

Discrepancies and Duplications unobserved by ordinary reader unless
Critic calls them to his attention

The Bible as Literature by Prof. Richard G. Moulton, Rev. John P. Peters, Prof. A. B. Bruce, and others. (T. Y. Crowell & Co., New York) 1896

Chapter II "Literary Aspects of Genesis" by Rev. John P. Peters, Ph.D. of St. Michael's Church, New York

p. 27 There are two distinct narratives, one legal and theological in tone, careful and precise, full of genealogies, exalted in its spiritual conceptions, but generally stiff and unattractive from the literary standpoint; the other, attractive and often extremely beautiful in its style, but maive and primitive in its conceptions, expressing the imaginings of the folk as over against the thought of the scholar. Our of these two marratives

p. 28 in the main our author composed his work, joining them together in a manner suited to his time, but alien to our present literary methods, not concerned too carefully to conceal the joints, or harmonize minor disagreements and inconsistencies; and it must be confessed that his work has been well done. The ordinary reader even of to-day does not observe the discrepancies and duplications, unless the critic calls them to his attention, and the composite work has a character and charm of its own through its very differences of style and conception superior to that of either narrative by itself. Out of the one the author has fashioned the framework, the bones of his new creation, and out of the other the flesh and blood. So he has made a finished and well-rounded whole, a true artistic creation, entitling him to the name of author and not merely compiler. To quote a homely proverb,

"'Tis neither butter nor bread,
But the way it is spread."

Critics have pointed out that the second of the two narratives described above, the folk narrative, is itself composite, composed of two stories joined together into one at a still earlier date. They are, however, so similar in tone and so closely joined

p. 29 together that it is no easy task to separate them. There are further a few documents or episodes which may have come to our author in one or the other of the two main documents, but which are manifestly separate compositions older than the narratives in which they are imbedded. Such are the poems scattered here and there through the book, the "Sword Song of Lamech" (iv. 23,24), the "Blessing of Isaac" (xxvii.27-29, 39,40), and above all the "Blessing of Jacob"(xlix. 2-27), none of which, unfortunately, are printed as poetry in the authorized version of the English Bible.