

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

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

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



Buy me a coffee

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



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE
CHURCHMAN

MARCH, 1896.

ART. I.—THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH.

NO. IV.—THE NARRATIVE OF CREATION (*continued*).

IN Gen. i. 4 we have an elliptical construction, rare even in the Pentateuch itself, but falling in well with the condensed form in which the thoughts of the writer are cast. Readers of English literature know how, in the poetry of Tennyson, a similarly condensed method of composition is adopted, thus proving the point on which I have already insisted—that condensation of style is not inconsistent with the highest form of poetry. It is also worth noticing that possibly the particular construction of which I am now speaking may be archaic in its character.¹ “And God saw that it was good” is in the Hebrew, **וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב**. The more usual Hebrew construction would be **כִּי טוֹב הוּא**. And we find that construction in chaps. iii. 7, 10, 11; xii. 11, 14, 18. All these six passages are from JE.² The construction “he saw,” or “believed,” or “knew,” followed by **כִּי**, with an adjective, seems hardly to occur outside the Pentateuch. It is true that “praise the Lord for He is good” (**כִּי טוֹב**, without **הוּא**) is found in post-exilic writings, as in 1 Chron. xvi. 34; 2 Chron. v. 13; and the critics may make the most they can of this fact. But it is to be observed (1) that the constructions are not absolutely identical; and that (2) so far as they are similar, they are as easily accounted for on the ground that post-exilic poets cast their thoughts into archaic form from long use and reverence as in any other way. There are one or two further considerations in regard to the use of the word **טוֹב**. In the first place, we have precisely the same construction as here in Jacob's song

¹ I say nothing of the well-known archaism **וַיִּרְא** in i. 24, quoted three times in the Psalms, because I am chiefly dealing with the question of *common authorship*.

² An intermediate construction is found in Gen. xxxiii. 13 (JE).

(chap. xlix. 15), thus corroborating the idea that it is characteristic of the earlier Hebrew. And the use of the word טוב (good) in reference to natural phenomena, is far more characteristic of the Pentateuch than of the later books, where the idea of moral goodness or usefulness is predominant. JE has it in Gen. ii. 12 in precisely the same sense as it is used in chap. i. (P). Even in that sense the Pentateuch and pre-exilic books usually have טוב בעיני, where the generally admitted post-exilic books have טוב לפני—another indication that P is not a post-exilic work.

The next word we shall notice is “he divided” (ויבדל). Considerably more than half the times this word is found in the Hiphil or causative voice are in the Pentateuch. Elsewhere it only occurs in that voice in Kings and Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, besides twice in Isaiah, and twice in Ezekiel. It occurs several times in Gen. i., and in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. It does not appear in JE, but it appears *four times in Deuteronomy*, in iv. 41, x. 8, xix. 7, and xxix. 20 (Heb.). Now we are told that the Deuteronomist is in close affinity with the narrative of JE, on which the Deuteronomic narrative is said to be founded. Whence then comes this affinity in style between P and Deuteronomy? Is it more probable that P imitates the Deuteronomist, or that Gen. i. and Deuteronomy are by the same author? It is worthy of note that the Hiphil voice of the word in question only occurs in this chapter of Genesis, once in Exodus, once in Numbers,¹ and several times in Leviticus.

The next expression we have to notice is מתחת, followed by ל, meaning *under*, and denoting the position of an object relative to some other object above it. This phrase occurs twice in the Pentateuch, and three times in 1 Kings. Of the occasions in which it is found in the Pentateuch it occurs once in the passages assigned to P, and *once in those attributed to JE*, thus affording an indication of the common authorship of both of them. We might refer to the evident reference to the narrative of the creation in the use of the word רקיע (firmament) in Ezek. i. and Ps. xix.² But Professor Cheyne, with a single wave of the critical wand, has dismissed at least the argument from Ps. xix. for ever. In his “Bampton Lectures” he has boldly asserted the post-exilic origin of the whole Psalter.³ It may not be altogether superfluous to observe (1) that this theory depends entirely on the unsupported assertion of

¹ The word is found in the Niphal voice in Num. xvi. 21 with a reflexive signification.

² Also Ezek. x. 1, Dan. xii. 3, and Ps. cl. 1.

³ With some insignificant exceptions.

Professor Cheyne; (2) that in spite of the obvious temptation to suppress the awkward witness of the Psalter to the pre-exilic existence of the Law, he is here deserted by his brother English critics; and that (3) it is a little extraordinary that no authentic information should have come down to us concerning the hymns used in religious worship by so unique a people as the Jews, the more especially as such information has come down to us in considerable profusion in the case of other nations certainly not more remarkable in the world's history. But if Professor Cheyne is right, Ezekiel, the "father of Judaism," must have coined the word רָקִיעַ, and his dutiful son, the author of the Priestly Code, embodied it in his "dry and prosaic" account of the creation.

The word עֵשֶׂב (herbage) occurs thirty-three times in Scripture, of which fifteen, or very nearly half, are in the Pentateuch. Once more, save in the Pentateuch, it does not occur in any but the poetic books. It never once occurs in the later historical narratives (for in 2 Kings xix. 26 it comes in only as an extract from a prophecy of Isaiah). Therefore we have here yet another illustration of the "dry and formal" style of the priestly writer. Another instance of the arbitrary way in which the critical theories have been constructed is the fact that the word, besides occurring *four* times in Gen. i., occurs also in Gen. ii. 5. Ordinary persons would see in this a sign that Gen. i. and ii. are a consecutive narrative by one author. But the new criticism has decided that the extract from the priestly author ceases with the first half of chap. ii. 4—an assertion to which we shall presently recur—and that the second half of chap. ii. 4, and thence forward, up to the end of chap. iv., belongs to JE. But we have not yet done with עֵשֶׂב. It occurs again in iii. 18 (JE) and ix. 3 (P), and also in Exod. ix. 22, 25; and x. 12, 15 (JE). It will be found in Deut. xi. 15, where the same phrase, "herbage of the field," is used as in Gen. ii. 5, iii. 18, but in a connection which irresistibly suggests the narrative of creation in Gen. i. Lastly, it occurs in Deut. xxix. 22 (A.V. 23)—that is to say, it occurs alike in the supposed fused narrative of the Elohist and Jehovist, in Deuteronomy, and in the Priestly Code, under circumstances which strongly suggest identity of authorship, or, if not, at least the *priority of the Priestly Code*. But the fact that עֵשֶׂב is *never once* used outside the Pentateuch in a narrative passage appears something like a proof positive that it is an archaic word, which, as such, became eventually the exclusive property of poetry.

In verse 12 the word מִין (*kind* or *species*) is one of the words supposed to be characteristic of P, and therefore every

passage in which it occurs is unhesitatingly assigned to the post-exilic priestly author. We shall probably find hereafter that this hard-and-fast rule, rigidly adhered to, involves its framers in some unexpected difficulties. For the present, however, we content ourselves with remarking that on this principle the unexampled use of משפחה (family or tribe) in place of מין, in Gen. viii. 19, ought to lead to that verse being assigned to another author. But it is nevertheless unhesitatingly assigned to P. Moreover, the word מין occurs also in *Deuteronomy*.¹

In verse 17 the use of the word נתן (to give), in the sense of to *place* or *set*, is almost entirely confined to the Pentateuch. Yet it is found in Gen. xli. 42, 48, Numb. xv. 38 (JE), as well as in P, another indication of unity of authorship.

We come next to the word שרץ (verb and noun), verse 20. Out of the Pentateuch it only occurs once in the Psalms and once in Ezekiel. It occurs repeatedly in Genesis and Leviticus. But one of the passages is Exod. viii. 3 (A.V. vii. 28). This is assigned to JE.² The word also occurs once in Deuteronomy (xiv. 19). We may observe that if the word only occurs in Ezekiel and the post-exilic writers, it ought to be a *late* word. But, as if to refute this hypothesis, it slips in most naturally in JE's account of the rapid multiplication of the frogs in the history of the plagues. And it is also found in a passage of Deuteronomy *parallel to one in Levit. xi*. The inference is, once more, that it is an *early* word, that the books which contain it were written about the same time and under the same influence, and it survived in the later poetical literature alone.

In verses 20, 21, we meet with the expression נפש החיה ("the living soul"). With the article this expression occurs, so far as I have been able to ascertain, *only* in P. נפש חיה, without the article, occurs also in JE (chap. ii. 7, 19). But it also occurs *without* the article in chap. i. 24, 30 (assigned to P). The expression in either form rarely, if ever, occurs save in the account of the Creation and of the Flood.³ And the inference is that in both these accounts the writer, whether he be Moses or anyone else, is neither indebted to the Elohist, nor the

¹ Professor Driver, in his Introduction, has a curious note on this word. He quotes it repeatedly from P, and then proceeds, "hence Deut. xiv. 13, 14, 15, 18." But if P be posterior to Deuteronomy, how can the latter be deduced from the former?

² Professor Driver has made a slip in his Introduction here. He has assigned Exod. viii. 3 (following the numbering of the English version) to JE. But elsewhere he includes the passage (Introduction, p. 123), among those assigned to P.

³ Only in Ezek. xlvi. 9, outside the Pentateuch, as far as I have been able to discover.

Jehovist, nor the author of the Priestly Code, but to sundry Babylonian traditions handed down among the Jews either orally or in a written form. As a matter of fact, we *know* that this was so in regard to the Flood, for the same tradition, though in a different and early Babylonian shape, has recently been discovered. We shall see hereafter that the early chapters of Genesis stand apart from the rest of the narrative, even of Genesis itself, by reason of their marked archaic character. And, as we have seen, we have also some ground for concluding that much of the language in which the narrative is cast is almost as archaic as the narrative itself.

Both the verb and the substantive רמש (in the sense of creep, creeping thing) are seldom found out of the Pentateuch—never, once more, save in the poetic works.¹ In the great majority of instances in which they occur the passages are assigned to P. But it occurs twice in JE—Gen. vi. 7 and vii. 23. It is found once more in Deut. iv. 18, in a passage which irresistibly recalls the language of Gen. i. Once more, then, we are face to face with indications of a common authorship of the Pentateuch.

Lastly, the word כבש (subdue) supplies us with a singular instance of the weight to be attached to the new criticism. The word is a somewhat rare one altogether. It occurs only *three times* in the Pentateuch, once here, and twice in Numb. xxxii. In verse 29 of that chapter it is assigned to P, but in verse 22, where it occurs in *precisely the same collocation*, it is assigned to JE. Therefore, it is plain that in that passage *P is quoting JE*. But if the one author quotes the other, neither their matter nor their words are independent. Where, then, are the *criteria* in this passage which enable the critics to separate the matter of the one author from that of the other?

It will, I think, be seen that if so many passages can be adduced from one single chapter in Genesis to show how incomplete and one-sided the supposed infallible critical analysis is proved to be, we are amply entitled to ask Christian men not to be in such a hurry as they have been to imagine that criticism has said its last word upon the question. It is true that Professor Driver argues (Introduction, p. 124) that not the *occurrence* of a word, but the *frequency* of its occurrence, is the sign of a particular author. He instances the use of εὐθύς by St. Mark, and remarks that the word also occurs in St. Matthew and St. Luke. But he forgets that in the latter case we are dealing with the *known*, in the former with the

¹ It does occur, however, once, in 1 Kings iv. 13. But there it appears to be a reminiscence of Gen. i., such as would naturally occur to a mind familiar with its contents.

unknown.¹ If some critic were to arise and deal with St. Mark as Professor Driver and those of his school have dealt with the Pentateuch, the occurrence of the well-known phrase *καὶ εὐθύς* in a passage assigned to the original Mark (or Ur-Markus, as the Germans would call it), when that phrase had been distinctly set down as a characteristic of a second writer of, say, the fourth century A.D., would be utterly fatal to the theory. For the hypothesis is that JE and P are not only distinct, but so distinct that their styles cannot possibly be confounded. We should not, therefore, expect to find in the former expressions characteristic of the latter. But not only is this frequently the case with the language of JE as compared with that of P in the chapter we have been examining, but our examination has proved that there are many indications of a *common authorship of the whole Pentateuch*. It is imperative, therefore, that the whole question should be reinvestigated, and from a different and wider point of view. I venture to repeat my firm conviction that, when such an examination has been fully carried out, the present critical analysis of the Pentateuch will be abandoned.

J. J. LIAS.

ART. II.—ARMENIA.

CIVILIZED Europe is just now having its attention directed towards Armenia, and the utmost interest and pity are being felt for a people suffering sore persecution at the hands of the Mahommedan masters. It is an old story, Armenia having been the scene of such troubles for many years past. A system of unavowed persecution has been going on, with a view to crushing the spirit of the Armenian people, probably the strongest and most independent race now held in thrall by Turkey. Of late this persecution has driven the people into open revolt against their tyrants, and the first symptoms of disaffection have been met with the most cruel and unrelenting reprisals on the part of the Turkish Government. One result has been to call for concerted action from the leading Powers of Europe; and Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Austria, and Italy are all interested in putting an end to this great international and intolerable scandal. How long the struggle will last, and what the end shall be, it is impossible to say; but many things seem to point to the imminent disruption of the Turkish empire, and to the mystical drying up

¹ Professor Driver, too, in the passage to which I am referring, is dealing with the ordinary use of the common word *משפחה*. His argument will not apply to the uncommon words I have mentioned in the text.