

It is usually stated that the style of P, in contradistinc-
tion to that of the other sources, is cold, dry and jejune; it is
meticulous in respect of

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details and shows a fondness for stereotyped phrases, which are constantly re-iterated in the identical form. In truth, the existence of these characteristics in the sections referred to P is to a certain extent an indisputable fact; whereas the style of the sections ascribed to J, for instance, or for that matter also to E, is clear and vivid, colourful and full of life; it is invariably marked by a charm of its own. But let us not be deceived by appearances. Let us not forget that to P are attributed those very sections that by their nature are necessarily dull and arid. How, for example, is it possible to infuse vitality and the distinctive charm of fine writing into genealogical records like those of the 'book of the history of Adam' or the list of Shem's descendants? On the other hand, the limited number of narrative sections that are customarily allotted to P show the vividness and grace of diction that characterize the narratives attributed to J and E. Conversely, in the few instances where genealogical lists are ascribed to J, we find the same frigid, insipid and schematic manner of writing peculiar to the P genealogies. In a word, change of style depends on change of subject-matter, not on difference of sources.

I shall not prolong the discussion. I believe that you have been convinced by now that all the disparities of which we have spoken today do not point to the existence of specific documents like J, E or P, and that they can all be explained simply by means of firmly established rules of the language, equally valid for all Hebrew writers and all Hebrew books.

It follows, therefore, that the Second Pillar likewise failed to stand up to examination. From afar it appeared as though hewn out of granite; when we drew near to it and touched it with our fingers, we realized that this stone was no better than that of the First Pillar, and that like the latter it disintegrated of its own accord at a finger's touch. The Second Pillar, too, lies in ruins.