

Style

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Cassuto, U., The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press) 1941, First Eng. ed., 1961

p. 59 If there are any here who still have doubts on the subject, and find it hard to imagine that in a unitary work divergent concepts of God like those mentioned should be conjointly reflected, I shall give them an example drawn from outside Biblical literature. In the Divina Commedia of Dante Alighieri, next to the most spirited and colourful passages, full of wondrous tales that point every moment to the direct intervention of the Deity in human affairs, there are doctrinal passages, corresponding in their character and conception of God to the sections attributed to source P, just as the former passages bear comparison with the sections assigned to J and E. Nevertheless Dante was one, and his Commedia was one.

p. 65-66 Let us pass on to another subject - the differences in family and communal customs. In this instance, too, we shall choose one of the most typical examples, one that is also considered among the most conclusive. It is usually stated - and every scholar repeats the assertions of his predecessors without thinking of investigating the matter in the least - that in source P it is the father who names the new-born son, whereas in J and E it is the mother who gives the name; this indicates that the documents emanated from different environments where different customs prevailed. P originated in a place and time that gave the right to name the child to the father, whilst the other sources were written in a place and time that bestowed this privilege on the mother.

When we examine the sections ascribed to J and E, we see at once that in most cases, it is true, the name is given by the mother; nevertheless there is a considerable number of exceptions to this rule - fourteen exceptions to nineteen or twenty examples that conform to the rule. The number of exceptions