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THE
CHURCHMAN

OCTOBER, 1896.

ART. I.—THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH.

PART VII.

IN resuming the examination of the Book of Genesis with a view to ascertain the evidences it presents of a common authorship of the books of Moses, it may be well to remark that the question has never, as yet, been approached from this side. All that has been hitherto done has been, first, to assume that it is the work of several different authors, and then to note certain phrases as characteristic of one or other of these authors. But until the investigation has been fairly carried out on both sides, it is simply trifling with the question to pretend that the problem has been solved.

We come next to the actual narrative of the flood itself, in Gen. vii., viii. It will be convenient if at the outset we mention the alleged sources of the narrative, and if the reader will place these portions of his Bible in brackets, he will be the better able to follow the discussion. The Jehovist (or writer who uses the word Jehovah) leads off with the first five verses of chap. vii. To him also belong verses 7-10, 12, 17, 22, 23; viii. 2b, 3a, 6-12, 13b, 20-22.¹ The rest is taken from the post-exilic writer or compiler of the Priestly Code. The general reader is quite as able to judge as the Hebrew expert of the *a priori* probability that the narrative, considered as a history, would be so compiled. And it will be seen that the linguistic peculiarities in the passage are not by any means striking or numerous. Nor does it seem very clear why the Elohist passages² should not be assigned to the North Israelite con-

¹ Kautzsch and Socin's arrangement differs somewhat from that of Professor Driver. The former assigns vii. 17a to P ("forty days" to the redactor), 23b to the redactor, the *whole* of viii. 13 to P.

² Those in which Elohim or God, not Jehovah or Lord, is used.

temporary (E) of the Jehovist (J), instead of to the post-exilic Elohist (P), the writer of the Priestly Code.

The first point which strikes us as remarkable is, that both these writers, assumed to be entirely independent of, and even sometimes contrary to, one another, have obtained their narrative from the same source—Babylonian tradition. We have now more than one translation of the famous Babylonian tablet discovered by Mr. George Smith nearly a quarter of a century ago. I do not wish to overload this paper with detail, so I shall refer my readers to the version of it given in Professor Sayce's "The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments." The general accuracy of his translation has not been seriously disputed. And on consulting it we are struck by several facts: (1) The Babylonian story and that contained in Genesis have a common origin. (2) The Israelite story is based on monotheistic, the Babylonian on polytheistic, religious ideas. Whether the Israelite is the earlier monotheistic account, or whether Israelite monotheistic sympathies have supplied us with a later monotheistic recension of the older story, is a point on which I will not enter. My only object is to discuss the modern theory of the manner in which the Pentateuch was composed. (3) The monotheistic and the polytheistic story agree in regarding the deluge as a punishment. (4) The Jehovist, in his reference to the dove (viii. 8, 9), and to Jehovah "smelling a sweet savour" (viii. 21), makes use of the same Babylonian document as the author of the Priestly Code does when he speaks of the measurement, the stories of the ark (vi. 15, 16), as well as its contents (vii. 14). And (5) the technical sacrificial expression "odour of a sweet smell" (ריח הניחח), implying a sacrifice of a particular kind, was in existence some thousands of years before the ritual which gave the phrase its technical character.

Let us pause a moment, and see what this involves. First of all, it involves the fact that a writer in Judea in the eighth or ninth century B.C. is acquainted with a Babylonian document of very early date. He must have been acquainted with it, for he uses its language and relates incidents which it contains. If oral tradition, handed down from Abraham, or even Moses, through some six centuries, accounts for these coincidences, we have here a marvel which almost competes, as far as miracle is concerned, with the story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, or of Balaam. But if J is consulting a document which had been handed down from the time of Moses, and embodying earlier Babylonian tradition, we have here a considerable Mosaic element in the narrative. And, if this be the case, why may not the whole narrative be Mosaic? On the other hand, it is at least a curious coincidence that the post-exilic writer, coming

from Babylon with an intensely bitter remembrance of the Captivity, and a still intenser hatred of Babylonian polytheism, should have followed an ancient Babylonian and polytheistic narrative of the deluge, the more especially when, *ex hypothesi*, he was writing with a strong anti-polytheistic object. One would have expected him to betray the passionate hatred of the Jew during and after the exile for Babylonian idolatry, polytheism, and superstition, a hatred which would lead him to cast away with anger, mingled with contempt, the "lying vanities" in which he had learned not to "put his trust." It is doubtful whether the appearance of this ancient Babylonish document is calculated to surprise us more in the ninth-century J or the post-exilic P. It is still more surprising to find them both using the same document. But there is yet another surprise in store for us. That very inscrutable person the redactor had before him two accounts of the flood by two separate authors. These accounts were in themselves presumably coherent, and not self-contradictory. They were derived from the same original story. The redactor might have followed either with satisfactory results. But he takes the trouble—very unnecessary trouble, one would have thought—to dovetail the one into the other in such a way as to produce the *maximum* of inconsistency and confusion. Mr. Wilkie Collins, in one of his clever stories, introduces a character who astonishes us by successively displaying an English, a French, and a German side. Modern criticism has painted a companion picture of an ancient editor who displays by turns superhuman acuteness and superhuman folly. Here his folly is in the ascendant. He might have saved himself and posterity a great deal of trouble by following either of his authorities, with the result that a clear and intelligible story would have been handed down. He has perplexed posterity and immortalized himself, we are asked to believe, by picking his narratives to pieces, and patching verses and half-verses together, so as to produce the greatest possible amount of bewilderment.¹ Then there are "recurring features" in each narrative, which are supposed to display the characteristics of the two authors. But it may be observed that these "recurring features" may as easily be characteristic of one writer as two, unless they are plainly antagonistic. Emphasis was given to early Hebrew narrative by repetition. And in repetition "recurring features" would

¹ Small apparent inconsistencies in a writer unversed in the modern art of literary composition need not surprise us, and fuller information would easily enable us to explain them. But on the theory canvassed above, these inconsistencies are deliberately pieced together out of two discordant accounts.

naturally be found. It is at least quite as probable that the theory is responsible for the "recurring features" as that they suggested the theory. Then again, as for the supposed contradiction between the selection of the beasts by pairs and sevens, to which exception has been taken, the word "clean beasts" points to the only reasonable explanation—the explanation which, until the microscopic criticism came into fashion, was invariably given. The *clean* beasts were for *food* and for sacrifice (viii. 20), as well as to preserve the species alive. The rest of the beasts were not for food, but for preservation. I may add that I do not propose to discuss the literal credibility of the story. My business at present is with the authorship alone.

We proceed to examine how far the story, as we have it, lends itself to the dissection and reconstruction which we are asked to regard as proved. We have already seen¹ that the supposed two separate narratives presuppose one another a good deal. And when one portion of a narrative presupposes another, it is a sign of unity of authorship. First of all, then, the later narrative (P), in chap. vii. 6, introduces an abrupt transition. In chap. vi. 22, supposed to be taken from this narrative, God's commands to Noah come to an end. So far as we at present know from P (v. 32), he is but five hundred years old. In a brief space we pass over a hundred years, and the flood of waters is already on the earth. All that P tells us between these two passages is God's prophecy of the flood just before it began. It is true that P in chap. vii. 11 refers to the flood. But it is far more in accordance with the ancient Hebrew style that there should be here a repetition of the narrative in verses 1-5, than so startling an inversion of the order as is involved in the critical reconstruction. Then, in verses 7-10, assigned "mainly" by Professor Driver to J, we have the word "God," which is the sign of the Elohist. How it got there he does not explain. Moreover, J in verse 9 agrees with P in chap. vi. 19, and is at issue with itself in verse 2. Therefore J itself must be "composite" here. Why verses 7-10 are not assigned to P or some other writer it is impossible to say, the more so as the supposed contradiction has been made much of by some critics.² Moreover, as we have already seen, the words "flood of waters" (vi. 17, vii. 6), and "waters of the flood" (vii. 10), seem to indicate unity of authorship. Precisely the same may be said of verse 12. It is assigned to J simply because verse 4 has been so assigned, and for no other reason whatsoever. The same, once more, may be said of verse 17, supposed to have been inserted from J

¹ CHURCHMAN, May, 1896.

² Kautzsch and Socin, with others, see the hand of the redactor in verse 9. Why, if he adapted verse 9 to suit vi. 20, he did not also alter verses 2 and 3, it "passes the wit of man" to say.

between verses 16, 18 (P). For it contains details similar to those in verses 18, 19, and were we to imitate the infallibility of the modern critic, we should pronounce it to be indubitably by the same hand.

We proceed to ask whether the author of the earlier narrative (J) betrays any signs of being acquainted with the later document (P). In the first place, there is the distinction of clean and unclean beasts (vii. 2, viii. 20). Here the author recognises a distinction, probably in the ninth century B.C., which many critics would tell us was not then in existence. But if it were thus early in existence, the fact opens out some interesting subjects for discussion. If this enactment were then in force, why may it not have been part of the Mosaic law? And if this particular provision dates back as far as the ninth century B.C., why should not many more have been then—and even yet earlier—in existence? A careful inquiry into the contents of the Old Testament Scriptures thus yields the result that a large portion of the Jewish law is older than some critics have supposed. *Some* ceremonial enactments, and some laws and ideas specially connected with sacrifice, were already in existence as far back as the eighth or ninth century B.C.

We need not dwell on the precise similarity of the statement in chap. vii. 1 (J), with that in chap. vi. 9 (P), and we have already remarked upon the incidental mention of the ark in this verse, which seems only consistent with a continuous narrative. But in verse 16 the exclusion of the words “and the Lord shut him in” from P’s narrative, and its assignment to J, seems a little singular. For the words are in close connection with the rest of the verse. The animals went in with Noah into the ark, “and Jehovah shut him in.” But the last words the redactor has taken from J are “and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights,” and he now adds a passage which has no apparent connection with the former, “and the Lord shut him in, and the flood was forty days upon the earth,” etc. Again the redactor’s principle of selection is not a little puzzling. Moreover, the narrative of J here approaches the bald formality supposed to be characteristic of P. But on the supposition that the theory is responsible for the alleged facts, and not the facts for the theory, all is clear enough. For, by the hypothesis, all passages containing the word “Jehovah” are from the Jehovist, and the word **יְהוָה** occurs in the Jehovistic passage (ii. 21). Consequently these words, however awkward the transition may appear, had of necessity to be assigned to the Jehovist. So, again, verse 22, which follows naturally on verse 21, had to be assigned to the Jehovist, because of the **נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים**, which is one of the supposed characteristics of the Jehovist (see chap. ii.

7).¹ Moreover, as has already been shown,² the expressions found in verses 21, 22, though assigned to P and J respectively (especially the word **שָׁרַף**, which also occurs in vi. 7, assigned to J), are all characteristic of Gen i., which is assigned to P.

The next passage selected by the redactor from J presents him again in rather a remarkable light. "Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark." These are the last words he has taken from the Jehovist. The next are: "And the rain from heaven was restrained, and the waters returned from off the earth continually" (viii. 2b, 3a). Now, we are told that he took these from J, and no doubt, if we are so told, we ought to accept the statement with docility. Nevertheless, the old Adam within us will sometimes assert itself. And we cannot, therefore, refrain from asking ourselves, What on earth made the redactor take this curious little passage, consisting of two half-verses, from J just at this point? And why did he take the account of the cessation of the rain which we find in viii. 1, 2a from P? We shall see presently that the style of 3a agrees remarkably with that of P in verse 5. But for the present we are lost in admiration at the redactor and his inscrutable ways. Why did he take this passage from J? It does not add any particular information. But his next selection from J, that in verse 6 *et seq.*, suggests considerations yet more perplexing. The "hundred and fifty days" belongs strictly to P. J "knows nothing" whatever about them. From whence, then, are J's forty days, at the end of which Noah opened the ark, to be reckoned? Supposing the narrative to be by one author, the answer is obvious: At the end of the hundred and fifty days. But if we are forbidden to see here the work of one author, or of any redactor who does not confine himself strictly to copying what he has before him—if it is the practice of Hebrew compilers to take their matter bodily from one author or another—from whence is the end of the forty days to be reckoned? The last forty days mentioned by J are those in which "the waters increased, and bare up the ark" (vii. 18). After that we learn from him (1) that all which had life was destroyed, that the rain was restrained, and that the waters returned from off the earth continually, and that at the end of the forty days (presumably the forty days during which the flood had taken place) Noah sent out the raven! But let us suppose that J meant to say that the forty days are to be reckoned from the date at which the waters began to abate.

¹ The words here are **נִשְׁמַת רוּחַ חַיִּים**, which, if the critical system were correct, would require a *third* writer here, and neither J nor P. For P (vi. 17) writes **רִיחַ חַיִּים**.

² CHURCHMAN, March, 1896, pp. 284, 285.

Then, what was the redactor thinking about to copy this statement from J when he had before stated twice over that one hundred and fifty days had elapsed before the waters began to abate at all? Once more the folly of the redactor was in the ascendant. He had not sense enough to see that the two accounts he had before him were palpably inconsistent. And, more astonishing than all, the Jewish public preferred this stupidly incoherent narrative to two other older and better ones, which they most surprisingly allowed to perish. There is nothing more to call for particular remark in the alleged selections in this chapter, save that there is no apparent reason, beyond the critical theory, why viii. 13b should be assigned to J, and that J appears to "know nothing" of Noah having got out of the ark. Or, if he did, then the spirit of inquiry which it is the duty of every orthodox disciple of the critics to repress, incites us to ask why P's narrative of the going out of the ark should be preferred to J's. Another trifling matter, too, may demand a moment's attention. P's narrative of the prevailing of the waters on the earth, and of the ark being borne on the face of the waters (vii. 18) is decidedly more graphic and picturesque than that of J in the preceding verse. Once more this is contrary to the hypothesis.

So far every one of our readers is as competent a judge of the question before them as the most profound Oriental scholar in the world. I conclude with a brief notice of the phraseology of P in these two chapters, which will, as usual, display a sufficient number of points of similarity to the rest of the narrative as to support the traditional view that the narrative in Genesis was written by one author. My first remark is that there is a point of contact between vii. 1 (J) and vi. 9 (P) in the use of the word דור (generation) in connection with Noah, though in the one case the word is in the singular, in the other in the plural. Next, the causative voice of the verb מטר (to rain) only occurs fifteen times in the Old Testament. Of these six are in the books of Genesis and Exodus—that is to say, more than one-third of the times it occurs in the whole of the Old Testament. The word occurs three times in J (Gen. ii. 5, vii. 4, xix. 24), and three times in P (Exod. ix. 18, 23; xvi. 4). Here, then, we have another sign of common authorship. Nor is this all. In vii. 4 (J) we have the expression אנכי ממטיר, "I am causing it to rain." Exod. ix. 18, xvi. 4 (P), has the same construction, save that we find הניני, "behold me," for אנכי, "I." This use of the participle of the causative voice of מטר occurs *nowhere else* in the Old Testament. Here again, then, we find signs of common authorship between J and P. The verb מחה, again, to wipe out, a characteristic word for "to destroy," occurs in

the Old Testament thirty-five times in this sense, in the active and passive voice. Of these eleven, or nearly one-third, are in the Pentateuch. Four are in Deuteronomy, seven in J. Thus, there are signs of common authorship between J and Deuteronomy. These voices occur but seldom in any other single book. Once more, in vii. 2 (J) we have the unusual expression **איש ואשתו** (man and his wife) for male and female, whereas, in verse 3 (J) and verse 9 (P) we have the more usual expression, **זכר ונקבה**. If difference of expression involves diversity of authorship, why are verses 2 and 3 assigned to the same author?

I have already¹ adverted to the fact that in chaps. vii. 11 and viii. 2 the poetic expressions "windows of heaven" and "fountains of the great deep" (which in vii. 11 are spoken of as cloven asunder—**בקע**) are assigned, under pressure of necessity, to the formal P, and the prosaic "rain" to the more lively J. The next expression which deserves notice is **בעצם היום היה** (literally, in the *bone* of this day, *i.e.*, on this very day). Wherever this phrase occurs in Genesis-Numbers, it has been found possible, by a dexterous manipulation of the passages, to assign it to P. But it is worthy of remark that it only occurs in the Pentateuch (including once in Deuteronomy), twice in Joshua, and in Ezekiel. Yet Professor Driver ("Introduction," p. 124) regards it as characteristic of P. But Josh. x. 27 he assigns to "the compiler." I venture to assert that the phrase is characteristic of the author of the Pentateuch, and that the author of Joshua had the Pentateuch before him when he composed his work. We ought not to pass over the use of "wing" for "species" in vii. 14, which seems rather to savour of the simplicity of early language than the period of decay. So, again, the expression "all flesh" only occurs here (where it is carefully, however, assigned to P), and in poetic passages. There is once more an archaic simplicity about it which suggests that the poets and prophets found the word in their ancient books.

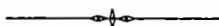
In verses 17-19 there is a delicate *nuance* of construction which has escaped the notice of the dissectors. In verse 17 (J) the waters are said to have increased, in verse 18 (P) to have increased *greatly* (**מאד**), and in verse 19 (P) to have increased *very greatly* (**מאד מאד**). We have thus in this passage, though it is said to have been taken from different authors, the positive, the comparative, and the superlative. Yet no one has detected the hand of the redactor here.² The poetic word "expired," which occurs here in the formal P, is

¹ CHURCHMAN, February, 1896, p. 246.

² It is true that in P we find **נבר** instead of **רבה**. Verse 18 has *both*!

remarkable. It has been carefully assigned to P wherever it occurs. But it once more strikes one as curious, and suggests some doubts whether the theory is correct, that the dry and formal post-exilic writer should have made use of a word which, save in Josh. xxii. 20, occurs only in poetry.¹ Then, in verse 22, assigned to J, we have the expression "breath of the spirit of life" (נשמת רוח חיים), which ought by rights to be found in the latest writer of all, because it combines J's expression, "breath of life" (ii. 17), and P's expression, "spirit of life" (vii. 15). Moreover, this passage very markedly recalls to mind P's language in Gen. i. 24, 25, as well as that of JE in Gen. ii. 7. In verse 18, again, we have the word נָבַר in the sense of prevail, in which it occurs four times in this passage. It only occurs in this voice and in this sense seven other times in the Old Testament. Of these one is Gen. xlix. 26 (where it is followed by לַעַי, as in vii. 19); and another is Exod. xvii. 17 (JE). We have thus another sign of unity of authorship in the Pentateuch, and yet one more point of connection between Jacob's song and the rest of the book in which it appears. I must reserve the examination of the diction of chap. viii. till a future occasion.

J. J. LIAS.



ART. II.—PROFESSOR CHEYNE ON DEUTERONOMY.²

THE school of criticism to which Professor Cheyne belongs is that of the "candid friends" of the "men of the Bible" and of Holy Writ itself. The guiding principle of candid friendship, announced long ago by Canning, that "black's not so black, nor white so very white," may be illustrated from various pages of "Jeremiah: His Life and Times." I will take one only from p. 23: "A fair-minded student is bound to say that Jeremiah and his opponents were both right. . . . The Baalim of the different cities and villages . . . were not necessarily, in the mind of the worshippers, 'other gods beside Jehovah'; and even when they were, their worship did not exclude that of Jehovah." But if so, Elijah and the Baal prophets were "both right," Elijah's exclusiveness (1 Kings xviii. 21) was unfounded, and Jehu's distinction in his massacre (2 Kings x. 23) was unmeaning. Then, how about Ashtoreth and the Asherah? Are they, too, mere synonyms or duplicates of Jehovah "in the mind of the worshippers"?

¹ In Numb. xx. 3 half a verse is severed from a coherent narrative because נָוִי is characteristic of P.

² "Jeremiah: His Life and Times."