrew appears to speak in language more or less figurative of a number of periods in which something was evolved out of nothing in various directions—periods in which a period of twilight preceded

¹ In the prolegomena to his Commentary, p. xi.

that of the full day. "And there was evening, and there was morning"; a "first," "second," "third day." This was the case alike in the evolution of order from chaos, light from darkness, vegetable, animal, and human life from the absence of all three. But in regard to the point whether these respective evolutions of animal and vegetable life took place consecutively or simultaneously, the narrative in Gen. i. cannot be regarded as speaking decisively. In fact, a history of creation in chronological sequence did not form part of the narrator's purpose. If Moses was the author of Gen. i., and, with submission, it is not yet proved that he was not, he was simply laying the foundation of his civil and ecclesiastical polity strong and deep in the original relations between God and man.

It will be seen from this that I incline to the belief that the Book of Genesis, from first to last, was written or compiled by Moses. There is another reason for this belief. Polytheistic and even monotheistic schemes have been accustomed to account for the origin of evil by the doctrine of the essential impurity of matter. It is an essential characteristic of Judaism and Christianity alike, when properly understood, that they stand almost alone among the religious systems of the world in basing their teaching on a flat denial of this most dangerous and delusive principle. It was surely, then, no obscure and unknown writer after the return from the Babylonish captivity, but the founder of the civil and ecclesiastical system of Israel, who penned those magnificent and far-reaching words, "and God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good." It is a sentence which only a leader in the world's thought could have written—one capable of taking his stand beside other great religious or philosophical creators, such as Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, Plato, Aristotle, Mohammed, and, with reverence be it spoken, in a sense beside Jesus Christ.¹ The vital principle it embodies is nowhere reaffirmed in the Old Testament, but it clearly underlies the whole, and, properly understood, the New Testament equally takes it for granted. Modern criticism has, it is true, evaporated Moses; but natural processes, we may be sure, will collect the scattered materials and combine them once more in their former shape. The critic may conduct his analytic researches to his heart's content; but no sound philosopher will be satisfied to regard Mosaism, with all its marked and most striking characteristics, as an indefinite product, evolved nobody knows when, and nobody knows how. The existence of a master

¹ Deut. xviii. 15. Quoted Acts iii. 22; vii. 37.

mind alone, those who can add philosophic to linguistic and so-called historical criticism will declare, can account for a system such as that which meets us in the books of Moses, and for the unique history of the Israelite people, which can only be explained by acknowledging the existence among them of special institutions of extraordinary originality and excellence.

I shall hereafter give other reasons for my belief that the first three chapters of Genesis are by the same hand; but for the present I will content myself with mentioning two points which seem to me to demand such a conclusion. The first is that chaps. ii. and iii. depend on and spring out of chap. i. The historian begins by laying down his theorem that all things, as they originally proceeded from the hand of God, were absolutely good and perfect. He then, after a more detailed account of the origin and early history of man, proceeds to show how this perfection was destroyed. Its destruction was the work of a malevolent being who set himself to ruin the world which God had created. That is to say, the historian proceeds from his vivid description of God as the Author of all good, and the Creator and Protector of man, to the origin of evil. The origin of evil, he tells us, was disobedience to the will of the Author of all good. Is it *primâ facie* more probable that this coherent and natural mode of transition from one subject to another was the work of a mere redactor, piecing together—and so awkwardly that he begins his piecework in the very middle of a sentence—two different and, as it is asserted, inconsistent accounts of the origin of things and the early history of mankind; or that we owe this most reasonable and intelligible solution of one of the most difficult problems which can exercise the human intellect to the working of a master mind—the mind of one specially selected by God to take a prominent part in the education of the human race?

My second point relates to the sources from which these supposed separate narratives are apparently derived. Professor Sayce, in his "Higher Criticism and the Monuments," points out that *both* these narratives, supposing them for the moment to have been by different authors, display a close acquaintance with Babylonian tradition. And what is more noteworthy still, the one which approximates most closely to Babylonian language is not that which, as written shortly after the return from the Babylonian captivity, might be expected to have been most coloured by Babylonian thought. It is in JE, it is supposed, the original materials of which were put into shape somewhere about the reign of Jehoshaphat (B.C. 914-889), that we find the closest correspondence with

Babylonian language. The words, "and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew"¹ (Gen. ii. 5), are found almost word for word in a Babylonian tablet which Professor Sayce translates: "Their waters were embosomed together, and the plant was ungathered, the herb of the field ungrown." Another tablet, which, according to Professor Sayce, "goes back to Sumerian times"—that is to say, centuries before the age of Abraham—contains the words, "A plant had not been brought forth, a tree had not been made"; that is in the primeval epoch to which the writer refers. But it is remarkable that a line or two previously Professor Sayce gives us in the same Sumerian version of the story of creation, side by side with the passage which has just been quoted, words which agree closely with P's post-exilic account of creation: "The whole of the lands, the sea also, had not been formed; when within the sea the current was." Compare Gen. i. 9: "Let the waters be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." In the later Babylonian tablet which he also quotes, and which he supposes to have been written about the seventh century B.C., we have great similarities with P's account, but a number of mythological details added, with which Jews of P's type would of course have no sympathy. Is it, then, more likely that the Jehovistic account of creation, showing as it does close correspondence with a Sumerian account of vast antiquity, was written at a time when Israel and Chaldæa had little or no communication with one another; and that the monotheistic writer of P, abhorring as he did Babylon from every point of view, religious, political, or social, would have taken the trouble to disentangle from the polytheistic absurdities, as he must have felt them to be, of Babylonish superstition a rational account of the origin of things? Or is it more reasonable to suppose that the whole account of creation and the fall in Genesis was handed down among the descendants of Abraham from their forefather, cleared by his monotheistic sympathies from the polytheistic accretions which had already probably grown around them?²

¹ The literal rendering of the Hebrew is, "and every plant of the field was not yet in the earth, and every herb of the field had not yet sprung up." This may possibly have been a quotation from some older document, because it does not fit in with the context of the Hebrew so well as it agrees with its context in the Babylonian and Sumerian documents above mentioned. If so, we know whence it is derived.

² It is of course quite possible that Abraham handed down to his posterity the early monotheistic account of creation before it had become corrupted by polytheistic accretions. But we must not forget that we have now definite evidence that the religion of Ur of the Chaldees was polytheistic before the days of Abraham.

But this is not all. In the narrative of creation we find unmistakable signs of contact also with Egyptian thought. In an early Egyptian hymn¹ we read the following words: "God is the primeval one, and existed when as yet nothing existed: He existed when as yet there was nothing, and whatever is, He made it after He was. He is the Father of beginnings." And, again: "*He blows the breath of life into their nostrils.*" These words are adopted word for word in Gen. ii. 7, just as the Sumerian tablet is apparently quoted in ii. 5. And once more: "God is the Creator of heaven and earth, the deep, the water, and the mountains; God stretches out the heavens, and makes firm the earth beneath." It is impossible to avoid seeing in this passage a similarity to P's narrative of creation in Gen. i. But we may go further still. Not only in the narrative of the creation, whether ascribed to P or JE, do we find traces both of Egyptian and Babylonian thought, but the conception of God presented to us in all the five books of the Pentateuch corresponds very closely to that presented to us in the hymn which has been quoted. There can be little doubt that the whole Pentateuchal conception of God was largely moulded by the ideas which were current in the best and purest days of Egyptian civilization. The word "Jehovah," *i.e.*, the eternally self-existing One, corresponds with the words of the hymn, "God is eternal, everlasting, and without end, perpetual, eternal." So we read in Deuteronomy (xxxiii. 27): "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Again: "The Lord is God, and there is none else" (Deut. iv. 35, 39), as well as the First Commandment, are echoed in the words of the hymn, "God is one and alone, and there is none other beside Him." Compare "He is the Truth, He lives by Truth and upon Truth. He is the King of Truth," with God is "abundant in goodness and truth" (Exod. xxxiv. 6). Again: "God is from the beginning, and has existed from the beginning." Compare Gen. i. 1. Again: "No one hath perceived His form, no one hath fathomed His likeness." Compare Exod. xxxiii. 20; Deut. iv. 12. He "Hears them that cry to Him." Compare Exod. ii. 23; iii. 7; xxiii. 27; Numb. xx. 16. Yet once more. In the hymn we read: "God is compassionate to them that fear Him." Compare Exod. xviii. 21; Lev. xix. 14, 32; xxv. 17, 36, 43; Deut. iv. 10; v. 29; vi. 2, 13, 24; x. 12, 20; xiii. 4; xxviii. 58.

Thus Egyptian and Babylonian ideas combined are seen to

¹ The hymn from which these words are taken appears in the "Maxims" of Ani, *circa* 900 B.C.; but the idea of God which it gives, and probably the hymn itself, is far older.

underlie not only the whole narrative of the creation, but the whole Pentateuch; and the Pentateuchal idea of God colours all the rest of the Old Testament. Canon Rawlinson, in his "Historical Illustrations of the Old Testament," has, moreover, shown that the writer or writers of Genesis and Exodus display a very minute familiarity with the customs of Egypt. The infallibility to which modern critics pretend has, it is true, enabled them to assert *ex cathedra* that the correctness of the descriptions might easily have been attained by a casual sojourner in Egypt. But, with submission, it is generally found that minute exactness is not usually attained by the casual sojourner, who is extremely apt to betray his ignorance in some unexpected way. Such exactness can only be reached by those who are familiar with the details by virtue of long and close acquaintance. I cannot enlarge any more on this subject. But I believe I have said enough to show that the phenomena presented by the early chapters of Genesis suggest more naturally the idea that they emanated from a great creative mind, well stored with the best traditions of Babylonia and Egypt alike, and evolving from them by infinite diligence and deep thought the religious system which even yet commands the admiration of the world, than the theory of an extraordinary, haphazard, inexplicable concoction of post-exilic times, which the critics have been pleased to recommend to us as a substitute for it. If it be said that I have left inspiration out of the account, I reply that inspiration is a question altogether outside the limits I have proposed to myself in these papers. But lest I should be misunderstood, I would explain that I conceive of inspiration, not as superseding the use of gifts, natural or acquired, but as providing its possessor with a guidance from above which teaches him how best to employ them.

ERRATUM.—In my last paper in THE CHURCHMAN for December, p. 129, l. 13, for "Barlaham" read Barlaam.

J. J. LIAS.

ART. IV.—OXFORD AND RELIGION IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THE University took an active part in the religious controversies of the seventeenth century, and whatever may be thought of the truths or errors put forward in these disputes, at least they were accompanied by a genuine zeal for religion. With the period which commenced at the Restoration the