

LANGUAGE AND STYLE

his begetting']. This is clear to anyone who is sensitive to the Hebrew idiom. In the genealogies from Adam to Noah and from Noah to Abraham, it would have been impossible to write anything else but *wayyōledh* and *'aḥrē hōlīdhō*; every Hebrew author would have had no option but to write thus and not otherwise. It is not a question of sources but of the general usages of the Hebrew tongue.

As for the past tense, in which it is permissible to use both *yāladh* and *hōlīdh*, all depends on the sequence of the verses. When a passage commences with *wayyiwwāledh* ['and he was born'] in the *Niph'al*, which has more affinity with the *Qal*, or when it has the *Qal* at the beginning with reference to the mother, for example, *yāledhā* ['she gave birth'], then the text is inclined to continue in the *Qal*, employing *yāladh* also for the masculine. But when the text opens with the verb in the *Hiph'il*, for instance, *wayyōledh*, or with the substantive *tōledhōth*, which is related to the *Hiph'il*, it continues in the *Hiph'il* even in the past tense, using *hōlīdh*. (I do not wish to bore you by quoting all the verses relevant to the subject; you can examine them by yourselves). Thus the whole position becomes clear. We are not dealing with linguistic idiosyncrasies peculiar to various sources, but with general rules of the language, which apply equally to all writers and all books.

A second example. The concept of *making a covenant* between God and man is expressed, according to the documentary hypothesis, in source P by the idiom *הקים ברית* *hēqīm berīth* ['He established a covenant'] (sometimes by *נתן ברית* *nāthan berīth* ['He gave a covenant']), and in other sources by the usual phrase *כרת ברית* *kārath berīth* [literally, 'He cut a covenant']. This thesis is accepted as an unquestionable fact, and all who are engaged in Biblical research reiterate it, one after the other, without ever thinking of testing it and seeing whether or no it corresponds to the actual textual position. Yet this test is by no means superfluous. If we examine the passages carefully, we shall see that the idioms *hēqīm berīth* and *kārath berīth* are not identical in meaning. 'To cut a covenant' signifies to give a certain assurance; 'to establish a covenant' connotes the actual fulfilment of an assurance that had been given at the time of the making of the covenant. They thus refer to two different matters, and are not different expressions for the

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