

suppose that in such an immense compilation as the Tetrateuch there should be certain parallel traditions, side by side or interwoven, each with its individual characteristics. In the telling, elements of parallel traditions may have been interwoven to form one narrative, and this may furthermore by its juxtaposition with other narratives have been furnished with certain genealogical and chronological data, connecting it with legends with which it may perhaps not always have been related. Parallel traditions may have been retained by the narrator with all their variations, for repetition, especially slightly varied repetition, is a popular stylistic trait, and repetition lays greater emphasis on that which is repeated. The narrator as well as the alert listener enjoys the minute variations that make reiteration more than a mere mechanical repetition. And if this is true of a dream or a scene or an episode, it is also true to a certain degree of an individual narrative where some feature is emphasized as important by such a repetition. It must be admitted that Genesis and Exodus-Numbers contain texts that are parallel and that have fallen into the hands of the editors of the Tetrateuch through individual paths of transmission. And it is just as indisputable that this same Tetrateuch contains texts where an older basis is sometimes apparent behind the present form. The merit of having established this belongs to literary criticism, but it is no more than one might expect at the outset of such a work as the Tetrateuch, that at one and the same time is a compilation and a revision of entirely different traditions. So far then it is possible to follow literary criticism: the material in the first four books of the Bible is heterogeneous, and the work as a whole presupposes a revision of the material in accordance with certain points of view.

On the other hand one can and must doubt whether the method by which literary criticism finds difficulties in the text and afterwards solves them is the right one. In other words one may doubt the correctness of the fundamental view and the methods of literary criticism.

(a) Its fundamental view. The narratives in the Hexateuch contain so many glaring inconsistencies, duplicate features,

and contradictions, that one author, Moses or Ezra or whoever one chooses to name, cannot be responsible for it in its present form. Three or four or still more written sources must have been combined by various editors who have attempted the impossible and have sought by means of a mechanical fusion to create as well as they could one continuous account of time from its beginning until the constitution of the Israelite community. Even warm adherents of this fundamental view have recognized the improbability of this mode of procedure ascribed to the creators of our Pentateuch. However, if one does have misgivings of a fundamental nature, one will have to let oneself 'eines Besseren belehren', among other things by Tatian's harmony of the Gospels.<sup>1</sup>

(b) Its methods. The use of different names for God and the difference in style betrays the different written sources. Parallel accounts are distributed among the sources in accordance with criteria of style and contents; accounts with inconsistencies are analysed and decomposed, the different elements are distributed between the different sources, editorial connecting links are pointed out where their presence is considered possible or necessary, and after a thorough analysis the related sections are joined together and are then reconstructed to such an extent as the gentle treatment accorded them by the editors makes possible. Finally, a special character is ascribed to them as, for instance, naïve, popular, having anthropomorphic expressions about God, or marked by supernaturalistic theology, sober erudition, interest in chronology, or by reflective theology, cultural superiority, prophetic influence.

The literary critical work on Gen. 6-9 will be so familiar to readers of this chapter that there is no need for a detailed discussion of it. We will however quote a few things from Gunkel's commentary on Genesis.<sup>2</sup> From him we learn that a distinction of sources between J and P in these chapters is one of the masterpieces of modern criticism.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the beginner can learn the method by which the distinction between sources must (1) be carried out by studying this pericope. First one

<sup>1</sup> Thus expressed by Beer in his commentary on Exodus, 1939, p. 5, *Vorwort*

<sup>2</sup> References to 5th ed., 1922      <sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 137