

meaning of their simple modes of worship, much less obtain accurate ideas concerning their theogony. Hence in dealing with this class of people we are compelled to make frequent conditional statements, if we would be on the side of veracity. The little word *perhaps* is of frequent occurrence in the vocabulary of the historian, if he desires his statements to receive proper credence, and especially so, when he is dealing with uncivilized peoples, and those who have left scanty records of their acts and deeds.

Thus we are enabled to see at a glance a few of the elements of a general nature that enter into a study of man's conception of God. There are many other special elements that enter into a special study of specific religions, local in their nature, but none the less important and necessary to be considered

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## THE DIVINE ELEMENT IN THE EARLY STORIES OF GENESIS.

By WILLIAM R. HARPER,  
The University of Chicago.

*The uniqueness of the section.—This section an organic part of at least two larger works.—The material of Gen. 1-12.—This material the outgrowth and therefore a part of the divinely ordered history of Israel.—The marked differences found in comparison of these stories with similar outside material.—Practical agreement between this material and the results of science.—Evidence furnished by monotheistic character of the material.—The markedly prophetic character of Gen. 1-12.—The importance of the predictive element in these chapters.*

In the preceding article an effort was made to present the facts and considerations which were thought to bear upon the human element in these stories. These having been considered, it now devolves upon us to take up those factors which together constitute what may be called the divine element in these chapters. It will be helpful if in this connection we recall the statement of the question given in a former number. In this statement it was shown that there were really two questions, the first relating to the origin of the narratives, the second relating to the value and character of the facts narrated. Has there entered into the composition of these narratives some external, superhuman, supernatural influence which has left upon them a clear and unmistakable impress? Granting that there has been present such a divine influence, what has been its method? Was the knowledge of these facts imparted by a special revelation, or did the divine influence limit itself to the guidance and direction of the author, as he ascertained for himself in whatever manner possible the material here collected, as he interpreted according to principles the events which were transpiring about him?

If, now, we grant the divine origin in any sense, and decide from a study of the facts that the material is something other than literal history, or that from a scientific point of view it is

imperfect or inaccurate, how may these two things be reconciled? Perhaps the whole matter is involved in the question as to the difference between truth and fact.

1. *The uniqueness of the section* may fairly be urged as favoring, if it does not prove, the hypothesis that the narratives are, to say the least, extraordinary. This uniqueness has been enlarged upon in a former article<sup>1</sup> and need not be further considered.

2. *This section is an organic part of at least two larger works.*—No one will deny the intimate relationship of these chapters with the remainder of the pentateuch or hexateuch. This relationship is not only literary, but logical. The prophetic stories found here<sup>2</sup> form a part of the prophetic document which continues through the entire hexateuch. The priest narratives<sup>3</sup> also form a part of the priest document which runs through the whole hexateuch. If, now, the hexateuch as a whole is in any sense divine, then these portions of it must share this divine element whatever that may be. If, on the other hand, these portions are not divine, we may reasonably infer that the divine character may be denied the whole hexateuch.

It is evident, therefore, that the question we have to deal with is larger than it at first appeared to be. It is not the character of the earlier stories of Genesis that is in debate, but that of the entire hexateuch. Two parallel cases may be cited; one more limited, the other more extended. There are many who accept without questioning the narrative portions of the Books of Kings which relate to the prophets Elijah and Elisha, and reject altogether the stories found in the Book of Jonah. In this they are guilty of great inconsistency. Even a cursory examination of the stories of Elijah, Elisha, and Jonah shows that they are of the same general character; that they belong to the same age; that the literary style in which they are given is the same; that the narratives come from the same period, a period comparatively late.

If, now, the stories of Elijah and Elisha are authentic and to

<sup>1</sup> BIBLICAL WORLD, September, 1894, page 185

<sup>2</sup> BIBLICAL WORLD, October, pages 266 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> BIBLICAL WORLD, October, pages 266 et seq.

be accepted, so likewise are those of Jonah. If there is reason for rejecting the stories of Jonah, the same reasons will compel one to reject the stories of Elijah and Elisha. Whatever view is held of a part must be accepted of the whole. This same line of argument applies also to the Old Testament as compared with the New. As has been said so many times, the two are inseparable; they are bound together by ties which may not be broken. If there is a divine element in the New Testament, that same element will be found in the Old Testament which lies at the basis of the New, and which was always recognized as divine by the writers of the New. These cases are strictly parallel with the case in hand. If there is any divine element in the five books of Moses, it is to be found in these chapters.

3. *The material of Gen. 1-12 is preparatory and fundamental* to the whole plan of salvation as revealed by God in the Old and New Testaments. The first six of the many steps in this plan are found in the chapters under consideration. These are (1) the account of the original state of innocence and the fall therefrom; (2) the promise given of an ultimate victory over sin; (3) the selection of Noah that through him there might come comfort to the world; (4) the destruction of the world that once more man might have opportunity to develop; (5) the selection of Shem to be the special medium of divine revelation to the world; (6) the narrowing of the line in Abraham.

The steps that immediately follow are those represented in sacred history by the names Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Moses, David, and by the organization of the royal order, the priestly order, the prophetic order. It is only necessary to note that the plan which runs through the entire Bible would have no beginning, and would be utterly inexplicable without these earliest steps. If such a plan exists, and if in it there is anything of the divine element, we must surely find this divine element also in the preparatory stages which sustain so important a relation to what follows. One need only make the effort to conceive this plan without the earlier portion of it, to understand how impossible is such a conception. If, therefore, one is willing to deny the existence of such a plan, or to deny the divine character of it,

he may consistently throw aside the divine element in these chapters; otherwise, he is logically compelled to accept the divine character of these chapters as well as of the remaining portions of the Old and New Testament which relate to this plan.

4. *This material is the outgrowth and therefore a part of the divinely ordered history of Israel.*—This consideration is one which should rightly have a volume for its proper presentation. Even to attempt to present it in a few paragraphs seems absurd. There may, however, be suggested the outline of the argument. (1) The history of Israel is a specially ordered history—a history in which God has manifested himself more clearly than in any other. He controls all history. Manifestations of him appear in all history, but in a special sense he has seen fit, for good reasons, to make a revelation of himself in the history of the chosen people. Is this premise capable of scientific demonstration? We answer, yes. A careful study of the facts of Israelitish history, of the character of Israelitish people, and of a comparison of this with other histories, furnishes data which, as we believe, are inexplicable upon any other hypothesis. The man who believes that there is a divine element in the Scripture record will naturally believe that there is a special divine element in the history which lies back of that record. It ought to be clear, however, that the more fundamental question is as to the inspiration of the history; in other words, the presence in the history of a special supernatural element. For if this be true, the inspiration of the records which form a part of the history would naturally follow. (2) It seems upon the whole most probable that we are to find in the prophetic activity of the times of Elijah, Elisha, and Jonah the more immediate occasion of the presentation in *writing* of the prophetic stories which form a part of Gen. 1–12. This does not mean that the events which are here described do not belong to the various times to which they are attributed. This does not mean that there were not in existence long before the times of Elijah, Elisha, and Jonah, oral traditions and written traditions which include these stories. It is understood, however, that the present literary form does not

date back to an earlier period than that mentioned; that it was in this period that men began to see the importance of placing in written form the traditions of the past; and particularly that at this time men began to have the prophetic ideas which controlled the selection of material and moulded the form in which it should be placed. The facts narrated had been known for centuries. The truth which these facts as selected were to teach, in the form in which they are presented, is largely new truth revealed from God in this period of great prophetic activity. (3) It is quite certain that we are to find in the priestly activity which had its origin long before Moses, which was, however, organized and regulated by Moses, and which developed from century to century after the death of Moses, the source of the priest narratives which these chapters contain. What do we mean by this? That as the outgrowth of the Levitical system, which did not spring up in a night, but was the result of the development of many centuries, there came to exist a certain priestly conception. Hence, in order to establish it, and in order to develop it still further, one of its representatives goes back to the beginning of the world, and, selecting from the traditions which had been handed down those which will enable him to accomplish his particular purpose, furnishes us with what we have found to exist in these so-called priestly chapters. (4) This material, as has been seen, is *extra-Israelitish* and *ante-Israelitish*; that is, the events narrated took place outside of the nation Israel, and, indeed, before Israel was known. Nevertheless, in the form in which the material is here presented and interpreted, it is in the truest sense *Israelitish*. The conceptions which led to the selection of these stories and the omission of others, are Israelitish conceptions. The coloring which every story shows is an Israelitish coloring. The atmosphere which they breathe is Israelitish. Whatever, therefore, one has to say about the Israelitish régime must be said of these narratives. (5) Whence, now, came the purpose and spirit of these writers? To what may we attribute all this, so different from anything which is found in other nations? The logical answer seems to be, to some divine influence which guided and controlled the his-

tory of the sacred people. The history and the writings are inseparable. Whatever we say of one we must say of another. There is no satisfactory explanation of the material on any other hypothesis.

(5) *The marked differences found in comparison of these stories with similar outside material.* Our readers remember how regularly these differences have been presented in connection with the consideration of each story. Taking the stories together, the following assertions may confidently be made: (1) They are sober, not fanciful; (2) they are historical, not legendary or mythical; (3) they are monotheistic, not polytheistic; (4) they exhibit a purpose at every step; (5) they are employed in each case to teach religious ideas of the highest order; (6) they exert an ennobling influence upon thought and life,—an influence beyond all calculation. The similarities between the Scripture stories and the outside stories were many and striking. This indicated beyond doubt a relationship. But whatever relationship may exist, there is no hypothesis other than that of the divine factor in these stories which does not exist elsewhere, that is sufficient under all the circumstances to explain the dissimilarities, which are far more numerous and more striking than were the similarities. One may make strong effort to explain the facts otherwise, but after every such attempt he will, if candid, be compelled to acknowledge the presence of some external objective influence which so permeates and controls the composition of these narratives as to lift them high above all others. If this is not the divine influence, what is it?

It is at this point that the origin of the stories deserves consideration. The question has already been considered. The Hebrew stories, in their outer form, are *sisters* of the similar stories found in other literatures. They all come from a common source. But now the spirit and purpose which are found in the Hebrew stories, the marks of dissimilarity, constitute the divine element. The genetic relationship with outside material cannot be denied. This explanation recognizes the human element; it also recognizes the divine element.

6. *There is, after all, practical agreement between this material and the results of science.*—When everything has been said that can be said, when the differences have been indicated and given all the importance due to them, the lack of agreement is comparatively slight. When the circumstances are considered it must be confessed that the agreement is phenomenal. No such agreement is found in any other ancient religious document. When the points of difference that certainly exist are examined, what do we find? (1) These differences in every case are outside of the proper sphere of revelation. They have to do with subjects in reference to which, it is universally considered, revelation has nothing to do. If revelation had given aid in this sphere, it would have brought reproach upon itself. But this is not all. (2) These differences affect in no way whatever the value of the truth revealed. Here again care must be taken not to confound two entirely distinct things, namely, truth and fact. There may be different and widely varying accounts of a particular event. Indeed, if there are different accounts they will of necessity be at variance one with another. But the great truth which is represented in the event, which, in the providence of God, the event was intended to teach, is something altogether independent of the details of the event. The time has come for the cessation of arbitrary and superficial efforts to reconcile religion and science. Such efforts are always productive of harmful results. The same thing is true of efforts to reconcile different Scripture statements one with another. These statements were not intended to be reconciled. Nothing is gained by reconciling them except possibly some technical archaeological or historical point. The great truth contained in the statement holds good in spite of variations of detail.

Everything considered, therefore, no argument against the divine element in this material is to be discovered in lack of agreement between its contents and the results of science. The facts properly interpreted may, on the other hand, be regarded as weighing in favor of the existence of such a divine element.

7. *The monotheistic character of the material furnishes evidence*

which deserves consideration in this connection. It is true that there appeared to be indications here and there of a polytheistic element. These indications, however, are merely the relics of what was once a polytheistic, and not the evidence of an existing polytheism. They are like the case endings, which, though once regularly used in Hebrew, appear now only in certain rare and archaic forms. The evidence, on the other hand, of the monotheistic spirit is everywhere most striking, not only in language but in spirit. It is possible perhaps to explain the development of the monotheistic cult from a lower polytheistic cult without the intervention of the superhuman. This would be difficult to do, but it would be still more difficult to explain the existence of the monotheistic in Israelitish tradition, when on every side the polytheistic prevails. There is undoubtedly development, but no theory of natural development, like that of Wellhausen, will satisfactorily explain the facts which are presented in the Hebrew material. One does not see how this unique element, in itself so distinct and different, is to be explained on any other hypothesis than that of the existence of the divine element.

8. *The markedly prophetic character of Gen. 1-12 must attract the attention of all who study it.* The word prophetic is here used in its broadest sense. Every utterance is selected and constructed to teach a great religious truth, or to explain the development of religious life. From this point of view nothing is superficial, nothing is lacking. The religious ideas which are thus promulgated when contrasted with the lack of teaching found in parallel stories, and indeed with their lack of purpose, are in themselves facts of no uncertain meaning. It is barely possible that a human soul without inspiration from above may have created such ideas. One must, however, inquire what there was in the atmosphere of Palestine, in the blood of the Hebrew nation, to lead the Israelitish prophets to such ideas of religious conception, when their neighbors and relatives on every side remained so sunken. The hypothesis of the divine factor working in the souls of these men satisfactorily explains everything.

9. *The predictive element in these chapters is perhaps the most important element.* It is understood that prediction is

only one element of prophecy; that it is not the most important element of prophecy. It is at the same time true that the presence of prediction is the strongest possible evidence of the divine element. It is true that the basis of prediction is the knowledge of general laws rather than a prognostication of specific events. But it is at the same time true that the declaration beforehand of what is more or less specific on the basis of principles is strong evidence of something higher than human. The section of Genesis under consideration includes the beginning and the basis of all prediction: the protoevangelium (3:15), which contains in germ the whole future of the human race, the declaration of comfort which Noah is to bring (5:29), the characterization of the families descending from Noah (9:21-27). It is not enough in answer to this position to say that these declarations are from a late date. We may admit that the literary form of each and every one is later than the time of David; but in admitting this it remains true (1) that the essential idea of each goes back to the time to which it is declared to belong, and (2) that even if this essential idea were as late as the time of David it contains in epitome so much of the future history of the human race, that one cannot deny its divine origin. These predictions appear all the more significant when we remember that in no other sacred literature is there anything of this kind.

Such, in brief, is the line of argument which, if space had permitted, could have been enlarged indefinitely. The purpose has been simply to suggest to the reader points for his own fuller consideration. Some of the points suggested may be emphasized more strongly than others. Some of them, taken individually, may not be thought to have great weight. But it will be noticed that the points presented do not hang one upon the other. In other words, the argument is not to be compared to a chain, and consequently only as strong as the weakest link in the chain. It is rather a rope, each line or argument, combined with all the others, contributing to the strength of the whole.

In conclusion, therefore, it would seem that there is as sure evidence of the divine element as of the human. The existence

of one is as certain as that of the other. It is also true that the relation of the divine is fundamental. The important fact, and one which should not be overlooked, is that the divine element is the force which regulates and controls the whole. It remains now to present a constructive theory which will bring together the human and the divine elements and show their relationship to each other. This task will be attempted in the next article, which will be the last of the series.

## The Bible in the Theological Seminary.

SHALL THE OLD TESTAMENT BE USED AS A MEDIUM OF  
CHRISTIAN TEACHING?

By PROFESSOR GEORGE H. SCHODDE,  
Capital University.

It is, to say the least, a genuine surprise that a member of a theological faculty in Germany should seriously defend the proposition that students of theology should not be required to study Hebrew and the Old Testament in the original. It is at first sight, at any rate, equally astounding that teachers of religion in that "land of authors and thinkers" should propose that the study of the Old Testament be excluded from the curriculum of religious training in the schools. And yet both of these propositions have been made; they have been for months, and are being yet, discussed in all seriousness by scholars and religious periodicals in the Fatherland. The first proposition was made by Dr. Schwally, of Strassburg, in a review of a little Hebrew grammar in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, No. 9. He says there: "The entire Hebrew school literature would disappear at one blow if the leaders in this department could come to see that it is entirely unnecessary and superfluous to vex and perplex (*quälen*) young theological students with the study of the Hebrew language. In order to understand the political and religious history of Israel, we need nothing more than translations. The æsthetic worth of this literature is amply reflected in the translation of Luther, who has, *e. g.*, in the Psalms, surpassed even the original. Those, however, who want to learn the original tongue for the purpose of understanding all the better the Old Testament writings, have the time and the opportunity to do so at the universities. In this case it is much better that the student enter without any knowledge of the subject than that he have distorted and false ideas."

The editors of this model critical journal, Professors Harnack and Schürer, added a note to this announcement—something done by them but very rarely—to the effect that they felt themselves constrained to express their dissent in this matter. Naturally others did the same, the most notable article in reply being undoubtedly that of Dobschütz, of Jena, in the organ of liberal theology in Germany, the *Christliche Welt*, of Leipzig (Nb. 30), in which he emphasized especially the importance of the lexical study of the Old Testament for the understanding of the New. In this article, among other notable statements, is also found the admission that the idea of Schwally, that the study of the Old Testament in the original should be left entirely to the specialist, is a view entertained by quite a number of other biblical scholars in the theological faculties of Germany.