

something that had been noticed by many people through the years, and had been discussed by the early church fathers: it was the fact that sometimes the Pentateuch uses the name Elohim which we translate as “God” for a chapter or two and sometimes it uses the name Jehovah for a chapter or two, and then sometimes it will use one for a verse or two and then the other. This had already been discussed by some of the early church fathers who noticed it.

I do not know why we need to make so much of “Astruc’s clue” as if he had made a great discovery, but it so happened that the movement of the higher criticism began shortly afterward, and it laid great stress on this variation of names for God which Astruc stressed in his book and consequently he is given the credit or blame for starting the higher criticism. Astruc never questioned that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, but actually declared it. He insisted that Moses was the author of the book of Genesis, and Genesis is as far as he went in his study. He said that Moses was the author of Genesis, but he pointed out that Moses was not with Noah in the Ark and Moses was not with Jacob in Egypt. So he asked a question that we ourselves can ask: where did Moses get his information?

If you want to believe that God directly revealed everything in Genesis to Moses, I have no objection to your believing it, but there is no evidence of it. The Scripture never says God did so, and I do not see any reason why we would have to hold that position. In fact, we have evidence that the Israelites knew about the Patriarchs before Moses even began to write, and it hardly seems to me to be probable that God dictated the book of Genesis to Moses, though God certainly could have done that if He chose. It seems to me to be altogether probable that Moses got this information some other way.

Perhaps there was tradition among the Israelites. They may have told these stories over and over, and passed them on by word of mouth. When Moses began to write the fundamental law of the Israelites, perhaps he took these stories which were passed on by word of mouth, and from the great mass of stories God enabled him to select certain true elements for his book. Perhaps the Holy Spirit led him in his selection of the story of creation, of the flood, and of the