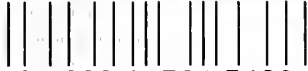


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THE PENTATEUCH

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# THE BOOKS OF THE PENTATEUCH

THEIR ORIGIN, CONTENTS  
AND SIGNIFICANCE

BY

FREDERICK CARL EISELEN

Professor of Old Testament Interpretation  
in Garrett Biblical Institute



THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN  
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

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## PREFACE

To some it may appear presumptuous on the part of the author to offer to Bible students a new Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament. The ground has been covered often, even by English-speaking scholars, and, what is far more significant, has been covered well. To mention but a few books in English: the student with adequate preparation may turn to the standard work by the late Professor Driver, or to the admirable Introduction of Professor Cornill; the student interested in a more popular presentation of the subject will find satisfactory guides in the Introductions of Professors Bennett, McFadyen, and G. B. Gray. And yet the author has felt for some time that there is room for another Introduction—an Introduction as complete, comprehensive, and scholarly as the works of Driver and Cornill, but written in less technical or more popular language and style.

The aim and purpose of the author to supply this want will explain some characteristics of the present work. Few abbreviations are used and relatively few footnotes are given. Whenever possible, reference is made to books written in English, and preference is given to books or periodicals which may be expected to be within reach of students removed from large libraries. The wisdom of using in the place of the name "Jehovah," found in the American Revised Version, the more accurate—though probably not original—form, "Yahweh," may be

questioned; but the author decided in favor of the latter in order to avoid the confusion that might result from the use of "Jehovah" in the body of the discussion and of the other name in quotations from authors preferring the latter; only in quotations from American Revised Version the more familiar form has been retained.

On questions regarding which scholars are not in agreement the author tries to state his own view and to present the reasons upon which his view is based. And it may be stated in passing that he holds his views not because they agree with the views of other scholars, but simply because, to his way of thinking, they offer the most satisfactory explanation of all the facts in the case. At the same time he endeavors to be fair in presenting the arguments used in support of divergent opinions, for he believes that every student should have the opportunity of estimating for himself the value of the arguments and of drawing his own conclusions.

In using a work of this character the student is sometimes tempted to confine his study to the book on Introduction and to neglect the study of the biblical text. This is a serious mistake. No one can understand and appreciate the weakness or strength of an argument unless he makes constant use of the book in which the facts upon which the argument is based are found. Therefore, the author would urge the student to base his study upon the biblical text and to use the Introduction simply as a guide to a clearer understanding of the facts presented in the Bible.

It should further be noted that a work of this kind cannot undertake a detailed interpretation of the message of a book. It introduces the student to the book and the book to the student; and after furnishing the introduction,



which is essential for an adequate comprehension of the message, it urges him to pursue a more detailed study of the contents.

The present volume is the first in a series of four volumes devoted to the Old Testament. In the discussion the arrangement of the Old Testament books in the Hebrew Bible is followed. Thus, the first volume deals with the Books of the Pentateuch; the second will deal with the books included among the Prophets in the Jewish Canon, and the third with the Writings. The fourth volume will be in two parts: the first will discuss the formation of the Old Testament Canon and the condition and transmission of the Hebrew Text; the second will consider the proper place of the Old Testament in the light of the conclusions of modern scholarship reflected in the preceding volumes.

The wisdom of devoting four chapters of this volume to a consideration of the arguments in favor of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch may be doubted by some, but the author believes that there are still multitudes of serious Bible students who need and are entitled to a fair and full discussion of these arguments.

Whether the student finds himself in agreement with the conclusions of the author or not, he should remember that the author has been prompted by the desire to know the truth and to present the truth apprehended by him in such a manner that the Bible student may be led to a deeper and truer appreciation of the vital, divine character of the message of the Old Testament books. How well he has succeeded in this sincere and earnest attempt the reader and student must decide.

FREDERICK CARL EISELEN.

Evanston, Illinois,



CHAPTER I

SCOPE AND HISTORY OF OLD TESTAMENT  
INTRODUCTION



## CHAPTER I

### SCOPE AND HISTORY OF OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION

**Scope of Old Testament Introduction.** The Old Testament is not a single book, the work of one man, but a library consisting of many books. These books were written by many authors, at different times and under varying circumstances. At first they existed and circulated separately, and during this period of independent existence some of them underwent considerable modifications or received additions of various kinds. But gradually they were brought together to form the collection now known as the Old Testament.

During the centuries of separate existence and later, as parts of the canon of Sacred Scriptures, the books were copied and recopied until, after the invention of printing, they assumed printed form. In the course of the frequent copyings the text suffered more or less serious corruptions. Consequently, in different localities and at different times, attempts were made to remove these errors and to restore the text to its pristine purity.

With the exception of a few small portions, the Old Testament books were written in Hebrew; and in this language they were read for several centuries. As the result of the dispersion of thousands of Jews among Greek-speaking peoples a demand arose, even before the opening of the Christian era, for a translation of the

Jewish Sacred Books into Greek. The substitution of Aramaic for Hebrew as the vernacular of Palestine was responsible for early translations or paraphrases into Aramaic. The spread of Christianity, with its emphasis on the Old Testament, caused similar demands to be made by peoples speaking other tongues. To meet these demands the Old Testament writings, indorsed and adopted by the Christian Church, were translated into numerous languages and dialects.

To trace these various fortunes of the Old Testament as a whole and of its constituent parts is not only of interest, but also of the greatest value for an adequate understanding and appreciation of both contents and teaching. It is the function of Old Testament Introduction to take the Bible student over this ground and to furnish him the general information that will make possible a proper understanding of the thought and message of the book. Old Testament Introduction, therefore, may be defined as the scientific study of the origin, original form, general contents, and intended significance of the Old Testament writings, their collection into the canon, and their transmission from the earliest times to the present.<sup>1</sup>

Old Testament Introduction is commonly treated under two heads: (1) General Introduction, and (2) Special Introduction. With this arrangement, General Introduction considers the Old Testament as a whole and has to do (*a*) with the setting apart of the books into the collec-

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly it was customary to discuss a much greater variety of subjects under the head of Introduction, such as the language of the Old Testament, hermeneutics, history, geography, archæology, etc. There is, however, at present, quite general agreement on limiting the study to the subjects enumerated above.

tion called the Old Testament; in other words, with the extent, origin, and growth of the Old Testament *canon*; (b) with the writing and transmission of the books in this canon, the history of Hebrew MSS., recensions, translations, revisions, etc.; in other words, with the condition and transmission of the Old Testament *text*. Special Introduction deals with the separate books of which the Old Testament consists, and discusses their authenticity, integrity, authorship, contents, design, plan, form, style, date, and other questions relating to their origin.

The division into General Introduction and Special Introduction, though convenient, is open to criticism, because neither canonicity nor the condition of the text can be adequately discussed apart from a study of the separate books. Setting aside, then, the above division, the subjects commonly included in Introduction may be arranged under three heads: (1) Study of the origin, original form, general contents and intended value of the separate Old Testament books. (2) Study of the setting apart of these books into the collection known as the Old Testament Canon. (3) Study of the text of the Old Testament and its fortunes from the time of the autographs to the present.

To these three subjects may be added (4): A consideration of the significance of the Old Testament in the light of modern knowledge. During the past century or two the Old Testament has been subjected to tests of various kinds. What are the results of these investigations? What is their bearing on the place and significance of the Old Testament in the thought and life of to-day? Or, to put it in another way, What should be the attitude of the thinking man to-day toward the Old Testament? Many demand an answer to these questions before they

will undertake a study of the book. It seems proper, therefore, to consider, as a part of Introduction, the results of scientific investigation, critical inquiry, archæological research, and the comparative study of religions in their relation to the Old Testament, and their bearing upon the trustworthiness, uniqueness, and permanent value of the Old Testament writings.

**History of Old Testament Introduction.** Biblical Introduction is a comparatively recent development. True, some of the early church fathers<sup>2</sup> discussed questions—linguistic, geographical, historical, etc.—which are properly a part of Introduction, but no complete treatise was produced. In the fifth century the Syrian monk Adrian wrote an *Introduction to the Divine Scriptures*, and in the following century similar books appeared; but none of these, though containing valuable introductory material, can be called Introductions in the modern sense. Such treatises were practically unknown before the period of the Reformation.

The Renaissance and the Reformation gave an impetus to biblical studies of every kind. The revival of interest in humanistic studies created a new interest in the Hebrew language,<sup>3</sup> and the controversy regarding the seat of authority—the church, or the Bible as interpreted by the individual—turned the attention of scholars toward the contents and their meaning. This led to a discussion of various questions of Introduction, such as the condition and transmission of the Hebrew text, the canonicity of the biblical books and the extra-canoncity of the

---

<sup>2</sup> Origen, Augustine, Jerome, etc.

<sup>3</sup> J. Reuchlin, 1455-1522, was the first Hebrew grammarian among Christians; he was strongly influenced by the greatest Jewish scholar of the age, Elias Levita, 1469-1549.



apocryphal books, the authorship, date, and relative value of individual books. The Renaissance and Reformation, therefore, may be credited with giving rise to the modern, scientific discussions of questions of Introduction.

The following are among the more prominent writers of this period: Sixtus of Sienna,<sup>4</sup> a Roman Catholic convert from Judaism, who distinguished between protocanonical and deutero-canonical writings and discussed also matters relating to individual books. An important work was produced by Karlstadt, the friend and co-worker of Luther.<sup>5</sup> A. Rivetus<sup>6</sup> defined Scripture as that which proceeds from God as the special author; he held an entirely mechanical view of inspiration. One of the most influential writers was Ludovicus Cappellus,<sup>7</sup> who maintained that the Hebrew vowel points and accents were unknown to the biblical writers and that they were introduced centuries after the opening of the Christian era. Cappellus influenced John Morinus,<sup>8</sup> a convert from Protestantism to Catholicism, who wrote several volumes on subjects of Introduction. In his zeal for the authority of the church he declared that God caused the Hebrew Scriptures to be written without vowel points, so that men would submit to the judgment of the church instead of following their own private judgment. Richard Simon,<sup>9</sup> a man of great learning, published, in 1678, his *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament*, in which, among other things, he denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

A new epoch was introduced in the eighteenth century by the rise of rationalism, with its disregard of the miraculous. The way had been prepared for this by B. Spinoza,<sup>10</sup> a pronounced pantheist, who believed the Scriptures to contain no divine revelation. The accounts

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<sup>4</sup> Born 1520; his book was entitled *Bibliotheca Sancta*.

<sup>5</sup> Entitled *De Canonicis Scripturis* (1520).

<sup>6</sup> Born 1572.

<sup>7</sup> 1585-1658.

<sup>8</sup> Born 1591.

<sup>9</sup> 1638-1712.

<sup>10</sup> 1632-1677.

of the miracles he considered legendary, and he was ready to reject as untrue all that seemed supernatural. He denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and expressed the opinion that it, like the other historical books, received its final form under Ezra. The historical portions of Daniel he considered to have been written later than Daniel, on the basis of Chaldean annals.

Under the influence of this new tendency the Old Testament came to be studied like any other literary production, and scholars like Eichhorn, Michaelis, DeWette, and others went at their task with the definite purpose of explaining the several books entirely in the light of the historical situation therein presupposed. On the whole, the Introductions of the latter part of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century were the outgrowth of this new point of view, and, as may be expected, they set aside the traditional views in many instances.

The more important works of this period are: J. G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in die goettlichen Schriften des Alten Bundes*, 1787; G. L. Bauer, *Entwurf einer Einleitung in die Schriften des Alten Testaments*, 1794; W. M. L. DeWette, *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in die kanonischen und apokryphischen Buecher des Alten Testaments*, 1817; T. H. Horne, *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, 1818; Heinrich Ewald, 1803-1875, published no formal Introduction, but in his numerous works he covered practically the whole range of Introduction; Friedrich Bleek, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1860.

In the nature of the case, these Introductions, which seemed to minimize the supernatural, aroused bitter opposition, and several attempts were made to rehabilitate the older traditional views, notably by Hengstenberg, Haevernick, Keil, and, in America, W. H. Green.

E. W. Hengstenberg, *Beitraege zur Einleitung ins Alte Testament*, 3 vols., 1831-1839; H. A. C. Haevernick, *Handbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung ins Alte Testament*, 3 vols., 1836-1849; C. F. Keil, *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in die kanonischen Schriften des Alten Testaments*, 1853; W. H. Green has written no complete Introduction, but he has published a volume on the *Canon* and one on the *Text* of the Old Testament, and several volumes dealing with various aspects of the Pentateuchal problem and other questions of Introduction; John H. Raven, *Old Testament Introduction*, 1906.

Meanwhile scholars were at work studying the subject of Introduction, especially as it related to the origin of the Pentateuch, upon a broader basis. Earlier writers had depended almost exclusively upon linguistic criteria, but scholars like Reuss, Graf, Kuenen, Wellhausen, and others realized the inadequacy of this method of procedure; hence they sought and found additional support for their views in what they conceived to have been the political, social, and religious development of the Hebrew people. Chiefly through the brilliant exposition of Julius Wellhausen the newer views rapidly gained adherents in all countries, though there were numerous scholars who insisted that many of the conclusions which found ready acceptance were without adequate support.

Edward Reuss set forth these newer views as early as 1834 in lectures on Old Testament Introduction delivered at the University of Strassburg, but they were not published until 1879 in *L'Histoire Sainte et La Loi*, and 1881 in *Geschichte der heiligen Schriften des Alten Testaments*. Two of Reuss's students followed out the suggestions thrown out in the lectures and published their results before the above-mentioned books appeared; K. H. Graf, *Die geschichtlichen Buecher des Alten Testaments*, 1866; August Kayser, *Das vorexilische Buch der Urgeschichte Israels*, 1874. Professor A. Kuenen defended Graf's views in *Godsdienst van Israel*, 1869, and expanded his investigations in the second edition of *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in die Buecher des Alten Testaments*, translated into German in 1887-1892. The most able of the earlier exponents

of the newer method was J. Wellhausen, who set forth his views in various articles and books, notably in *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*, 1878, and in the fourth edition of Bleek's *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*.

Among the followers of these pioneers two "schools" may be distinguished. On the one hand are those who accept Wellhausen's views, not only regarding the growth of Israel's literature, but also regarding the development of Israel's history and religion. On the other hand there are many scholars who insist that, while the newer views regarding the origin of the Old Testament books may be correct, there is much more reliance to be placed upon Hebrew tradition, and that there is more of the unique and divine in Israel's religion than some modern scholars are ready to admit.

The former point of view is reflected, for example, in the discussions of questions of Introduction in B. Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 1881. The other tendency appears most pronounced in H. L. Strack, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1883; E. Koenig, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1893. By far the greater number of scholars occupy intermediate positions, some leaning more in the one, others more in the other direction: E. Riehm, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1889; S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 1891; tenth new, enlarged, and revised edition, 1910; C. Cornill, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1891; English translation, 1907; W. H. Bennett, *A Biblical Introduction*, 1899; Wolf Wilhelm Graf Baudissin, *Einleitung in die Buecher des Alten Testament*, 1901; J. E. McFayden, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1905; C. E. Steuernagel, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1912; G. B. Gray, *A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1913.

Generally speaking, the literary conclusions of the Wellhausen school seem to hold the field at present, though not without important modifications. For example, while Wellhausen showed a tendency to assign the

origin of a narrative to the period when it first assumed literary form, it is now quite generally recognized that a narrative may have been in existence long before it was written down, and that it may have been preserved, with few alterations, by oral tradition for generations and even centuries. As a result many modern writers on questions of Introduction admit the presence in the Old Testament books of much more ancient material than Wellhausen was ready to concede.

Of the many books reflecting this tendency may be mentioned, in addition to those named in the preceding paragraph: E. Sellin, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 1910; R. Kittel, *Die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft in ihren wichtigsten Ergebnissen*, 1910; English translation, 1911; H. Gunkel, *Genesis*, 1902; the introductory section of this Commentary has been translated into English under the title *The Legends of Genesis*.

Moreover, the discovery of the civilizations and literatures of other Oriental nations has shown, in the first place, the antiquity of literary efforts, and, in the second place, the close relation existing between these civilizations and that of Israel; which again points in the direction of greater antiquity for some of the customs and practices recorded in the Old Testament.

This subject receives consideration in a great variety of discussions, but general agreement has not yet been attained: F. Hommel, *Die altisraelitische Ueberlieferung in inschriftlicher Beleuchtung*, 1897; English translation, 1897; H. Winckler, *Altorientalische Forschungen*, 1897ff., and numerous other writings; E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, especially the third edition, prepared by H. Winckler and H. Zimmern, 1902; A. Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orient*, 1904; English translation, 1911; A. T. Clay, *Light on the Old Testament from Babel*, 1906; and many more. The most recent and most complete collection of cuneiform inscriptions throwing light on Old Testament history and religion is contained in R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*, 1912.

However, while it is undoubtedly true that many recent writers assign some Old Testament material that was formerly considered late to earlier dates, the present trend in purely literary matters is in the direction of the views advocated by the so-called Graf-Wellhausen school.

All the Introductions mentioned in the preceding paragraphs have to do primarily with the origin of the Old Testament books and their component parts; and in all of them the discussions are based upon the books as they appear at present in the Old Testament Canon. When it was seen, however, that many of the biblical books are compilations embodying material coming from different periods, attempts came to be made to trace the origin and growth of the Hebrew literary remains irrespective of the form or forms in which they are found at present. In other words, attempts were made to write histories of the literature of the Hebrews similar to the histories of the literatures of ancient Greece, Rome, India, Persia, and more modern peoples. Such histories have their place and value in the study of the Old Testament, but they are not Introductions, for the latter must begin with the books in their present form and must seek to determine their origin, growth, and setting apart, in their present form, into the collection of sacred writings known as the Old Testament.

The more important literary histories are: G. Wildeboer, *Die Litteratur des Alten Testaments nach der Leitfolge ihrer Entstehung*, 1894; E. Kautzsch, *Abriss der Geschichte des alttestamentlichen Schrifttums*, 1897; English translation, 1898; Karl Budde, *Die Israelitische Litteratur*, 1906; H. T. Fowler, *A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel*, 1912.

The other branches of Old Testament Introduction—the formation of the canon and the condition and trans-

mission of the text—have not been neglected. Most of the Introductions already named discuss these subjects, at least briefly; but there are some volumes that are devoted entirely to the consideration of one or the other of these two topics.

G. Wildeboer, *Die Entstehung des alttestamentlichen Kanons*, 1891; English translation, 1895; F. Buhl, *Kanon und Text des Alten Testaments*, 1891; English translation, 1892; H. E. Ryle, *The Canon of the Old Testament*, 1892; C. D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, 1897; W. H. Green, *General Introduction to the Old Testament—The Canon*, 1898; *The Text*, 1899; T. H. Weir, *A Short History of the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament*, 1899; A. S. Geden, *Outlines of an Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 1909. Valuable material is found also in C. A. Briggs, *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture*, 1899.

The bearing of recent research and investigation on the permanent place and significance of the Old Testament in religious life and thought has been discussed in a multitude of articles and books.

Among the better known books, not previously mentioned, are the following: J. E. McFadyen, *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*, 1903; J. P. Peters, *The Old Testament and the New Scholarship*, 1902; G. A. Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, 1901; C. F. Kent, *The Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament*, 1906; R. W. Rogers, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 1908; A. W. Vernon, *The Religious Value of the Old Testament*, 1907; W. G. Jordan, *Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought*, 1909; S. R. Driver, *Modern Research as Illustrating the Bible*, 1909; M. Flinders Petrie, *Egypt and Israel*, 1911; F. C. Eiselen, *The Christian View of the Old Testament*, 1912; A. S. Peake, *The Bible—Its Origin, Its Significance, Its Abiding Worth*, 1913; M. Jastrow, *Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions*, 1914; W. F. Badè, *The Old Testament in the Light of To-day*, 1915.





CHAPTER II

THE BOOKS OF THE PENTATEUCH AND  
THEIR CONTENTS



## CHAPTER II

### THE BOOKS OF THE PENTATEUCH AND THEIR CONTENTS

**The Name "Pentateuch."** According to the common Jewish arrangement the Hebrew Old Testament consists of three parts, called *Law, Prophets, and Writings*.<sup>1</sup> The first of these consists of five books, sometimes called the Five Books of Moses. This group of books is called *Tōrāh*, or *Law*, because it contains practically the entire legal system of the Jews. While the *Law* was originally a continuous whole, the five-fold division goes back to very early times: the early rabbis speak of the *five fifths of the Law*, while the early church fathers, beginning with Tertullian, employ the term *Pentateuch*, which is still in common use among Christians. In the Greek name ἡ πεντάτευχος, πεντάτευχος (five-rolled) is used as an adjective; the noun βιβλος ("book") is to be supplied. τὸ τεῦχος properly denotes the box or chest in which the roll was kept, but in the course of time it came to be used of the roll itself. Symmachus, who translated the Old Testament into Greek during the latter part of the second century A.D., used it as the equivalent of the Hebrew word תְּרָאָשִׁית, "roll."

**The Fivefold Division.** The five books in the Pentateuch are named by the Jews after the opening words of the several books. Thus the first book is called תְּרָאָשִׁית

---

<sup>1</sup> Tōrāh, Nebhūim, and Kethūbhim.

—*berēshūth*, “In Beginning”; the second, שְׁמוֹת or שְׁמוֹת אֱלֹהִים—*shemōth*, or *wēlleh shemōth*, “Names,” or “And these are the Names”; the third, וַיִּקְרָא—*wayyikrā*, “And he called”; the fourth, בְּמִדְבָּר—*bemidhbār*, “In Wilderness”<sup>2</sup> or וַיֹּדַע—*wayedhabbēr*, “And he said”;<sup>3</sup> the fifth, אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים—*ēlleh haddebhārīm*, “These are the words,” or simply, דְּבָרִים—*debhārīm*, “Words.”

The names of the books in the English Bible are derived through the Latin translation of Jerome, called the Vulgate, from the early Greek translation known as the Septuagint, and are meant to be descriptive of the contents. Genesis, *γένεσις*, “Generation” or “Origin”—derived from the Septuagint translation of Gen. 2. 4a, *αὐτῆ ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς*; Exodus, *ἐξοδος*, “Coming out”—that is, from Egypt; Leviticus, *λευιτικόν*, “Levitical” (“system”)—found chiefly in this book; Numbers, *ἀριθμοί*, “Numbers”—suggested by the numbering of the people recorded in the opening chapters; Deuteronomy, *δευτερονόμιον*, “Repetition of the Law”—derived from 17. 18, where the Septuagint translated erroneously *τὸ δευτερονόμιον τοῦτο*, “this repetition of the law”; the true meaning is “a copy of this law.”

The fivefold division is due to the nature of the contents. Genesis clearly forms a book by itself, and so does Deuteronomy; Leviticus has characteristics of its own, which separates it from the books on either side. This leaves Exodus and Numbers, the opening words of the former<sup>4</sup> and the closing words of the latter<sup>5</sup> showing that each is considered complete in itself.

<sup>2</sup> The fifth word of the first verse.

<sup>3</sup> The first word.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 1. 1-7.

<sup>5</sup> Numbers 36. 13.

**The Hexateuch.** Modern scholars add to the five books of the Pentateuch the book of Joshua, because "its contents, and still more, its literary structure, show that it is intimately connected with the Pentateuch and describes the final stage in the history of the *Origines* of the Hebrew nation."<sup>6</sup> Hence it has become customary to speak of the first six books of the Old Testament—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua—as the Hexateuch, that is, the six-roll book. That there is justification for this arrangement may be seen, for example, from this very simple consideration: The divine promise that the descendants of Abraham should occupy Canaan, repeatedly made in Genesis and never lost sight of in the following books, is shown only in the book of Joshua to have attained realization. The reason for separating the material in the book of Joshua from the Torah appears to be twofold: (1) Moses could not be connected with this material as its author; (2) the contents made it impossible to set it apart, with the books of the Pentateuch, as an authoritative rule of life.

**General Contents of the Hexateuch.** Though there is great variety of contents in the books of the Hexateuch, it is possible to arrange all the material under two heads: 1. *History*: The historical portions of the Hexateuch cover the period beginning with the creation of the world and ending with the settlement of the twelve tribes of Israel in Canaan. This period may be divided into three epochs: (1) The beginning of all things—Gen. 1. 1 to 11. 9; (2) The Hebrew Patriarchs—Gen. 11. 10 to 50. 26; (3) The organization of Israel as a national unit and its

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<sup>6</sup> S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 103.

settlement in Canaan—the historical sections of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. Even in these so-called historical sections no attempt is made to furnish a complete history, many details important to the historian are treated briefly or passed over entirely; nevertheless, the stream of narrative is never wholly interrupted, and though at times it is almost lost sight of, it always reappears and flows on to the end. 2. *Law*: The legal element in the first five books is so prominent that, as has been stated, they are known as *Torah*, which means, Law. The book of Leviticus consists entirely of legal material; two others, Exodus and Numbers, are a mixture of law and history; Deuteronomy is made up largely of addresses embodying laws; and even Genesis, which is chiefly narrative, mentions the laws of marriage and of the Sabbath as given in primeval times, gives regulations concerning food, in the days of Noah, and relates the institution of circumcision in the time of Abraham.

#### GENESIS

The book of Genesis falls naturally into two parts:

**I. The Beginning of all Things.** I. 1 to II. 9. Almost all ancient peoples sought answers to the questions, Whence came the world? Whence came man? How did sin come into the world? How did different languages and nations arise? etc. Gen. I. 1 to II. 9 contains the answers of Hebrew religious thinkers to these questions. The chapters tell of the creation of heaven and earth, man's original habitation, the entrance of sin into the world, the beginnings of civilization, and the growth of population. The spread of sin and wickedness, following the development of civilization, was punished

by a Flood which destroyed the human race with the exception of one family; the descendants of this family re-peopled the earth and gave rise to various nations and races.

**II. The Stories of the Patriarchs.** 11. 10 to 50. 26. From the beginning of things in general the book passes to the beginnings of the Hebrew people, in which the author is primarily interested. The Hebrews possess numerous characteristics common to the group of nations called the Semitic race. The racial relations of the Hebrews are briefly touched upon in 11. 10-26, which traces the genealogy of Shem down to Abraham,<sup>7</sup> whose migration from southern Babylonia to Canaan marks the first beginnings of the Hebrew people. The rest of the book consists of narratives centering around the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and around Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob. The lives of these are narrated with considerable fullness, down to the descent of the family of Jacob into Egypt, with an account of which the book closes. The connecting bond throughout the chapters is the promise to Abraham<sup>8</sup> and the covenant based upon it, the unfolding of which is exhibited in the lives of the patriarchs and in the rise of the twelve tribes. The successive steps in the development are connected, and the interest is concentrated, by the use of the formula, "These are the generations of": Shem, 11. 10; Terah (Abraham), 11. 27; Ishmael, 25. 12; Isaac, 25. 19; Esau, 36. 1, 9; Jacob, 37. 2.

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<sup>7</sup> Genesis gives "Abram" as the original name of the first patriarch; the change to "Abraham" was due, according to the popular etymology in 17. 5, to the promise that the bearer of the name was to become the father of a multitude of nations.

<sup>8</sup> Gen. 12. 1-3.

## I. THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS (1. 1-11. 9)

1. The creation of all things (1. 1 to 2. 25).
2. The beginning of sin (3. 1-24).
3. Early growth and corruption (4. 1 to 6. 8).
  - (1) The first murder (4. 1-16).
  - (2) The earliest civilization (4. 17-24).
  - (3) The line of Seth (4. 25 to 5. 32).
  - (4) The apostate sons of God (6. 1-8).
4. Noah and his times (6. 9 to 9. 29).
  - (1) The flood (6. 9 to 9. 17).
  - (2) Noah's prophecy (9. 18-29).
5. The origin of nations and languages (10. 1 to 11. 9).
  - (1) The gradual dispersion (10. 1-32).
  - (2) The confusion of tongues (11. 1-9).

## II. THE STORIES OF THE PATRIARCHS (11. 10 to 50. 26)

1. Abraham and Isaac (11. 10 to 25. 18).
  - (1) Abraham's ancestry (11. 10-32).
    - (a) Genealogy of Shem (11. 10-25).
    - (b) Genealogy of Terah (11. 26-32).
  - (2) Migrations of Abraham (12, 13).
  - (3) Abraham's victory over the kings of the East (14).
  - (4) Yahweh's covenant with Abraham (15).
  - (5) Birth of Ishmael (16).
  - (6) Covenant of circumcision (17).
  - (7) Destruction of Sodom (18, 19).
  - (8) Abraham and Abimelech (20).
  - (9) Birth of Isaac (21).
  - (10) Proposed sacrifice of Isaac (22).
  - (11) Death and burial of Sarah (23).
  - (12) Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah (24).
  - (13) Death of Abraham and Ishmael (25. 1-18).
2. Jacob and Esau (25. 19 to 36. 43).
  - (1) Jacob and Esau (25. 19 to 28. 22).
  - (2) Jacob and Laban (29. 1 to 32. 1).
  - (3) Jacob's return to Canaan (32. 2 to 36. 43).
3. Joseph and his brothers (37. 1 to 50. 26).
  - (1) Joseph's betrayal and exaltation in Egypt (37. 1-36; 39. 1 to 41. 57). (Story of Tamar and Judah, 38. 1-30.)
  - (2) Reunion of Joseph and his brothers (42. 1 to 45. 15).
  - (3) Descent of family of Jacob into Egypt (45. 16 to 48. 22; 49. 29 to 50. 26). (The Blessing of Jacob, 49. 1-28.)



## EXODUS

The closing chapters of Genesis record how the Hebrew nomads, after living in Canaan for several generations, were driven by famine into Egypt and were settled by the Pharaoh of Egypt in Goshen, a district in the eastern portion of the Nile Delta. There they remained in practical seclusion for many generations. This period is passed over very briefly in the book of Exodus.<sup>9</sup> In the course of time a new dynasty ascended the throne of Egypt, under which a period of oppression set in, from which the Hebrews were delivered under the leadership of Moses. The opening verses of Exodus—1. 1 to 2. 22—portray the the experiences of the Hebrews during the closing years of the stay in Egypt; then follows—2. 23 to 12. 29—an account of the events leading up to their release from oppression. Chapters 12. 30 to 19. 2 contain a record of the departure from Egypt, the overthrow of the pursuing Egyptians, and the march of the Israelites until they reached Mount Sinai. The rest of the book—19. 3 to 40. 38—relates some incidents during the encampment before Mount Sinai, but the greater portion is devoted to the giving of the Law.

## I. THE OPPRESSION IN EGYPT (1. 1 to 2. 22)

1. Death of Joseph; increase of Israelites (1. 1-7).
2. Forced labor (1. 8-14).
3. Murder of male children (1. 15-22).
4. Birth, adoption, and flight of Moses (2. 1-22).

## II. PREPARATION FOR THE DELIVERANCE (2. 23 to 12. 29)

1. Call of Moses to be the deliverer (2. 23 to 4. 17).
2. Moses's return to Egypt (4. 18-31).
3. Increased burdens (5. 1-21).

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<sup>9</sup>Exod. 1. 7.

## 34 THE BOOKS OF THE PENTATEUCH

4. Yahweh's promise to Moses and Aaron (5. 22 to 6. 13; 6. 28 to 7. 7). (Genealogy of Moses and Aaron, 6. 14-27.)
5. The plagues and the Pharaoh's stubbornness (7. 8 to 12. 29).

### III. THE EXODUS AND THE MARCH TO MOUNT SINAI (12. 30 to 19. 2)

1. Institution of the Passover and departure from Egypt (12. 30 to 13. 16).
2. From Succoth to Elim, through the Red Sea (13. 17 to 15. 27).
3. From Elim to Mount Sinai (16. 1 to 19. 2).
  - (1) Quails and Manna (16. 1-36).
  - (2) War with Amalek (17. 1-16).
  - (3) Visit of Jethro; appointment of judges (18. 1-27).
  - (4) Arrival at Mount Sinai (19. 1, 2).

### IV. GIVING OF THE LAW (19. 3 to 40. 38)

1. Establishment and ratification of the Covenant (19. 3 to 24. 18).
  - (1) Preparation of the people (19. 3-25).
  - (2) The Decalogue (20. 1-21).
  - (3) The Book of the Covenant (20. 22 to 24. 18).
    - (a) Prohibition of images; building of altars (20. 22-26).
    - (b) Laws concerning the protection of persons (21. 1-32).
    - (c) Laws concerning the protection of property (21. 33 to 22. 17).
    - (d) Miscellaneous laws connected with the civil and religious organization (22. 18 to 23. 19).
    - (e) Blessings of obedience (23. 20-33).
    - (f) Ratification of the Covenant (24. 1-8).
    - (g) Moses's return to the Mount (24. 9-18).
2. Instruction concerning the sanctuary and the priests (25. 1 to 31. 18).
  - (1) Ark, table of showbread, candlestick (25).
  - (2) Curtain, framework, veil, screen (26).
  - (3) Court, altar of burnt-offering (27).
  - (4) Vestments of priests, ritual of consecration (28, 29).
  - (5) Altar of incense, maintenance of public service, laver, oil, incense (30).
  - (6) Selection of Bezalel and Oholiab; Sabbath observance (31).
3. Apostasy and renewal of the Covenant (32. 1 to 34. 35).
  - (1) The golden calf and Yahweh's anger (32).
  - (2) Moses's intercession and Yahweh's response (33).
  - (3) Renewal of the Covenant (34).

4. Execution of the directions in chapters 25 to 31 (35. 1 to 40. 38).
- (1) Sabbath observance, contributions of people, appointment of Bezalel and Oholiab (35. 1 to 36. 7).
  - (2) Curtains, framework, veil, screen (36. 8-38).
  - (3) Ark, table of showbread, candlestick, altar of incense, oil, incense (37).
  - (4) Altar of burnt-offering, laver, court, amount of metal used (38).
  - (5) Vestments of priests, delivery of completed work to Moses (39).
  - (6) Erection of tabernacle (40).

### LEVITICUS

The book of Leviticus contains few passages cast in narrative form; and in these few cases the narrative is introduced not so much for the purpose of describing the past as for the purpose of enforcing some provision for the future. The book is almost entirely a collection of laws, chiefly ceremonial or priestly in nature; hence its name "Leviticus," which means, the *Levitical* book. An even more appropriate title is found in the Talmud, "Law of the Priests."

#### I. LAWS CONCERNING SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS (1. 1 to 7. 38)

1. Burnt-offerings (1. 1-17).
2. Meal-offerings (2. 1-16).
3. Peace-offerings (3. 1-17).
4. Sin-offerings (4. 1 to 5. 13).
5. Guilt (or trespass)-offerings (5. 14 to 6. 7).
6. Priestly functions in connection with these sacrifices, and other regulations (6. 8 to 7. 38).

#### II. CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS; SIN OF NADAB AND ABIHU (8. 1 to 10. 20)

1. Consecration of Aaron and his sons (8).
2. Aaron offers sacrifices (9).
3. Sin and punishment of Nadab and Abihu (10. 1-7).
4. Priestly duties and portions (10. 8-20).

## III. LAWS CONCERNING CLEANNESS AND UNCLEANNESS (II. I TO 15. 33)

1. Clean and unclean animals (11).
2. Uncleanness connected with childbirth (12).
3. Various forms of "leprosy" (13, 14).
4. Uncleanness from sexual secretions and discharges (15).

## IV. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (16. 1-34)

## V. THE LAW OF HOLINESS (17. 1 to 26. 46)

1. Slaughter of animals; prohibition of eating of blood (17).
2. Prohibition of incest and other forms of impurity (18).
3. Religious and moral behavior (19).
4. Moloch worship, unlawful marriage and other offenses (20).
5. Regulations touching priests and offerings (21, 22).
6. Festivals and sacred seasons (23).
7. Light of the sanctuary, showbread, blasphemy (24).
8. Sabbatical year and year of jubilee (25).
9. Obedience and disobedience and their consequences (26).

## VI. APPENDIX: LAWS CONCERNING VOWS, THINGS DEVOTED AND TITHES (27. 1-34)

## NUMBERS

The book of Numbers contains an account of Israel's wanderings from the encampment before Mount Sinai to the settlement in the region east of the Jordan. The opening chapters give the census of the people who came out of Egypt. Following a long legal section comes the record of the wanderings during the period extending from the second to the fortieth year: the survey of Canaan, the refusal to enter the land, the march back to the wilderness, and various rebellions. The important events of the first ten months of the fortieth year are narrated in detail: the march around Edom, the death of Aaron, the conquest of the land of the Amorites and of Bashan, the episode of Balaam, the sin of Baal-peor, the second census, the slaughter of the Midianites, and the

settlement east of the Jordan. Interspersed with the historical sections are laws of various kinds.

I. EVENTS BEFORE MOUNT SINAI (I. I TO IO. IO)

(A period of nineteen days, beginning one month after the setting up of the tabernacle; compare I. I with Exod. 40. 17.)

1. Census, arrangement of camp, functions of Levites (I. I to 4. 49).
2. Miscellaneous laws chiefly concerning purity and the Nazirites, closing with the priestly blessing (5. I to 6. 27).
3. Laws regarding the services of the sanctuary (7. I to 8. 26).
4. The supplementary Passover (9. I-14).
5. The cloud over the tabernacle and the silver trumpet (9. 15 to IO. IO).

II. FROM MOUNT SINAI TO THE PLAINS OF MOAB (IO. II TO 22. I)

(From the twentieth day of the second month of the second year to the fortieth year.)

1. Departure from Mount Sinai (IO. II-36).
2. Discouragements, murmurings, and Yahweh's displeasure (II. I to 14. 45).
3. Various ceremonial laws (15. I-41).
4. Rebellion and punishment of Korah and his company; vindication of the tribe of Levi and its prerogatives (16. I to 18. 32).
5. Laws of purification (19. I-22).
6. From Kadesh, around Edom, to the Plains of Moab (20. I to 22. I).

III. IN THE PLAINS OF MOAB (22. 2 TO 36. 13)

(The closing months of the desert wanderings.)

1. Israel and Moab; Balak and Balaam (22. 2 to 24. 25).
2. Apostasy at Shittim; zeal and reward of Phinehas (25. I-18).
3. Second census (26. I-65).
4. Appointment of Joshua (27. 12-23).  
(Law of inheritance, 27. I-11).
5. Laws regarding various kinds of offerings (28. I to 29. 40; Heb. 30. I).
6. Conditions of validity of a vow (30. I-16).
7. Slaughter of the Midianites and division of booty (31. I-54).
8. Settlement of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh east of the Jordan (32. I-42).

9. Israel's encampments after leaving Egypt (33. 1-49).
10. Various laws relating to the conquest and the settlement of Canaan (33. 50 to 36. 13).

## DEUTERONOMY

The book of Deuteronomy consists chiefly of three discourses purporting to have been delivered by Moses in the Plains of Moab. The first contains a rehearsal of the history from Mount Horeb (Sinai) to the Jordan. Then follow long sections setting forth the laws which the Israelites are to obey when they are settled in Canaan and the spirit in which they are to obey them. The closing chapters deal with the last days of Moses: his charge to Joshua, the Song of Moses, the Blessing of Moses, and the death and burial of Moses.

## I. FIRST DISCOURSE: YAHWEH'S PROVIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP A MOTIVE FOR OBEDIENCE (1. 1 to 4. 43)

1. Introduction: Time and place of the discourses (1. 1-5).
2. Retrospect of Israel's history from Mount Horeb to the Jordan (1. 6 to 3. 29).
3. Exhortation to obedience (4. 1-40).
4. Cities of refuge east of the Jordan (4. 41-43).

## II. SECOND DISCOURSE: EXPOSITION OF THE LAW (4. 44 to 26. 19; 28. 1-68)

1. Introduction to the exposition of the Law (4. 44-49).
2. The prophetic Decalogue, and a series of exhortations based chiefly on the first commandment (5. 1 to 11. 32).
3. Ceremonial and religious laws (12. 1 to 17. 7).
4. Appointment and duties of officials (17. 8 to 18. 22).
5. Criminal laws (19. 1-21; 21. 1-9).
6. Military laws, to be observed in time of war (20. 1-20; 21. 10-14).
7. Miscellaneous collection of civil, criminal, humane, and religious laws (21. 15 to 25. 19).
8. Presentation of the firstborn and the triennial tithe (26. 1-19).

(Instructions regarding the symbolical acceptance of the Law after the crossing of the Jordan, 27. 1-26.)

9. Consequences of obedience and disobedience (28. 1-68).

III. THIRD DISCOURSE: IMPORTANCE OF LOYALTY TO YAHWEH

(29. 1 to 30. 20)

1. Exhortation to accept the Deuteronomic Covenant (29. 1-29; Heb. 29. 2-30).
2. Promise of restoration (30. 1-10).
3. Present choice between life and death (30. 11-20).

IV. APPENDIX: THE CLOSING DAYS OF MOSES (31. 1 to 34. 12)

1. Commission of Joshua; delivery of the Law to the priests (31. 1-29).
2. The Song of Moses (31. 30 to 32. 44).
3. Final commendation of the Law (32. 45-47).
4. Command for Moses to ascend Mount Nebo (32. 48-52).
5. The Blessing of Moses (33. 1-29).
6. Death and burial of Moses (34. 1-12).





CHAPTER III  
HISTORY OF THE PENTATEUCHAL  
CRITICISM



### CHAPTER III

## HISTORY OF THE PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM

#### **Traditional View of the Authorship of the Pentateuch.**

In the latest portions of the Old Testament it seems to be assumed that the *Law*, or *Torah*, is the work of Moses;<sup>1</sup> but it is by no means clear that in these passages *Torah* is used of the entire Pentateuch; it may refer simply to the legal system of the Hebrews embodied in the Pentateuch.

In the late postexilic period *Torah* (Law) came to denote the entire Pentateuch; from this usage and from the occurrence of the word in numerous Old Testament books outside of the Pentateuch it has been inferred that the Pentateuch existed in complete, written form at the time the books using the term were written. Now, if *Torah* and Pentateuch were always synonymous, this would be valid reasoning, but clearly such is not the case, for there are many passages in which *Torah* cannot be identical in meaning with Pentateuch, and cannot even refer to it. The etymology of the word *Torah* is somewhat uncertain; but there seems good reason for connecting it with a verb meaning "to throw" or "to cast," which is used of the casting of arrows, both in battle and, religiously, for the purpose of casting the lot, which was done by throwing arrows on the ground in the presence of the Deity. The casting of lots was a primitive method of determining the will of the Deity;<sup>2</sup> from which usage the noun received its primary significance: instruction received from the Deity by the casting of the lot. When the primitive methods of determining the will of the

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<sup>1</sup> Ezra 3. 2; 7. 6; 2 Chron. 34. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. 21. 21; Jonah 1. 7, etc.

Deity were left behind and more spiritual communion was established, the noun came to denote every expression of the will of the Deity whatever the method or means of its revelation or apprehension. When the separate expressions of the divine will came to be collected and put in writing—at first probably in small collections—the individual items as well as the collections were called *Torah*. At a still later period, when it was seen that practically the whole legal system of the Hebrews was contained in the books of the Pentateuch, *Torah* came to be used to designate that group of books.<sup>3</sup> The significance of the word in any given passage must be determined from the context.

Whatever the significance of these Old Testament passages may be, Philo of Alexandria<sup>4</sup> and Josephus<sup>5</sup> proceed on the assumption that Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch, and the same seems to be true of some of the New Testament writers.<sup>6</sup> The Babylonian Talmud<sup>7</sup> states definitely: "Moses wrote his own book, the section about Balaam and Job." Only the last eight verses of Deuteronomy are ascribed to Joshua, on the reasonable assumption that Moses would hardly have written in his lifetime an account of his own death in the words: "And he died there."<sup>8</sup> According to the Gemara<sup>9</sup> exposition of this passage, at least one rabbi insisted that even the closing verses came from Moses. He argued that when it was said: "Take this book of the law,"<sup>10</sup> the book must have been complete, and consequently

<sup>3</sup> See *Journal of Biblical Literature*, xxiv, part i, pp. 1-16.

<sup>4</sup> c. B. C. 20 to A. D. 50; *Vita Mosis*, iii, 39.

<sup>5</sup> c. A. D. 37-100; *Contra Ap.*, i, 18; *Ant.*, iv, 8, 48.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 8. 4; Mark 7. 10; Luke 20. 37; John 5. 45-47; 7. 19, etc.

<sup>7</sup> *Baba bathra*, 14b.

<sup>8</sup> Deut. 34. 5.

<sup>9</sup> The Talmud contains the oral laws and traditions of the early Jews; it consists of two parts, the Mishna, which contains the laws, and the Gemara, which is in the nature of commentaries.

<sup>10</sup> Deut. 31. 26.

Moses must have written the Torah from beginning to end.

The relevant section in the Gemara reads: "The author [of the Mishna section] said: Joshua wrote his book and eight verses of the Torah. This is taught according to him who says of the eight verses of the Torah, Joshua wrote them. For it is taught: And Moses the servant of the Lord died there. How is it possible that Moses died and wrote: And Moses died there? It is only unto this passage that Moses wrote; afterwards Joshua wrote the rest. These are the words of Rabbi Jehuda, others say, of Rabbi Nehemiah; but Rabbi Simeon said to him: Is it possible that the book of the Torah could lack one letter, since it is written: Take this book of the Torah? It is only unto this the Holy One, blessed be He! said, and Moses said and wrote; from this place and onwards the Holy One, blessed be He! said, and Moses wrote with weeping—" <sup>11</sup>

The closing verses of Deuteronomy have always proved troublesome to those who were anxious to maintain the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in its present form, with the possible exception of these verses. If they insisted that Moses wrote the account of his own death they were confronted, as Hobbes suggests,<sup>12</sup> with the strange phenomenon that Moses, speaking of his own sepulcher, declares that it was not found to that day wherein he was yet living. On the other hand, if they denied these verses to Moses, it could be only on the basis of internal evidence; and if such evidence was accepted as conclusive in this one case, there seemed to be no good reason why it might not have to be considered decisive in other cases.

**Criticism to the Close of the Reformation Period.**  
The view that Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch main-

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<sup>11</sup> Compare C. A. Briggs, *Introd. to the Study of Holy Scripture*, p. 253.

<sup>12</sup> *Leviathan*, iii, 33.

tained itself without serious opposition until the time of the Reformation. The objectors were few, and they exerted little influence. Some of the early heretics denied the Mosaic authorship, in part on critical but chiefly on dogmatic grounds.<sup>13</sup> In the tenth or eleventh century a Spanish Jew, Rabbi Isaac ben Jasos, pointed out that Gen. 36. 31 must be later than the founding of the Hebrew monarchy, and he suggested that it may have been written during the religious revival under Jehoshaphat.<sup>14</sup> In the twelfth century the distinguished Jewish scholar Ibn Ezra<sup>15</sup> called attention to certain passages which seemed difficult to harmonize with belief in Mosaic authorship. His words, in which he skillfully abstains from committing himself, read: "If you penetrate the secret of the twelve,<sup>16</sup> also of 'and Moses wrote'<sup>17</sup> (Exod. 24. 4; Num. 33. 2; Deut. 31. 9, 22), and 'the Canaanite was then in the land' (Gen. 12. 6), and 'in the mountain of the Lord he appears' (Gen. 22. 14), and 'his bedstead was a bedstead of iron' (Deut. 3. 11), you will discover the truth."<sup>18</sup>

The Renaissance and the Reformation mark a new epoch in biblical criticism. The Renaissance aroused men's interest in literature and science, the Reformation aroused men's interest in religion as a personal experience. In the Renaissance men began to think for them-

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<sup>13</sup> The philosopher Celsus, see Origen, *Contra Cels.*, iv, 42; the Nazaræans, see Joann. Damasc., *De haer.*, xix; Ptolemy, a Valentinian Gnostic, see Epiphanius, *Adv. haer.*, xxxiii, 4. The Clementine Homilies also questioned the Mosaic authorship, iii, 47.

<sup>14</sup> Compare *Studien und Kritiken*, 1832, pp. 639ff.

<sup>15</sup> c. 1092-1167.

<sup>16</sup> Perhaps Deut. 34. 1-12.

<sup>17</sup> Use of the third person.

<sup>18</sup> *Commentary on Deuteronomy*, I. I.

selves in matters of science and literature; in the Reformation they began to think for themselves in matters of religion. It was inevitable that the awakening of thought and the substitution of reason for authority in science, secular literature, and secular history should ultimately affect sacred literature and sacred history as well. Some of the men prominent in the Reformation movement advanced views which later investigation has confirmed and expanded. Karlstadt, the friend and coworker of Luther, questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. He called attention to the fact that the style of narrative in the account of Moses's death was the same as in the preceding chapter; from which he argued that if Moses did not write the account of his own death, it could not be considered unreasonable to conclude that he did not write the entire Pentateuch.<sup>19</sup> Luther admitted the presence of post-Mosaic elements and apparently was little disturbed by the claim that Moses may not have been the author of the entire Pentateuch.<sup>20</sup> Andreas Masius, a learned Roman Catholic, maintained that the Pentateuch, though containing Mosaic elements, received its final form from Ezra or some other man of God.<sup>21</sup>

**From the Period of the Reformation to Astruc.** The general church, Protestant and Catholic, did not adopt the liberal attitude of these leaders, but continued to regard belief in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch an essential article of faith. But the facts to which earlier writers had called attention continued to assert themselves; hence it is not strange that some thinkers not in sympathy with the church or Christianity should

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<sup>19</sup> *De Canonicis Scripturis*, p. 85.

<sup>20</sup> *Prælectiones de Gen.*, on 36. 31.

<sup>21</sup> *Com. in Josuam* (publ. 1574), Præf., p. 2.

select this article as a point of attack, thinking that by its overthrow they could demolish the whole structure.

The pantheistic philosopher, B. Spinoza, who rejected the orthodox view that the Scriptures contained a special divine revelation, denied the Mosaic authorship; he surmised that the Pentateuch and the other historical books attained substantially their present form under Ezra; but he admitted that the text might have suffered corruption even after his death.<sup>22</sup> Similar views had been expressed a few years earlier by the English deist Hobbes<sup>23</sup> and by Isaac Peyrerijs, the originator of the Pre-Adamite theory.<sup>24</sup>

In 1678 appeared *A Critical History of the Old Testament*,<sup>25</sup> by Richard Simon, a Catholic priest in Paris.<sup>26</sup> His theory as to the origin of the Pentateuch may be summarized as follows: As was the case in other Oriental states, the Hebrews had a class of official historiographers since the days of Moses. These men, who were inspired prophets, not only recorded what was of importance in their own day, but altered, enlarged, or abridged the works of their predecessors. All these writings were collected by Ezra and his immediate successors; and from the material thus brought together, the books of the Old Testament were arranged in the form in which they are now extant.

The book of Simon, a work of great learning and re-

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<sup>22</sup> *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, 104-124 (publ. 1670). The specific arguments advanced in favor of this view are those already mentioned.

<sup>23</sup> *Leviathan*, iii, 33 (publ. 1651).

<sup>24</sup> *Systema Theol. ex Præadamitarum hypothesi*, iv, 1-2 (publ. 1655).

<sup>25</sup> *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament*.

<sup>26</sup> 1638-1712.



search, was condemned and confiscated, but it produced a lasting impression. The Arminian Clericus also admitted the presence of post-Mosaic elements and for a time held the view that the Pentateuch in its present form was composed by the priest sent from Assyria to instruct the colonists in Samaria in the religion of Yahweh.<sup>27</sup> Anton Van Dale distinguished between the legal and historical sections of the Pentateuch; the latter he believed to have been composed by Ezra, the former by Moses, and to have been inserted into the historical framework by Ezra.<sup>28</sup>

The permanent value of these and similar discussions lies not in the theories proposed, but in their insistence upon the facts, which demanded serious consideration by scholars. Naturally, the attacks of the men named upon the traditional positions called out defenders; the more prominent among these were Huet, a Jesuit; Heidegger, a Calvinist; and Carpzov, a Lutheran. But these men, instead of meeting the problems squarely, spent most of their energy in the futile attempt to explain away the facts. Others, admitting the presence of post-Mosaic elements, did not consider them sufficiently numerous to militate against the belief in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch as a whole; they explained them as due to interpolation and a later editing of the work by Ezra and others.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> 2 Kings 17. 28, 29. *Sentimens de quelques theologiens de Holland sur l'histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, pp. 107, 129 (publ. 1685). Later he explained the elements which could not be harmonized with Mosaic authorship as due to interpolation.

<sup>28</sup> *De origine et progressu idolatriæ*, p. 71 (publ. 1696); and *Epist. ad Morin.*, p. 686.

<sup>29</sup> Among these writers the more prominent were DuPin, Witsius, Spanheim, Prideaut, Vitringa, Calmet.

**Theory of Jean Astruc.** Jean Astruc, physician of Louis XIV, and professor of medicine in Paris, gave new direction to critical theories regarding the origin of the Pentateuch.<sup>30</sup> Early in the eighteenth century several writers had suggested that Moses used older sources in the composition of the book of Genesis.<sup>31</sup> Following out these suggestions Astruc maintained that Moses used several sources, which he incorporated into his work practically without alterations. Noticing, further, that in some sections of Genesis the divine name "Elohim" was used and in others, "Yahweh," he proceeded, on the basis of this peculiarity, to analyze the book into two principal sources—the Elohist and the Yahwistic, or Jehovistic—admitting, however, the presence of nine or ten additional minor sources, of which only fragments were preserved. Astruc did not deny the Mosaic authorship of Genesis or of the other books of the Pentateuch; his view was that Moses compiled the book of Genesis from the older sources, and then wrote the remaining four books.

**Modifications and Expansions of Astruc's Theory.** The investigations begun by Astruc were continued diligently by other scholars. J. G. Eichhorn<sup>32</sup> called attention to the fact that the two sources marked by the use of different divine names were differentiated also by

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<sup>30</sup> He set forth his views in a book published in Brussels in 1753, entitled *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paroît que Moïse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse*.

<sup>31</sup> Abbé Fleury, *Moeurs des Israelites*, 6 (publ. 1701); Vitringa, *Observ. Sacra*, IV, 2 (publ. 1722); Abbé Laurent François, *Preuves de la Religion de Jesus Christ contra les Spinosistes et les Deistes*, I, 2 c. 3, art. 7 (publ. 1751).

<sup>32</sup> *Urgeschichte*, in *Repertorium*, IV, V (1779); *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1780-1783).

linguistic characteristics. W. M. L. DeWette,<sup>33</sup> in discussing the origin of the documents embodied in the Pentateuch, pointed out that Deuteronomy is shown by its peculiar characteristics to be quite independent of the preceding books, and he assigned it to the age of Josiah. He also was the first to question, in connection with critical conclusions, the historicity of some of the Pentateuchal narratives. F. Bleek<sup>34</sup> brought out the close connection between the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua. H. Ewald<sup>35</sup> showed that, though after Exodus 2 the peculiar use of the divine names ceases, linguistic characteristics make it evident that the two main sources were used also in the remaining books of the Pentateuch, and F. Tuch<sup>36</sup> insisted that the Elohim source was used also in Joshua. K. D. Ilgen,<sup>37</sup> and later H. Hupfeld,<sup>38</sup> distinguished a second Elohim source in Genesis, and K. H. Graf<sup>39</sup> insisted that most of the legislation in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers was later than that in Deuteronomy. These scholars and their successors, the more important of whom are mentioned below, have gradually established Pentateuchal criticism upon a firm, scientific basis.

<sup>33</sup> *Dissertatio Critica* (1805); *Kritischer Versuch ueber die Glaubwuerdigkeit der Buecher der Chronik* (1806); *Kritik der Mosaischen Geschichte* (1807); *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in die Bibel Alten und Neuen Testaments* (1817-1826).

<sup>34</sup> In Rosenmueller's *Repertorium* (1822) and in *Studien und Kritiken* (1831). As early as 1792 Geddes expressed a similar opinion, *The Holy Bible*, vol. i, p. xix.

<sup>35</sup> Ewald's views were first expressed in *Studien und Kritiken* (1831).

<sup>36</sup> *Genesis* (1838).

<sup>37</sup> *Urkunden des Jerusalemischen Tempelarchivs* (1798).

<sup>38</sup> *Die Quellen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammensetzung* (1853).

<sup>39</sup> *Die geschichtlichen Buecher des Alten Testaments* (1866).

In the course of the investigations various theories have been proposed to account for the complicated facts discovered in the Pentateuch:

1. THE FRAGMENT THEORY. Even before Astruc Peyrierius<sup>40</sup> and Spinoza<sup>41</sup> had advocated views which might be classed under this head; but the so-called Fragment Theory was fully developed subsequently to Astruc, when the literary analysis of the Pentateuch was carried to extremes. This theory regarded the Pentateuch as "an agglomeration of longer and shorter fragments, between which no threads of continuous connection could be traced." The arguments in support of the theory were drawn chiefly from the middle books of the Pentateuch, where the transitions are frequently very abrupt. Among the advocates of the Fragment Theory A. Geddes,<sup>42</sup> J. S. Vater,<sup>43</sup> A. T. Hartmann,<sup>44</sup> and, for a time, W. M. L. DeWette<sup>45</sup> are the more important.

2. THE SUPPLEMENT THEORY. The better appreciation of a common plan and purpose running throughout the entire Pentateuch or Hexateuch made the permanent acceptance of the Fragment Theory impossible. It was superseded by the so-called Supplement Theory, which seemed to do better justice to all the facts in the case. According to this view, the Elohist part of the Pentateuch was the oldest portion, which served as ground-

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<sup>40</sup> See above, pp. 17, 18, 48.

<sup>41</sup> See above, p. 48.

<sup>42</sup> *The Holy Bible*, I (1792); *Critical Remarks on the Hebrew Scriptures*, I (1800).

<sup>43</sup> *Kommentar ueber den Pentateuch* (1802-1805).

<sup>44</sup> *Historisch-kritische Forschungen ueber die Bildung, das Zeitalter, und den Plan der fuenf Buecher Moses* (1831).

<sup>45</sup> *Beitraege zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, I (1806); *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1817).

work for the whole. The Elohist portion was revised by a later editor, the Yahwist or Jehovist, who annotated the older work throughout and added to it a considerable number of new and independent sections. Deuteronomy was thought to be the latest addition to the work. Among the advocates and defenders of the Supplement Theory in some form were W. M. L. DeWette,<sup>46</sup> F. Bleek,<sup>47</sup> H. Ewald,<sup>48</sup> F. Tuch,<sup>49</sup> J. J. Staehelin,<sup>50</sup> A. Knobel,<sup>51</sup> and, for a time, F. Delitzsch.<sup>52</sup> While there are differences in details, generally speaking, the composition of the groundwork was assigned to the period of the Judges or to the beginning of the period of the monarchy; the Yahwistic additions were variously dated in the reigns of Saul, or of Solomon, or of Hezekiah; Deuteronomy was commonly dated in the seventh century.

It must not be thought, however, that the Supplement Theory always had the simple form here indicated. Sometimes it appeared as a combination of the Supplement Theory with the Fragment Theory *plus* elements taken from the Document Theory. Ewald, for example, assumed in his *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (1843ff.), that the following sources were used: 1, A few passages coming from Moses; 2, the book of the Wars of Yahweh; 3, a biography of Moses written soon after his death; 4, the book of the Covenants written in the days of Samson; 5, the book of the "generations," coming from the days of Solomon; 6, the book of a prophetic narrator living in the days of Elijah; 7, the work of a second prophetic narrator writing about 800; 8, a compilation of all these, made about 750, by a third prophetic narrator, who added some material of his own; 9, several additions, of which Deuteronomy, in the first half of the seventh century, was the most important.

<sup>46</sup> In the later editions of his *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung*, especially editions 5 (1840) and 6 (1845).

<sup>47</sup> Especially in *De libri Gen. origine atque indole historica* (1836).

<sup>48</sup> *Studien und Kritiken* (1831).

<sup>49</sup> *Kommentar ueber die Gen.* (1838).

<sup>50</sup> *Kritische Untersuchungen ueber den Pentateuch* (1843).

<sup>51</sup> *Die Genesis Erklaert* (1852). <sup>52</sup> *Genesis* (1852).

3. THE DOCUMENT THEORY. The discovery by Hupfeld in 1853 of a second Elohim source necessitated a modification of the Supplement Theory. Moreover, a closer study of the interrelation of the different layers in the Pentateuch showed that theory to be inadequate. Its place was taken by what is generally known as the Document Theory, because it considers the Pentateuch in its present form to be the result of the compilation of material coming from at least four documents, each of which is thought to have had originally an independent existence.<sup>53</sup> The earlier advocates of the Document Theory used a variety of symbols to designate the different sources, but at present the four documents are generally known as J—the Jehovistic document, that is, the document characterized by the use of the divine name “Jehovah” or “Yahweh” in the sections narrating events preceding the call of Moses; E—the Elohist document, that is, the document using the divine name “Elohim” in the corresponding sections; D—Deuteronomic Code, furnishing the heart of the book of Deuteronomy; P—Priestly Code, a document combining history and law, written from a distinctively priestly standpoint. These four documents in turn are thought to embody older sources which had an independent existence either in written or oral form.

4. THE GRAF-WELLHAUSEN THEORY. The Document Theory is the prevailing theory at the present time;

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<sup>53</sup> In a sense the theories already described might be called Document Theories, because they too recognize the presence of material from several sources, but the names given to them are more descriptive of their outstanding characteristics. The same is true in this case: the use of the four originally independent documents is the distinguishing feature of the compilation according to this theory.

but in the course of its history it has passed through various modifications.<sup>54</sup> The form in which it is most widely accepted among scholars to-day is known as the Graf-Wellhausen Theory, or the Development Theory. In its general positions this theory was first advocated in 1835 by W. Vatke<sup>55</sup> and J. F. L. George,<sup>56</sup> but as presented then it exerted little influence, perhaps because of its Hegelian point of view. But even before that date, in 1833 or 1834, Edward Reuss, following somewhat in the footsteps of DeWette, called attention in his lectures, at the University of Strassburg, to the fact that the history of Israel as outlined in Judges, Samuel, and Kings contained much that seemed to conflict with the theory that the laws of the Pentateuch were in force among the people during the centuries described in those books. He further maintained that the Mosaic Code was utterly unknown to the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries, that Jeremiah was the first prophet who shows acquaintance with a written law (Jer. 2. 8; 18. 18, etc.), and that his quotations are exclusively from Deuteronomy. This book, or at least its central portion (4. 45-28. 68), he thought to have been the book "found" in the temple in the days of Josiah, and he looked upon that code as the most ancient part of the codified legislation contained in the Pentateuch. According to his view, Ezekiel lived prior to the redaction of the ritual

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<sup>54</sup> This is true especially with regard to the order in which the several documents originated. The earlier writers, Hupfeld, E. Schrader—in DeWette's *Einleitung*, 8th ed. 1869, Th. Noeldeke—*Untersuchungen zur Kritik des Alten Testaments*, 1869, and others, considered P the oldest document; others, like A. Dillmann, gave first place to E.

<sup>55</sup> *Die älteren Juedischen Feste*.

<sup>56</sup> *Die Religion des Alten Testaments*, i.

code and of the laws which were formulated by the hierarchy.

The views of Reuss were not published until 1879. Meanwhile a former pupil of Reuss, K. H. Graf, had published similar views, which were further developed by A. Kayser, A. Kuenen, and most brilliantly of all, by Julius Wellhausen. According to these scholars, the four documents originated in the order J, E, D, P, and their dates, not counting later additions, were approximately: J, 850; E, 750; D, 650; P, 500-450.<sup>57</sup>

Modern scholars, with few exceptions, accept in all essentials the conclusions of the Graf-Wellhausen school regarding the order and dates of the Pentateuchal documents.<sup>58</sup> The priority of P is universally given up;

<sup>57</sup> The more important works of these pioneers are: E. Reuss, *L'Histoire Sainte et La Loi* (1879); K. H. Graf, *Die geschichtlichen Buecher des Alten Testaments* (1866); A. Kayser, *Das vorexilische Buch der Urgeschichte* (1874); A. Kuenen, *Godsdienst van Israel* (1869, 1870); J. Wellhausen, *Geschichte Israels*, i (1878); *Composition des Hexateuchs*, first in *Jahrbuecher fuer Deutsche Theologie* (1876-1877), republished as vol. ii of *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten* (1885). Mention should also be made of J. W. Colenso, *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (1862-1879).

<sup>58</sup> Among the more prominent writers on Old Testament subjects who accept the general literary conclusions of the Graf-Wellhausen school may be named: Duhm, Stade, Smend, Marti, Budde, Cornill, Baentsch, Bertholet, Kautzsch, Steuernagel, W. R. Smith, G. A. Smith, Driver, G. B. Gray, Skinner, J. E. McFadyen, H. P. Smith, G. F. Moore, J. P. Peters, W. R. Harper, and many more. Of special discussions of the Pentateuchal criticism which represent this theory, may be named, in addition to those already enumerated: A. Westphal, *Les sources du pentateuque* (1888ff.); W. B. Bacon, *The Genesis of Genesis* (1892), and *The Triple Tradition of the Exodus* (1894); W. E. Addis, *The Documents of the Hexateuch* (vol. i, 1893; vol. ii, 1898); H. Holzinger, *Einleitung in den Hexateuch* (1893); C. Steuernagel, *Allgemeine Einleitung in den Hexa-*



but there are a few eminent scholars, among them Kittel,<sup>59</sup> Graf Baudissin,<sup>60</sup> and Koenig,<sup>61</sup> who consider E older than J, and some who date P earlier than D.<sup>62</sup> There are also some who, while accepting the Document Theory in some form, assign the documents embodied in the Pentateuch to dates much earlier than those favored by the Graf-Wellhausen school.<sup>63</sup>

**Recent Developments.** The efforts to determine the dates of the completed documents were followed by attempts to fix the age of the material embodied in these documents. The earlier adherents of the Graf-Wellhausen school were inclined to assign not only the completed documents but practically all the material embodied

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*teuch* (1900); A. Merx, *Die Buecher Mose und Josua* (1907); I. Benzinger, *Wie wurden die Juden das Volk des Gesetzes?* (1908). The English text of the Pentateuch, arranged according to the principal sources, is found in J. E. Carpenter and G. Harford-Battersby, *The Hexateuch*, vol. ii (1900); vol. i, which is devoted to a discussion of the critical questions, is published separately under the title, *The Composition of the Hexateuch*. A similar arrangement is found in C. F. Kent, *The Student's Old Testament*, especially the volumes on *Beginnings of Hebrew History* (1904) and *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents* (1907).

<sup>59</sup> *Geschichte der Hebraer*, I (1888).

<sup>60</sup> *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1901).

<sup>61</sup> *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1893).

<sup>62</sup> A. Dillmann, in his revision of the commentaries on the books of the Hexateuch by A. Knobel (1880ff.); R. Kittel, in the volume mentioned in note (59), and in the *Theologische Studien aus Wuerttemberg* (1881, 1882); but the latter approaches more nearly to the Graf-Wellhausen school in the 2d ed. of the *Geschichte* (1909-1912); W. W. Graf Baudissin in the volume mentioned in note (60), and in *Geschichte des alttestamentlichen Priestertums* (1889); E. Riehm, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, edited by A. Brandt (1889, 1890); H. L. Strack, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1883); and others.

<sup>63</sup> E. Koenig, for example, gives the dates: E, 1200; J, 1000; D, 700-650; Sellin, J, 1000-950; E, 950, revised c. 850; D, c. 700, the reform under Hezekiah; P, 500.

in them to relatively late dates. Later investigations have clearly shown that much of the material, both historical and legal, must have been handed down, orally or in written form, from very early times.<sup>64</sup>

It would be erroneous to think that no voices were raised against the modern views in general, and against the prevailing Document Theory in particular. Hengstenberg, Haevernick, Keil, Green, and others did their best to uphold or reestablish the traditional views.<sup>65</sup> Others, while admitting some truth in the newer views, proposed rival theories, which, their authors believed, would explain all the facts without departing so far from traditional views. A. Klostermann,<sup>66</sup> for example, followed in many points by James Orr,<sup>67</sup> holds that the ground-

<sup>64</sup> H. Gunkel, *Schoepfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (1895); *Genesis* (1902); A. Merx, *Die Buecher Mose und Josua* (1907). H. Winckler, in numerous publications, especially—in cooperation with H. Zimmern—in the third edition of E. Schrader, *Die Keilschriften und das Alte Testament* (1902, 1903); A. Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orient* (1904; English translation 1911); R. Kittel, *Die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft in ihren wichtigsten Ergebnissen* (1910; English translation 1910) and in the 2d ed. of his *Geschichte*; and many others.

<sup>65</sup> The following are of greatest interest in this connection: E. W. Hengstenberg, *Die Authentie des Pentateuchs* (1836-1839); H. A. C. Haevernick, *Handbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1836-1849); F. H. Ranke, *Untersuchungen ueber den Pentateuch* (1834-1840); J. K. F. Keil, *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1853); A. Zahn, *Das Deuteronomium* (1890), and *Ernste Blicke in den Wahn der modernen Kritik des Alten Testaments* (1893ff.); W. H. Green, *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch* (1895); and *The Unity of the Book of Genesis* (1895); E. Rupprecht, *Das Raetsel des Fuenfbuches Moses* (1895-1897), and *Wissenschaftliches Handbuch der Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1898).

<sup>66</sup> *Der Pentateuch* (1893, neue Folge, 1907).

<sup>67</sup> *The Problem of the Old Testament* (1906).

work of the Pentateuch is a Mosaic production, historical and legal, which was regularly read before the people—J. In the course of time this early document received minor additions and underwent various modifications—E; until there were current two distinct recensions of the original work. Twice it received more extensive additions, the first under Solomon, at which time were added the Levitical regulations and the related historical sections—P; the other under Josiah, when Deuteronomy was added—D.

A somewhat different theory is advocated by B. D. Erdmans.<sup>68</sup> According to him, the kernel of the Pentateuch is an *Adam* book—beginning Gen. 5. 1—or a *Jacob* recension of the same—compare Gen. 37. 2—which was originally polytheistic and arose before B. C. 700. Meanwhile an *Israel* recension of the same work, also polytheistic, had been made, which, before the discovery of Deuteronomy, was interwoven with the *Jacob* recension. After the finding of Deuteronomy the combined work was revised from the standpoint of monotheism, and in postexilic times it received further additions.

In part at least the opposition of these and other recent writers to the generally accepted view is based upon the alleged uncertainty of the critical analysis of the Pentateuch underlying the conclusions of the Graf-Wellhausen school. The findings of Astruc, which mark the first stage in the development of the Document Theory, were based upon the discovery of a significant alternation in the use of the divine names “Yahweh” and “Elohim” in different parts of the book of Genesis. Taking this “dis-

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<sup>68</sup> *Alttestamentliche Studien*, i, *Genesis* (1908); ii, *Die Vorgeschichte Israels* (1908); iii, *Exodus* (1910). For a criticism of Erdmans, see *ZATW*, 1910, pp. 245ff.; 1911, pp. 44ff.

covery" as a starting point, there have been various attempts made in recent years to prove, chiefly from the ancient translations, foremost among them the Septuagint, that the accepted text of the Hebrew Bible is so uncertain that no analysis of documents can be based upon it. It follows that if the critical analysis is faulty, any theory resting upon it loses its chief support; and the way is cleared for a new analysis and a new theory or new theories.<sup>69</sup>

In general, it may be said that these more recent theories are a combination of the Supplement Theory and a modified Document Theory. Unfortunately, as Professor Skinner has pointed out so clearly, the textual-critical foundations so essential for the newer views are rather insecure. It would seem, therefore, that, though it may be admitted that many questions of Pentateuchal criticism are still unsettled and that some of the opinions now held may have to be modified, the Document Theory as presented in its main outlines by the Graf-Wellhausen school, has still the better of the argument.

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<sup>69</sup> Klostermann called attention to the textual uncertainties in 1893; other authors following in his footsteps are: J. Lepsius, several articles in *Reich Christi* (1903); J. Dahse, in *Archiv fuer Religionswissenschaft* (1908); more fully in *Die Gottesnamen in Genesis* (1912) and *Wie erklart sich der gegenwaertige Zustand der Genesis?* (1913); H. A. Redpath, in *American Journal of Theology*, 1904; B. D. Eerdmans, *Alttestamentliche Studien* (1908-1910); A. Troelstra, *De Naam Gods in den Pentateuch*, translated into English, *The Name of God in the Pentateuch* (1912); H. M. Wiener, *Essays in Pentateuchal Criticism* (1910); *The Origin of the Pentateuch* (1910); *Pentateuchal Studies* (1912), and numerous articles in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*. See also *International Standard Bible Encyclopædia*, art. "Pentateuch." A thorough-going discussion of the views expressed by these writers is given by J. Skinner in five articles in the *Expositor* (1913), published, with additions, in book form under the title *The Divine Names in Genesis* (1914).

CHAPTER IV

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF MOSAIC  
AUTHORSHIP

I. INDIRECT EVIDENCE



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AUTHORSHIP

I. INDIRECT EVIDENCE

AN adequate discussion of the authorship and origin of the Pentateuch requires a consideration of the arguments which have been and are being advanced in favor of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. For convenience sake these arguments are here arranged in four groups: 1. Indirect Evidence. 2. External Evidence. 3. Direct Internal Evidence. 4. Indirect Internal Evidence.<sup>1</sup> The present chapter is devoted to a consideration of the Indirect Evidence, which is presented under three heads:

**I. Lack of Unanimity among the Critics.**<sup>2</sup> This lack of unanimity, it is claimed, proves conclusively that the working principles and methods of these scholars are faulty; but if they use in their investigations faulty methods and principles, their conclusions cannot be considered well founded and, therefore, must be rejected.<sup>3</sup>

Now, assuming for the sake of argument that the

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<sup>1</sup> Following, in a general way, the arrangement of the discussion in F. E. Gigot, *Special Introduction to the Old Testament*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> That is, the scholars holding nontraditional views regarding the origin of the Pentateuch.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps no recent writer has made more ingenious use of these alleged disagreements than James Orr, in *The Problem of the Old Testament*.

alleged disagreements are real, must they be traced to the use of faulty methods and principles? In investigations of this sort lack of agreement in conclusions may be due to one or the other of two causes: either to the use of faulty methods and principles, or to a lack of a sufficient number of decisive data on the basis of which the questions must be settled. What, then, is the working principle and method of modern critical investigation? In the words of J. E. McFadyen, it is "the free and reverent study of all the biblical facts."<sup>4</sup> It is *study*, which means careful investigation rather than superficial reading followed by hasty, unfounded conclusions. The investigation is *free*, in the sense that, though it is not disrespectful to traditional beliefs, it is not prevented by them from marking out new paths if the facts so demand. It is *reverent*, because it deals with a book that has played a unique part in the religious life and thought of many centuries and has been and is received as a book in which the voice of God may be heard. It is primarily a study of the *facts* presented in the book, not of theories or speculations, though in the study of the facts much may be learned from the theories of the past, and the study may give rise to new theories. In order to be thoroughly scientific it must have due regard for *all* the facts in the case.

In the question under consideration, then, the method or principle of procedure is the careful, scientific examination of all the facts that throw light on the authorship and composition of the Pentateuch. Surely, this cannot be a faulty method of procedure; and if there is disagreement in conclusions, it cannot be charged to the use of faulty working principles.

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<sup>4</sup> *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*, p. 47.



On the other hand, disagreement in conclusions may be due to a lack of sufficient decisive data. The facts to be examined may be few in number or they may be open to more than one interpretation. In such case it is to be expected that the personal element—personal preference or prejudice—should make itself felt in the interpretation of the few or indecisive facts: a conclusion appealing to one person as well founded may be rejected by another as unwarranted. It is well to heed the words of caution written by one of the most eminent Old Testament scholars, recently deceased: "In the critical study of the Old Testament there is an important distinction which should be kept in mind. It is that of *degrees* of probability. The probability of a conclusion depends upon the nature of the grounds upon which it rests; and some conclusions reached by critics of the Old Testament are for this reason more probable than others, the facts at our disposal being in the former case more numerous and decisive than in the latter. It is necessary to call attention to this difference, because writers who seek to maintain the traditional view of the structure of the Old Testament sometimes point to conclusions which, from the nature of the case, are uncertain, or are propounded avowedly as provisional, with the view of discrediting all, as though they rested upon a similar foundation."<sup>5</sup> And again: "It is in the endeavor to reach definite conclusions upon the basis either of imperfect *data*, or of indications reasonably susceptible of divergent interpretations, that the principal disagreements between the critics have their origin. Language is sometimes used

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<sup>5</sup> S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. iv.

implying that critics are in a state of internecine conflict with one another or that their conclusions are 'in a condition of perpetual flux.' Such statements are not in accordance with the facts. There is a large area on which the data are clear: here, accordingly, critics are agreed, and their conclusions are not likely ever to be reversed. And this area includes many of the most important results criticism has reached. There is an area beyond this, where the data are complicated and ambiguous; and here it is no more than natural that independent judges should differ." <sup>6</sup> Wherever, therefore, real differences of opinion are found they are due, not to the use of faulty principles, but to the peculiar character of the available evidence.

POINTS OF AGREEMENT. It should be noted, however, that the disagreements have been greatly exaggerated and overemphasized. As a matter of fact, on all the main points under discussion, regarding which the data are sufficiently numerous and decisive, there is general agreement among scholars, even among those representing what may be called different schools. There is practical unanimity, for example, on points like these:

I. The composite character of the Pentateuch or the Hexateuch, as, indeed, of all the so-called historical books of the Old Testament. "In the light of all these facts," says McFadyen, "the general possibility, if not the practical certainty, of the compositeness of the historical books may be conceded." <sup>7</sup> Even W. H. Green admits the possibility of compilation. He says: "By the unity

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<sup>6</sup> S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. vi.

<sup>7</sup> *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*, p. 143.

of the Pentateuch is meant that it is in its present form one continuous work, the product of a single writer. This is not opposed to the idea of his having had before him written sources in any number or variety, from which he may have drawn his materials, provided the composition was his own." <sup>8</sup>

2. The use of four principal sources, now commonly designated J, E, D, P. Each of these is thought to have reached its final form subsequently to the time of Moses, but each of them is supposed to contain material considerably older than the time of the composition of the document as a whole. E. Sellin, a very cautious and conservative scholar, assigns the *highest degree of probability* to the view which claims that the Pentateuch is a compilation of material from four originally separate historical-legal sources, the oldest of which, he thinks, assumed written form, at the earliest, near the beginning of the period of the monarchy.<sup>9</sup> Even scholars who, like Orr, question the existence of four independent documents, recognize "evident signs of different pens and styles, of editorial redaction, of stages of compilation."<sup>10</sup>

3. The presence in P, whatever its date, of an independent code of laws, found chiefly in Lev. 17 to 26. Graf was the first to call attention to this unique group of laws, and Klostermann furnished the appropriate title "Heiligkeitsgesetz," which means "Law of Holiness,"

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<sup>8</sup> *Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, p. 59.

<sup>9</sup> *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 18. On p. 16 he uses these emphatic words: "So ist das Eine ein absolut feststehendes wissenschaftliches Faktum: der Pentateuch ist erst in der nachmosaischen Zeit aus einer Mehrheit in Palaestina geschriebener Quellen zusammengewachsen. Das ist die unverrückbare Basis auf der die protestantische Pentateuchforschung von heute einmuetig steht."

<sup>10</sup> James Orr, *The Problem of the Old Testament*, pp. 369ff.

because the fundamental requirement is that Israel should be holy because Yahweh is holy.<sup>11</sup>

4. The detailed analysis of the Pentateuch into P, D, and the combined JE. The interweaving of J and E is so complete that it is much more difficult to separate them, though even on this point there is coming to be greater unanimity.

5. The presence in the Pentateuch of three distinct legal codes—the Book of the Covenant, the Deuteronomic Code, and the Priestly Code—belonging to different periods and representing different stages of political, social, and religious development.

6. J and E are older than D; and modern scholars are also agreed that J and E are older than P.

7. Deuteronomy in some form, not the whole of the Pentateuch, was the Book of the Law upon which the reforms of Josiah were founded. Whatever the date of its writing, it was then *published* for the first time.

POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT. From the preceding summary it would seem that agreement has been reached on all essential points. The disagreements appear in matters of detail, such as definite dates, regarding which decisive data are lacking:

1. The relative age of D and P. The mooted question is whether P is postexilic and so later than D, or, apart from editorial additions, preexilic and, consequently, earlier than D. A few scholars hold that P, with the exception, perhaps, of H,<sup>12</sup> was written before D,<sup>13</sup> and that H, though embodying earlier material, reached its final form during the exile. These scholars, however,

<sup>11</sup> Lev. 19. 2; 20. 7, etc.

<sup>12</sup> That is, the Law of Holiness.

<sup>13</sup> See above, p. 54.

admit that P received more or less extensive additions during the postexilic period. On the other hand, most modern scholars consider P a postexilic production; they admit, however, that H was compiled during the exile, and that the laws of H and P are largely based on pre-exilic practice, ritual, and customs, some of which may have reached the compiler in written form. It would seem, therefore, that the difference between the two views is, after all, not so very great. One side says: "P is preexilic with postexilic additions"; the other: "P is post-exilic, embodying preexilic material." Both might agree on this statement of the case: P is a combination of preexilic and postexilic materials.

2. The relative age and place of composition of J and E. But here again there seems to be growing unanimity in favor of Judah as the home of J, and of the northern kingdom, the territory of the Joseph tribes, as the home of E. The Graf-Wellhausen school places J before E, but there are a few eminent scholars who reverse this position.<sup>14</sup>

3. The detailed analysis of JE into J and E. There are several reasons why uncertainty should exist here: (1) The similarity of subject; both J and E cover the early history of the Hebrews; (2) the similarity of point of view; both reflect the prophetic point of view; (3) the nearness in date and age; both come from the golden age of Hebrew prose writing; (4) the manner of combination; the interweaving of J and E is much more complete and intricate than is the case with the other documents.

4. The presence of the Pentateuchal documents in Judges, Samuel, and Kings. It is quite generally ad-

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<sup>14</sup> See above, p. 57.

mitted that traces of some of them are found in Judges; it is also recognized that, if these sources were not used in Samuel, the compiler made use of sources written in the spirit of J and E; there is more uncertainty regarding Kings.

5. The exact process by which the several documents were combined to form the present Pentateuch.

6. The analysis of the several documents into earlier and later material, symbolized by the letters J<sub>1</sub>, J<sub>2</sub>, J<sub>3</sub>, E<sub>1</sub>, E<sub>2</sub>, E<sub>3</sub>, etc. The general tendency among more recent writers is to assign a considerable proportion of the material to relatively early dates.

Concerning these six points on which disagreements exist it may be noted: (1) They do not touch the central question, Did Moses write the Pentateuch? (2) Uncertainty on these points cannot invalidate the conclusions reached regarding other and more important questions. (3) The disagreements are easily accounted for by the absence of decisive data. Therefore, the charge that the lack of unanimity is due to the use of faulty working methods and principles is without support; and the disagreements in so far as they are real cannot be used legitimately as an argument against the correctness of the modern critical position.

**II. The Manner of Literary Composition.** Another line of argument against the modern critical view, and thus, by implication, in favor of the traditional position is suggested in these words: "No other book was so constructed; no book could be so constructed";<sup>15</sup> or in the assertion of A. J. F. Behrends: "Was there ever such a literary patch quilt?—It is simply incredible that Genesis

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<sup>15</sup> *Anti-Higher Criticism*, p. 10.

was put together as the critics claim.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, the claim is set up that the study of extra-biblical literature shows the modern critical views concerning the origin of the Pentateuch to be impossible.

It is rarely wise to call a thing impossible; and it is never so, unless one is absolutely sure of his facts. Unfortunately, the facts in the case do not warrant the assertions quoted. The eminent archæologist H. A. Sayce, often claimed as one of the chief supporters of the traditional views, has made the statement: “Modern research has shown that a considerable part of the most ancient literature of all nations was of composite origin, more especially where it was of a historical or religious character. Older documents were incorporated into it with only so much change as to allow them to be fitted together into a continuous story, or to reflect the point of view, ethical, political, or religious, of the later compiler. The most ancient books that have come down to us are, with few exceptions, essentially compilations.”<sup>17</sup> He illustrates his statement by referring to the “Book of the Dead” of Egypt and the epic literature of ancient Babylonia;<sup>18</sup> and then concludes with the words: “The composite character of the Pentateuch, therefore, is only what a study of similar contemporaneous literature brought to light by modern research would lead us to expect.”<sup>19</sup>

It is not necessary, however, to go outside of the Old Testament to find illustrations of the literary method, which, according to modern scholarship, was used in

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<sup>16</sup> *The Old Testament under Fire*, pp. 129, 133.

<sup>17</sup> *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

the production of the Pentateuch. The books of Chronicles, for example, which contain a "history" parallel to the historical records from Genesis to Kings, were written several centuries subsequently to the writing of the other records. According to the testimony of the Chronicler himself, he made use of earlier documents; and a comparison with the earlier narratives shows that, in principle at least, he followed the same method which the compiler of the Pentateuch is said to have adopted. In some cases he simply transferred the statements in the older writings to his own work; in others he introduced modifications or made abbreviations to satisfy his own religious or theological ideas, while in still other cases he introduced wholly fresh material.<sup>20</sup>

In a later work, written by a Semite for Semitic (Syrian) Christians, the same method of compilation can be studied more fully, because in this case the original documents, four in number, have been preserved. The *Diatessaron* of Tatian<sup>21</sup> is a *Life of Jesus* composed by piecing together passages from the four canonical Gospels. This compilation constituted the official gospel of the Syrian Church for about two centuries, and but for the interference of some Syrian bishops might have displaced the separate Gospels entirely from use in that church. The following extract consists of twelve fragments from three different sources, only two of which contain a whole verse: "And the same day, when even was come, he said unto them, Let us go unto the other

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<sup>20</sup>Compare, for example, 2 Sam. 10. 1-5 with 1 Chron. 19. 1-5, and 2 Sam. 24. 1-10 with 1 Chron. 21. 1-8. Unfortunately, many of the sources used by the Chronicler, if not all of them, have been lost; hence it is impossible to study in detail the method of the Chronicler.

<sup>21</sup>Died c. 150 A. D.



side of the lake. And when they had sent away the multitude (Jesus) went into a ship with his disciples; and there were also with him other little ships. And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, and the ships were near being swamped by the waves; and (Jesus) was in the stern being asleep on a pillow. And his disciples came to him and awoke him, saying, Master, save us, we perish! Then he arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still! And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly (and) wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this? for he commanded the winds and water, and they obey him." This brief paragraph consists of extracts from the following sources: Mark 4. 35a, Luke 8. 22b, Mark 4. 36a, Luke 8. 22a, Mark 4. 36b, Matt. 8. 24a, Luke 8. 23b, Mark 4. 38a, Matt. 8. 25, Luke 8. 24b, Mark 4. 39b-41a, Luke 8. 25b. It is seen, therefore, that "such a literary patch quilt" was not only possible, but was actually produced and put to serious use.<sup>22</sup>

**III. Unity of Theme and Plan.** Another phase of the same argument rests upon the alleged unity of the Pentateuch; which, it is claimed, militates against the assumption of diversity of authorship. Says W. H. Green: "The unity of theme and the unity of plan . . .

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<sup>22</sup> Compilations of a similar character are found in other ancient and modern literatures. For Arabic literature see *Revue Biblique*, 1906, pp. 509-519, and the Essay on *Historical Methods in the Old Testament*, in *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, edited by H. B. Swete (1909). For other examples, even in early English literature, see Carpenter and Harford-Battersby, *The Hexateuch*, vol. i, chap. i, and H. T. Fowler, *A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel*, pp. 46ff.

creates a presumption that these books are, as they have been traditionally believed to be, the product of a single writer."<sup>23</sup>

Now, no one can deny the essential unity of theme and plan; but does such unity exclude the use of compilation as a method of literary composition? The same kind of unity exists in Chronicles, where, according to the writer's own testimony, it is perfectly consistent with compilation from numerous sources. There is complete unity in the *Diatessaron*; and there is a certain unity in students' essays, though in many cases they consist largely of extracts from other works. All that this kind of unity proves is that the final product is dominated by the ideals of one man or of one school; and such domination is not questioned in the case of the Pentateuch. Who this man may have been or when he may have lived cannot be determined from the unity of theme and plan.

To sum up this part of the discussion: The Indirect Evidence, of which so much is made by some writers, does not prove the case; it leaves the problem of the origin and authorship of the Pentateuch an open question.

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<sup>23</sup> *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, p. 29; compare also, *The Unity of the Book of Genesis*, *passim*.

CHAPTER V  
ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF MOSAIC  
AUTHORSHIP

2. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE



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**1. Evidence Based upon New Testament Statements.**

This includes the testimony of Jesus and of the New Testament writers. There are those who insist that the words of Jesus place the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch beyond question. In support reference is made to passages like these: John 5. 45-47; 7. 19; Matt. 8. 4; Mark 7. 10; which, however, are all irrelevant, because not one of them claims the authorship of the Pentateuch for Moses. In the first "Moses" seems to cover the entire Old Testament; in the second, "Did not Moses give you the law?" there is no reference to the *writing* of anything; and in the third and fourth certain laws are ascribed to Moses, without implying literary authorship of the Pentateuch or even of a part of it. Other passages of a similar character and equally irrelevant are quoted at times, which it is not necessary even to mention.

There are, however, a few passages in which the words of Jesus seem to imply that Moses actually *wrote* some things contained in the Pentateuch. In Mark 10. 5 these words are placed in the mouth of Jesus: "For your hardness of heart he [Moses] wrote you this commandment"; or Luke 20. 37, "Even Moses showed in the place concerning the Bush." These and similar passages, naturally interpreted, seem to imply that Moses wrote some

passages, long or short, in the Pentateuch. Do these references settle the question of the authorship of the first five books of the Old Testament for those who claim to be followers of Jesus, the Christ? An emphatic affirmative answer is given by W. H. Green: "For those who reverently accept him as an infallible teacher this settles the question."<sup>1</sup> He and other writers are one in charging that denial of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in the presence of passages like those quoted is evidence of unbelief, an insult to the Christ, because a denial of his authority. "If Moses did not write the Pentateuch," says one, "or any portion of it, and the Highest Critics—Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit—declare he did, it would be a lie. It would be none the less a lie, even though the Jews held traditionally that Moses was the author of these books. The testimony of the Highest Critics is absolutely unerringly and eternally true, and he who hesitates to receive it as against all other testimonies is disloyal to the truth."<sup>2</sup>

Clearly these statements are based on the assumption that Jesus gave and meant to give deliberate decisions on questions of authorship, which assumption cannot be substantiated. In the first place, it is well to note that in only about one fifth of the New Testament quotations from the Old Testament is a personal name connected with the quotation. Jesus, himself, in quoting from the Pentateuch or other Old Testament books, frequently omits all reference to the alleged author, which seems to imply that, in comparison with the truth taught, he considered the question of authorship of no special significance.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *The Highest Critics vs. the Higher Critics*, pp. 7, 8.

Moreover, in some cases at least, the exact form of quotation is doubtful. Compare, for example, Matt. 15. 4, "God said," with Mark 7. 10, "Moses said"; and Luke 20. 37, "Moses showed, in *the place concerning* the Bush," with Mark 12. 26, "Have ye not read in the book of Moses, in *the place concerning* the Bush, how God spake unto him," with Matt. 22. 31, which, referring to the same statement, introduces it by "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?" Which one of the evangelists has preserved the actual words of Jesus?

But even admitting that in these and similar passages Jesus used a personal name, does this imply a decision respecting authorship? No one would raise objection in connection with extra-biblical literature to the use of the name of a writer to designate a book without implying that the man named was the author of the entire book in its present form.<sup>3</sup> There is evidence of the same usage in the New Testament. In the sermon of Peter "Samuel" is used as equivalent to "book of Samuel,"<sup>4</sup> for the reference is to a statement in the Second Book of Samuel, which is ascribed not to Samuel but to Nathan; nor is it probable that the speaker used the name to suggest the authorship of the book in which the statement is found, for the words were not spoken until after the death of Samuel; hence the latter cannot be the author of the book in which it is preserved. In the Epistle to the Hebrews<sup>5</sup> a psalm is referred to as "David,"<sup>6</sup> which is not even in

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<sup>3</sup> Compare, for example, the universal reference to "Webster's Dictionary."

<sup>4</sup> Acts 3. 24; the passage in the mind of the speaker is 2 Sam. 7. 11-16.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. 4. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Psa. 95.

the title ascribed to the shepherd-king of Israel. May it not be, therefore, that Jesus and the New Testament writers used the name Moses as a convenient designation of a book without any thought of authorship? This seems to be the case in 2 Cor. 3. 15, "Whenever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart." <sup>7</sup>

All these facts suggest that, while Jesus frequently refers to the Pentateuch and in some instances connects the name of Moses with a definite passage, *he never does so for the purpose of proving that Moses wrote the Pentateuch or any portion of it.* W. T. Davison describes the situation correctly when he writes: "A study of the whole use of the Old Testament made by Christ in his teaching shows that the questions of date and authorship with which criticism is chiefly concerned were not before the mind of our Lord as he spoke, nor was it his object to pronounce upon them." <sup>8</sup>

But even admitting that the references of Jesus imply in some cases a recognition of authorship, the question still remains whether the few passages quoted carry with them the authorship of the entire book from which the quotations are taken. There are even some conservative scholars who answer this question in the negative. C. H. H. Wright, after enumerating the passages which, he thinks, are referred to by Jesus as coming from Moses, continues: "All, however, that can be fairly deduced from such statements is, the Pentateuch contains portions

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<sup>7</sup>The origin of the designations Moses = Law = Pentateuch, Samuel = Book of Samuel, David = Book of Psalms must be explained and can be explained; but as the use of "Samuel" and "David" in the above-mentioned illustrations shows, it cannot always rest upon the fact of authorship, whatever the popular idea may have been.

<sup>8</sup>James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iv, p. 151.



written by Moses. It does not follow that the five books as a whole were written by that lawgiver.”<sup>9</sup>

Other scholars consider this explanation somewhat forced and unnatural; therefore, they prefer a different interpretation of the words of Jesus. Many hold that in his references to the Pentateuch Jesus accommodated himself to the usage of the Jews, without indorsing their views or giving expression to his own, even though he knew that the commonly accepted opinions regarding the authorship of the Pentateuch were erroneous. Those who advocate this view believe that their attitude in no wise dishonors their Master or discredits his spiritual authority and supremacy. Indeed, they say, one cannot easily see what other course he could have taken. Jesus had come to reveal the Father, to bring a sinful race into harmony with a holy God. The task was great and difficult, and there was but little time in which to accomplish it. If he had turned aside from his chief purpose to settle scientific and literary questions which were not under discussion among the people, he would have aroused popular opposition and thus hindered his chief work. As has already been pointed out, in no case do his references imply that he desired to pronounce authoritative critical judgment, and in no case does the value of the quotation depend on the authorship of the passage quoted. Looking, therefore, at the question from the pedagogical standpoint, it would seem that in view of his important mission in the world, Jesus was compelled to accommodate himself to the view and usage of the people in all matters not essential to his lifework.

Though this view appeals as perfectly satisfactory to

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<sup>9</sup> *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 76.

many devout Christian believers, there are others who maintain that it would not have been legitimate for Jesus to accommodate himself to the usage of the people if he had known that their views were not in accord with the facts;<sup>10</sup> nevertheless, they insist that his utterances do not settle purely literary questions. They believe that Jesus shared the views of the people, that he actually believed that Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch, and that this was due to a lack of knowledge on his part. And they further insist that this attitude toward Jesus in no wise affects the supreme and final authority of the Christ over the lives of men. The entire life of the Master, they say, shows that he regarded his mission as spiritual; he did not come to correct all errors, but merely those touching religion and ethics; and even here he did not give specific rules. In most cases he simply laid down great principles which in time might be worked out and applied to the details of human activity. He did not abolish slavery, he made no effort to correct errors in science; why should he correct erroneous views regarding critical and literary questions?

These were outside the sphere of his immediate interests. His knowledge or ignorance in these secondary matters does not necessarily affect his knowledge or authority in essentials. Surely, the words of Marcus Dods are not inapplicable here: "Ignorance of some departments of truth does not disqualify a man for knowing and imparting truth about God; in order to be a medium of revelation a man does not need to be in advance of his age in secular learning; intimate communion with

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<sup>10</sup> J. E. McFadyen, *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*, p. 209.

God, a spirit trained to discern spiritual things, a perfect understanding of and zeal for God's purpose are qualities quite independent of a knowledge of the discoveries of science." <sup>11</sup>

Again, the argument continues, while Christ was God he was also truly man. The union of the divine with the human, if real, must have brought some limitations. And as a matter of fact, the New Testament teaches that in some respects at least the divine powers of Christ were limited, else he could not have felt hunger, weariness, pain, etc. As strength was needed it was supplied. It may have been there potentially but not actually. May it not have been the same with omniscience? In one case at least Jesus admitted that his knowledge was limited: "But of that day or hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." <sup>12</sup> And, surely, that which, according to his own admission, was hidden from Jesus was of infinitely greater importance than the authorship of a biblical book. It would seem, therefore, that B. P. Raymond is right when he says: "To affirm that he had knowledge of the critical questions which agitate Christian scholars to-day is to deny that he was made like unto his brethren. It is to compromise the reality of his humanity and to start on the road to docetism. Fairbairn's conclusions are just: 'The humanity of the Saviour must be absolutely real.' " <sup>13</sup>

There are, then, three explanations of the references of Jesus to the authorship of the Pentateuch, each one of which seems perfectly fair, natural and, above all, scriptural; and each one of which implies that his utter-

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<sup>11</sup> *The Book of Genesis*, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> Mark 13. 32.

<sup>13</sup> M. S. Terry, *Moses and the Prophets*, p. 194.

ances do not furnish an answer to the question: Did Moses write the Pentateuch? This conclusion, since it is in perfect accord with the New Testament, can in no wise be construed as an insult to the Christ; nor does it affect in the least his authority in religious and ethical matters.

What has been said of the words of Jesus is equally true of similar New Testament statements coming not from Jesus directly but from the authors of New Testament books. The New Testament has one distinct purpose—to make man morally and spiritually perfect. This is clearly expressed in 2 Tim. 3. 15-17, in words referring primarily to the Old Testament but applicable to all scriptures “inspired of God.” It seems to have been no function of the inspired writers to give information on purely scientific or literary questions. Nothing in the New Testament warrants the inference that it seeks to settle critical problems connected with the Old Testament. “It nowhere claims that right for itself, and if any man makes such a claim for it he must be prepared to justify his claim. He must show that it was part of the purpose of the writers of the New Testament to correct traditional views of authorship and history, if these views were mistaken. Further, he must show that they had access to information which would enable them to correct those views; or, in the absence of such information, he must show that they were miraculously led to a knowledge of these matters. Till these claims can be substantiated the New Testament indorsement of a tradition of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch can have no more value than the tradition itself; and that must be independently investigated. There need be no reason for alarm at such a conclusion, unless it can be shown that

these questions are integrally bound up with the spiritual function of Scripture.”<sup>14</sup>

The general use of the Old Testament by the New Testament writers also implies that their primary interest was in the substance, not in the literary form. There is not the slightest suggestion that they ever thought about questions of authorship. They were concerned with the teaching and the spirit of the Old Testament, not with the letter or anything touching merely the external form. All of which goes to show that the testimony of Jesus and of the New Testament writers does not settle anything regarding the authorship and origin of the Pentateuch.<sup>15</sup>

2. **The Tradition of the Jewish People and of the Christian Church.** In the preceding paragraphs it has been pointed out that it was not within the sphere of Jesus and of the New Testament writers to examine or settle literary questions; nor is there any evidence that they did. Neither is there any evidence that the early Christian Church, or her leaders, ever took time to institute such investigation. On the testimony of Jesus and of his disciples the Old Testament writings were taken over from the Jews as inspired Sacred Scriptures without further questions; and with the books themselves came the Jewish traditions concerning their authorship. This fact robs Christian tradition of all independent value; and if there is any weight in tradition at all, it is in the traditions current among the early Jews.

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<sup>14</sup> J. E. McFadyen, *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*, p. 198.

<sup>15</sup> See further J. E. McFadyen, *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*, chap. viii; J. P. Peters, *The Old Testament and the New Scholarship*, chap. iv.

The official Jewish tradition regarding the authorship of the Pentateuch has already received brief consideration.<sup>16</sup> It may be well, however, in this connection, to quote and consider somewhat more fully the classic passage in the Talmud,<sup>17</sup> which embodies the rabbinical idea of the origin of the Old Testament books. It reads: "Moses wrote his own book and the section about Balaam and Job; Joshua wrote his own book and eight verses in the Torah; Samuel wrote his own book and the books of Judges and Ruth. David wrote the book of Psalms at the direction of the ten elders: the first man, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Jeduthun, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah; Jeremiah wrote his own book and the book of Kings and Lamentations. Hezekiah and his company wrote Isaiah, Proverbs, Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes; the men of the Great Synagogue wrote Ezekiel, the Twelve, Daniel and the Roll of Esther; Ezra wrote his own book and the genealogies in Chronicles down to his own time. But who completed them? Nehemiah ben Hachaliah."<sup>18</sup> As has been stated,<sup>19</sup> there is another tradition assigning to Moses even the account of his own death.

Concerning these traditions the following may be noted:

1. They cannot be traced beyond B. C. 180 when the book of Ecclesiasticus was written. In other words, they first appear about 1000 years subsequently to the time of Moses.

2. There is no evidence that the tradition is based

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<sup>16</sup> See above, p. 44.

<sup>17</sup> Collected between A. D. 200 and 500.

<sup>18</sup> Babylonian Talmud, *baba bathra*, 14b, 15a.

<sup>19</sup> See above, p. 45.

upon any kind of scientific investigation, or that the statement regarding the Pentateuch was handed down uninterruptedly from anywhere near the time of Moses. The intervening centuries were full of confusion and barbarity.

3. A moment's thought will show that the traditions prove too much. They are much nearer the time of the prophets, yet no one has taken seriously their explanation of the origin of the prophetic books. Is it credible that Samuel wrote the books of Samuel when practically all the events recorded in Second Samuel and some recorded in First Samuel took place after Samuel's death? Evidently, the expression "wrote" cannot be interpreted as having the ordinary meaning of the word. The tradition must use the word loosely, either of preparing the final edition, or of having some connection with a book, perhaps as its hero, or as the author of some part or parts of the contents.

4. There are numerous indications in early Jewish literature that in postexilic times the Jews manifested a tendency to ascribe to the great men of the past institutions or literary activities with which they had little or nothing to do. This tendency appears already in Chronicles, as a comparison of that book with parallel narratives in Samuel and Kings clearly shows: David came to be regarded as the author of practically all the Psalms and the originator of an elaborate temple service, Solomon the author of the Wisdom literature, Ezra the author of the completed canon, and Moses the giver of the completed legal system, from which it was only a step to make him the author of the books that contained the legal literature.

In view of these facts is it not precarious to lay much

stress on Jewish tradition? About all that may safely be inferred from it is that Moses did much for his people as a leader, judge, and lawgiver. It certainly does not prove that he wrote the Pentateuch in its present form.

**3. Testimony of the Other Books of the Old Testament.** The expression "Book of Moses" is found in the Old Testament only in 2 Chron. 25. 4; 35. 12; Ezra 6. 18; Neh. 13. 1; but expressions implying that the *Law* was ascribed to Moses are numerous, especially in Kings and Chronicles.<sup>20</sup> In Josh. 1. 7 Joshua is commanded to do according to all the law which Moses commanded; and in other passages it is noted with what fidelity he followed the directions of Moses. Judges 3. 4 states that some of the nations were left in the land "to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah, which he commanded their fathers by Moses." Similar passages are found in some of the prophetic books: Mal. 4. 4, for example, contains this exhortation: "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances"; but these and similar passages, being of the same nature as those already mentioned, carry little additional weight.

Do these statements prove that Moses wrote the Pentateuch? In the first place, what was said concerning the testimony of the New Testament writers may be repeated here: There is no evidence anywhere to show that matters relating to literary questions fall within the domain of special divine revelation. Two questions, therefore, need to be considered: (1) Were the writers of the Old

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<sup>20</sup> 1 Kings 2. 3; 2 Kings 14. 6; 18. 6, 12; 23. 25; 1 Chron. 15. 15; 22. 13; 2 Chron. 8. 13; 30. 16; 33. 8; 34. 14; 35. 6, etc.



Testament books in a position to know who was the author of the Pentateuch? (2) What is really claimed in the passages quoted? The second question may receive first consideration. What does the expression "law of Moses" mean? Says Green: "It is to be presumed, at least until the contrary is shown, that 'the law' and 'the book of the law' have the same sense throughout as in the New Testament, as also in Josephus and in the prologue to the Book of Sirach or Ecclesiasticus." Then he continues: "The testimonies which have been reviewed show that this was from the first attributed to Moses. At the least it is plain that the sacred historians of the Old Testament, without exception, knew of a body of laws which were universally obligatory and were believed to be the laws of Moses, and which answer in every particular to the laws of the Pentateuch."<sup>21</sup>

Do the facts warrant the statement of Professor Green? Is the term "Torah," or "Law," when used in the Old Testament, identical in meaning with "Pentateuch"? That the terms were used as synonyms in post-Old Testament times no one denies; it is equally certain, however, that the word "Torah" is frequently used by the Old Testament writers with a much more restricted meaning. As has been pointed out in an earlier chapter, the word, like many other theological terms, has a history and did not retain the same meaning throughout the successive stages of that history. Hence, the exact meaning of the

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<sup>21</sup> *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, p. 35. The last sentence does not necessarily imply what is definitely claimed in the preceding sentence, that in Old Testament passages such as have been quoted "Law" and "Pentateuch" are synonyms, or, what Green wants to prove, that because the Law is ascribed to Moses, therefore it follows that he is the author of the entire Pentateuch.

word in a given passage must be determined in the light of its context; and there cannot be the slightest doubt that in a multitude of passages the meaning of the author would be destroyed by an interpretation of "Law" as a synonym of "Pentateuch." In every Old Testament passage the word may be explained with perfect fairness as referring to a body of laws, of uncertain extent, which was assigned to Moses; in no case is it necessary to interpret it as synonymous with "Pentateuch." One thing is certain, therefore, that "law of Moses" is not identical with "Pentateuch of Moses."<sup>22</sup>

But does the ascription of this body of laws to Moses necessarily imply that he was the author of every law in the collection? No doubt the phrase "law of Moses" may be so interpreted, provided there is no reason for believing otherwise. On the other hand, it may mean only that the collection contains a Mosaic nucleus, which may have been expanded at a later time in the spirit of Moses and along the lines laid down by him. No one seriously questions at present that Moses was the originator of the movement and impulse which found literary expression in the Pentateuch, or that the historical, religious, and ethical development reflected in the Pentateuch progressed in the spirit of Moses and along lines marked out by him.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of the etymology and history of the word *torah*, see above, pp. 43, 44; its various meanings may also be seen in any Hebrew Lexicon. That in some cases the reference cannot be to the Pentateuch will appear again below, pp. 97ff.

<sup>23</sup> To quote from two adherents of the Graf-Wellhausen school: "The priests derived their Torah from Moses: they claimed only to preserve and guard what Moses had left. . . . From the historical tradition it is certain that Moses was the founder of the Torah" (Wellhausen, *History of Israel*, p. 396). "Though Moses was not the

Even at the present time it is not uncommon to use personal names in referring to literary productions, without implying that the persons bearing these names are the authors of these works. "French jurists and historians and preachers when speaking of the Code *Napoleon*, usually and rightly, mean thereby a system of laws which, every one of them knows fully, should not be exclusively attributed to the first emperor bearing that name."<sup>24</sup> No one objects to calling one of the great English dictionaries of the day "Webster's Dictionary" or simply "Webster," though everyone knows that the latest edition contains little that came from Webster himself.

Evidently, then, the Old Testament references to the law or laws of Moses do not prove the Mosaic authorship of all the laws covered by that term; much less do they establish the Mosaic authorship of the larger work of which they happen to be a part. That the three or four passages which speak of "the book of Moses" may refer to the Pentateuch in its present form need not be questioned, for it is generally accepted that when these statements were written the Pentateuch existed in completed form. The ascription of the entire work to Moses may be due, either to an erroneous expansion of the postexilic tradition that all law came from Moses, or to the recognition of a Mosaic nucleus in the book and the conviction that the entire work was written in the spirit of Moses, to record a movement inspired and guided in its early

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author of the written law, he was unquestionably the founder of that oral teaching, or Torah, which preceded, and became the basis of, the codes of the Pentateuch" (Montefiore, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1892, p. 64).

<sup>24</sup>F. E. Gigot, *Special Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 57.

stages by him. But whatever the explanation, the references do not prove that Moses is the author of the entire Pentateuch.

The External Evidence, like the Indirect Evidence, is inconclusive; the authorship of the Pentateuch is still an open question.

CHAPTER VI  
ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF MOSAIC  
AUTHORSHIP

3. DIRECT INTERNAL EVIDENCE



## CHAPTER VI

### ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP

#### 3. DIRECT INTERNAL EVIDENCE

THE direct internal evidence consists of statements in the books of the Pentateuch that Moses *wrote* something. These passages are: (1) Exod. 17. 14, "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." (2) Exod. 24. 4, "And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah." (3) Exod. 34. 27, 28, "Jehovah said unto Moses, Write thou these words. . . . And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." (4) Num. 33. 1, 2, "These are the journeys of the children of Israel, when they went forth out of the land of Egypt, by their hosts under the hand of Moses and Aaron. And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of Jehovah." (5) Deut. 31. 9, 24-26, "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and unto all the elders of Israel. (9) . . . And it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it by

the side of the ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God, that it may be there for a witness against you.”

Concerning these passages let it be noted: (1) Genesis and Leviticus contain no passages which are said to have been written by Moses. (2) If Moses was the author of the entire Pentateuch, why is there special mention made of these passages as having been written by him? If some one else wrote the larger work, the references could be explained, in some cases at least, as due to a desire on the part of the compiler to emphasize the fact that he is embodying Mosaic material. (3) Moses is always spoken of in the third person, which would be quite natural if the statement had been written by another. No doubt Moses might have used the third person in speaking of himself; but it does not follow that he did use it or must have used it.

But turning now to the five passages involved, do they prove, or do they make it even probable that Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch? Passages 1 and 4 refer to historical narratives; the others, 2, 3, and 5, to legal portions. The latter may be considered first: What does the statement in Exod. 24. 4, “And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah” mean? A comparison with verses 3 and 7 suggests that “all the words of Jehovah” includes at most the Book of the Covenant, either in its present or in an earlier form. At present it extends from Exod. 20. 22 to 23. 33, while in its original form it was probably even less extensive. Exod. 34. 27, 28 also seems to refer to a limited portion. In verse 10 Yahweh is introduced as saying: “Behold, I make a covenant.” In the succeeding verses he sets forth what, in view of this covenant relation, he will do for Israel, and what he expects Israel to do for him. This part of the transaction closes with



verse 26. Then follows, in verse 27, the statement: "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." Here "these words" can refer only to what immediately precedes, certainly not more than verses 10-26. If "he wrote," in 28b, refers to Moses the definite statement is made that Moses carried out the divine command: "And he was there with Jehovah forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." The context favors the interpretation that Moses is the writer; but there are those who, chiefly on the basis of Exod. 34. 1 and Deut. 10. 24, believe that the pronoun refers to Yahweh. In either case less than one chapter is involved.

Deut. 31. 24-26 is frequently interpreted as proving the Mosaic authorship of the entire Pentateuch. The central question is, Does the expression "this law" refer to the entire Pentateuch? If not, what does it mean? If it includes the entire Pentateuch, it follows that in this passage the whole work is ascribed to Moses. In support of the claim that it means the entire Pentateuch the following considerations are urged:

1. The exegetical tradition of the Jews so understood it; at any rate, such is the inference drawn from a comparison of Neh. 8. 13-18 with Deut. 31. 9, 10. This, however, is mere assumption, for there is no indication anywhere that "the words of the law" in Neh. 8. 13 is to be identified with "this law" in Deut. 31. 9.

2. The assertion is made that Deut 31. 9 must use the expression "this law" with the same meaning as Deut. 1. 5; then the claim is added that in the latter passage the reference is to a law already in existence, because Moses

is represented as about to expound it; from which the further inference is drawn that the reference is to the laws contained in the preceding books. However, a careful reading of Deut. 1. 5 and 4. 8 shows that in these passages "this law" refers to the legislation Moses is about to proclaim, and not to what precedes. Assuming, then, that "this law" in Deut. 31. 9 is the same as in the other passages, it cannot be interpreted as including more than Deuteronomy.

3. Deut. 4. 5, 14; 24. 8; 29. 1 recognize a prior legislation binding upon Israel. How this can prove that "this law" in 31. 9 includes the entire Pentateuch or that Moses wrote the entire work is not easily seen; for it is just the modern view regarding the origin of the Pentateuch which insists that there were laws and statutes in Israel long before Deuteronomy was written. Only a series of unwarranted assumptions can justify the use of the passages mentioned as an argument in favor of the traditional view.

4. "This book of the law" in Josh. 1. 8 is said to refer to the same Mosaic work as Deut. 31. 9, 24-26 and to be coextensive with it. Now, the argument continues, the contents of "the book of the law" spoken of in Josh. 1. 7ff. as comprising "all the law which Moses had commanded" presuppose and include the other books of the Pentateuch—Josh. 1. 13ff.; 4. 12; 22. 2ff. are drawn from Num. 32; Josh. 5. 2 from Gen. 17. 10; Josh. 5. 15 from Exod. 3. 5; etc.; therefore, "this law" in Deut. 31. 9, 24-26 also includes the other books of the Pentateuch. The first part of the argument—that "the law" or "this book of the law" in Josh. 1. 7, 8 is identical with "this law" in Deut. 31. 9, 24-26—may or may not be true, for it cannot be proved or disproved; but the second—that

this law is coextensive with the Pentateuch—rests upon a misapprehension. Even the superficial reader can see that Josh. 1. 1-9 is in the nature of an introduction; that the actual narrative of Joshua's exploits begins with verse 10. Is it not precarious to argue that, because "this book of the law" or "all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee," in the introductory verses of the book may be identical with "this law" in Deut. 31. 9, 24-26, therefore every reference to a commandment or law of Moses in any portion of the Book of Joshua must refer to the same written work? And is it not even more precarious to continue: If the laws mentioned in the other portions of the book are found in different books of the Pentateuch, it must follow that these books were a part of "this book of the law" mentioned in the introduction? The author of the book of Joshua may have had at his disposal several independent collections of laws or commandments attributed to Moses, or he may have used a work embodying these collections other than the Pentateuch or consisting of parts of the Pentateuch. But whatever source the author of Joshua may have known, no legitimate interpretation of the Joshua passages can determine from them the extent of "this law" in Deut. 31. 9, 24-26. It is seen, then, that the arguments commonly depended upon fail to prove that "this law" in Deut. 31. 9, 24-26 includes the entire Pentateuch, and thus, that the passage credits the writing of the Pentateuch to Moses.

On the other hand, there are many who insist that "this law" can be made to embrace, at the most, the book of Deuteronomy, and, in all probability, not even the whole of this book. The more important reasons for this limitation are:

1. Deut. 29. 1 undoubtedly recognizes the existence of an earlier legislation; but it does something more: it draws a clear distinction between the covenant made in Moab and the covenant made in Horeb. The words of the covenant made in Moab are found in the book of Deuteronomy; those of the other covenant in the preceding books of the Pentateuch. If, therefore, in Deuteronomy the words "*this law*" are used, is it not most natural to interpret them as excluding the words of the other law or covenant?

2. The statements in Deut. 31 read very much like statements made not by Moses himself but by a later writer who, in rewriting the Deuteronomic discourses of Moses, desires to give the sources from which he secured his material.

3. In Deut. 4. 8 "*this law*" is described as containing "*statutes and ordinances.*" As already pointed out, the relative clause, "*which I set before you this day,*" implies that the law is not yet announced; on the other hand, 5. 1 introduces Moses as presenting "*statutes and ordinances*" to the people. May it not be reasonably inferred from this that "*this law,*" both in 4. 8 and 31. 9, included the statutes and ordinances embodied in Deut. 5-30 and nothing more? But while some ordinances are found in chapters 5-11, on the whole, this section impresses one as little more than a review of the earlier covenant, an account of some of the events connected with its establishment, and a general introduction to the legislation which follows. Moreover, 12. 1 reads like a formal introduction to the new legislation: "*These are the statutes and the ordinances which ye shall observe to do in the land which Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath given thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the*

earth." For these reasons many think that "this law" in 31. 9 refers only to the legal section beginning with 12. 1.

4. In Deut. 31. 10ff. appears the command regarding the instruction of the people in "this law." In Deut. 27. 2ff. other provision is made for bringing it to the attention of the people: "And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over the Jordan unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over; that thou mayest go in unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath promised thee. And it shall be, when ye are passed over the Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in Mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster. And there shalt thou build an altar unto Jehovah, thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt lift up no iron *tool* upon them. Thou shalt build the altar of Jehovah thy God of unhewn stones; and thou shalt offer burnt-offerings thereon unto Jehovah thy God: and thou shalt sacrifice peace-offerings, and shalt eat there; and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God. And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law."

Josh. 8. 30-35 seems to narrate how the two commands—to read the law before the people and to inscribe it upon the stones—were carried out: "Then Joshua built an altar unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of unhewn stones, upon which no man had lifted up any iron; and they offered thereon burnt-offerings unto Jehovah, and sacrificed peace-offerings.

And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. And all Israel, and their elders and officers, and their judges stood on this side of the ark and on that side before the priests, the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, as well the sojourner as the home-born; half of them in front of Mount Gerizim, and half of them in front of Mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded at the first that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners that were among them."

Is it probable that the writing upon the stones involved the copying of the entire Pentateuch, or even of the whole of Deuteronomy? Kirkpatrick may be right in saying, "It is plain that the command to write *all the words of this law* upon the stones which were to be set up on Mount Ebal can only refer to a nucleus of the law, perhaps no more than the Ten Commandments."<sup>1</sup> But whatever the contents of this law may have been, it is quite safe to assert that Deut. 31. 9 and 24-26 do not prove that Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch.

The same assertion may be made regarding the other legal sections said to have been written by Moses. The fact that they are ascribed to Moses may, perhaps, imply that some of the laws now in the Pentateuch were first written down by him, but it fails to show the extent of these Mosaic laws, and furnishes not the slightest evi-

<sup>1</sup> *The Divine Library of the Old Testament*, p. 43.

dence that the entire Pentateuch came from the hand of the great leader of Israel.

There remain, then, the two historical passages, Exod. 17. 14 and Num. 33. 1, 2. Concerning the former, W. H. Green, a staunch defender of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, has this to say: "The fact that such an injunction was given to Moses in this particular instance seems to imply that he was the proper person to place on record whatever was memorable and worthy of preservation in the events of the time. And it *may perhaps be involved* in the language used that Moses had already begun, or at least contemplated, the preparation of a connected narrative to which reference is here made."<sup>2</sup> Even if everything that the learned professor claims is granted, the passage cannot be used to prove the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. At the most one may infer that a Mosaic record, long or short, was used by the compiler of the more extensive work, and that the latter alludes here to one of his sources of information.<sup>3</sup>

The other passage, Num. 33. 1, 2, states that Moses wrote down the names of the successive encampments of Israel. This passage also makes the impression that the author of the narrative in its present form was not Moses but a later writer, who claims that he is embodying a Mosaic document in his own work. But whatever the exact force of the words, the section claimed for Moses does not extend beyond 33. 49. Surely, the writing of a part of one chapter does not necessarily imply the writing of the entire Pentateuch. It requires a considerable stretch of the imagination to conclude as does Green:

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<sup>2</sup> *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, pp. 37, 38.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that there is no statement to the effect that Moses actually wrote the account.

“There is no escape from the conclusion that the author of this list of stations was the author of the entire Pentateuchal narrative from the departure out of Egypt to the arrival at the plains of Moab.”<sup>4</sup>

The argument from the Direct Internal Evidence clearly is no more conclusive than are the arguments discussed in the two preceding chapters: it leaves the authorship of the Pentateuch in its present form an open question.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, p. 38.



CHAPTER VII  
ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF MOSAIC  
AUTHORSHIP

4. INDIRECT INTERNAL EVIDENCE



CHAPTER VII  
ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF MOSAIC  
AUTHORSHIP

4. INDIRECT INTERNAL EVIDENCE

THE Direct Internal Evidence having proved scanty and unsatisfactory, there remains one other line of argument that demands consideration, namely, the contents of the book which, even apart from definite statements, are said to point to Moses as the author of the entire Pentateuch, or at least to the age of Moses as the time of its composition. This argument, based upon what may be called Indirect Internal Evidence, is cumulative, and may be presented under five heads: I. The Origin of the Pentateuch in the Desert. II. The Influence of Egypt Reflected in the Pentateuch. III. The Lack of Personal Acquaintance with Palestine. IV. The Pentateuchal Legislation and Israel's Nomad Life. V. Linguistic Characteristics.

**I. The Origin of the Pentateuch in the Desert.** The claim is made by the defenders of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch that both the legislation and the history of the Pentateuch bear the impress of the desert and, consequently, point to the desert as the place of their origin. By way of illustration attention is called to facts like these:

I. AS TO LEGISLATION: (1) The central institution of worship in the Pentateuch is the tent or tabernacle,

around which the tribes are grouped in their encampments.<sup>1</sup> The sanctuary being in the form of a tent, it must have originated among a people living in tents. In a settled community, where the people live in houses, the sanctuary assumes the form of a house. Israel was a nomadic people before entering Palestine; the use of a tent as the sanctuary must, therefore, have originated during the period of desert wanderings.

(2) The material used in the building of the tabernacle<sup>2</sup> was such as could be brought from Egypt or could be found in the desert. The Shittim wood, for example, could be found in sufficient quantities only in Egypt and in the Arabian desert.

(3) The existence of the tabernacle implies the organization of a priesthood to look after its care and transport and to assume responsibility for the public services. Why were the members of the tribe of Levi selected for the priestly office? Why not the descendants of Reuben, the firstborn? The experiences of the desert furnish the answer. The Levites were of the tribe of Moses; in a serious crisis they proved more loyal to Moses than any of the others; hence they were set apart by him, at the command of Yahweh, for a position of special honor.<sup>3</sup> And because this was done at the direction of Yahweh, Reuben, who as the firstborn might have claimed the honor, was content.

(4) In Egypt the priests were great landowners, whose possessions were considered sacred. In Israel they were left without property; they were dependent entirely on the good will and generosity of their fellows. Is it not

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<sup>1</sup> Num. 2. 1-34.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. 25-31.

<sup>3</sup> Num. 16ff.

remarkable that not a word of complaint fell from their lips? The most satisfactory explanation of the whole situation is found in the supposition that before the partition of Palestine, Moses, at divine direction, reconciled the Levites, members of his own tribe, to their lot.

(5) If the facts are as here stated, it becomes necessary to regard the laws regarding the Levites—their offices, functions, and revenues—a part of the organization begun and completed in the desert. Then Moses, being the outstanding leader of the age, must be credited with originating and formulating them.<sup>4</sup>

(6) The same claim may be made for the laws regarding different kinds of sacrifice.<sup>5</sup> They presuppose the desert and the camp as the place of sacrifice,<sup>6</sup> and the setting apart of Aaron and his sons as priests.<sup>7</sup>

(7) The ceremonial of the great Day of Atonement<sup>8</sup> points to the desert as the place and the period before the conquest as the time of its origin. It is the *living Aaron* who is referred to again and again,<sup>9</sup> the scapegoat is to be let loose in the *wilderness*,<sup>10</sup> the minister is to set out with the goat from the *camp*,<sup>11</sup> the bullock and goat for the sin-offering are to be carried out of the *camp*,<sup>12</sup> and the bearers are to return to the *camp*.<sup>13</sup>

(8) In the same direction points further the assumed

<sup>4</sup> This includes the laws regarding Levitical revenues (Lev. 27. 1-33; Num. 18. 8-32), and the laws concerning the transport of the tabernacle and of its furniture by the Levites (Num. 3, 4), in which occur frequent allusions to the camp (4. 5) in the desert (3. 23, 29, 35. 38).

<sup>6</sup> Lev. 1-7.

<sup>10</sup> Verses 10, 21, 22.

<sup>6</sup> For example, 4. 12, 21; 6. 11.

<sup>11</sup> Verse 26.

<sup>7</sup> 1. 5, 7, 8; 2. 2, 3, 10, etc.

<sup>12</sup> Verse 27.

<sup>8</sup> Lev. 16.

<sup>13</sup> Verse 28.

<sup>9</sup> Verses 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, etc.

proximity of the tabernacle to every member of the nation. Such proximity is presupposed, for example, in the laws regarding ceremonial uncleanness,<sup>14</sup> the Nazirites,<sup>15</sup> and purification after childbirth.<sup>16</sup> Such proximity was a reality only during the desert life.

2. AS TO HISTORY. The defenders of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch claim that the narrator reveals such intimate acquaintance with the desert of the Exodus that the conclusion becomes inevitable that he was an eyewitness of the events recorded.

(1) Only a man who actually passed through the territory could have mastered so perfectly the peculiarities of the land. This is the more remarkable because the descriptions are only incidental to the main story. Moreover, the peculiarities of the Sinaitic peninsula are so striking that it is quite impossible to explain the author's remarkable truthfulness to nature as due to coincidence or to a vivid imagination. One need but read the books of modern travelers to realize how well he has performed his task. Thus, the encampment at Marah, where the waters were bitter,<sup>17</sup> evidently corresponds to Hamarah, where a modern traveler found a spring "so bitter that neither men nor camels could drink of it."<sup>18</sup> The descriptions of Mount Sinai itself, as given in the book of Exodus, have been found so exact by modern travelers that Dean Stanley, for example, considers the coincidences "a strong internal argument of the scene itself having been described by an eyewitness."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Lev. 15. 2-33.

<sup>15</sup> Num. 6. 1-21.

<sup>16</sup> Lev. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Exod. 15. 22ff.

<sup>18</sup> Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 37.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

(2) The author reveals the same familiarity with the products of the Sinaitic peninsula. Whatever the nature of the biblical manna may have been,<sup>20</sup> *manna* is the indigenous name in the Sinaitic peninsula for the tamarisk-gum of the Tarfa tree, and may have been so used in the days of the Exodus. The enormous flight of quails mentioned in the same connection is also in keeping with conditions in the desert, as ancient and modern travelers have observed. The Shittim tree, whose wood was used in the tabernacle, is the one tree that is found in any numbers in the wadies of Sinai and the only solid tree of sufficient size to furnish the boards as prescribed. Again, the game of the desert, like the chamois, is included among the clean animals.

These and similar facts are brought forward to show that the author of the Pentateuchal narratives was thoroughly familiar with conditions in the desert through which Israel journeyed, and that the laws in the Pentateuch were better adapted to the desert period of Israel's history than to any period subsequent to the settlement in Palestine.

**II. The Influence of Egypt Reflected in the Pentateuch.** The whole Pentateuch, it is claimed, is "so strongly impregnated with Egyptian memories that nothing can account for this peculiarity but its origin among the fullness of such reminiscences."<sup>21</sup>

1. The foundation of the entire covenant law is the fact that Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt,<sup>22</sup> an idea which reappears constantly throughout the whole legis-

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<sup>20</sup> Exod. 16.

<sup>21</sup> Adapted from a statement in Gigot, *Special Introduction to the Old Testament*, vol. i, p. 70.

<sup>22</sup> Exod. 20. 2.

lation.<sup>23</sup> The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are closely associated with the deliverance from Egyptian bondage.<sup>24</sup> Appeal is made to the bitter experience in Egypt to enforce the kindly treatment of strangers.<sup>25</sup> Egyptian superstition may have influenced the wording of the law regarding images and likenesses of Yahweh.<sup>26</sup>

2. Attention is also called to the similarities between the Hebrew and Egyptian ceremonial institutions and practices. The ark is thought to have its counterpart in Egypt; there are similarities in the priestly dress, especially in the high priest's garment. The Urim and Thummim in the breastplate of the high priest, the holy convocations, the form of the altar of burnt-offerings, the provisions of the Day of Atonement, and other practices, all suggest Egyptian customs and practices.

3. Turning from the laws and institutions to the historical records, one is immediately impressed with the accurate knowledge of Egypt manifested by the author, a knowledge such as could be gained only by one who lived for a long time in that land of exclusiveness. The author of Gen. 39 to Exod. 15, for example, reveals a remarkable familiarity with the land—its geography, climate, products, etc. His allusions to all phases of Egyptian life and customs—political, social, moral and religious—are in perfect accord with the findings of modern exploration and excavation regarding ancient Egypt. Even greater importance attaches to the fact to which attention has frequently been directed, that the

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<sup>23</sup> Exod. 23. 15; 29. 46; Lev. 11. 45; 19. 36; Num. 15. 41, etc.

<sup>24</sup> Exod. 12. 12, 17, 23, etc.

<sup>25</sup> Exod. 22. 21; Lev. 19. 34.

<sup>26</sup> Exod. 20. 4.



knowledge of the writer is a "knowledge of Egypt in its condition under the Ramessides, that is, about the time of Moses, and his minute accuracy is inconsistent with any later date."<sup>27</sup>

4. Another evidence of close relationship with Egypt is seen in the fact that the only foreign words in the Pentateuch are of Egyptian origin. Moreover, the writer's thorough knowledge of the language of Egypt is evidenced by the correctness of his orthography whenever he uses Egyptian words. This is exactly what one would expect of Moses, for he lived many years in Egypt and was carefully educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.<sup>28</sup>

**III. Lack of Personal Acquaintance with Palestine.** In striking contrast to the accurate and thorough knowledge of Egypt and the desert stands a surprising lack of acquaintance with Palestine, and evidently, the author expects his readers to know even less.<sup>29</sup>

1. Clearly, the author was not in Canaan when he wrote, for (1) many of the laws look toward the settlement in Canaan as something still in the future,<sup>30</sup> and (2) he frequently uses the phrase "in the land of Canaan" when writing of places which must have been well known to the inhabitants of the land. He speaks, for example of "Hebron, in the land of Canaan,"<sup>31</sup> precisely as Jacob does when he is in Egypt;<sup>32</sup> so also of "Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan."<sup>33</sup> Surely, were the author in

<sup>27</sup> S. R. Poole, in *Contemporary Review*, 1887, p. 361.

<sup>28</sup> Acts 7. 22.

<sup>29</sup> Gen. 14. 2, 7, 17; 23. 2, etc.

<sup>30</sup> Exod. 12. 25-27; 13. 5-14; 23. 20-33; Lev. 14. 34-57; 18. 3-30; Num. 15. 2-41; 18. 20, 24, etc.

<sup>31</sup> Gen. 23. 2, 19.

<sup>32</sup> Gen. 49. 30.

<sup>33</sup> Gen. 33. 18; compare 12. 6.

the land or were he writing primarily for the people living there, he would not need to add the explanatory words.

2. There is nothing in the entire work revealing the kind of knowledge of the country that would imply personal acquaintance or examination. All the knowledge shown is such as Moses might have obtained from the oral or written traditions of his own people, from private or official accounts of Egyptians, and from the forty days exploration of the spies.<sup>34</sup> In confirmation of this statement attention is called to the striking differences between the boundaries of Canaan laid down in Num. 34. 1-12, especially in giving the northern limit, and the statements in Josh. 13. 4-6; 15. 1-5, 21-32, said to have been written after the conquest.

**IV. The Pentateuchal Legislation and Israel's Nomad Life.** In support of the preceding arguments it is further claimed that the Pentateuchal legislation is the natural outgrowth of Israel's nomad life during the period beginning with the night of the Exodus and ending with the arrival on the eastern banks of the Jordan.

1. **THE EXODUS.** The starting point of the desert life is the midnight experience preceding the Exodus. This incident is needed as the explanation of the Passover, of Yahweh's appropriation of the firstborn and of the Feast of Unleavened Bread,—three institutions which became fundamental in the Hebrew system.<sup>35</sup>

2. **THE SECOND PASSOVER.** In the interval between the Passover celebrated in Egypt and the first one celebrated in the desert, a law had been passed removing from the camp those who were polluted by a dead body.<sup>36</sup> In

<sup>34</sup> Num. 13. 18-20.

<sup>35</sup> Exod. 12. 13.

<sup>36</sup> Num. 5. 2.

consequence, some individuals in this condition were excluded from the celebration of the first Passover in the desert.<sup>37</sup> The resulting conflict between two laws, one requiring that all should participate in the Passover celebration, the other excluding some from participation, was met by the institution of a second Passover, to be celebrated a month after the regular feast.<sup>38</sup>

3. LAWS OF PROPERTY. In connection with the general provisions for the division of the land it was ordered that the tribal divisions should be observed, and that the number of families within the tribe should determine the amount of land allotted to each tribe.<sup>39</sup> No provision was made for cases in which the head of the family had died, leaving no sons but only daughters. When such a case was discovered a new law was made for the benefit of the daughters.<sup>40</sup> But what would happen if these daughters should marry into another tribe? Would the property go with them, and thus be alienated forever from their own tribe? This question having been raised, a law forbidding marriage into another tribe was formulated.<sup>41</sup>

4. BLASPHEMY. Blasphemy is prohibited in Exod. 22. 28. However, when some one was convicted of blasphemy it was found that no penalty for the transgressor was provided; consequently, he was put in ward until instruction might be asked of Yahweh.<sup>42</sup> The result was the fixing of stoning as penalty for blasphemy.<sup>43</sup>

5. THE ANNUAL FEASTS. In Exod. 23. 14ff. the observance of three annual feasts is enjoined. Nothing

<sup>37</sup> Num. 9. 6.

<sup>38</sup> Num. 9. 10-14.

<sup>39</sup> Num. 26. 52-56.

<sup>40</sup> Num. 27. 1-11.

<sup>41</sup> Num. 36. 1-9.

<sup>42</sup> Lev. 24. 10-12.

<sup>43</sup> Lev. 24. 13-16.

is said about the place of observance, for the simple reason that during their camp life the Israelites were always within easy reach of the tabernacle; hence there was no need of a command that the feasts should be celebrated there. In Deut. 16. 16 the special provision is added that the people should appear before Yahweh "in the place which he shall choose," that is, the central sanctuary. The addition may be traced to the fear that, after the settlement in Canaan, the people, being farther removed from the sanctuary, would be disinclined to undertake the long journey.

6. THE SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS. In Lev. 17. 3-5 the definite order is given that no animal is to be slain, inside or outside of the camp, without bringing it to the tabernacle and offering it there as an oblation to Yahweh. This command could easily be carried out as long as the people were encamped around the tabernacle, but it would be quite impractical after the crossing of the Jordan and the scattering of the people. Therefore, in the legislation intended for the people in Palestine, the provision for presenting the animal to be slaughtered at the tabernacle is removed.<sup>44</sup>

These and other similar illustrations are depended upon as supporting the assertion that the laws of the Pentateuch were framed to meet conditions as they arose during the desert life of Israel, and that they were modified or expanded to meet new needs presenting themselves in the course of the wanderings or in anticipation of the settlement in Canaan.

**V. Linguistic Characteristics.** A generation or two ago linguistic arguments played a very prominent role in critical discussions. It was alleged that the Pentateuch

<sup>44</sup> Deut. 12. 15.

contains numerous archaic words and grammatical forms, which were taken to point to Mosaic, or at least to an early, origin—especially since many of them are not found even in the book of Joshua. It was pointed out, for instance, that the form **הוא**, the regular masculine pronoun, stands in the Pentateuch one hundred and ninety seven times for the feminine, and that **הוא**, a masculine form, is used nineteen times for both genders, etc. Attention was further drawn to defective modes of writing, unusual formations of stems, forms used subsequently only in poetry, etc. Besides, many words and phrases were said to occur only in the Pentateuch, never in the later books, while many that are found in later books are absent from the Pentateuch. There are also many words that are used frequently in the Pentateuch but only rarely in the other books and vice versa.

The author has tried to present in the preceding pages a fair statement of the cumulative argument in favor of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, based upon the Indirect Internal Evidence. If it were possible to confine consideration to the facts and phenomena emphasized by the defenders of Mosaic authorship, and if the conclusions reached by them could be accepted without question, the argument might appear quite formidable, if not overwhelming. However, before the value and weight of the argument can be properly estimated, attention should be given to the following considerations: <sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> A detailed discussion of the argument would involve the presentation and consideration of facts and evidence that can be discussed more adequately in the succeeding chapters and would, therefore, mean a great deal of useless repetition. For this reason the author contents himself here with calling attention to a few important general considerations, reserving a full discussion of all the facts for the succeeding chapters.

1. The method of the defenders of the traditional view is neither fair nor scientific: only the facts that can be interpreted in favor of Mosaic authorship are taken into account; contradictory facts are passed over lightly or are entirely ignored.<sup>46</sup>

2. The only argument that has anything to do directly with the writing of the Pentateuch is the linguistic argument; but it has proved so unsatisfactory that it is now rarely urged by those who know Hebrew. Further study has disproved the high antiquity of the alleged archaic words and forms. It is at present quite generally admitted that the linguistic peculiarities are due to the special care with which the Pentateuch was copied in later times. Scrupulous regard for the letter of the Law prevented modifications in the direction of later orthography, such as were introduced into the books that were considered less sacred and, therefore, were copied with less care.

3. The student of Hebrew legislation who confines himself to a few well-chosen examples may conclude that these originated in the desert, and that the desert experiences account for their modification in certain directions. But it becomes an entirely different matter when the legal system as a whole is studied. It is, to say the least, extremely doubtful that the desert wanderings furnished to the great leader the opportunity of framing the complete and intricate criminal, civil, moral, and ceremonial codes that are embodied in the Pentateuch. Moreover, there are numerous modifications of laws which cannot be explained as the outgrowth of the exigencies of the desert life.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> See below, Chapters VIIIff.

<sup>47</sup> See below, pp. 143ff.

4. All that the facts presented by the defenders of the traditional view may prove is that the Pentateuch contains elements going back to Mosaic times; which is entirely different from saying that the entire Pentateuch, with the possible exception of a few later interpolations or additions, was written by Moses. They cannot even prove that these Mosaic elements were preserved in writing: oral tradition, faithfully preserved, would satisfy all the facts in the case. Nor is it possible to point out definitely any of the Mosaic elements; for they may have undergone alterations, either accidentally in the course of oral transmission, or intentionally at the hands of later editors or revisers.

5. Putting the case briefly, the facts included in the cumulative argument may be said to warrant the following conclusion, and nothing more: Whatever the time of the final composition or compilation of the Pentateuch, it contains elements, both historical and legal, that may have originated in the days of Moses. These elements were later modified and expanded in the spirit of the first great leader, and the result of this development, continuing throughout several centuries, is embodied in the Pentateuch in its present form.

6. This, the only safe conclusion, is far different from the claims of the defenders of the Mosaic authorship. True, if there were no contradictory evidence, another step might be taken and the entire work might be ascribed to Moses; but even then this would be an inference and nothing more. If, however, there are facts which seem to militate against the acceptance of Mosaic authorship, these too must be carefully examined before the final verdict is given. This examination is undertaken in the chapters which follow.

What, then, may be said regarding the different kinds of argument advanced to prove the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch? Simply this: the case is not proven; the authorship of the Pentateuch is still an open question.



CHAPTER VIII

THE COMPOSITE CHARACTER OF THE  
PENTATEUCH

I. THE DIVINE NAMES IN GENESIS



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE COMPOSITE CHARACTER OF THE PENTATEUCH

#### I. THE DIVINE NAMES IN GENESIS

OVER against the traditional view that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch practically in its present form stands the modern critical view, the more important claims of which may be summarized as follows:

1. The Pentateuch is a relatively late compilation of material taken from written sources, all of which reached their final form subsequently to the time of Moses.
2. The compiler depended chiefly upon four documents: J—the Jehovistic document, traces of which are found throughout the entire Pentateuch; E—the Elohist document, closely interwoven with J and, like it, found throughout the Pentateuch; D—the Deuteronomic Code, found chiefly in the book of Deuteronomy, though traces of it may be seen elsewhere; P—the Priestly Code, which served as the groundwork of the compilation.
3. D is identical with the Book of the Law that served as the basis of Josiah's reforms in B. C. 621 and was in existence separately at the time; hence the Pentateuch in its present form cannot be older than that date, though some of the material embodied in it may be considerably older.
4. J and E are both older than D.
5. The several documents show such striking differences that, on the whole, it is quite easy to separate them.

From this summary it is seen that a full discussion of the modern critical view of the origin of the Pentateuch involves the discussion of at least four points: 1. the Pentateuch is a compilation of material from different documents originating at different times. 2. The Pentateuch contains some material that must have been written subsequently to the age of Moses. 3. The Pentateuch had not reached its final form when the Book of the Law was found in the days of Josiah.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the Book of the Law discovered in the days of Josiah was not the completed Pentateuch but the book of Deuteronomy in some form. 4. The Pentateuch in its present form is the result of gradual growth during several centuries following the age of Moses.<sup>2</sup>

The first subject, then, that demands consideration is the *Composite Character of the Pentateuch*. Those who hold that the Pentateuch is in the nature of a compilation base their opinion almost entirely upon internal evidence, which may be arranged so as to form a cumulative argument. The present chapter deals with the first part of this argument, the *Peculiar Use of the Divine Names "Yahweh" (Jehovah) and "Elohim" (God) in the Book of Genesis*, not because this argument is first in importance, but because it was the discovery of this peculiarity that gave birth to the modern Document Theory; chronologically, therefore, it is entitled to first place.

As has been previously stated,<sup>3</sup> Jean Astruc was the first to call attention to the peculiar use of the divine names in the Book of Genesis. He noticed that in large sections in Genesis and in the opening chapters of Exodus

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings 22. 8ff.

<sup>2</sup> Gigot, *Special Introduction to the Old Testament*, vol. i, pp. 85ff.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 50.

the divine name "Yahweh" was systematically used, in others, "Elohim," and he suggested that this peculiarity could best be accounted for by assuming that the writer, whom he thought to be Moses, used two principal documents, which from their respective use of the divine names might be called Jehovistic (Yahwistic) and Elo-histic. The facts discovered by Astruc and others who continued this line of investigation are as follows:

SECTION	Elohim	Yahweh	Ha-Elohim	El Elyon	Adonai	El Shaddai	No Divine Name	Remarks
Gen. 1. 1 to 2. 4a . . .	35 times							
2. 4b to 3. 24 . . .	4 <sup>a</sup>	20 <sup>b</sup>						<p><sup>a</sup> Only in the conversation between the serpent and the woman.</p> <p><sup>b</sup> In the present text Yahweh and Elohim are combined into Yahweh-Elohim, but originally Yahweh alone was there.</p> <p><sup>c</sup> Probably only twice; in 7. 9 Elohim is used, but there is reason for believing that originally Yahweh was in the text. Evidently, there is a combination of sources.</p>
4. . . . .	1	10						
5. . . . .	3	1	2					
6. 1-8. . . . .		5	2					
6. 9-22. . . . .	3		2					
7. 1-9. . . . .		3 <sup>c</sup>						
7. 10 to 8. 19. . . . .	3	1						
8. 20-22. . . . .		3						
9. 1-17. . . . .	6							
9. 18 to 11. 9. . . . .	1	8				Gen. 11. 10-32 . . . . .		
12, 13. . . . .		13						
14. . . . .		1		4				
15, 16. . . . .		13			2			
17. . . . .	7	1				1		
18, 19. . . . .	2	16			6			
20, 21. . . . .	15	3	2		1			
22. 1-19. . . . .	2	5	3				Gen. 22. 20 to 23. 20	
24. . . . .		19						
25. 1-18. . . . .	1							
25. 19-26. . . . .		4				25. 27-34		
26. 1 to 27. 40. . . . .		10	1			27. 41-45		
27. 46 to 28. 9. . . . .	1					1		
28. 10-22. . . . .	4	4					29. 1-30	
29. 31 to 30. 24. . . . .	8	5						
30. 25-43. . . . .		2						
31. . . . .	8	2	1					
32. . . . .	4	1						
33, 35. . . . .	20		1			1	34	
38, 39. . . . .	11		1				36, 37	
41-50. . . . .	20	1	9			4	40	
Exod. 1, 2. 23-25. . . . .	5		3				Exod. 2. 1-22	
3. 1 to 4. 17. . . . .	5	16	5					
4. 18 to 6. 1. . . . .		16	2					

Is there any significance in the facts here presented? Can it mean anything that in Gen. 1. 1 to 2. 4a, the

<sup>4</sup>Gigot, *Special Introduction to the Old Testament*, vol. i, p. 89. Another table giving also the Septuagint variants may be seen in *Expositor*, May, 1913, pp. 409-411.

account of creation, Elohim is used thirty-five times and Yahweh not at all, while in 2. 4b-25, also dealing with creation, Yahweh-Elohim is used exclusively? Or, that in Gen. 12-16 Yahweh is used twenty-seven times and Elohim not at all? Or, that in Gen. 33-50 Yahweh occurs but once, El, or Elohim, sixty-seven times? Is it strange that even with only these facts before them scholars should reach the conclusion that the peculiarity in the use of the divine names points to the use of at least two distinct documents in the composition of the Pentateuch?

It would seem almost inconceivable that one and the same author should restrict himself to the exclusive use of one or the other of these divine names in certain long sections, while in others he was apparently careful to avoid such partiality, using sometimes the one and sometimes the other. On the other hand, the facts are easily explained on the theory that two documents were used and combined by the same methods of literary composition as were used in the production of other books of the Old Testament.<sup>5</sup> In some cases the compiler may have embodied in his work, practically without any alterations, entire sections taken from one or the other of the two sources, thus preserving the divine names exactly as he found them. In other cases he may have taken greater liberties, merging into one single paragraph passages drawn from the two sources, and preserving the divine name used in each source.<sup>6</sup> The combination Yahweh-Elohim in Gen. 2. 4b to 3. 24 probably originated with a

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<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 72.

<sup>6</sup> The exceptions to the general usage in a given passage may be due to carelessness on the part of later copyists, or, in some cases, on the part of the compiler.

later harmonizer who, after reading the two accounts of creation, one making Elohim, the other Yahweh the Creator, sought to teach by the combination that the two are in reality one and the same God.

The facts presented in the above table are so clear that there seems no escape from them; but is it necessary to adopt the Document Theory in order to find a satisfactory explanation for them? Naturally, scholars bent on maintaining the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch cannot admit this; and they have sought to show that the use of the divine names is determined by a difference in the meaning, which "made the one or the other more suitable in a particular connection." In the words of Green: "Yahweh denotes specifically what God is in and to Israel; Elohim what he is to other nations as well. That universal agency which is exercised in the world at large, and which is directed upon Israel and Gentiles alike is by Elohim, the God of creation and of providence. That special manifestation of himself which is made to his own people is by Yahweh, the God of revelation and of redemption. The sacred writer uses one name or the other according as he contemplates God under one or the other point of view."<sup>7</sup>

Now, it may readily be admitted that Elohim and Yahweh are not synonymous: the former is the general term for deity, the other the proper name of the God of Israel; but it is, to say the least, doubtful that the peculiar usage pointed out can be explained in all cases as due to such difference in meaning. For example, in Gen. 2 it is Yahweh-Elohim who created the animals and man, in Gen. 1 Elohim is credited with the same creative act; in Gen. 6. 5 it is Yahweh who sees that the world is corrupt,

<sup>7</sup> *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, p. 103.

in verse 12 Elohim sees it; in Gen. 6. 22 it is stated that Noah did according to all that Elohim commanded him, in 7. 5, according to all that Yahweh commanded him. Does the explanation suggested by Green really explain the use of the different divine names in these and similar passages? Is it possible to discover a difference in the point of view from which the divine manifestation is described? On the other hand, the peculiarity receives a natural and perfectly satisfactory explanation on the assumption that the statements were taken from productions of two different authors, one of them using Elohim, the other Yahweh.

But why should there be this difference in the writings of two authors covering the same general period? A comparison of some statements in Exodus with others in Genesis furnishes the answer. Exod. 6. 2, 3, reads: "And Elohim spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Yahweh; and *I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as El Shaddai, but by [as to] my name Yahweh I was not known [I did not make myself known] to them.*" Which is in perfect accord with the words addressed to Abraham in Gen. 17. 1, "*I am El Shaddai; walk before me, and be thou perfect,*" and the statement addressed to Jacob in Gen. 35. 11, "*I am El Shaddai, be fruitful and multiply.*" However, there is a contradiction between the words addressed to Moses in Exod. 6. 2, 3, and those spoken to Abraham in Gen. 15. 7, "*I am Yahweh that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees,*" and to Jacob in Gen. 28. 13, "*I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac*" (author's translation).

It is, indeed, conceivable that one and the same author, knowing both names, should use them indiscriminately in writing of the earlier period; but is it reasonable to



suppose that he would thus use them and then place in the mouth of Yahweh the assertion, "I never did use the one during the patriarchal age"? Evidently, Gen. 17. 1 and 35. 11 were written by one who held the view expressed in Exod. 6. 2, 3, that the name "Yahweh" was not applied to the God of Israel during the pre-Mosaic age, while Gen. 15. 7 and 28. 13 must be ascribed to an author who believed that the divine name "Yahweh" was in use during the earlier period. This difference of opinion regarding the use of the divine name "Yahweh" is by no means confined to the few passages quoted; on the contrary, it may be traced throughout the entire section Gen. 1 to Exod 6. 3.

The facts here briefly outlined point so strongly to the use of material from different sources in the composition of the book of Genesis that even some of the defenders of Mosaic authorship have become convinced of the justice of the claim; but they follow Astruc in insisting that this admission in no wise interferes with the belief that Moses was the one who combined this material so as to form the present book. In support of this contention they call attention to the fact that after Exod. 6 the peculiar use of the divine names practically ceases. That being the case, it is quite possible to assume that in describing the pre-Mosaic age Moses depended on sources which he found already in existence, and that beginning with his call to divine service he told, in his own words, the story of Israel's experiences to the close of his activity, just before the crossing of the Jordan. The discussion in the succeeding chapters will show that this modified Document Theory cannot be considered satisfactory, chiefly for two reasons: (1) there is abundant evidence to prove that the same documents were used in the com-

position of the other books of the Pentateuch, and (2) all the books contain elements that cannot be dated as early as the time of Moses.

Recent attacks upon the Document Theory seem to have proceeded on the assumption that the peculiar use of the divine names is the sole argument in favor of the theory. Therefore the attempt has been made to show, by the use of textual criticism, especially by a comparison of the commonly accepted Hebrew text with the Septuagint translation, that the Hebrew textual tradition in respect to the use of the divine names is untrustworthy, and that, consequently, any conclusions based upon it are without adequate foundation. In other words, the claim is made that the original Hebrew text did not reveal the peculiar use of the divine names upon which the Document Theory is based; hence the entire Document Theory falls to the ground.<sup>8</sup>

An exhaustive discussion of these claims would require more space than is available in this Introduction.<sup>9</sup> Here it may be sufficient to emphasize once more that the Document Theory rests upon a much broader foundation, that the argument from the peculiar use of the divine names is only one of several, and that, though it was the first to be used, it is not necessarily to be regarded as the strongest.<sup>10</sup> True, if these recent claims could be established, it would affect in a measure the detailed analysis of J and E in the book of Genesis, though in

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<sup>8</sup> See especially the articles and books mentioned on p. 60, note 69.

<sup>9</sup> An admirable treatment of the principal questions involved may be found in a series of articles by J. Skinner in the *Expositor*, 1913, April to September, except August, reprinted in book form under the title, *The Divine Names in Genesis*.

<sup>10</sup> The assertion of Troelstra that the peculiar use of the divine names is the *base* of biblical criticism is far from the truth.

many cases even this analysis could be carried through and the separation of the combined JE and P would not become any more difficult even in Genesis; in the other books of the Pentateuch the effect would be *nil*.

It may be well, however, to inquire, Has the claim that the Massoretic text, that is, the commonly accepted Hebrew text, is unreliable, been established? What are the facts in the case? A divine name is found in Genesis about three hundred and forty times; in the Massoretic text Yahweh occurs one hundred and forty-three times, Elohim one hundred and seventy-seven times, and the combination Yahweh-Elohim twenty times.<sup>11</sup> Now, an examination of the Hebrew MSS. reveals the fact that they are not in absolute agreement;<sup>12</sup> but when the discrepancies are properly evaluated, that is, when the investigation is confined to such MSS. as have a reasonable claim for consideration, it is found that "there remain but sixteen confusions of J, E and JE;<sup>13</sup> that of these eleven are supported by only one MS., and only one by so many as three." In the light of these facts no one can consider the testimony of the Hebrew MSS. sufficient to discredit the general accuracy of the Massoretic tradition.

A comparison of the Hebrew text with the recension preserved in the Samaritan Pentateuch leads to the same result. They are not in entire agreement—the Samaritan text reads Elohim for Yahweh in three passages, Yahweh for Elohim in five places, and adds Elohim in one; but the agreement in the great majority of cases, especially when contrasted with their frequent variations in other matters,

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<sup>11</sup> J. Skinner, *Genesis*, p. xxxv.

<sup>12</sup> A table of variants is given in *Expositor*, July, 1913, pp. 33, 34.

<sup>13</sup> Yahweh, Elohim, and Yahweh-Elohim.

is strong evidence in support of the substantial accuracy of the Massoretic text.

The differences between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint are much more numerous. In a considerable number of cases the Septuagint translation has θεός where the Hebrew has Yahweh and κύριος where the Hebrew reads Elohim, though the normal Greek equivalents are κύριος for Yahweh and θεός for Elohim. Skinner states the result of a comparison of the Massoretic text with the Cambridge edition of the Septuagint, which is the best available standard text of the Septuagint, in these words: "Making allowance for some doubtful cases, I find that there are about sixty passages where the Cambridge edition reads a different name from the Massoretic text. The number of relevant occurrences of one or the other of the divine names in the Massoretic text of Genesis is about 320 (in the Septuagint nearly 330); hence the cases in which the standard Septuagint throws any doubt on the accuracy of the Massoretic text number three sixteenths of the whole. Roughly speaking, we may take it that that fraction expresses the extent of the 'margin of uncertainty' with which criticism has to reckon in the divine names of Genesis." <sup>14</sup>

Even if in all these cases the Septuagint reading should be considered original, the reliability of the Massoretic text would not be overthrown. Surely, the agreement in the remaining thirteen sixteenths cannot be overlooked. True, Dahse, Wiener, and others extend the area of uncertainty, but they do this by an altogether unscientific use of the critical apparatus available for the study of the Septuagint text. What the investigations of these scholars show is the uncertainty of the Septuagint text;

<sup>14</sup> *Expositor*, September, 1913, p. 272.

and much critical work may have to be done before the original form of the Septuagint text is determined. Meanwhile it will be perfectly safe to accept the Cambridge edition as giving, on the whole, the most satisfactory text; at any rate, the critical material brought forward in the course of recent textual discussions tends to increase rather than diminish confidence in that text. Therefore the statement of Skinner may be regarded as giving the relevant facts as nearly as they can be determined at present.

It is by no means certain, however, that in all the sixty cases mentioned by Skinner the Septuagint reading is preferable to the Massoretic text. The number of instances in which the Septuagint has preserved the original reading can be determined only by a careful examination of each individual case; but in a majority of cases the superiority undoubtedly lies on the side of the Massoretic text—which means that the area of uncertainty is in reality much more restricted than would appear on first sight. In other words, taking into consideration all the facts known at present, there is still good reason for believing that the Massoretic tradition has preserved the original text of the Pentateuch, including the divine names, with far greater accuracy than the Septuagint translation. It would seem, therefore, that scholars have been justified in attaching more value to the Massoretic text than to the Septuagint translation.<sup>15</sup>

In conclusion it may be confidently affirmed that, whatever the future may bring forth, the Document Theory as outlined at the beginning of this chapter furnishes a more satisfactory explanation of the peculiar use of the divine names than any of the other theories advanced

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<sup>15</sup> See note at close of this chapter.

thus far. This applies to the theories of Klostermann, Orr, and Eerdmans, to which reference has been made,<sup>16</sup> as also to the view of Redpath, who assumes the existence of a double or triple recension of the Pentateuch, each contributing something to the present text when the others were damaged or illegible. The Pericope Theory of Dahse, that is, the attempt to connect the peculiar use of the divine names with pericopes—Sedar divisions—of the Jewish synagogue lectionaries is equally unsatisfactory. Though developed with much ingenuity, it finds so little support in facts and is so dependent upon the results of an unjustifiable textual criticism that it can hardly be considered an important contribution to the solution of a complicated problem.

If the argument from the peculiar use of the divine names is valid, it proves that in the book of Genesis the compiler used at least two documents. This was the Document Theory in its earlier form. But later investigations have shown that the Pentateuch contains also extensive extracts from a third document,<sup>17</sup> which, in the use of the divine names, agrees with the one whose point of view is reflected in Exod. 6. 2, 3. In other words, this third document proceeds on the assumption that Yahweh was not used during the pre-Mosaic age as the name of the God of Israel. Its view regarding the origin of the name "Yahweh" finds expression in Exod. 3. 13-15: "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto

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<sup>16</sup> See above, pp. 58, 59.

<sup>17</sup> The view was first expressed by Ilgen and set forth in greater detail by Hupfeld; see above, pp. 51, 54.

them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." The significance of these verses is well expressed in the words of G. B. Gray: "Exod. 3. 13-16 shows us the name [Yahweh], so to speak, in the making."<sup>18</sup> The linguistic, theological, and other characteristics, which aid in differentiating the first two documents discovered are of equal value in tracing this third document throughout the entire Pentateuch. The fourth document, D, is found mainly in the book of Deuteronomy.

## NOTE

*The Massoretic Text and the Septuagint.* Professor John Skinner has given such an admirable summary of the reasons why in doubtful cases the Massoretic text should be preferred over a Septuagint variant that it may be of value to the reader to have Skinner's statement in full:<sup>19</sup>

"(a) The Massoretic text is the result of successive transcriptions in one and the same language; the Septuagint is a translation from one language into another. It is not denied that a version *may* represent a purer text than a recension in the original language; but in the absence of proof that this is the case, the presumption is all in favor of the original, because it is not subject to the uncertainty which inevitably attends the mental process of translation; especially when, as is abundantly

<sup>18</sup> *A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 29.

<sup>19</sup> *Expositor*, September, 1913, pp. 272ff.

clear in the case of the Septuagint, word-for-word translation was not aimed at. (b) The Massoretic text is the lineal descendant of the official Palestinian recension of the Old Testament; the Septuagint represents at best an Alexandrian recension whose text was certainly not transmitted with the same scrupulous fidelity as that of Palestine. For (c), as regards the divine names, the Samaritan Pentateuch shows that the Palestinian text has undergone practically no change from a time prior to (or at all events not much later than) the separation of the Palestinian and Egyptian recensions. The Septuagint text, on the contrary, has been in a state of perpetual flux as far back as its history can be traced. It makes no difference whether this be due to accident or to deliberate revision: On either view the fact remains that the names of God have been handled with a freedom which was not allowed to Jewish scribes. (d) While the Septuagint contains particular readings which are shown by internal evidence to be superior to the Hebrew, yet an examination of its general text proves that, on the whole, it is inferior to the Massoretic Hebrew. . . . The Massoretic text is often emended from the Septuagint, but practically never except for some superiority, real or supposed, attaching to the reading presupposed by the Septuagint in particular cases. (e) The liability to error is far greater in Greek than in Hebrew. In the original text we have the distinction, not easily overlooked, between a proper name יהוה and a generic name אלהים; in Greek we have only the difference of two appellatives, κύριος and θεός (often contracted in MSS. to κς and θς), a difference without much significance to a Greek-speaking writer, and therefore apt to be effaced through the natural predilection for θεός."



CHAPTER IX  
THE COMPOSITE CHARACTER OF THE  
PENTATEUCH

2. REPETITIONS AND DISCREPANCIES



## CHAPTER IX

### THE COMPOSITE CHARACTER OF THE PENTATEUCH

#### 2. REPETITIONS AND DISCREPANCIES

IN support of the claim that the Pentateuch is the result of compilation, attention may further be called to the presence of alleged repetitions and discrepancies both in the historical and in the legal portions of the Pentateuch. These, it is pointed out, would not appear in a work coming directly and in all its parts from the hand and brain of one and the same author.

**1. Repetitions and Discrepancies in Narrative Portions.** In the narrative portions of the Pentateuch repetitions and discrepancies occur sometimes in narratives appearing side by side, sometimes in paragraphs which, on first sight, appear to be continuous accounts of a single event, and sometimes in narratives found in different parts of the Pentateuch. From the great number and variety of cases a few typical illustrations may be selected:

**THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION.** Gen. 1. 1 to 2. 4a and 2. 4b-23 give side by side what seem to be two accounts of creation. If it is said that only the first paragraph is a complete story of creation and that the second repeats a few incidents of creation by way of introduction to chapter 3, it still remains a fact that certain acts of creation are mentioned in both narratives. In so far as this is the case, there are repetitions, for which the

above interpretation may or may not furnish an adequate explanation. Are there also differences and discrepancies that make it difficult or impossible to believe in unity of authorship? There is, first of all, the use of the divine names discussed in the preceding chapter: the first narrative always uses Elohim, the other, with the same consistency, Yahweh-Elohim. Moreover, differences in theological conception may be noted: it does not require profound study to discover that the conception of Deity in chapter 1 is more elevated and spiritual than that reflected in chapter 2. But the consideration of these theological differences and of the differences in vocabulary and style must be postponed for the present.<sup>1</sup> In this connection only a few general features can be taken up. For instance, the arrangement of the acts of creation according to the days of the week is not adopted in the second account. The lack of arrangement, it is true, has been explained by saying that since the second narrative is not intended to give a complete account of creation, a repetition of the scheme was not necessary; this explanation, however, cannot remove the striking differences in the order of the acts of creation in so far as they are mentioned in both narratives. In the first account the order is: Light, the firmament, separation of land and water, vegetation, the heavenly bodies, fish and birds, land animals and, last of all, man, who is created male and female. In chapter 2 the order is: Man, vegetation, animals, woman. Is it probable that one and the same author composed side by side two narratives that show such marked differences in the order of the acts of creation? Add to this the differences in the use of the divine names, in theological conception, and in style and vocabu-

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter x.

lary, and the conclusion becomes almost inevitable that the two accounts must be traced to two distinct authors.<sup>2</sup> The explanation of these phenomena offered by Green is not only vague but skillfully evades the real difficulties: "Where the events referred to are the same they are mentioned under a different aspect or adduced for a different purpose, which accounts for the repetition. Thus the renewed mention in Gen. 2 of the formation of man and the lower animals, which had already been spoken of in chapter 1, is no proof that they are by separate writers; for each chapter has a design of its own, which is steadfastly kept in view, the second being not parallel to, but the sequel of, the first."<sup>3</sup>

THE STORY OF THE FLOOD. Gen. 6-9 contains what to the superficial reader appears to be a single, continuous story of the Flood; but closer study reveals the presence of repetitions and even discrepancies which seem to imply that the narrative in its present form is the result of compilation.<sup>4</sup> There are, for example, two accounts of man's corruption and God's consequent displeasure,<sup>5</sup> repetitions in the statements concerning the entering into the ark,<sup>6</sup> the rising of the Flood,<sup>7</sup> the perishing of all living creatures,<sup>8</sup> and the drying of the earth.<sup>9</sup> Some passages speak of one pair of every kind of animals being taken

<sup>2</sup> It is well to bear in mind that the several differences—use of divine names, theological conception, vocabulary and style—always go together.

<sup>3</sup> *Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, p. 110.

<sup>4</sup> See for a more detailed discussion J. E. McFadyen, *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*, pp. 143-152. Bennett and Adeney, *Biblical Introduction*, pp. 27ff.

<sup>5</sup> 6. 5-8 and 9-13.

<sup>6</sup> 7. 7 and 13.

<sup>7</sup> 7. 6, 10-12, and 17-20, 24.

<sup>8</sup> 7. 21, 22 and 23.

<sup>9</sup> 8. 6-12 and 13, 14.

into the ark;<sup>10</sup> others distinguish between clean and unclean animals, and state that of the former seven pairs of each were to be preserved.<sup>11</sup> According to some verses, the Flood continued for forty days,<sup>12</sup> according to others, one hundred and fifty.<sup>13</sup> The defenders of the unity of the narrative do scant justice to facts like these. Surely, they are not explained in this statement of Green: "Noah's entry into the ark is twice recorded, without, however, any implication that two documents have been drawn upon. After the general statement (7. 7-9) that he went in with his family and various species of living things, the writer wishes to emphasize more exactly that he went in on the very same day that the Flood began (verses 13-16) and so restates it with that view."<sup>14</sup>

DUPLICATE NARRATIVES IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE PENTATEUCH. In the first illustration the two parallel narratives appeared side by side, in the second they were closely interwoven so as to form one continuous story; now attention may be directed to a few parallel accounts of the same events found in different parts of the Pentateuch. Under this head may be mentioned: Duplicate accounts of the origin of names like Beer-sheba,<sup>15</sup> Bethel,<sup>16</sup> Israel.<sup>17</sup> There are two accounts of the promise of a son to Abraham.<sup>18</sup> The father-in-law of Moses is called in one place Reuel,<sup>19</sup> and in another

<sup>10</sup> 6. 19, 20.

<sup>11</sup> 7. 2, 3.

<sup>12</sup> 7. 12, 17.

<sup>13</sup> 7. 24; 8. 3.

<sup>14</sup> *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, p. III.

<sup>15</sup> Gen. 21. 31 and 26. 32, 33.

<sup>16</sup> 28. 18, 19 and 35. 15.

<sup>17</sup> 32. 28 and 35. 10.

<sup>18</sup> 17. 16-19 and 18. 9-15.

<sup>19</sup> Exod. 2. 18.

Jethro.<sup>20</sup> Exod. 16 contains an account of the sending of the manna and of the quails; Num. 11 relates the sending of the quails at a later period of the desert wanderings, and the references to the manna<sup>21</sup> read as if they came from an author who was mentioning them for the first time.

2. **Repetitions and Discrepancies in Legal Portions.** Here again a few typical illustrations must suffice:

**THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE.** It is quite generally admitted, even by those who defend the Mosaic authorship of the entire legal system,<sup>22</sup> that the Pentateuch embodies at least three clearly defined codes of law—the Book of the Covenant,<sup>23</sup> the Priestly Code,<sup>24</sup> and the Deuteronomic Code.<sup>25</sup> In the first of these the following regulations regarding the place of sacrifice are laid down: "An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in every place where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee. And if thou make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it."<sup>26</sup> Two points are emphasized in this passage: (1) that Yahweh may be worshiped in different localities—in every place where he may record his name; and (2) that the altar must be built of earth or unhewn stone.

<sup>20</sup> Exod. 3. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Verses 6-9.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Green, *Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, pp. 36, 37.

<sup>23</sup> See below, pp. 281ff.

<sup>24</sup> See below, pp. 308ff.

<sup>25</sup> See below, pp. 181ff.

<sup>26</sup> Exod. 20. 24, 25.

The Deuteronomic Code prohibits repeatedly and emphatically the worship of Yahweh at local sanctuaries, and insists with the same emphasis that his worship should be centered in one place: "Ye shall surely destroy all the places wherein the nations that ye shall dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: and ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods; and ye shall destroy their names out of that place. Ye shall not do so unto Jehovah your God. But unto the place which Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come; and thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and your vows, and your free-will offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock: and there ye shall eat before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee." <sup>27</sup> The differences between the provisions of the two codes cannot be explained by assuming that one law was meant for the desert, the other for Canaan, because both codes are looking forward to the time of settlement beyond the Jordan.<sup>28</sup>

According to the Book of the Covenant, the altar of sacrifice is to be made of earth or unhewn stone; not so according to the so-called Priestly Code. Exod. 27. 1—a part of the Priestly Code—records the command concerning the building of this altar, said to have been given,

<sup>27</sup> Deut. 12. 2-7; compare also 14. 23; 16. 2, 6, 7, etc.

<sup>28</sup> Compare Exod. 23. 20ff and Deut. 12. 1.



like Exod. 20. 24, 25, on Mount Sinai: "And thou shalt make the altar of acacia wood." This is followed by minute instructions concerning elaborate details of construction, which could not be carried out without the use of tools strictly prohibited in the other passage. That the altar of burnt-offering was meant, as in Exod. 20. 24, is definitely stated in Exod. 38. 1, which narrates the carrying out of the command in 27. 1ff. Is it at all probable that these contradictory laws concerning the place of sacrifice were given by one and the same man, two of them, according to definite statements, on Mount Sinai, and two of them intended for the period after the conquest?

THE PRIESTHOOD. The Book of the Covenant knows no priestly race. It would be strange if there had been no priesthood in early Israel; but it seems that during the early centuries of the nation's history the priests might be taken from any tribe, and the heads of families were permitted to offer sacrifice.<sup>29</sup> The Deuteronomic Code knows a priestly race or tribe, the Levites: "Thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites."<sup>30</sup> "The priests the Levites, *even* all the tribe of Levi."<sup>31</sup> "The priests the sons of Levi."<sup>32</sup> From these and similar expressions scattered throughout Deuteronomy the following inferences may be drawn: (1) The priesthood was confined to members of the tribe of Levi, and (2) all the members of the tribe of Levi were priests.

The Priestly Code differs from the Deuteronomic Code in that it limits the priesthood to a particular family of

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<sup>29</sup> See below, p. 204.

<sup>30</sup> Deut. 17. 9, 18.

<sup>31</sup> 18. 1.

<sup>32</sup> 21. 5.

the tribe of Levi, the sons of Aaron, assigning the lower offices and tasks connected with the worship of Yahweh to the other members of the tribe: "And bring thou near unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office."<sup>33</sup> The distinction between the duties of the family of Aaron and those of the other Levites is brought out in this command: "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying: Bring the tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle. . . . And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him on the behalf of the children of Israel. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall keep their priesthood."<sup>34</sup> And again: "And Jehovah said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy fathers' house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. And thy brethren also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou near with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall be before the tent of the testimony. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the Tent: only they shall not come nigh unto the vessels of the sanctuary and unto the altar, that they die not, neither they, nor ye. And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tent of the meeting, for all the service of the Tent: and a stranger shall not come nigh

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<sup>33</sup> Exod. 28. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Num. 3. 5-10.

unto you. And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar; that there be wrath no more upon the children of Israel. And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are a gift, given unto Jehovah, to do the service of the tent of meeting. And thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priesthood for everything of the altar, and for that within the veil; and ye shall serve: I give you the priesthood as a service of gift.”<sup>35</sup>

Is it not clear that the three codes represent three entirely distinct views of the personnel of the priesthood? If so, is it probable that all three reflect the view of one single author? Is it not more reasonable to interpret the differences as due to the fact that the three codes mark three stages in the development of Hebrew legislation? Similar differences may be seen in the laws concerning other matters connected with the ritual and religious institutions—the payment of tithes, the first-born, the cities of the priests, and many more.<sup>36</sup>

SLAVERY. The Book of the Covenant contains the following law regarding slavery: “If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he come in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he be married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master give him a wife, and she bear him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself. But if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free:

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<sup>35</sup> Num. 18. 1-7.

<sup>36</sup> The different laws are conveniently arranged in C. F. Kent, *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*; the sections devoted to “Ceremonial Laws.”

then his master shall bring him unto God, and shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.”<sup>37</sup>

A law relating to the same subject is found in the Deuteronomic Code: “If thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou lettest him go free from thee, thou shalt not let him go empty: thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy threshing-floor, and out of thy winepress; as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day. And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go out from thee; because he loveth thee and thy house, because he is well with thee; then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant forever.”<sup>38</sup> The first of these laws was given on Mount Sinai,<sup>39</sup> the other in the land of Moab.<sup>40</sup> The closing verses of the Book of the Covenant<sup>41</sup> suggest that the laws contained therein were intended for the life in Canaan, which is definitely asserted of the laws of Deuteronomy.<sup>42</sup>

The Priestly Code has this to say on the subject: “And if thy brother be waxed poor with thee, and sell himself unto thee; thou shalt not make him to serve as a bond-

<sup>37</sup> Exod. 21. 2-6.

<sup>38</sup> Deut. 15. 12-17.

<sup>39</sup> Exod. 20. 21.

<sup>40</sup> Deut. 1. 1-5.

<sup>41</sup> Exod. 23. 20ff.

<sup>42</sup> Deut. 6. 1; 12. 1, etc.

servant. As a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee; he shall serve with thee unto the year of jubilee: then shall he go out from thee, he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possessions of his fathers shall he return. For they are my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen."<sup>43</sup> Like the law in the Book of the Covenant this law was given on Mount Sinai, and, like both the preceding laws, it was intended for life in Canaan.<sup>44</sup>

A comparison of the two laws said to have been given on Mount Sinai reveals the following important differences:

EXODUS	LEVITICUS
(1) Permits enslavement of Hebrews.	Prohibits such enslavement.
(2) Length of service—six years.	Hired service to continue to the year of Jubilee.
(3) Makes provision for permanent enslavement.	Permits no enslavement at all.
(4) Under certain conditions the family remains with the master.	The family goes with the liberated hired servant.

In the light of these striking differences, is it reasonable to suppose that the three laws were given by one and the same lawgiver, two of them at practically the same time, and all three to be put into practice at the same time and in the same place?

These and numerous other phenomena of a similar nature, discoverable in all parts of the Pentateuch, must be faced. And the question may well be asked: Can the repetitions, differences, and discrepancies found in the

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<sup>43</sup> Lev. 25. 39-42.

<sup>44</sup> Lev. 25. 1, 2.

narrative and legal portions of the Pentateuch be harmonized with the view that everything in the Pentateuch, with, perhaps, a few minor exceptions, proceeded from one and the same author, or that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch in its present form?

CHAPTER X

THE COMPOSITE CHARACTER OF THE  
PENTATEUCH

3. DIFFERENCES IN THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTION, STYLE,  
AND VOCABULARY





## CHAPTER X

### THE COMPOSITE CHARACTER OF THE PENTATEUCH

#### 3. DIFFERENCES IN THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTION, STYLE, AND VOCABULARY

1. **Differences in Theological Conception.** The differences in theological conception revealed in different parts of the Pentateuch constitute another phase of the argument by which, it is thought, the composite character of the Pentateuch can be established. The portions of the Genesis narrative which are bound together by the use of the divine name "Yahweh" reflect a very primitive and pronounced anthropomorphic conception of the Deity, and the same characteristic may be traced in portions of the remaining books of the Pentateuch. Yahweh is represented not only as forming human resolutions and as swayed by human emotions, which is common also in later books, but as performing his acts in a human way. Thus he is said to *form* or *fashion* man and the animals,<sup>1</sup> and to *breathe* into man's nostrils the breath of life;<sup>2</sup> he *takes* a rib from man's body and *closes* up the opening;<sup>3</sup> he *builds* the rib into a *woman*;<sup>4</sup> he *plants* the garden;<sup>5</sup> he *takes* man and *sets him down*

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 2. 7, 19.

<sup>2</sup> 2. 7.

<sup>3</sup> 2. 21.

<sup>4</sup> 2. 22.

<sup>5</sup> 2. 8.

in it;<sup>6</sup> he *walks* in the garden in the cool of the day;<sup>7</sup> he *closes* the door of the ark after Noah enters;<sup>8</sup> he speaks as if he were *jealous* of man;<sup>9</sup> he *goes down* to confound the speech of the builders of the tower of Babel;<sup>10</sup> he appears *in human form* to Abraham and *eats* with him;<sup>11</sup> he *goes to make inquiry* about the iniquity of Sodom;<sup>12</sup> he *wrestles* with Jacob;<sup>13</sup> he *meets* Moses and seeks to kill him; etc.<sup>14</sup>

The same sections abound in ethical and theological reflection, introduced perhaps by a later reviser, who sought to make the narratives embodied in the original document vehicles of profound religious and ethical teaching. In the words of Dillmann: "He [that is, the author of these sections] deals with the problem of the origin of sin and evil in the world, and follows its growth (Gen. 2-4; 6. 1-8); he notices the evil condition of man's heart even after the Flood (8. 21), traces the development of heathen feeling and heathen manners (11. 1ff.; 9. 22ff.; 19. 1ff.; 33ff.), and emphasizes strongly the want of faith and disobedience visible even in the Israel of Moses's days (Exod. 16. 4, 5, 25-30; 17. 2, 7; 14. 11, 12; 32. 9-14; 33. 12 to 34. 28; Num. 11; 14; 25. 1ff.; Deut. 31. 16-22). He shows in opposition to this how God works for the purpose of counteracting the ruin incident to man, partly by punishment, partly by choosing and educating, first Israel's forefathers to live as godlike men, and finally Israel itself to become the holy people of God. He represents Abraham's migration into Canaan as the

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<sup>6</sup> 2. 15.

<sup>7</sup> 3. 8.

<sup>8</sup> 7. 16.

<sup>9</sup> 3. 22.

<sup>10</sup> 11. 6, 7.

<sup>11</sup> 18. 1-8.

<sup>12</sup> 18. 21.

<sup>13</sup> 32. 24-32.

<sup>14</sup> Exod. 4. 24.

result of a divine call and promise (Gen. 12. 1-3; 24. 7); expresses clearly the aim and object of this call (18. 18, 19); exhibits in strong contrast to human sin the divine mercy, long-suffering, and faithfulness (Gen. 6. 8; 8. 21, 22; 23ff.; Exod. 32. 9-14; 33. 12ff.); recognizes the universal significance of Israel in the midst of the nations of the world (Gen. 12. 2, 3; 27. 29; Exod. 4. 22, 23; 19. 5, 6; Num. 24. 9); declares in classical words the final end of Israel's education (Num. 11. 29; compare Gen. 18. 19 R. V.; Exod. 19. 5, 6); and formulates under the term 'belief' the spirit in which man should respond to the revealing work of God (Gen. 15. 6; Exod. 4. 1, 5, 8, 9, 31; 14. 31; 19. 9; compare Num. 14. 11, and Deut. 1. 32; 9. 23). And in order to illustrate the divine purpose of grace, as manifested in history, he introduces at certain points prophetic glances into the future (Gen. 3. 15; 5. 29; 8. 21; 9. 25-27; 12. 2, 3; 18. 18, 19; 28. 14; Num. 24. 17, 18), as he also loves to point to the character of nations or tribes as foreshadowed in their beginnings (Gen. 9. 22ff.; 16. 12; 19. 31ff.; 25. 25ff.; 34. 25ff.; 35. 22; compare 49. 9ff.)"<sup>15</sup>

The same group of narratives shows less tendency than is seen in other parts of the Pentateuch to explain significant events by appeal to the extraordinary, miraculous, or supernatural; there is a more general recognition of the play of natural forces. This appears, for example, in the stories of the plagues of Egypt<sup>16</sup> and of the crossing of the Red Sea.<sup>17</sup>

Somewhat different and more elevated theological ideas

<sup>15</sup> A. Dillmann, *Numeri, Deuteronomium, Josua*, pp. 629, 630.

<sup>16</sup> Exod. 8. 1-4; 8. 20-32; 9. 1-7; etc.; compare these with 8. 5-7; 9. 8-12, etc.

<sup>17</sup> Exod. 14. 21.

appear in a group of narratives characterized, in its earlier parts, by the use of Elohim instead of Yahweh—in other words, in the narratives generally assigned to the Elohist document. True, these narratives mention the local sanctuaries and the “pillars” without a sign of disapproval; but they lend no support to unspiritual service, and the putting away of “strange gods” meets the author’s full approval.<sup>18</sup> The God of these parts appears not in bodily form but in dreams,<sup>19</sup> and he carries out his plans through the ministry of angels.<sup>20</sup>

Closely connected with this higher view of the divine manifestations is the representation of Abraham as a prophet, possessing the power of effectual intercession.<sup>21</sup> Moses, though not called a prophet, is represented as intrusted with a prophet’s mission;<sup>22</sup> and he appears as a prophet in all essentials, holding exceptionally close communion with his God.<sup>23</sup>

Though the standpoint of the narratives in this group, like that of the group previously discussed, is prophetic, there is less evidence of conscious ethical and theological reflection. Thus, the prophetic or didactic purpose of the long Joseph narratives is expressed in a single verse.<sup>24</sup> The lesson to be taught is the mysterious manner in which God effects his purposes through human means, even though it be without the knowledge, or contrary to the wishes, of those who actually bring them to pass.

Both groups of narratives have much to say about the

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<sup>18</sup> Gen. 35. 2-4; Jos. 24. 1-25.

<sup>19</sup> Gen. 20. 3; 31. 24; Num. 22. 9, 20.

<sup>20</sup> Gen. 21. 17; 22. 11; 28. 12.

<sup>21</sup> Gen. 20. 7.

<sup>22</sup> Exod. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Exod. 33. 11; Num. 12. 6-8; compare Deut. 34. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Gen. 50. 20; compare 45. 5-8.

sacred sites of Palestine. The people loved to think of their ancestors as frequenting the spots which they themselves held sacred; and the traditions attached to the localities are recounted by the two narrators.

The theological conceptions of a third group of narratives and laws, known as P, or the Priestly Code, interwoven with the two groups already discussed—J and E—present striking contrasts to those of the other two documents. The representation of the Deity is much less anthropomorphic, and there are no angels or dreams as means of communication. Again in the words of Dillmann: "Certainly, he [the author of this group of narratives] speaks of God as 'appearing' to men, and as 'going up' from them (Gen. 17. 1, 22, 23; 35. 9, 13; 48. 3; Exod. 6. 3) at important moments of the history, but he gives no further description of his appearances: usually, the revelation of God to men takes with him the form of simple *speaking* to them (Gen. 1. 29; 6. 13; 7. 1; 8. 15; 9. 1; Exod. 6. 12, 13, etc.); only in the supreme revelation on Sinai (Exod. 24. 16, 17; compare 34. 29b), and when he is present in the Tent of Meeting (Exod. 40. 34, 35), does he describe him as manifesting himself in a form of light and fire (קִבְיֹהֹ), and as speaking there with Moses (Exod. 25. 22; Num. 7. 89), as man to man, or in order that people may recognize him (Exod. 16. 10; Lev. 9. 6, 23, 24; Num. 14. 10; 16. 19, 42; 20. 6). Wrath also proceeds from him (Num. 16. 46), or destroying fire and death (Lev. 10. 2; Num. 14. 37; 16. 35, 45ff.; 25. 8, 9). But anthropopathic expressions of God he avoids scrupulously; even anthropomorphic expressions are rare (Gen. 2. 2, 3; compare Exod. 31. 17b), so that a purpose is here unmistakable. It may be that as a priest he was accustomed to think and speak of God more

strictly and circumspectly than other writers, even those who were prophets. On the other hand, he nowhere touches on the deeper problems of theology. On such subjects as the justice of the divine government of the world, the origin of sin and evil, the insufficiency of all human righteousness (see on the contrary, Gen. 5. 24; 6. 9), he does not pause to reflect; the free divine choice, though not unknown to him (Num. 3. 12, 13; 8. 16; 17. 5ff.; 18. 6), is at least not so designedly opposed to human claims as in J. His work contains no Messianic outlooks into the future; his ideal lies in the theocracy, as he conceives it realized by Moses and Joshua.”<sup>25</sup>

The influence of this ideal is seen in the promises made to the patriarchs, which, unlike those reported by J, are restricted to Israel.<sup>26</sup> “The substance of these promises,” says S. R. Driver, “is the future growth and glory of the Abrahamic clan; the establishment of a covenant with its members implying a special relation between them and God (Gen. 17. 7b; Exod. 6. 7a), and the confirmation of the land of Canaan as their possession. The Israelitish theocracy is the writer’s ideal; and the culminating promise is that in Exod. 29. 43-46, declaring the *abiding presence of God with his people Israel.*”<sup>27</sup>

In the legal sections belonging to this group religion is defined largely in terms of ritual and form, which is at variance with the spirit of J and E. There is an elaborate ritual for the offering of sacrifice, and great prominence is given to the sin and trespass offerings, which are not even mentioned in other parts of the Pentateuch. A sharp distinction is made between the priests, the sons of

<sup>25</sup> *Numeri, Deuteronomium, Josua*, p. 653.

<sup>26</sup> Gen. 17. 6-8; 28. 3-4; 35. 11, 12; Exod. 6. 4, 6, 7.

<sup>27</sup> *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 129.

Aaron, and the Levites; only here is introduced the high priest with a full description of his dignity and privileges, and ample provision is made for the support of both priests and Levites.

D, like the other documents, has its own peculiar theological conceptions. Its fundamental theological truth is expressed in these words: "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah";<sup>28</sup> and its fundamental law, reiterated again and again, upon which all other requirements rest, assumes this form: "Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."<sup>29</sup> While J and E make much of the old sacred places by connecting them with the history of the patriarchs and the appearances of Yahweh and his angels,<sup>30</sup> D will have nothing to do with them; while J and E seem to consider the "pillar" a perfectly legitimate symbol of Hebrew religion,<sup>31</sup> D contains this prohibition: "Thou shalt not plant thee an Asherah of any kind of tree beside the altar of Jehovah thy God, which thou shalt make thee. Neither shalt thou set up a pillar, which Jehovah thy God hateth."<sup>32</sup>

D differs from the Book of the Covenant, which is closely connected with JE, regarding the place of sacrifice: the latter permits the bringing of sacrifice in different places;<sup>33</sup> D insists again and again that there is but one legitimate place of public worship, "the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose out of all the tribes."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Deut. 6. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Deut. 6. 5; 10. 12; 11. 1, 13, 22; 13. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Gen. 12. 6; 21. 33; 28. 18-22; 31. 13, 49, etc.

<sup>31</sup> Gen. 28. 18-22; 31. 13, 45; Josh. 24. 26.

<sup>32</sup> Deut. 16. 21, 22.

<sup>33</sup> Exod. 20. 24.

<sup>34</sup> Deut. 12. 5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26; 14. 23-25; 15. 20; 16. 2, 6, 7, etc.

It differs from P regarding the personnel of the priesthood: the Priestly Code limits the priesthood to the sons of Aaron;<sup>35</sup> D recognizes all the sons of Levi as priests.<sup>36</sup>

The marked differences in theological conception revealed by the several groups of narratives and laws stand out much more prominently when the several groups are read consecutively; but even this brief outline may be sufficient to show that the differences cannot easily be harmonized with a belief in unity of authorship.

2. **Differences in Style.** The force of the argument drawn from differences in style cannot be fully appreciated without a knowledge of Hebrew; nevertheless, even the English student can at least "feel" certain differences in the style of different sections of the Pentateuch. As in other matters, the differences between J and E are not as great as those between JE on the one hand, and D or P on the other; which is due to the fact that the former come from approximately the same age—the creative age of prophetic narration. However, a few differences between J and E may be noted: J dwells less than E upon concrete particulars; but he excels in the power of delineating life and character. He is, indeed, the best narrator in the Bible. "His touch," says Driver, "is singularly light: with a few strokes he paints a scene which, before he has finished, is impressed indelibly upon his reader's memory. In ease and grace his narratives are unsurpassed; everything is told with precisely the amount of detail that is required; the narrative never lingers, and the reader's interest is sustained to the end. His dialogues especially (which are frequent) are remarkable for the delicacy and truthfulness with which char-

<sup>35</sup> Exod. 28. 1; Num. 3. 5-10; 18. 1-7.

<sup>36</sup> Deut. 17. 9, 18; 18. 1; 21. 5.



acter and emotions find expression in them.”<sup>37</sup> E is perhaps a little more terse in style, but its narratives are on the whole so well told that it is not easy to see wherein they fall short of J, except that at times they lack the spontaneous charm and strength of the other.

The style of the P sections is altogether different. Again, in the words of Driver: “If JE—and especially J—be free, flowing, and picturesque, P is stereotyped, measured, and prosaic. The narrative, both as a whole and in its several parts, is articulated systematically; the beginning and close of an enumeration are regularly marked by stated formulæ (Gen. 5. 6-8, 9-11, 12-14, etc.; or Gen. 1. 5b, 8b, 13, etc.). The descriptions are methodical and precise. When they embrace details, emphasis (Gen. 1. 29; 6. 17; 9. 3) and completeness (Gen. 10. 5, 20, 31; 36. 40; 23. 17; 36. 6; etc.) are studied; hence a thought is often repeated in slightly different words (Gen. 2. 2, 3; 23. 17-20; Exod. 12. 18-20; etc.). There is a tendency to describe an object in full each time that it is mentioned (compare Gen. 1. 7 beside verse 6; verse 11 beside verse 10; 8. 18, 19 beside verses 16, 17); a direction is followed, as a rule, by an account of its execution, usually in the same words (Gen. 1. 6, 7; 11, 12; 24, 25; 6. 18-20; 7. 13-16; etc.). Sometimes the circumstantiality leads to diffuseness, as in parts of Num. 4 and (an extreme case) Num. 7. Metaphors, similes, etc., are eschewed (Num. 27. 17b is an exception), and there is generally an absence of the poetical or dramatic element, which is frequently conspicuous in the other historical books of the Old Testament (including J and E). To a greater extent than in any other part of the Old Testament is a preference shown in P for *standing*

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<sup>37</sup> *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 119.

*formulae and expressions*; some of these recur with great frequency, and are apparent in a translation. Particularly noticeable is an otherwise uncommon mode of expression, producing a peculiar rhythm, by which a statement is first made in general terms, and then partly repeated, for the purpose of receiving closer limitation or definition (Gen. 1. 27; 6. 14; 8. 5; 9. 5; 23. 11, etc.). It seems as though the habits of thought and expression, which the author had contracted through his practical acquaintance with the law, were carried by him into his treatment of purely historical subjects.”<sup>38</sup>

In a comparison of style D might almost be left out of consideration because, while J and E are chiefly historical, D represents the legal literature, a difference in subject matter that would produce differences in style and expression, though the author were the same. Since P contains much legal material, it is easier to institute comparisons between it and D. Comparing, now, the style of the legal portions of P with D, even the reader of an English translation can notice this difference: P is cold, legal, formal, and precise; D is rhetorical and hortatory; the style of the latter closely resembles that of the great prophets.

The stylistic peculiarities of the several documents are, indeed, so marked that they fully justify the claim of C. A. Briggs: “There is as great a difference in style between the documents of the Hexateuch as there is between the four Gospels.”<sup>39</sup>

**3. Differences in Vocabulary.** It is exceedingly difficult to present this part of the argument in any sort of popular form, hence all that is attempted here is to enumerate a

<sup>38</sup> *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 129, 130.

<sup>39</sup> *The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*, p. 75.

few of the characteristic expressions of each document which seem to point in the direction of diversity of authorship:<sup>40</sup>

The following words are characteristic of the portions assigned to J: *Yahweh* is the name of the God of Israel even in pre-Mosaic times;<sup>41</sup> *Sinai*, not Horeb, is the name of the mountain on which the law was given; *Israel*, not Jacob, is the name of the third patriarch from the birth of Benjamin on. The inhabitants of Palestine are called *Canaanites*; the regular name of Mesopotamia is *Aram Naharaim*; *Egypt* is used as equivalent to Egyptian. The longer form of the pronoun of the first person *ānōkhī* is used, not *anī*. Characteristic phrases are: *To find favor or grace in the sight of . . .*; *to call on the name of. . .*; *to run to meet. . .*; *took him a wife. . .*; *to preserve seed alive. . .*; *to dwell in the midst of. . .*; the particle *nā* with the imperative, etc.

As characteristic of E may be noted: The use of the divine name *Elohim* in Genesis; the pre-Israelitish inhabitants of Palestine are called *Amorites*, not *Canaanites*; the mountain of God is called *Horeb*, not *Sinai*; from Gen. 32 on *Jacob* is used in preference to *Israel*; the name of Moses's father-in-law is *Jethro*. Characteristic expressions are also: *the man Moses*, and *to bring up* from the land of Egypt, where J uses *to bring out*.

The linguistic peculiarities of P are very numerous. Driver enumerates fifty expressions characteristic of the narrative portions of P, many of which occur never or rarely in other books, some of them only again in

<sup>40</sup> See, further, art. "Hexateuch," in Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*; S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 99ff., etc.; Carpenter and Harford-Battersby, *Hexateuch*, pp. 185ff.

<sup>41</sup> See above, chapter VIII.

Ezekiel.<sup>42</sup> Of these may be mentioned: The use of the divine name *Elohim* in Genesis; *Paddan Aram* is the regular name for Mesopotamia; the mountain of God is called *Sinai*, as in J, never Horeb. The shorter form of the pronoun of the first person singular *anī* is used 130 times, the longer form *ānōkhī* only once. The Hebrew *ammim*, meaning *peoples*, is used in the sense of *kinsfolk*, especially in the two phrases "that soul shall be cut off from his kinsfolk" and "to be gathered unto one's kinsfolk." Other peculiar expressions are: *To be fruitful and multiply . . .*; *this selfsame day* [literally "the bone of this day"] . . .; *after their families . . .*; *soul* [*nephesh*] in the sense of "person" . . .; *throughout their generations . . .*; *congregation of the Israelites . . .*; *according to the mouth* [*command*] *of . . .*; etc.

D also has its characteristic words and phrases: *Horeb* is used, not *Sinai*, as the name of the mountain on which the law was given; *that your days may be long . . .*; *a mighty hand and a stretched out arm . . .*; *the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow . . .*; *and remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt . . .*; *to do what is right* [*or evil*] *in the eyes of Yahweh . . .*; *with all the heart and with all the soul . . .*; *to observe to do . . .*, etc.

The differences in style and vocabulary—and they are much more numerous than this brief list would seem to indicate—cannot be explained, as has been attempted, on the basis of differences in theme or subject matter, because in many cases the differences appear in sections dealing with one and the same theme. Moreover, while it is undoubtedly true that arguments from language and style, when standing alone, are not conclusive, in this case the linguistic and stylistic evidence does not stand by

<sup>42</sup> *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 131ff.

itself; it appears in connection with the differences in theological conception, repetitions, and discrepancies, and the peculiar use of the divine names—the latter being in a sense a part of the linguistic evidence—and strikingly confirms the conclusions as to diversity of authorship which have been drawn from the other peculiarities.

In the light of the facts presented in chapters VIII-X and others of a similar nature, it would seem that the view which regards the Pentateuch as a compilation of material taken from different sources, written by different authors, is not the result of unwarranted speculation, but is developed upon the basis of actual facts presented in the Pentateuch from beginning to end.



CHAPTER XI  
POST-MOSAIC ELEMENTS IN THE  
PENTATEUCH





## CHAPTER XI

### POST-MOSAIC ELEMENTS IN THE PENTATEUCH

IF only the first part of the Pentateuch, the book of Genesis, were a compilation, Moses might, perhaps, be regarded as the compiler, and the author of the remaining books.<sup>1</sup> But if, as has been shown in the preceding chapters, the entire group of books is in the nature of a compilation, this fact in itself makes belief in Mosaic authorship practically impossible, as some time must have elapsed between the last event recorded—the death of Moses—and the production of the compilation in its present form. There are, however, some additional, specific considerations that have convinced scholars that Moses cannot have been the author. The present chapter deals with one of these: the presence of references and passages which by their very contents imply that they were written subsequently to the time of Moses. The more important of these may be enumerated here:

**1. Literary Considerations.** (1) The use of the third person when speaking of Moses. No doubt, Moses might have referred to himself in the third person, but it does not necessarily follow that he actually did. Num. 33. 2, for example, reads: "And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of Jehovah; and these are their journeys according to their

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 129.

goings out." This statement sounds much more like the introduction to a quotation from a record of Moses than an introduction by Moses to something which he is about to write. Or take Exod. 6. 26, 27. "These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom Jehovah said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their hosts. These are they that spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron." Naturally interpreted, these words must be regarded as a reference to Moses and Aaron written by some one other than Moses.

(2) Deut. 34. 1-8 records the death and burial of Moses. A large part of Jewish tradition and practically all Christian tradition accepting the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, ascribes these verses to Joshua.<sup>2</sup> This is done not because of any external evidence pointing to Joshua as the author, but exclusively on the basis of internal evidence: It does not seem reasonable to believe that anyone would report as a fact of history his own death and burial. But chapter 33 cannot be considered the close of the Book of Deuteronomy; chapter 34 forms a literary unit with the preceding chapters. Now, if it is permissible to deny one passage to Moses solely on the basis of internal evidence, why not others, provided the internal evidence is sufficiently decisive?

**2. Geographical References.** (1) "Beyond Jordan." The Book of Deuteronomy opens with these words: "These are the words which Moses spake unto all Israel beyond the Jordan"; to which should be added the statement in 1. 5, "beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab."<sup>3</sup> From this it would seem that in the narrative portions of

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 44, 45, 86.

<sup>3</sup> Compare also 4. 41, 46, 47, 49; Num. 22. 1.

the Pentateuch the territory *east* of the Jordan is called *beyond the Jordan*, as if the author were a resident of the territory west of the Jordan, which, the records assert, Moses never entered.<sup>4</sup> The natural inference would be that Moses was not the author of these and similar passages in the Pentateuch. To escape this inevitable inference it has been suggested that "beyond the Jordan" was a geographical term for the country east of the Jordan and was used irrespectively of the location of the speaker.<sup>5</sup> If this assertion could be proved, the phrase would throw no light on the question under consideration; but, unfortunately for those who make that claim, it is unwarranted; it is contradicted by the fact that in the speeches which are said to have been delivered east of the Jordan the same phrase is used of the territory west of the river.<sup>6</sup>

(2) Stereotyped expressions denoting "south" and "west." The common Hebrew word for "south" is נֶגֶב *neghebh*;<sup>7</sup> the same word is used as a geographical term denoting the southern portion of Judah. But the Negeb lay southward only to the inhabitants of western Palestine; hence the use of the term with the meaning "south" presupposes residence west of the Jordan, which was never attained by Moses. The word for "west" is יָם *yām*,<sup>8</sup> a word meaning also "sea." Now the sea—the

<sup>4</sup> Deut. 34. 4. According to the later historical books, the inhabitants of Palestine west of the Jordan referred to the east Jordan territory in the same way (Josh. 2. 10; 7. 7; 9. 10, etc.; Judg. 5. 17; 10. 8).

<sup>5</sup> Compare Gallia Transalpina.

<sup>6</sup> Deut. 3. 20, 25; 11. 30; an exception is found in 3. 8, where the author seems to have forgotten himself; compare also Num. 32. 19, where it is used of both sides; and see on both passages, Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p. xliii.

<sup>7</sup> Gen. 12. 9; 20. 1; 24. 62; etc.

<sup>8</sup> Exod. 27. 12; Num. 2. 18; 3. 23, etc.

Mediterranean Sea—was immediately west of Palestine, not of the desert or of Mount Sinai.

(3) The name "Hebron" seems to be of post-Mosaic origin. Josh. 14. 15 contains the statement: "Now the name of Hebron beforetime was Kiriath-arba; which Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim"; and 15. 13 implies that the change in name was not made until after the city had been assigned to Caleb. But Hebron is named several times in Genesis<sup>9</sup> and at least once in Numbers.<sup>10</sup> Does this imply that Genesis and Numbers were written after the name was changed, that is, after the conquest of Canaan? If not, what is the explanation?

(4) The occurrence of the name "Dan" in the Pentateuch points in the same direction. The name is said to have originated in the age of the Judges: "They [the Danites, who had been driven northward during the period of the Judges] called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first."<sup>11</sup> Since the author of the Pentateuch knew the new name,<sup>12</sup> the question naturally arises, Did he live subsequently to the period of the Judges?

(5) Deut. 3. 14 narrates the conquest of a part of the east-Jordan territory in these words: "Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob, unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called them, even Bashan, after his own name, Havvoth-jair [towns of Jair], unto this day."<sup>13</sup> The words "unto this day" are meaningless if written immediately after the naming; they

<sup>9</sup> Gen. 13. 18; 23. 2; 37. 14.

<sup>10</sup> Num. 13. 22.

<sup>11</sup> Judg. 18. 29.

<sup>12</sup> Gen. 14. 14; Deut. 34. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Compare also Num. 32. 41.

would seem to imply the lapse of a considerable period of time.<sup>14</sup> In Judg. 10. 3, 4 seems to be another narrative explaining the origin of the name: "And after him [Tola] arose Jair, the Gileadite; and he judged Israel twenty and two years. And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havvoth-jair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead." Were the stories written so late that the origin of the name had been forgotten?

(6) In Gen. 40. 15 Canaan is called "the land of the Hebrews." Would this designation be used before the Hebrew people had taken possession of the land, so that it could come to be known as their land?

In each of the cases mentioned the most natural interpretation requires that the passage be assigned to a date subsequent to Moses.

**3. Historical Statements.** (1) Gen. 36. 31 states: "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." The last clause presupposes the establishment of the monarchy in Israel, for the words certainly imply that the author knows something of kings in Israel. There is nothing anywhere to support Green's assumption that the Edomite kings were pre-Mosaic.<sup>15</sup>

(2) The expression "the Canaanite was then in the land"<sup>16</sup> has meaning only at a time when the Canaanites had disappeared, at least as an independent people; which

<sup>14</sup> The name is used in Josh. 13. 30, in the narrative of the division of the land.

<sup>15</sup> *Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, p. 51. If Belah the son of Beor (verse 32) is the same as Balaam the son of Beor (Num. 22. 5), as is quite probable, the list of eight kings might well reach to the beginning of the Hebrew monarchy.

<sup>16</sup> Gen. 12. 6; 13. 7.

would point, at the earliest, to the reign of Solomon, of whom it is related: As for all the people that were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, who were not of the children of Israel; their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel were not able utterly to destroy, of them did Solomon raise a levy of bondservants unto this day." <sup>17</sup>

(3) Deut. 2. 12 reads: "The Horites also dwelt in Seir aforetime, but the children of Esau succeeded them; and they destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which Jehovah gave unto them." This reads as if the writer were looking back to the conquest as an accomplished fact.

(4) In several passages occurs the expression "unto this day." Deut. 10. 8, for example, reads: "At that time Jehovah set apart the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, to stand before Jehovah to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day." <sup>18</sup> True, in some cases the expression might have been used in the days of Moses; in others, however, as in the passage quoted, it would be more intelligible if the statement had been written in a subsequent age. And in the light of the facts already pointed out, this is the more natural view in all cases.

(5) The triumph song in Exod. 15, in its present form, seems to presuppose the establishment of Yahweh's sanctuary on Mount Zion, or at least his rule in Palestine:

Thou in thy lovingkindness hast led the people that thou hast redeemed:

<sup>17</sup> I Kings 9. 20, 21.

<sup>18</sup> Compare also Gen. 32. 32; 35. 20; Deut. 3. 14, etc.

Thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation. .  
 Thou wilt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine  
 inheritance,  
 The place, O Jehovah, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in,  
 The sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.<sup>19</sup>

(6) Num. 21. 14 names "the Book of the Wars of Jehovah" as the source from which a song or fragment of a song was taken. The wars of Yahweh can hardly be anything but the wars leading to the conquest of Canaan, which the Hebrews carried on under the leadership and direction of their God. But the existence of a collection of songs describing these struggles almost certainly presupposes the close of the struggles or, at least, a more advanced stage than had been reached even at the death of the great leader. The most severe fighting began after the crossing of the Jordan.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the song quoted is used to prove that the Arnon marked the boundary line between Israel and Moab. Did the contemporaries of Moses need such proof when they themselves had established the boundary?

(7) If Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch, is it not strange that he was in doubt regarding the name of his own father-in-law, calling him, in some passages, Reuel,<sup>21</sup> in others, Jethro?<sup>22</sup> The difference is easily explained on the assumption that different traditions as to the name of Moses's father-in-law were current in Israel subsequently to the time of Moses, and that the contradictory traditions were preserved in the different documents.

(8) The characterization of Moses in certain passages reads as if it came from some one other than Moses:

<sup>19</sup> Exod. 15. 13, 17.

<sup>20</sup> Compare the Book of Jashar, Josh. 10. 13; 2 Sam. 1. 18.

<sup>21</sup> Exod. 2. 18 (J); Num. 10. 29 (J).

<sup>22</sup> Exod. 3. 1; 18. 1 (E), corrupted in 4. 18 (also E) to Jether.

“Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants, and in the sight of the people.”<sup>23</sup> Or again: “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth.”<sup>24</sup> And again: “And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face.”<sup>25</sup>

(9) The book of Exodus contains two accounts of the call of Moses.<sup>26</sup> If both came from Moses himself, it seems very strange that the second should contain no reference whatever to the first.

4. **Archæological References.** (1) The expression “shekel of the sanctuary”<sup>27</sup> presupposes the sanctuary and a systematized ritual, for the reference takes it for granted that everyone knows what the shekel of the sanctuary is.

(2) The reference to the bedstead of Og in Deut. 3. 11 reads as if the author looked upon it as a well-known relic. Is it probable that Moses would speak of it in that manner, since his listeners or readers had conquered and slain Og that very year?<sup>28</sup>

5. **Legislative Enactments.** Many of the legislative enactments in the Pentateuch presuppose a background other than that of the desert.

(1) Exod. 23. 19, for example, presupposes agricultural pursuits and, perhaps, the existence of the temple: “The first of the first fruits of thy ground thou shalt bring into the *house* of Jehovah thy God.”

<sup>23</sup> Exod. 11. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Num. 12. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Deut. 34. 10.

<sup>26</sup> Exod. 3. 1 to 6. 1 (E), and 6. 2 to 7. 7 (P).

<sup>27</sup> Exod. 30. 13, 24; 38. 24-26.

<sup>28</sup> Compare verses 1-3; Num. 21. 33.



(2) Deut. 19. 14 looks back to the settlement in Canaan as something belonging to the far distant past: "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set, in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit, in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it."

The list of passages quoted and referred to in this chapter is by no means exhaustive, and only such passages have been included as seem to imply definitely a post-Mosaic date. At any rate, each passage finds a natural interpretation on the assumption that it was written subsequently to the time of Moses or by some one other than that great leader of Israel.

What, now, is done with these and similar passages by the defenders of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch?

Frequently the assertion is made that there is no good reason for denying them to Moses, and that practically all of them can be interpreted as coming from him. But if there should be discovered a few passages that cannot be assigned to him, they must be explained as later interpolations. In the words of Green: "Even if it could be demonstrated that a certain paragraph or paragraphs were post-Mosaic, this would merely prove that such paragraph or paragraphs could not have belonged to the Pentateuch as it came from the pen of Moses, not that the work as a whole did not proceed from him. It is far easier to assume that some slight additions may here and there have been made to the text, than to set aside the multiplied and invincible proofs that the Pentateuch was the production of Moses." <sup>29</sup>

Other passages are passed over in silence, or are dis-

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<sup>29</sup> *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, p. 51.

posed of without serious attempt to meet the problems raised by them.

Now, while it is true that Moses might, perhaps, have written some of the passages enumerated, others cannot possibly come from him; and in every case the only natural interpretation is that which ascribes the passage to another author. Again, while some of the passages might, perhaps, be thrown out as interpolations, others are so closely bound up with their context that they would carry with them large sections of the Pentateuch, and the resulting breaking up of continuity in narration would increase rather than diminish the difficulties. On the other hand, all the difficulties disappear if it is admitted that the narratives in which the alleged post-Mosaic elements are found were written in the periods to which modern scholarship assigns them.

CHAPTER XII  
THE LAW BOOK OF KING JOSIAH



## CHAPTER XII

### THE LAW BOOK OF KING JOSIAH

ONE of the most significant events in Hebrew religious history is that recorded in 2 Kings 22, 23 and 2 Chron. 34, 35. The substance of the narrative is as follows: King Josiah, who ascended the throne when eight years of age, determined, in the eighteenth year of his reign, to repair the temple of Yahweh. The supervision of the work was placed in the hands of a commission of which Hilkiyah, the chief priest, and Shaphan, the king's secretary, were members. One day Hilkiyah reported to Shaphan: "I have found the book of the law in the house of Yahweh." He gave the book to Shaphan, who read it and reported the find to the king. When, at his request, the book was read before the king, he was so deeply impressed with the nature of the contents that he sent Hilkiyah, Shaphan, and others to inquire of Yahweh "concerning the words of the book that is found." They consulted the prophetess Huldah, who affirmed that the book was an expression of the will of Yahweh. Whereupon the book was read in the presence of the people, and the king "made a covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all *his* heart, and all *his* soul, to confirm the words of this covenant, that were written in this book: and all the people stood to the covenant." In accordance with this vow, and on the basis of the newly found law book, Josiah introduced such far-reaching reforms in Judah that the narrator could

write of him: "And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to Jehovah with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him."

**Was the Law Book of Josiah the Pentateuch?** Until recent times the law book of Josiah was almost universally identified with the Pentateuch, which was thought to have been completed centuries before and to have been deposited by the side of the Ark of the Covenant.<sup>1</sup> In the course of time it was lost sight of, but finally, in the days of Josiah, it was recovered and identified as the Law of Moses.

Most modern scholars, however, believe that there are good and sufficient reasons for believing that the book found was not the completed Pentateuch: (1) The Pentateuch as a whole would hardly be described as a "book of the law,"<sup>2</sup> much less as a "book of the covenant,"<sup>3</sup> a term applicable only to Exod. 20-23<sup>4</sup> and to Deuteronomy.<sup>5</sup> (2) A book as large as the Pentateuch could not have been handled as freely as is suggested in the narrative. It was read at least twice on the same day;<sup>6</sup> it seems to have been no special hardship for the people to have the entire book read to them, apparently at one service.<sup>7</sup> (3) If the book found had been the entire Pentateuch, it would be difficult to explain why Josiah based his reforms upon one small portion—Deuteronomy.<sup>8</sup> (4) A book as heterogeneous in contents as is the Pentateuch as a whole, and containing romantic

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 31. 9, 24-26.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings 22. 8.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Kings 23. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Exod. 24. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Deut. 5. 2; 29. 1, 21.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Kings 22. 8, 10.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Kings 23. 2.

<sup>8</sup> See below, p. 185.

stories like the patriarchal narratives would hardly have made the swift and terrible impression which the book found by Hilkiah is said to have produced upon king and people.<sup>9</sup> (5) Another difficulty is suggested in the words of R. Kittel: "It is utterly impossible that the whole Pentateuch should have vanished without leaving a trace of its existence. The older and, consequently, the better known it was, the greater the impossibility. Even if the one copy deposited in the temple had disappeared, there must always have been others in existence in the priestly circles."<sup>10</sup>

W. H. Green seeks to weaken the force of the last argument by directing attention to the fate suffered by the code of Charlemagne after that emperor's death. The situation is described by Sir J. Stephen in these words: "When the barbarism of the domestic government—under the Carolingian dynasty—had thus succeeded the barbarism of the government of the state, one of the most remarkable results of that political change was the disappearance of the laws and institutions by which Charlemagne had endeavored to elevate and civilize his subjects. Before the close of the century in which he died the whole body of his laws had fallen into utter disuse throughout the whole extent of his Gallic dominions. They who have studied the charters, laws, and chronicles of the later Carolingian princes most diligently are unanimous in declaring that they indicate either an absolute ignorance or an entire forgetfulness of the legislation of Charlemagne."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> 2 Kings 22. 11-13; 23. 3ff.

<sup>10</sup> *History of the Hebrews*, vol. i, p. 59.

<sup>11</sup> *Lectures on the History of France*, iv, p. 94; W. H. Green, *Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, pp. 155, 156.

There is, however, one important difference between the two cases, which destroys the parallelism and, therefore, makes Green's objection of no effect. *The successors of Charlemagne make no claim that they are carrying out the principles laid down by that wise and great emperor; on the other hand, the great religious leaders of Israel insist that they are simply trying to put into practice the principles of Yahweh religion, as proclaimed from the Exodus on.* A change of policy on the part of the Frankish kings may explain their disregard of Charlemagne's code of laws; but no such change in policy is admitted by the religious leaders of Israel: their claims, teaching, and practice all imply that they are seeking to recall the people to what they consider the policy laid down by the first great prophet. And it remains a fact that the nature of these claims and the character of their teaching and practice cannot be harmonized with the view that the Pentateuch as a whole was in existence, as an embodiment of the will and law of Yahweh, at or before the time of Josiah. Modern scholars, therefore, seem justified in claiming that the Law Book of Josiah was not the Pentateuch as a whole.<sup>12</sup>

**The Deuteronomic Code the Law Book of Josiah.** If the law book of Josiah was not the completed Pentateuch, can its extent and contents be determined? The suggestion has been made that it was "the Book of the Covenant" in Exod. 20. 22 to 23. 33. Now, though the law book of Josiah is called "the book of the covenant,"<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> All the arguments given in the succeeding pages to determine the contents and extent of this law book prove at the same time that it was not the entire Pentateuch.

<sup>13</sup> 2 Kings 23. 2, 21. S. A. Fries, in *Die Gesetzesschrift des Königs Josia*, has attempted to prove that the law book of Josiah was identical with Exod. 34; but his arguments are not convincing.



there is, aside from other considerations, one fundamental objection to identifying it with the Book of the Covenant in Exodus: The central requirement of the law of Josiah was the prohibition of the worship of Yahweh at the local sanctuaries and the centralization of public worship in one place; on the other hand, the Book of the Covenant specifically permits the multiplicity of sanctuaries.<sup>14</sup> Evidently, the latter did not serve as the basis of Josiah's reforms.

There is only one collection of laws in the Pentateuch that meets all the requirements of the narrative in 2 Kings 22, 23, namely, the so-called Deuteronomic Code.<sup>15</sup> The reforms carried through under the direction of Josiah are exactly those advocated in Deuteronomy:

	2 KINGS 23	DEUTERONOMY
(1) Centralization of worship.....	8-20	12. 2-6; 16. 2, 6, 7, etc.
(2) Abolition of the worship of the heavenly bodies .....	4, 5, 11	17. 3
(3) Condemnation of high places, pillars, Asherahs, etc. ....	4, 5, 14, 15	16. 21, 22
(4) Prohibition of religious prostitutes .....	7	23. 17, 18
(5) Maintenance of priests ejected from the local sanctuaries...	8, 9	18. 8
(6) Abolition of Moloch worship..	10	18. 10
(7) Celebration of the Passover in a new style.....	21-23	16. 1-8
(8) Ejection of diviners and soothsayers .....	24	18. 10, 11

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<sup>14</sup> Exod. 20. 24.

<sup>15</sup> While the general view has been that the Law Book of Josiah was the entire Pentateuch, its identification with Deuteronomy is not an entirely new discovery. Chrysostom, 1 *ad Cor.*, *Hom.* VII, 3, and Jerome, *adv. Jovin.* 1, 5, identified the law book of Josiah with Deuteronomy.

Other references pointing to Deuteronomy are: (1) The law book of Josiah contained denunciations and curses such as are found in Deut. 28;<sup>16</sup> (2) it made mention of a covenant between Yahweh and the people;<sup>17</sup> (3) the consulting of the prophetess Huldah<sup>18</sup> may have been suggested by Deut. 18. 18, 19.

All the information, therefore, that may be gathered from the biblical narrative itself points to Deuteronomy in some form as the law book underlying the reforms of Josiah in B. C. 621. The original extent of the Deuteronomic Code is a matter of dispute. It may be that in the days of Josiah it included only chapters 12-19 and 26, *plus* the blessings and curses in chapter 28, though the latter, perhaps, in simpler form.<sup>19</sup>

**Origin and Date of the Law Book of Josiah.** When was the law book of Josiah, or the Deuteronomic Code, written? There is, first of all, the traditional view that Moses wrote it along with the rest of the Pentateuch. Naturally, the scholars who deny the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch include in this denial Deuteronomy; and most of them are agreed that the book was written a comparatively short time before its discovery by Hilkiah.

There are, however, differences of opinion as to the exact date. Some hold that it was written during the early years of Josiah's reign;<sup>20</sup> others that it was the product of Manasseh's apostate reign;<sup>21</sup> still others assign

<sup>16</sup> 2 Kings 22. 11, 13, 19.

<sup>17</sup> 2 Kings 23. 2, 3, 21; compare Deut. 29. 1; 26. 17-19, etc.

<sup>18</sup> 2 Kings 22. 14.

<sup>19</sup> See, further, below, p. 302.

<sup>20</sup> Reuss, Kuenen, Cheyne, Cornill, Holzinger, Carpenter and Harford-Battersby, Kent, etc.

<sup>21</sup> W. R. Smith, Kittel, Ryle, Driver, Kautzsch, Steuernagel, etc.

it to the reign of Hezekiah,<sup>22</sup> and consider it the basis of the reforms instituted by him.<sup>23</sup> More recently the claim has been put forward that it was composed during the early years of Solomon's reign and was deposited by him in the foundation stone of the temple, where it remained hidden until its accidental discovery in the days of Josiah.<sup>24</sup>

The last mentioned view grew out of the discovery of the ancient Egyptian custom of placing the law of a sanctuary somewhere into the building at the time of its erection. It is claimed that the narrative in 2 Kings 22 suggests a similar custom in connection with the temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem. Since, now, the temple in Jerusalem was erected by Solomon, it is thought that he had prepared a written statement of the law of the proposed sanctuary, in order that it might be placed into the foundation wall of the new building. That law is then identified with the Deuteronomic Code.<sup>25</sup>

Regarding this view, it may be noted that nowhere in the Old Testament is there any suggestion of walling a code of laws into the foundation walls of the temple or of any other sanctuary; nor is there even the slightest indication in 2 Kings 22. 5, 6, that in the course of the repairs the foundation stone or the foundation walls of the temple were torn out. Moreover, there is no hint in the narrative of the dedication of Solomon's temple that a copy of the Jerusalem law was deposited in the foundation wall. On the other hand, the sanctuary may well have

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<sup>22</sup> Riehm, Koenig, Westphal, Oettli, G. A. Smith, Sellin, Fries.

<sup>23</sup> 2 Kings 18. 3-6.

<sup>24</sup> E. Naville, *La Découverte de la Loi*, *passim*.

<sup>25</sup> 1 Sam. 10. 25 and Deut. 31. 26 are urged in support of the view that the custom was known in Israel.

been considered the proper place for the preservation of official documents, including law codes, because, being a holy place, it would be a safe place. Hence, there is nothing inherently impossible or improbable in the view that a copy of the law of Israel, whatever its contents may have been, was deposited by Solomon in the new temple of Yahweh. However, there are, in addition to the reasons for a later date given below, two considerations which make the composition of the Deuteronomic Code in the days of Solomon or under his direction highly improbable: (1) his utter disregard of the prohibition of polygamy,<sup>26</sup> and (2) a similar disregard on his part of the law against the multiplication of horses.<sup>27</sup> It is much more probable that the author of the Deuteronomic Code was familiar with the disastrous results of Solomon's reign, and formulated the laws in Deut. 17. 14-20 with his conduct in mind.

The facts in the case point strongly to the eighth or seventh century as the time when the Deuteronomic Code was formed:<sup>28</sup>

(1) The differences between Deuteronomy and the Book of the Covenant suggest a period considerably removed from the conquest; they presuppose a decided change in the social condition of the people.<sup>29</sup>

(2) The law of the kingdom<sup>30</sup> is colored by reminis-

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<sup>26</sup> Compare 1 Kings 11. 1-3 with Deut. 17. 17.

<sup>27</sup> Compare 1 Kings 10. 28 with Deut. 17. 16.

<sup>28</sup> The arguments here presented are chiefly those of Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 87ff.; *Commentary on Deuteronomy*, pp. xlfff.

<sup>29</sup> For the conditions reflected in the Book of the Covenant, see below, pp. 281ff.

<sup>30</sup> Deut. 17. 14-20.

cences of Solomon's reign. This does not mean that Moses may not have made provision for the establishment of a monarchy in Israel, but simply that the form and character of the provision in Deuteronomy bears traces of a later date.

(3) The forms of idolatry alluded to, especially the worship of the "host of heaven,"<sup>31</sup> point to the middle period of the Hebrew monarchy. True, the worship of Sun and Moon is very ancient, and was known in the territory through which the Hebrew tribes passed and in which they settled, as may be seen from place names preserved in the narratives;<sup>32</sup> but the Old Testament references to the "host of heaven" are all relatively late.<sup>33</sup> It is not improbable that it was the contact with Assyria during the eighth century that led to the prevalence of this form of idolatry.<sup>34</sup>

(4) The earlier prophets, Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, show no certain traces of the influence of Deuteronomy. It is altogether otherwise with later writers. Jeremiah exhibits marks of it on almost every page, and Ezekiel and Isaiah, 40ff., give abundant evidence of it. A date for Deuteronomy between Isaiah and Jeremiah would account for these facts.

(5) The language and style of Deuteronomy, clear and flowing, free from archaisms, but purer than that of Jeremiah, would suit the same period. Dillmann is undoubtedly right when he says: "The style of Deuteronomy implies a long development of the art of public

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<sup>31</sup> Deut. 4. 19; 17. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Beth-shemesh, Sinai, Wilderness of Sin; Shemesh = Shamash, the Sun-god, Sin, the Moon-god.

<sup>33</sup> 2 Kings 17. 16; 21. 3, 5, etc.

<sup>34</sup> Compare 2 Kings 23. 12 with 16. 18.

oratory, and is not of a character to belong to the first age of Israelitish literature.”<sup>35</sup>

(6) Deut. 16. 22 contains the prohibition: “Neither shalt thou set thee up a pillar; which Jehovah thy God hateth.” If Isaiah had known of that law—and if it had been in existence ignorance on his part would be difficult to explain—he would hardly have adopted the pillar as a symbol of the conversion of Egypt.<sup>36</sup>

(7) The terms of Deut. 17. 8-13; 19. 17, in which the constitution of the supreme tribunal is not prescribed but represented as already known, seem to presuppose the existence of the judicial system said to have been instituted by Jehoshaphat.<sup>37</sup>

All the evidence presented thus far appears to point to the closing years of the eighth or to the seventh century as the most probable age of Deuteronomy. Can the date be determined more definitely? Now, it may be admitted that “the data showing Deuteronomy to be post-Mosaic are more definite and distinct than those which we possess for fixing the precise part of the century before B. C. 621 to which it is to be assigned”;<sup>38</sup> nevertheless, the subject is of sufficient interest and importance to warrant at least an attempt to determine the date more exactly.

Many scholars hold that Deuteronomy was written by a contemporary of Josiah, with or without the knowledge of Hilkiyah; that it represents a well-wrought-out compromise between priests and prophets; and that the story

<sup>35</sup> *Numeri, Deuteronomium, Josua*, p. 611.

<sup>36</sup> Isa. 19. 19.

<sup>37</sup> 2 Chron. 19. 8-11.

<sup>38</sup> S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 87.

of the finding of the law book in the temple was devised for the purpose of bringing the king into more active sympathy with the reform movement planned by the author and his associates. This view is open to the following criticisms: (1) It is not in accord with the view of the narrator of Josiah's reforms, who cannot have lived very long after the events recorded took place, and may have been an eyewitness. (2) Deuteronomy contains some laws which cannot be explained as a compromise entered into by the priests in Jerusalem. It is difficult to believe that they would indorse the provision in 18. 7, which places the Levites at the local sanctuaries on an equality with those serving in the temple in Jerusalem. Indeed, it may have been due to the opposition of the Jerusalem priests that the law was not carried out by Josiah.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, there are numerous laws that appear out of place in a code representing primarily a compromise between prophets and priests.<sup>40</sup> Deuteronomy reveals a wider outlook; it is interested in all things affecting the welfare of the people. (3) If Deuteronomy originated as claimed, why was it that the advocates of the reform movement waited until the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign? He appears to have been in sympathy with Yahweh religion from the very beginning,<sup>41</sup> and it would be only natural to suppose that it might be easier to convince a boy than a man. (4) On the theory that Deuteronomy was a contemporary production it would be difficult to explain why Josiah responded so readily to the book presented to him, a book full of denuncia-

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<sup>39</sup> 2 Kings 23. 9.

<sup>40</sup> Chapter 20; 22. 8, 10; 25. 4, etc. Some of these laws, however, may be later additions to the original code.

<sup>41</sup> 2 Chron. 34. 3; compare also 2 Kings 22. 11-13.

tions affecting him, his house, and his people. Why did he not feel free to disregard or even destroy it? <sup>42</sup> May his attitude not have been due to the fact that the manner of the finding of the book convinced him that he was face to face with a relatively ancient sacred book?

Whatever, therefore, the date of the book may be, unless the biblical narrative is entirely disregarded, it must be admitted that the book had been lost and recovered as related in 2 Kings 22. Moreover, "there is force in the argument that it could hardly have been lost during the early years of Josiah, . . . while this might easily have happened during the heathen reaction under Manasseh." No doubt a date in the reign of Manasseh is in more perfect accord with the biblical story. "A man of prophetic character," says Kittel, "faithful to Yahweh, stirred by Hezekiah's attempted reform and by Manasseh's idolatry, wrote the book in the reign of the latter. The troubles of the time and the hostile disposition of the king deterred him from publishing it. He had no wish to risk his own safety and the usefulness of his work. Hoping for better days, he concealed it in the temple. The author may not have survived the long reign of Manasseh, or he would soon have come forward with his work after Josiah's accession. It appears to have been thus forgotten and only found by a fortunate accident in the eighteenth year of Josiah. Hilkiyah and Shaphan are thus exculpated from every kind of disingenuousness." <sup>43</sup>

The objections raised against the view that Deuteronomy was written by a contemporary of Josiah do not hold here. There would be time for the loss of the book

<sup>42</sup> Compare Jer. 36. 23ff.

<sup>43</sup> *History of the Hebrews*, vol. i, p. 64.



and its recovery, in accord with the narrative in 2 Kings 22. Moreover, the reign of Manasseh furnished a suitable occasion: the reactionary policy of the king silenced the preacher-prophets; hence if they desired to continue their teaching, they must do so by the use of the pen. The spirit and contents of the book also would be accounted for if it had been written at that time. The failure of the eighth century prophets to accomplish permanent results must have led many prophetic souls to think that, perhaps, their predecessors had gone too far in their disregard of the forms and institutions that meant so much to the religious life of the common people. They concluded that the time to discard these forms had not yet arrived; it would be better to retain them and to give them a new and higher significance, in accord with the spiritual and ethical ideals of the eighth-century prophets. This new ideal of religion found expression in the Deuteronomic Code. Deuteronomy, therefore, is, in a sense, a compromise, fostered by the prophets, between the lofty spiritual teaching of the eighth-century prophets and the insistence on religious forms and institutions advocated by the priests.

Against this view also some objections have been urged: (1) The expression "*the* book of the law" is said to imply that Hilkiah knew of the previous existence of a law book, though he did not know its contents; and (2) the tone of the entire Deuteronomic legislation is said to preclude the idea that it was a private production; evidently, it was an official work, meant to regulate the conduct of the entire people.<sup>44</sup> (3) It is further suggested that, if the book had been written in Manasseh's reign, it would show traces of the opposition and perse-

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<sup>44</sup> E. Sellin, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 41.

cutation to which the faithful Israelites were then exposed.<sup>45</sup>

It is thought that these difficulties are removed by assigning the book to the reign of Hezekiah, and interpreting it as the basis of Hezekiah's reforms,<sup>46</sup> as subsequently it became the basis of Josiah's reforms. Koenig believes that it originated among the faithful Yahweh priests in Jerusalem, under the influence of the terrible calamity that fell upon the idolatrous and wicked northern kingdom in B. C. 722, that it served as the basis of the reforms of Hezekiah, that it was lost sight of during the reactionary reign of Manasseh, and was found again in the reign of Josiah, as described in 2 Kings 22.<sup>47</sup> Sellin finds support for the view that Deuteronomy was the law book underlying the reforms of Hezekiah in the ancient Egyptian custom, which is thought by Naville and others to favor a date during the reign of Solomon.<sup>48</sup> From this custom and the statements in Deut. 31. 26 and 1 Sam. 10. 25 he draws the inference that at the time of the last dedication of the temple in the spirit of the Mosaic Law—which was the dedication under Hezekiah—a copy of the law of the sanctuary was placed into the foundation walls. The copy retained by the priests was destroyed during the bloody reign of Manasseh. The only remaining copy was that in the foundation walls, which was found in the course of the repairs ordered by Josiah in B. C. 621.

If Deuteronomy is dated before B. C. 700, the ap-

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<sup>45</sup> G. A. Smith, *Critical Review*, 1895, pp. 341ff.

<sup>46</sup> Described in 2 Kings 18. 3-5.

<sup>47</sup> *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, pp. 218, 219; *Geschichte der alttestamentlichen Religion*, pp. 360, 361.

<sup>48</sup> See above, p. 187.

parent disregard of Deut. 18. 6, 7 at the time of Josiah's reform,<sup>49</sup> may be explained as due to a change in conditions during the intervening century. In the eighth century the worship at the local sanctuaries was, in name at least, worship of Yahweh, the God of Israel; hence, when Deuteronomy was written the priests at the local sanctuaries could be treated as priests of the legitimate Yahweh religion. When, however, during the apostate reign of Manasseh, all kinds of heathen practices were introduced there, in which the priests participated, the same consideration could no longer be shown to them.

It does not seem possible to determine exactly and absolutely the date of Deuteronomy. The choice seems to lie between the dark days of Manasseh's reign and the years immediately preceding the reforms of Hezekiah. The objections raised against the former date possess little weight, nor are the arguments in favor of the latter date conclusive. On the contrary, if Deuteronomy had been the basis of Hezekiah's reform, it would be very singular that no appeal was made by him to the book sanctioning his reforms, as was done a century later by Josiah. It, surely, is only natural to suppose that, had the book been in existence, the king would have sought to reinforce his efforts by such an appeal. On the whole, therefore, it seems preferable to date the book subsequently to the reforms of Hezekiah, and to regard the latter as giving a strong impulse to the movement which found its culmination and literary expression in the Deuteronomic Code.

In either case the author, be he priest or prophet, was influenced by the lofty ideals of the eighth-century prophets; for the spirit of the entire book is preeminently

<sup>49</sup> 2 Kings 23. 9.

prophetic. Service is ever placed above sacrifice. To love and to serve Yahweh and one's fellows with all the heart and soul is its supreme demand. The detailed laws are presented simply as the means by which this love may find concrete expression.

**The Permanent Significance of Deuteronomy.** "Deuteronomy," says J. E. McFadyen, "is one of the epoch-making books of the world."<sup>50</sup> Does it lose this position if it can be shown that it is not the work of Moses but of a prophetic mind in the eighth or seventh century B. C.? The claim has been made that if the book was not written by Moses, it is nothing but a forgery, because the author sought recognition and authority for his book by hiding behind the name of Moses; and that a book thus palmed off does not deserve the respect and confidence of intelligent people. In this connection it may be well to remember that the value and significance of a book does not depend upon its authorship or literary history, but upon its inherent quality. It is not difficult, therefore, to imagine that a book the author of which seeks to secure recognition for it by hiding behind the name of another man might contain teaching of the greatest spiritual and ethical value.

In the case of Deuteronomy, however, it is well to bear in mind, that the book never claims to have been written by Moses; the only claim it makes is that it contains the parting message of the great leader, which is something entirely different. The author seems to keep himself distinct from Moses; he introduces the latter as speaking and purports to give the contents of his farewell address. In other words, the author adopts a well-known ancient literary custom, followed again and again in the

<sup>50</sup> *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 51.

historical books of the Old Testament, especially in Kings and Chronicles, and by extra-biblical writers, namely, the custom of placing in the mouths of their heroes utterances which, the authors believe, their characters might have uttered at a particular time or under particular circumstances. Thucydides, a very cautious and painstaking historian of antiquity, describes the principle adopted by himself in these words: "As to the various speeches made on the eve of the war or in its course, I have found it difficult to retain a memory of the precise words which I heard spoken; and so it was with those who brought me reports. But I have made the persons say what it seemed to me most opportune for them to say in view of each situation; at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said."<sup>51</sup> From this admission it would seem that among the ancients "*the conditions of historical veracity were satisfied if the speech represented the spirit of the speaker.*" If, then, the author of Deuteronomy reproduced the spirit and ideals of Moses, he observed principles of literary composition recognized as perfectly sound and legitimate in his own day.

That Deuteronomy is true to the spirit and ideals of Moses no serious reader can doubt. The laws of Deuteronomy are not the author's invention; three fourths of them are reproduced from earlier legislation; the others represent an attempt to apply the principles embodied in the older laws to the needs and conditions of the author's age. These principles, in the last analysis, go back to the first great prophet of Israel, Moses;<sup>52</sup> hence the charge of fraud and forgery is entirely unwarranted. Deuter-

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<sup>51</sup> I, 22.

<sup>52</sup> See above, p. 90.

onomy, therefore, is rightly described as "the prophetic reformulation, and adaptation to new needs, of an older legislation," in the spirit of Moses and upon principles laid down by him. Moreover, there may have been a tradition in Israel, oral or written, of a final legislative address delivered by Moses before his death; upon which traditional basis the author may have developed the Deuteronomic Code.

The conclusion of the whole matter is admirably stated by Driver in these suggestive words: "The bulk of the laws contained in Deuteronomy is undoubtedly far more ancient than the time of the author himself: and in dealing with them as he has done, in combining them into a manual for the guidance of the people and providing them with hortatory introductions and comments, conceived in the spirit of Moses himself, he cannot . . . be held to be guilty of dishonesty or literary fraud. There is nothing in Deuteronomy implying any interested or dishonest motive on the part of the (post-Mosaic) author: and this being so, its moral and spiritual greatness remains unimpaired; its inspired authorship is in no respect less than that of any other part of the Old Testament Scriptures which happens to be anonymous."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 91.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE PENTATEUCHAL DOCUMENTS

#### I. THE HISTORICAL SITUATION REFLECTED





## CHAPTER XIII

### CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE PENTATEUCHAL DOCUMENTS

#### I. THE HISTORICAL SITUATION REFLECTED

SEVERAL times in the preceding chapters dates have been suggested for the documents used in the composition of the Pentateuch, but no evidence in support of these suggestions has as yet been presented. In this chapter and in the chapters immediately following this lack is supplied: the attempt is made to determine the chronological order of the Pentateuchal documents, to fix, as nearly as possible, their dates, and to trace the process of compilation, culminating in the completed Pentateuch.

As in the preceding discussions, the evidence may be presented in the form of a cumulative argument, which does not form "a chain which is worthless if one link is broken," but is, rather, "like an array of pillars supporting a roof—the roof will stand, even though some of the pillars are weak or rotten": 1. The historical situation reflected in the documents. 2. The relation of the Pentateuchal documents to other Old Testament writings. 3. Peculiarities of vocabulary and style. 4. The mutual relation of the Pentateuchal documents.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This outline, but not the discussion, is taken in substance from W. H. Bennett and W. E. Adeney, *A Biblical Introduction*, pp. 33ff. Though the arrangement may necessitate some repetition, it makes possible a logical discussion, and for that reason is here adopted.

The argument based upon the historical situation reflected in the Pentateuchal documents may be considered first. The Book of the Covenant<sup>2</sup> was at one time a part of the combined JE, and probably, before the combination was made, of the document E. If, therefore, the date of the Book of the Covenant can be fixed, the earliest possible date of the combination of J and E, or even the earliest possible date of E can be determined.

The biblical record assigns the Book of the Covenant to the period spent by Israel before Mount Sinai,<sup>3</sup> but internal evidence seems to point to a later date:

1. The laws in the Code are addressed not to nomads dwelling in tents but to agriculturists living in houses; the people are spoken of as having fields and vineyards and standing grain; mention is made of their fruits and the outflow of their presses; regulations are given concerning the tilling of the soil, and the observance of the agricultural feasts of harvest and of ingathering is prescribed.<sup>4</sup> Thus it would seem that the conditions reflected presuppose at least the conquest, and that the code did not originate prior to the age of the Judges; and there are many scholars who believe that the state of society presupposed is more orderly than, judging from statements in the book of Judges, it was during that age; hence they prefer to assign it to the period of the early monarchy. This does not involve a denial of the presence of earlier elements; on the contrary, the Book of the Covenant may be described as a collection of Mosaic decisions, modified and expanded to meet the needs of the people subsequently to the settlement in Canaan.

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<sup>1</sup> Exod. 20. 22 to 23. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. 20. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Exod. 22. 5, 6, 29; 23. 10ff.; 16, etc.

2. The Book of the Covenant recognizes and sanctions the multiplicity of altars and sanctuaries. The command in Exodus 20. 24 provides for the building of altars and the offering of sacrifice "in every place where I record my name." The reference seems to be to localities like Bethel,<sup>5</sup> Beersheba,<sup>6</sup> Gilgal,<sup>7</sup> and others that were consecrated by the appearance of Yahweh to the patriarchs or to the people during their early history. Moreover, there are some regulations which could not be carried out unless sanctuaries were scattered throughout the land.<sup>8</sup>

These regulations reflect not only the practices of the patriarchs but also the conditions prevailing, according to the biblical records themselves, during the period of the Judges and of the early kings. Thus, during the period of the Judges sacrifices were offered at Shiloh,<sup>9</sup> Bochim,<sup>10</sup> and Bethel;<sup>11</sup> Samuel offered sacrifice at Ramah<sup>12</sup> and at Mizpah;<sup>13</sup> other places of sacrifice in his day were a city in the land of Zuph<sup>14</sup> and Gilgal.<sup>15</sup> Saul offered a burnt-offering at Gilgal<sup>16</sup> and built an altar at Aijalon;<sup>17</sup> and during the period of the United Kingdom sacrifice is said to have been offered at Bethlehem,<sup>18</sup> Hebron,<sup>19</sup> and Gibeon.<sup>20</sup> Even after the completion of the temple, sacrifices continued to be offered in places outside of Jerusalem. Elijah repaired an altar of Yahweh on Mount Carmel,<sup>21</sup> and he makes complaint

<sup>5</sup> Gen. 28. 16-19.

<sup>6</sup> Gen. 21. 33.

<sup>7</sup> Josh. 4. 20-24.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Exod. 21. 13, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Judg. 21. 19; 1 Sam. 1. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Judg. 2. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Judg. 20. 26.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Sam. 7. 17.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Sam. 7. 9.

<sup>14</sup> 1 Sam. 9. 12.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Sam. 11. 15.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Sam. 13. 9.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Sam. 14. 35.

<sup>18</sup> 1 Sam. 20. 28, 29.

<sup>19</sup> 2 Sam. 15. 7.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Kings 3. 4.

<sup>21</sup> 1 Kings 18. 30.

that "the people of Israel have thrown down the altars of Jehovah."<sup>22</sup> Even some of the pious kings, who are said to have done that which was right in the sight of Yahweh, made no effort to abolish the "high places,"<sup>23</sup> and the prophets Amos and Hosea attacked the local sanctuaries only because the Yahweh worship practiced there had become so mixed with Canaanite elements that in reality it was nothing more than the worship of local Baals. Down toward the close of the eighth century there seems to have been no serious attempt at limiting the public worship of Yahweh to one place, though the eighth-century prophets began to notice conditions at the local sanctuaries which ultimately might lead to their abolition.

3. The Book of the Covenant knows no elaborate ritual or official priesthood. This again reflects conditions during the earlier periods of Hebrew history. During the period of the Judges and of the early monarchy the offering of sacrifice was not confined to the priests. The heads of families were permitted to offer sacrifice,<sup>24</sup> Gideon brought a burnt-offering at the command of Yahweh,<sup>25</sup> and the same was done by king Saul<sup>26</sup> and king Solomon.<sup>27</sup> Neither Samuel, a prophet,<sup>28</sup> nor Elijah, another prophet,<sup>29</sup> appears to have been acquainted with any provision limiting the offering of sacrifice to

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<sup>22</sup> 1 Kings 19. 14.

<sup>23</sup> Joash, 2 Kings 12. 2, 3; Amaziah. 14. 3, 4; Uzziah, 15. 3, 4; Jotham, 15. 34, 35.

<sup>24</sup> Manoah, Judg. 13. 19; Jesse, 1 Sam. 20. 29.

<sup>25</sup> Judg. 6. 26, 27.

<sup>26</sup> 1 Sam. 14. 35.

<sup>27</sup> 1 Kings 3. 4.

<sup>28</sup> 1 Sam. 7. 17.

<sup>29</sup> 1 Kings 18. 30ff.

priests of the tribe of Levi. Moreover, during these early centuries the ritual seems to have been the simplest imaginable. On the other hand, by the middle of the eighth century it had become so complex and was so overemphasized by priests and people that the prophets felt impelled to protest against the prevailing formalism.<sup>30</sup>

All the available evidence goes to show that the period preceding the seventh century offers the most suitable background for the Book of the Covenant, and that it must have been written before B. C. 700. But from the attitude of the eighth-century prophets toward the local sanctuaries it may further be inferred that a law sanctioning these could not have been formulated among the religious leaders of their day. The latest possible date, therefore, for the Book of the Covenant would be B. C. 750. In all probability, however, it belongs to a much earlier age. There is, indeed, nothing in the laws it contains which would make it impossible to assign the code, aside from minor modifications, to the age of the Judges; and in all essentials it may go back to Mosaic decisions, which were adapted to later conditions and, when collected and codified, served as a legal guide until its place was taken by a more advanced code of laws.

The historical documents J and E, of which the Book of the Covenant at one time formed a part, were written from the standpoint of the same early age; hence they too must be placed earlier than B. C. 750.

A different situation is presupposed in D. As has been stated in another connection,<sup>31</sup> two characteristic points in the legislation of D are: (1) the limitation of public worship to a single sanctuary, which thus becomes the

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<sup>30</sup> Amos 5. 21-23; Isa. 1. 10-15, etc.

<sup>31</sup> See above, pp. 159, 160.

only legitimate dwelling place of Yahweh; (2) the limitation of the priesthood to the tribe of Levi, with the recognition of the right of every Levite to become a priest.

The practice in Israel prior to B. C. 750 is not in accord with these provisions; even the eighth-century prophets seem to have been unconscious of their existence. But Amos,<sup>32</sup> Hosea,<sup>33</sup> and Micah<sup>34</sup> attacked the high places because of the immorality and superstition connected with the worship there. Perhaps as a result of prophetic teaching,<sup>35</sup> Hezekiah made an attempt, toward the close of the century, to purify the worship in the temple and to break down the high places.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Isaiah's insistence on the inviolability of Zion and the consequent deliverance of Jerusalem from the attack of Sennacherib,<sup>37</sup> greatly increased the prestige of the temple. Thus from the middle of the eighth century on there came to be an evergrowing conviction, on the one hand, that the worship of Yahweh at the local sanctuaries was proving a hindrance to pure religion and, on the other, that Yahweh was taking a special interest in the temple on Mount Zion, where the worship may have been purer than at the local shrines.

This conviction found expression in the legislation of D, which made its first public appearance in B. C. 621, when it served as the basis of Josiah's reforms.<sup>38</sup> With the northern kingdom gone, the centralization of worship

<sup>32</sup> Amos 4. 4, 5.

<sup>33</sup> Hos. 10. 8.

<sup>34</sup> Mic. 1. 5, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Jer. 26. 18, 19.

<sup>36</sup> 2 Kings 18. 3-5.

<sup>37</sup> 2 Kings 19. 20-37; Isa. 37. 2-38.

<sup>38</sup> See above, pp. 181ff.

could be carried out much more easily than would have been possible a century before. The background reflected in D, therefore, is the religious movement inspired by the eighth-century prophets and culminating in the reforms instituted by King Josiah.

In D the centralization of worship is insisted upon as something to be reached but not yet attained; in P it is presupposed as a universally accepted principle of Yahweh worship. This would seem to point to a later date for P. The reforms of Josiah were short-lived; his successors reverted to the religious practices of Manasseh,<sup>39</sup> and their political blunders led to the downfall of the southern kingdom in B. C. 586. Many of the Jews who were carried into exile apostatized; those who remained loyal to the religion of their fathers returned to their former home as soon as opportunity offered. The returned exiles settled in or near Jerusalem, where they, with the Jews who had been left behind, worshiped on the mountain of Yahweh, so dear to former generations, which henceforth was the only sanctuary recognized by the Jewish community. This postexilic ideal is reflected throughout P.

Other distinctive features of P are the limitation of the priesthood to the house of Aaron,<sup>40</sup> the assignment of the menial tasks of the sanctuary to the non-Aaronic Levites,<sup>41</sup> and the establishment of the high priesthood.<sup>42</sup> There is no trace of any distinction between priests and Levites in D;<sup>43</sup> nor is such distinction suggested in the

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<sup>39</sup> 2 Kings 23. 32ff.

<sup>40</sup> Num. 18. 1-7.

<sup>41</sup> Num. 3. 3-10.

<sup>42</sup> Exod. 28; 29. 1-9; Lev. 21. 10-15, etc.

<sup>43</sup> 18. 1; 24. 8, etc.

narrative of Josiah's reforms;<sup>44</sup> nor is it recognized by the contemporary prophet Jeremiah,<sup>45</sup> nor in any other preexilic document.

The first to make a distinction between the priests and other Levites is the priest-prophet Ezekiel, during the exile. In chapter 44 he lays down regulations concerning the new temple and its services. From verse 7 it would seem that the menial tasks of the sanctuary had been allowed to fall into the hands of foreigners, which practice, the prophet declares, is an abomination to Yahweh, and must be discontinued: "No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any foreigners that are among the children of Israel."<sup>46</sup> This is followed by regulations regarding the practice of the future: "But the Levites that went far from me, when Israel went astray, that went astray from me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity. Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house, and ministering in the house: they shall slay the burnt-offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and became a stumbling-block of iniquity unto the house of Israel; therefore have I lifted up my hand against them, saith the Lord Jehovah, and they shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto me, to execute the office of priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, unto the things that are most holy; but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. Yet will I make them

<sup>44</sup> 2 Kings 23.

<sup>45</sup> He uses the expression "the priests the Levites," or "the Levites the priests," 33. 18, 21, etc.

<sup>46</sup> Ezek. 44. 9.



keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein. But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me; and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord Jehovah: they shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge."<sup>47</sup>

This passage agrees with P in making a definite distinction between the priests and other Levites;<sup>48</sup> it differs from P in admitting to the priesthood only the sons of Zadok, while P recognizes all the sons of Aaron as priests.<sup>49</sup> This fundamental difference, taken with the whole tenor of the Ezekiel passage, makes it evident that Ezekiel did not know the provisions of Num. 18. 1-7 and similar passages in P. Ignorance of such a law—if it had been in existence—on the part of a member of the priesthood would be inexplicable; hence it may be quite safe to infer from the nature of Ezekiel's legislation that the law embodied in P did not exist in his day, and that his provision marks a step in advance of D in the direction of P.

The significance of the Ezekiel passage is fairly stated by Driver in these words: "It seems to follow incontrovertibly that the Levites generally had heretofore (in direct conflict with the provisions of P) *enjoyed priestly*

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<sup>47</sup> Ezek. 44. 10-16.

<sup>48</sup> Compare Num. 18. 1-7.

<sup>49</sup> Compare Ezek. 44. 15 with Num. 18. 1, 7; 3. 10, etc. The sons of Zadok had been priests in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon, 1 Kings 4. 2, 4.

*rights* (verse 13): for the future, however, such as had participated in the idolatrous worship of the high places are to be deprived of these rights, and condemned to perform the menial offices which had hitherto been performed by foreigners (verses 10, 11, 14); only those Levites who had been faithful in their loyalty to Yahweh, namely, the sons of Zadok, are henceforth to retain priestly privileges (verses 15, 16). Had the Levites not enjoyed such rights, the prohibition in verse 13 would be superfluous. The supposition that they may have merely *usurped* them, is inconsistent with the passage as a whole, which charges the Levites, not with *usurping* rights which they did not possess, but with *abusing* rights which they did possess. If Ezekiel, then, treats the Levites generally as qualified to act as priests, and degrades them to a menial rank, without so much as a hint that this degradation was but the restoration of a *status quo* fixed by immemorial Mosaic custom, could he have been acquainted with the legislation of P?"<sup>50</sup>

Naturally, the legislation of Ezekiel did not appeal to the Levites. And if their assignment to a subordinate position was a recent innovation, it is easy to understand why at the time of the first return over four thousand priests returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, but only seventy-four Levites,<sup>51</sup> and why at a later time Ezra experienced great difficulty in inducing Levites to accompany him.<sup>52</sup>

A postexilic date would explain the prominence given to the high priest in the legislation of P. The Jewish community was without kings from B. C. 586 to the age

<sup>50</sup> *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 139, 140.

<sup>51</sup> Ezra 2. 36-40.

<sup>52</sup> Ezra 8. 15-20.

of the Maccabees in the second century. Moreover, the interests of the postexilic community were almost exclusively religious or ecclesiastical; hence it was only natural that the supreme authority should come to center in the person of the ecclesiastical head—the high priest. To the same period point other considerations: According to Neh. 8. 18 the Feast of Tabernacles was kept for eight days, as is prescribed in P,<sup>53</sup> as against the seven days of D;<sup>54</sup> according to Neh. 10. 37, 38 the people paid tithes to the Levites, and the Levites to the priests, following the legislation of P,<sup>55</sup> but not of D.<sup>56</sup> In all these and other matters the historical situation reflected in P is later than that presupposed in D or even in Ezekiel; on the other hand, it must be earlier than Ezra-Nehemiah, for P seems to underlie at least some of the reforms advocated by them.

The whole situation as it relates to the historical background reflected in the several Pentateuchal documents may be summed up in these words: "The legislation of JE is in harmony with, and, in fact, sanctions, the practice of the period of the Judges and of the early Kings, with its relative freedom, for instance, as to the place of sacrifice and the persons authorized to offer it; during which, moreover, a simple ritual appears to have prevailed, and the Ark was guarded, till it was transferred by Solomon to the temple, by a small band of attendants, in a modest structure, quite in accordance with the representation of JE. The legislation of D harmonizes with the reforming tendencies of the age in which it was pro-

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<sup>53</sup> Lev. 23. 39.

<sup>54</sup> Deut. 16. 13-15.

<sup>55</sup> Num. 18. 21-26.

<sup>56</sup> Deut. 14. 22-29; 26. 12-15.

mulgated, and sanctions the practice of the age that immediately followed: it inculcates a centralized worship, in agreement with a movement arising naturally out of the existence of the temple at Jerusalem, strengthened, no doubt, by the fall of the northern kingdom, and enforced practically by Josiah; its attitude toward the high places determines that of the compiler of Kings, who wrote in the closing years of the monarchy; it contains regulations touching other matters (for example, the worship of the "host of heaven") which assumed prominence at the same time; the revenues and functions of the priests are more closely defined than in JE, but the priesthood is still open to every member of the tribe of Levi. The legislation of P is in harmony with the spirit which shows itself in Ezekiel, and sanctions the practice of the period beginning with the return from Babylon; and the principles to which P gives expression appear (at a later date) in a still more developed form, as forming the standard by which the Chronicler consistently judges the earlier history. The position into which the legislation of P appears to fall is thus intermediate between Deut. and the Chronicler."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 138, 139.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE PENTATEUCHAL DOCUMENTS

2. THEOLOGICAL STANDPOINT; LITERARY PARALLELS;  
VOCABULARY AND STYLE; MUTUAL RELATION



## CHAPTER XIV

### CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE PENTATEUCHAL DOCUMENTS

#### 2. THEOLOGICAL STANDPOINT; LITERARY PARALLELS; VOCABULARY AND STYLE; MUTUAL RELATION

1. **The Theological Standpoint Expressed or Implied in the Pentateuchal Documents.** The theological differences discoverable in different parts of the Pentateuch have been considered in an earlier chapter.<sup>1</sup> Do they throw any light on the chronological order of the principal Pentateuchal documents? No doubt there are difficulties in the way of using this kind of evidence: (1) The successive stages in the development of Hebrew theology are not easily determined, because it seems to have developed not along a straight line but in zigzag fashion; hence the time when a theological idea first became a part of the thought life of the Hebrews cannot always be fixed. (2) Chronological landmarks are more difficult to find in the case of doctrines than in the more concrete matters of the sanctuary and the priesthood. (3) In the study of the development of doctrine it is necessary to reckon with the unusual spirits, men in advance of their age, who may see, accept, and formulate a truth long before any considerable number of people become familiar with it.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter X.

But even when making every allowance for these difficulties, the student will soon find that the facts presented in Chapter X and others of a similar nature reveal a definite chronological development in the theological thinking of the Hebrews, which makes it possible to arrange the documents giving expression to these different ideas in chronological order. Without going into details, attention may be called, by way of illustration, to the differences in the conception of Deity.<sup>2</sup> No doubt all popular representations of Deity are more or less anthropomorphic, but it requires no expert training to see that the anthropomorphisms of J and, to a less degree, of E are much more numerous and pronounced than those of P. The conception reflected in J and E is the more primitive; and a comparison with the teaching of the eighth-century prophets shows that it is earlier than their day.

On the other hand, D presupposes the activity and teaching of these prophets. Their attacks upon the corrupt Yahweh worship at the local sanctuaries contributed much toward the formulation of the law of a single, central sanctuary; but it affected theological thinking in an even more fundamental manner, which shows itself in D's insistence upon the unity and uniqueness of Yahweh: "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah."<sup>3</sup> This idea is the sequel of the prophetic teaching in the eighth century, and, in turn, prepares the way for the theological arguments in Isa. 40-55.

A further advance in the conception of Deity is seen in P. For example, the transcendence of God above nature is conspicuous throughout the entire P narrative

<sup>2</sup> For details see Chapter X.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. 6. 4.



of creation;<sup>4</sup> there are no anthropomorphisms as in the J narrative;<sup>5</sup> God does his work, so to speak, from the distance. The elaborate system of minute, external religious observances, which is a part of P, also points to a late date. True, early ritual is often elaborate, but there are passages in the Old Testament which show that this was not so in early Israel.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, there is abundant evidence in the post-exilic writings to show that after the exile all the religious leaders, including the prophets, laid great stress on ritual and external form.

2. **The Relation of the Pentateuchal Documents to Other Old Testament Writings.** Arguments based upon alleged literary parallels must be used with a great deal of caution and discrimination, otherwise the conclusions reached may be found to rest upon rather insecure foundations:

(1) The occurrence of the same or similar expressions in two documents does not necessarily prove dependence of one upon the other. Only characteristic features may be used as evidence. Thus the statement in Neh. 8. 18, that eight days were given to the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles "according unto the ordinance," may legitimately be used to prove that P was known and recognized as authoritative in the days of Nehemiah, because the law prescribing an eight-day feast is characteristic of P,<sup>7</sup> and is not in accord with the earlier practice.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the reasoning of Hommel is faulty when he writes: "From a single in-

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<sup>4</sup> Gen. 1. 1 to 2. 4a.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. 2. 4b-25.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Amos 5. 25; Jer. 7. 22, 23, etc.

<sup>7</sup> Lev. 23. 39.

<sup>8</sup> Deut. 16. 13-15.

stance, namely, the passage in Deut. 28. 68, I am able to prove that Deuteronomy must have been known to the prophets at least as early as 740. In this verse there is a threat that 'the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships.' This passage is twice quoted by Hosea (8. 13 and 9. 3). . . . The only possible deduction from this is that Deuteronomy must have been in existence at least long before Hosea." <sup>9</sup> The passages in Hosea read: "They shall return to Egypt," and, "Ephraim shall return to Egypt." Neither thought nor language is exactly the same as in Deuteronomy; and the occurrence of these words in Hosea proves nothing as to the date of Deuteronomy.

(2) Modern scholars do not claim, as seems to be erroneously assumed by some, that the contents of the Pentateuchal documents were invented by the authors of these documents, or that the laws embodied in them or the institutions mentioned by them were created at the time the documents were written. On the contrary, it is universally admitted that some of the traditions which form a part of the narrative sections may have been handed down from an early age and that some of the laws and institutions may go back to very early days. Only the exact form and the historical and literary setting are assigned to later periods. This being the case, a reference in early literature to institutions or practices which occupy a prominent place in an alleged late document may establish an early date for these institutions, without throwing any light whatsoever on the date of the document. To illustrate: Amos 5. 21-23 and Isa. 1. 10-15 presuppose the practice of an elaborate ritual and of a

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<sup>9</sup> F. Hommel, *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, pp. 10, 11.

very complete system of sacrifices. The same sacrifices play a prominent role in P.<sup>10</sup> From this it has been inferred that the eighth-century prophets knew the entire Pentateuch.<sup>11</sup> But this inference is not warranted. No doubt the eighth-century prophets knew certain sacrifices and rites that are frequently mentioned and prescribed in some parts of the Pentateuch, and this familiarity may prove that these rites and sacrifices were known and practiced in Israel as early as the eighth century, or even earlier; but from this admission no legitimate inference can be drawn regarding the date of the Pentateuch, or of any part of the same.

(3) In some cases in which the similarities between two documents are striking enough to imply literary dependence of some sort it is exceedingly difficult to prove which of the two is the borrower. For instance, the resemblances between Ezekiel and Lev. 26. 3ff. are so numerous and so striking that it is quite generally agreed that there is some kind of literary dependence. Nevertheless, after years of discussion, scholars are not yet agreed as to what is the exact nature of the relation and whether the priority lies with Ezekiel or with Lev. 26. 3ff.<sup>12</sup>

(4) If a literary work is a compilation from several sources, a literary parallel to material taken from one of these sources affords no evidence as to the dates of the other sources. If, for example, there should be references in Amos or Hosea to incidents recorded in J or E, these might prove that J or E was in existence at that

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<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Lev. 1-7.

<sup>11</sup> W. H. Green, *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, pp. 54ff.

<sup>12</sup> See Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 147.

time, but nothing could be inferred as to the date of D or P.

(5) If a writing shows numerous parallels to a body of literature that is known to belong to a certain period, it may be legitimate to conclude that it belongs to the same general period, even though mathematical demonstration may not be possible. Thus the numerous similarities between the prophecies of Ezekiel and the Law of Holiness<sup>13</sup> may be used as evidence to prove that the latter, in its final form, was written during the early years of the exile.

With these cautions in mind, the alleged literary parallels between the Pentateuchal documents and other Old Testament literature may be considered for the purpose of determining, if possible, the chronological order of these documents. The books of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, whatever additions they may have received at later times, undoubtedly contain material coming from the eighth century. Now, because these early portions show points of contact with J and E, the claim has been made that the prophets named were familiar with the Pentateuch in its present form.<sup>14</sup> This inference is unwarranted. All that may, perhaps, be inferred is that they knew J and E, because all the points of contact discoverable are with these documents; there are none with D and P. But even this much is not necessarily implied in the prophetic references; it cannot be proved

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<sup>13</sup> Lev. 17-26.

<sup>14</sup> Amos refers to the law concerning pledges (2. 8; compare Exod. 22. 26); Hosea to Jacob's wrestling with the angel (12. 2-6; compare Gen. 32. 22-32); Amos and Isaiah to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah (Amos 4. 11; Isa. 1. 9; compare Gen. 19); Micah to the land of Nimrod (5. 6; compare Gen. 10. 8, 9) and to the story of Balak and Balaam (6. 5; compare Num. 22-24), etc.

that any part of the Pentateuch was known to them in written form; all the facts would receive a satisfactory explanation on the assumption that much of the material, historical and legal, now found in the Pentateuch was common property—but not necessarily in written form—of the people in the eighth century B. C. At the same time it may safely be assumed that literary documents were in existence in Israel at that time; if so, there is nothing to militate against the further assumption that the prophets were familiar with them. But if they knew any of the documents which now form a part of the Pentateuch, they must have been J and E; there is not the slightest indication that they knew D or P. If these facts mean anything, it is that J and E are earlier and D and P later than the eighth-century prophets.

The literature that originated prior to the reform movement of Josiah reveals no knowledge of D; on the other hand, the books written subsequently, especially during the closing years of the monarchy and during the Babylonian exile, give evidence of its influence on almost every page. The language and style of Jeremiah show such close resemblances to D that Colenso reached the conclusion that Jeremiah was the author of D. Though this opinion has found no favor with modern scholars, the similarities are so striking that on this ground alone the two books might be assigned to the same general period.<sup>15</sup> The editor of the book of Kings, who was active at this time, wrote from the point of view of D; he assumed throughout that the temple in Jerusalem is

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<sup>15</sup> It may be noted, for instance, that the phrase "the priests, the Levites," which is not found in earlier literature, is characteristic of both.

the only legitimate sanctuary. Even in the postexilic age the influence of D was felt.<sup>16</sup>

P has affinities with the earlier and influences the later postexilic literature. H—the Law of Holiness—which is embodied in P, is even more closely connected with Ezekiel than is D with Jeremiah;<sup>17</sup> and the resemblances between the two are so great that Graf, Colenso, Kayser, and others ascribed the code to Ezekiel, either as its collector or its redactor. At any rate, Ezekiel shows an intimate acquaintance with it, and in its final form it may well have come from the same priestly circles to which the prophet belonged; which would make it several decades later than D.

That P is later than D is suggested by the fact that Deut. 11. 6 evidently was written without regard for the story in Num. 16. 1ff., which is a part of P; the latter names Korah, Dathan, and Abiram as participants in the rebellion against Moses and Aaron; the former seems to know only Dathan and Abiram. The distinction between the priests and Levites, which is characteristic of P, cannot be separated from Ezek. 44. 10-15; but the manner in which the distinction is referred to in P—Ezekiel considers the menial functions a degradation, P a long-established privilege—makes it probable that a considerable interval separates P from Ezekiel—evidently P is later than Ezekiel. Neh. 8. 18; 10. 37, 38 reveal the influence of P, and the Chronicler seems to have known not only P, but the Pentateuch in completed form. The literary parallels, therefore, would place the origin

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<sup>16</sup> Neh. 1. 5ff.; Dan. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Compare Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 145.

of P between Ezekiel and Chronicles, not later than the middle of the fifth century B. C.<sup>18</sup>

3. **Peculiarities of Vocabulary and Style.** The linguistic evidence has been used both to prove<sup>19</sup> and to disprove<sup>20</sup> the traditional views of the origin of the Pentateuch. As a matter of fact, standing by itself the linguistic argument is rarely decisive; in most cases it can be appealed to only as corroborating a position justified by other considerations. Regarding the use of the argument made by Keil and other defenders of the traditional view, it may be said that the impressive lists of expressions collected by them are by no means conclusive, for the simple reason that there is no proof of the antiquity of the words and phrases other than the assumption that the books in which they occur were written at an early date.

That the linguistic characteristics of different sections of the Pentateuch suggest diversity of authorship has been pointed out in another connection;<sup>21</sup> but it is quite impossible to determine from these characteristics the dates of the several documents. This is especially true of J and E which, as the earliest Hebrew documents of any length in existence, cannot be judged by other literature. However, the general history of the Hebrew language shows that the vocabulary of these documents fits the period to which they are assigned for other reasons. In the case of the other documents external criteria are furnished by writings whose dates are fixed. Thus the resemblances between D and Jeremiah, while not proving

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<sup>18</sup> It must be remembered, however, that this refers only to the final literary form; the writer embodied much material, both historical and legal, that had been handed down from earlier days.

<sup>19</sup> See above, p. 117.

<sup>20</sup> See above, pp. 162-164.

<sup>21</sup> See above, pp. 164, 165.

that D was written in the age of Jeremiah, certainly do not prohibit its assignment to that period. In the same way, the linguistic resemblances between P and books that are known to be exilic or postexilic, while not sufficiently numerous to establish an exilic or postexilic date for P, at least prove that an exilic or postexilic date is in perfect accord with the linguistic peculiarities of that document.

Turning now to the matter of style, there are enough differences between the narrative portions of J and E on the one hand, and of P on the other, to warrant the assertion that J and E are earlier than P.<sup>22</sup> "In JE," says Driver, "the patriarchs are men of flesh and blood; the incidents of their history arise naturally out of their antecedents, and the character of the circumstances in which they are placed. Moreover, in the topics dwelt upon, such as the rivalries of Jacob and Esau, and of Laban and Jacob, or the connection of the patriarchs with places famed in later days as sanctuaries, the interests of the narrator's own age are reflected; in P we have a skeleton from which such touches of life and nature are absent, an outline in which legislative, statistical, chronological elements are the sole conspicuous feature. There is also a tendency to treat the history theoretically, which is itself the mark of a later age."<sup>23</sup>

**4. The Mutual Relation of the Pentateuchal Documents.** A study of the mutual relation of the Pentateuchal documents, or of provisions contained in them, confirms the conclusions stated in the preceding paragraphs, namely, that J and E are earlier than D, and D

<sup>22</sup> Compare, for example, the genealogies in Gen. 4 (J) with those in Gen. 5 (P); the former gives them in a fresh and lifelike form; the latter has removed all imaginative coloring, leaving nothing but a bare list of names.

<sup>23</sup> *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 141.



earlier than P. Support for this assertion may be found, for instance, in the development of the ceremonial law, as reflected in the several documents: J and E take little interest in ritual;<sup>24</sup> more attention is given to it in D;<sup>25</sup> H<sup>26</sup> lays still more stress on ceremonial requirements; and the ritual and ceremonial are almost the sole interest of the legal sections of P.<sup>27</sup>

The laws regarding the priesthood pass through similar stages of development: According to J and E any Israelite may perform priestly functions;<sup>28</sup> D limits the priesthood to the tribe of Levi;<sup>29</sup> the Levites are not named in H, the priests are the sons of Aaron,<sup>30</sup> and the high priest appears for the first time in Hebrew law.<sup>31</sup> In P a sharp distinction is drawn between the priests, the sons of Aaron and the Levites,<sup>32</sup> and the exceptional sanctity and authority of the high priest receive elaboration.<sup>33</sup>

A similar gradual advance may be noted in the provisions for the support of the priesthood and of the sanctuary. The Book of the Covenant, embodied in JE, provides for the presentation of first-fruits and firstlings,<sup>34</sup> and E makes mention of tithes, in connection with Bethel.<sup>35</sup> D gives more detailed instruction regard-

<sup>24</sup> See above, p. 204.

<sup>25</sup> See above, p. 206.

<sup>26</sup> Lev. 17-26; earlier than P, and embodied in P, see below, pp. 287ff.

<sup>27</sup> See above, p. 158.

<sup>28</sup> See above, p. 145.

<sup>29</sup> See above, p. 145.

<sup>30</sup> Lev. 21, 22.

<sup>31</sup> Lev. 21. 10. Undoubtedly, even before this time the priesthood at the temple in Jerusalem and other sanctuaries had, as a practical arrangement, a head or chief; but from now on the high-priesthood appears as a divinely ordained institution of special sanctity.

<sup>32</sup> See above, p. 146.

<sup>34</sup> Exod. 22. 29-30.

<sup>33</sup> Exod. 28; 29. 1-9, etc.

<sup>35</sup> Gen. 28. 22.

ing tithes: it recognizes an annual tithe to be spent in sacrificing and feasting at the central sanctuary, and a triennial tithe to be given to the Levites and to the needy in the community.<sup>36</sup> The legislation of P is much more complete and complex: It orders every individual twenty years of age and older to pay to the sanctuary half a shekel; moreover, the people are to pay tithes to the Levites, and in turn the Levites are to pay tithes on their income to the priests; in addition, thirty-five cities are assigned to the Levites and thirteen to the priests; and further provision is made for priests and sanctuary by ordering the presentation of firstfruits and firstlings, and by allowing the priests to take considerable portions of the offerings and sacrifices brought to the sanctuary.<sup>37</sup>

The same chronological order of the documents is suggested by the regulations regarding the slaughter of animals for food or for sacrifice: According to J and E, animals may be slaughtered and offered in various places;<sup>38</sup> according to D they may be killed anywhere,<sup>39</sup> but sacrifice may be offered only at the central sanctuary.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, in the course of the centuries feast days became more numerous, the rituals provided for them became more complex and more clearly defined, and in some instances they were observed for a longer time.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Deut. 14. 22-29; 26. 12-15.

<sup>37</sup> Exod. 30. 11-16; Lev. 7; 27; Num. 15; 18; 35; Josh. 21, etc.

<sup>38</sup> Exod. 20. 24.

<sup>39</sup> Deut. 12. 15.

<sup>40</sup> Deut. 12. 5-7.

<sup>41</sup> For the earliest legislation see Exod. 23. 14-17; 34. 22-24; for D, Deut. 16. 1-17; for P (H), Lev. 23; note especially that while D directs that the Feast of Tabernacles shall be observed seven days, P adds an eighth day (Num. 29. 35); P also adds the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23).

Thus far attention has been given only to the evidence furnished by the legal codes, and only a few illustrations have been cited. These might be greatly multiplied, but the results would remain the same: the Book of the Covenant is clearly the most primitive code and served as the basis of the Deuteronomic legislation; D, on the other hand, shows no acquaintance with P<sup>42</sup> and seems to mark an intermediate stage in the legal evolution beginning with the Book of the Covenant and culminating in P. Driver describes the relation of D to the other legal codes in the Pentateuch in these words: "Deuteronomy is an *expansion* of that in JE (Exod. 20-23); it is in several features *parallel* to that in H (Lev. 17-26); it contains *allusions* to laws such as those codified in some parts of P, while from those contained in other parts its provisions differ widely."<sup>43</sup> And again: "Hebrew legislation took shape gradually; and the codes of JE (Exod. 20-23; 34. 10-26), Deuteronomy, and P represent three successive phases of it."<sup>44</sup>

A comparison of the historical portions of the several documents or of the historical references and allusions in the legal portions, leads to the same conclusions regarding their relative antiquity. D, for instance, contains numerous references and allusions to events narrated more fully in other parts of the Pentateuch.<sup>45</sup> Now, it

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<sup>42</sup> Though it contains parallel requirements; see Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 73-75.

<sup>43</sup> Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 76, 77.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>45</sup> Especially in I. 6 to 3. 22; 9. 6 to 10. 11; although these sections probably were not a part of D in its earliest form, but were prefixed at an early date as a suitable historical introduction, the significance of the facts remains the same.

is a significant fact that in its history as in its law, both in allusions and actual expressions, D seems to be dependent on JE, with a complete disregard of the narrative portions of P. From this only one conclusion may be deduced: "Inasmuch as, in our existing Pentateuch, JE and P repeatedly cross one another, the constant absence of any reference to P can only be reasonably explained by one supposition, namely, that *when Deuteronomy was composed JE and P were not yet united into a single work, and JE alone formed the basis of Deuteronomy.*"<sup>46</sup>

The argument based upon the mutual relation of the Pentateuchal documents evidently favors the arrangement of these documents in the chronological order suggested by the other lines of evidence—JE, D and P.

To sum up, the discussion in Chapters XIII and XIV seems to lead naturally and inevitably to the following conclusions regarding the chronological order of the Pentateuchal documents:

1. J and E reflect the historical situation of the period of the Judges and of the early kings; D that of the later kings, especially conditions presupposed in the account of Josiah's reforms and Jeremiah's prophecies; P that of the exilic and postexilic period, especially the age of Ezra-Nehemiah.
2. The theological standpoint of each document agrees with what is known of Hebrew theological thinking during the period to which the document is assigned by the historical background reflected in it.
3. J and E have points of contact with other Old Testament writings known to have originated before B. C. 650; D with the literature that can be dated between 650 and

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<sup>46</sup>Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 81.

the exile; P with that of the exilic and postexilic period. D appears to have been unknown during the period of the early monarchy, P before the exile. 4. The vocabulary and style of each document are just what they might be expected to be if the documents were written during the periods to which the historical background points. 5. In their legal as in their historical sections, JE, D, and P represent three successive stages of development; P implies the prior existence of D, D the prior existence of J and E.



CHAPTER XV

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE  
PENTATEUCHAL DOCUMENTS

3. DATES OF THE DOCUMENTS





## CHAPTER XV

### CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE PENTATEUCHAL DOCUMENTS

#### 3. DATES OF THE DOCUMENTS

IN Chapters XIII and XIV the aim has been to determine, in a general way, the chronological order in which the four principal documents used in the compilation of the Pentateuch originated. The present chapter deals with the more specific inquiry, Can the dates of the several documents be determined more exactly?

In the preceding discussion J and E have been grouped together, because the relation between these two documents is much more intimate than that between the combined JE, and D or P, or between either J or E and D or P. The difficulties in the way of separating the two are indeed so great that some scholars have doubted the independent existence of the document symbolized by E;<sup>1</sup> and they have been inclined to explain the passages assigned by others to E, as additions to or modifications of the document J. But, though J and E do not differ from one another in diction and style as either differs from P, and though they are so welded together that the lines of demarcation between the two frequently cannot be determined with absolute certainty, the facts presented by JE receive the most satisfactory explanation on the assumption that it consists of two originally independent

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<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 67.

documents. The similarities between the two strands of narrative are easily explained by the fact that their subject matter is practically the same and that both originated in the same general period of Hebrew literary history. Nevertheless, there are numerous sections in the parts of the Pentateuch commonly included in JE which, on the one hand, are separated from J by the use of Elohim instead of Yahweh, by theological conceptions, by linguistic peculiarities and by their view of the early history,<sup>2</sup> and which, on the other hand, are so closely bound together among themselves by these same characteristics, that it seems most natural to regard them as fragments of one continuous narrative, which at one time had an independent existence.

Can J be assigned to a definite date in the period of the Judges or of the early kings, during which, according to internal evidence, it must have been written? Evidently, JE is earlier than D;<sup>3</sup> if so, J cannot have been written after B. C. 650. Again, if the eighth-century prophets knew JE or the independent J and E, which, however, is not certain,<sup>4</sup> J cannot be dated later than B. C. 750. To a date earlier than the eighth-century prophets points also the fact that the prophetic tone and point of view of J is less pronounced than in the prophetic messages of that century; though, on the other hand, the general religious attitude is not unlike that of the line of prophets beginning with Elijah.<sup>5</sup> These and similar facts have led most modern scholars to decide

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chapters VIII-X, and below, pp. 297-299.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapters XIII and XIV.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 220.

<sup>5</sup> The fact that the prophetic tone is less pronounced may, perhaps, be due to the difference in the nature of the productions—the one is narrative, the other represents prophetic discourses.

upon the age of Elijah, that is, about the middle of the ninth century B. C., as a suitable place for J, or at least of the earliest layer of J, if, as there seems ground for believing, the original J underwent one or more later revisions or expansions. A few scholars favor a date a century or more earlier; thus Schultz, Koenig, and Sellin assign it to the latter part of David's or the earlier years of Solomon's reign.

Whatever the differences of opinion regarding the exact date, practically all modern scholars are agreed that J cannot have been written earlier than the time of David. In support of this view, attention may be called to facts like these: (1) The central thought of the narrative from beginning to end is that Yahweh has chosen Israel out of all the nations of the earth, to be his peculiar people, that he has blessed it more than other nations and has appointed it to become a blessing to all, and that from the beginning he has appointed Canaan to be the exclusive possession of his people. The confident tone of the narrative with regard to these promises is thought to imply: (a) That the author knew a united Israel, such as was not found during the period of the Judges or even under Saul. (b) That Judah was a real and prominent part of the nation. During the period of the Judges Judah was separated from the tribes in the center and in the north by a line of Canaanite cities, of which Jebus-Jerusalem was one.<sup>6</sup> (c) That the historical situation in the days of the author warranted the conviction that Israel would completely overcome the native population. The final conflicts between the Israelites and Canaanites belong to the reigns of David and Solomon.

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<sup>6</sup> Deut. 33. 7. In the Song of Deborah (Judg. 5), Judah is not even mentioned among the tribes of Israel.

(d) There are passages which imply that the Exodus is in the past, that Israel has subjected the Canaanites, and is firmly established in the land.<sup>7</sup> (2) Moreover, J is acquainted with the monarchy as a reality in Israel,<sup>8</sup> and with kings of the tribe of Judah,<sup>9</sup> which makes the reign of David the earliest possible date. These facts may not amount to a mathematical demonstration, as the available facts rarely do in investigations of this sort; at the same time, what evidence there is seems sufficiently strong to give at least a high degree of probability to the view that J was written at the earliest during the reign of David.

If the age of David offers the earliest possible date for J, are Koenig, Sellin, and others right in assigning it to the reign of David or that of his immediate successor Solomon, or is it necessary to follow the majority of scholars and date it a century or more later? Sellin puts forward several arguments in favor of the former alternative:<sup>10</sup> (1) The document contains not the slightest reference or allusion to the division of the kingdom; the entire narrative is permeated by the consciousness that the *whole* nation is the people of promise. Such assurance would be inexplicable after the death of Solomon. (2) The conception, implied again and again in J, that the Canaanites, though not entirely destroyed, yet had been transformed from masters to slaves, evidently is a reflection of a situation brought about under David.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Gen. 12. 6; 13. 7; 40. 15; compare Num. 32. 41 with Judg. 10. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Gen. 36. 31.

<sup>9</sup> Gen. 49. 8-12.

<sup>10</sup> *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> Compare Gen. 9. 25; 12. 6; 13. 7; Judg. 1. 28, 29 with 2 Sam. 5. 6ff.; 24. 18ff. From 1 Kings 9. 15, 21 it has generally been inferred that forced labor, a sign of complete subjugation, was not imposed upon the Canaanites until the reign of Solomon. This,

(3) J contains no traces of any acquaintance with the new administrative scheme of Solomon;<sup>12</sup> which would exclude a date during the latter part of Solomon's reign. (4) The absolute, firm faith in Yahweh as the God of the whole universe, which is characteristic of the document, proves that the author did not know of the cleavage in the religious consciousness which appeared in Israel during the latter part of Solomon's reign.<sup>13</sup> (5) The conviction that Israel was more blessed than any other nation and the unshaken confidence in the divine choice and providence, which is expressed in J<sup>14</sup> is reflected also in the narratives of the reigns of David and Solomon.<sup>15</sup> (6) The religious conditions and practices presupposed in J,<sup>16</sup> in contrast with the form of worship introduced by Jeroboam I, all point to the reign of David or Solomon.

Sellin admits that these arguments are not conclusive

Sellin insists, cannot be the meaning of the passage, because (1) an officer who was "over the men subject to taskwork" is mentioned under David (2 Sam. 20. 24); and (2) it is inconceivable that David should have carried on campaigns against outside nations without being master in his own territory. 2 Sam. 4. 2, 3 and 21. 2 also imply successes against the natives.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Kings 4. 7ff.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Kings 11.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Gen. 12. 1-3.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Sam. 18. 17; 25. 28; 2 Sam. 5. 12; 8. 14; 14. 13; 21. 3; 1 Kings 5. 1-5; 10. 1ff.

<sup>16</sup> Such as the multiplicity of sanctuaries (see above, p. 143), the silence concerning the temple in Jerusalem (Exod. 34. 26 refers to any tribal sanctuary, and Josh. 9. 23, 27, if from J, may refer to the Yahweh sanctuary at Gibeon—1 Kings 3. 4; compare 2 Sam. 21. 9), the references to the consulting of Yahweh (Gen. 25. 21; Judg. 1. 1), a practice common with David, the absence of prophets as mediators of divine revelations, and the constant assumption that Yahweh is to be worshiped without external representation.

but thinks that, in the absence of all evidence pointing to a later date, they may be sufficient to establish the origin of J in the period suggested by him. The reasoning of Sellin is based, at least in part, upon the assumption that the traditions and stories embodied in J were formulated at the time the document preserving them was written. He evidently fails to maintain the distinction, carefully observed by him in other instances, between the origin and the writing down of a story; he forgets that a story once fixed may be handed down in oral form, with but slight modifications, for generations and even centuries. With these facts in mind, it is easily seen that not a single argument of Sellin throws light on the date of the actual *writing* of the document.<sup>17</sup> All the facts enumerated would receive a satisfactory explanation on the assumption that some of the traditions embodied in J assumed a more or less fixed form during the period of the United Monarchy; which is far from proving that J, or even individual traditions or stories, assumed written form at that time.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, it is equally difficult to prove that J was written in the ninth century. In the absence of

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<sup>17</sup> The facts noted in argument 2 would be true at any time subsequent to David; regarding 3, it may be asked if there was any occasion why the writer should have referred to the scheme; regarding 4: if the document had been written in Judah, subsequently to Solomon, by a firm believer in Yahweh, would he have taken a different attitude? Is the confidence to which reference is made in 5 less pronounced in later ages? The references to conditions and practices, enumerated in 6, would be possible at any time during a century, or even more, following the death of Solomon. This leaves only the first argument; and the silence concerning the division may easily be explained on the assumption that the traditions in J were fixed in their essential point of view before the division.

<sup>18</sup> Steuernagel, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 209.

decisive data, "we can only argue upon grounds of probability derived from our view of the progress of the art of writing, or of literary composition or of the rise and growth of the prophetic tone and feeling in ancient Israel, or of the period at which the traditions contained in the narratives might have taken shape, or of the probability that they would have been written down before the impetus given to culture by the monarchy had taken effect, and similar considerations, for estimating most of which, though plausible arguments on one side or the other may be advanced, a standard on which we can confidently rely scarcely admits of being fixed." Thus while a date in the ninth century would explain the facts presented in J, and would satisfy all that is known regarding Hebrew history, civilization, religion, and literature, no dogmatic statement can be made. Without fixing a definite date it may still be necessary to be content with Driver's conclusion: "All things considered, both J and E may be assigned, with greatest probability, to the early centuries of the monarchy."<sup>19</sup>

Though there is no unanimity among scholars regarding the place of origin of J, by far the great majority are inclined to look to the southern kingdom, Judah, for its home; only a few, and these chiefly among the earlier defenders of the Document Theory,<sup>20</sup> favor a northern origin. On this point again the evidence is rather inconclusive, but what little there is points to the south: (1) Hebron, a sanctuary of Judah, instead of Beersheba, frequented by Israel, plays a prominent role in the patri-

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<sup>19</sup> *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 125.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Schrader, Reuss, and Kuenen.

archal narratives.<sup>21</sup> (2) In the Joseph narratives Judah, not Reuben, the first-born, is the spokesman.<sup>22</sup> (3) J furnishes information regarding the earliest history of Judah.<sup>23</sup> (4) The choicest blessing of Jacob is reserved for Judah.<sup>24</sup> (5) In the account of the conquest J's chief interest is in Judah.<sup>25</sup> (6) The north-Israelite hero Joshua receives slight consideration.

E, on the other hand, would seem to have come from the northern kingdom, more specifically, from the territory occupied by Ephraim-Manasseh: (1) Localities belonging to the northern kingdom are the more prominent in E: the principal residence of Abraham is not, as in J, Hebron, which belonged in later times to Judah, but Beersheba, a sanctuary frequented by the people of the north,<sup>26</sup> and its immediate neighborhood.<sup>27</sup> Bethel is frequently named,<sup>28</sup> and Shechem plays such a prominent role<sup>29</sup> that some have thought that E originated there.<sup>30</sup> Mention is made of the burial places of famous persons of antiquity which were shown in the north, Deborah,<sup>31</sup> Rachel,<sup>32</sup> Joshua,<sup>33</sup> Joseph,<sup>34</sup> Eleazar.<sup>35</sup> (2) Persons connected with the northern tribes play the principal roles

<sup>21</sup> Gen. 13. 18; 18. 1; 37. 14.

<sup>22</sup> Gen. 37. 26; 43. 3, 8-10; 44. 14-34.

<sup>23</sup> Gen. 38.

<sup>24</sup> Gen. 49. 8-12.

<sup>25</sup> For example, Judg. 1. 1-21.

<sup>26</sup> Amos 5. 5; 8. 14.

<sup>27</sup> Gen. 20. 1; 21. 14; 22. 19.

<sup>28</sup> Gen. 12. 8; 13. 3; 28. 19, 22; 31. 13; 35. 1, 3, 7, etc.

<sup>29</sup> Gen. 33. 18-20; 35. 4; Josh. 24. 1, 25, 32.

<sup>30</sup> E. Sellin, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 35.

<sup>31</sup> Gen. 35. 8.

<sup>32</sup> Gen. 35. 19, 20.

<sup>33</sup> Josh. 24. 30.

<sup>34</sup> Josh. 24. 32.

<sup>35</sup> Josh. 24. 33.



in the narratives of E: Joseph, the ancestor of Ephraim-Manasseh, is the favorite of his father and even of God,<sup>36</sup> so that Jacob pronounces special blessings upon the sons of Joseph.<sup>37</sup> Joshua, the Ephraimite, is the companion and coworker of Moses,<sup>38</sup> and after the latter's death becomes his successor as the leader of Israel.<sup>39</sup> In the Joseph narratives Reuben, not Judah, is the spokesman of his brethren.<sup>40</sup> Thus everything seems to point to the northern kingdom as the home of E;<sup>41</sup> but the evidence connecting E specifically with Shechem is hardly decisive.

Another important question, on which there is still some difference of opinion among scholars, is the relative age of J and E. Earlier advocates of the Document Theory were inclined to give priority to E;<sup>42</sup> in their footsteps followed, among others, A. Dillmann and E. Riehm, and among Old Testament scholars now living, this view is strenuously defended by E. Koenig.<sup>43</sup> Most modern scholars, however, accept the priority of J. In support of his position Koenig depends mainly on four arguments; but none of these can be considered in any sense conclusive: (1) The construction of אֱלֹהִים—*Elohim*—God—with a plural verb. Why this should weigh heavily in favor of an early date is difficult to comprehend, when, according to Koenig's own admission, the same con-

<sup>36</sup> Gen. 37. 3ff.

<sup>37</sup> Gen. 48. 14-20.

<sup>38</sup> Exod. 33. 11; Num. 11. 28, etc.

<sup>39</sup> Deut. 31. 23; Josh. 1. 1, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Gen. 37. 21, 22; 42. 37.

<sup>41</sup> See also C. Steuernagel, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, pp. 217ff.

<sup>42</sup> For example, Noeldeke, Schrader, Kayser, Reuss.

<sup>43</sup> *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, pp. 203, 240. *Geschichte der alttest. Religion*, p. 12. R. Kittel formerly held the same view; but see above, p. 57.

struction is found in passages belonging certainly to a relatively late date.<sup>44</sup> (2) The use of "Elohim" rather than "Yahweh" in the earlier portions.<sup>45</sup> The same argument would prove the early date of P. (3) The earnest appeal of Joshua, to serve Yahweh,<sup>46</sup> seems to indicate that the age of Moses is not far removed. But why? Are not the appeals of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and the other prophets equally earnest? (4) The mention of the "pillars" in E, while J is silent concerning them, shows that when E was written they were still in use, and that they were abolished prior to the writing of J. Following out this reasoning, since Koenig dates E in the period of the Judges, he would have to assign a passage like Isa. 19. 19 to the same age or earlier.

On the whole, the evidence favors the priority of J: (1) Many of the narratives in J appear to be older and more original than the parallel stories in E. The J narratives are more simple, natural, and lifelike; the play of human emotions and of natural forces is made to explain successive steps in the development of the incidents recorded, while the writer of E depends much more extensively upon the supernatural as a moving cause. As illustrations may be mentioned the stories of Abraham or Isaac at Gerar,<sup>47</sup> the birth of Issachar,<sup>48</sup> the wages of Jacob;<sup>49</sup> indeed, the whole early history of Israel—the

<sup>44</sup> For example, 1 Kings 12. 28; 19. 2.

<sup>45</sup> See above, pp. 125ff.

<sup>46</sup> Josh. 24.

<sup>47</sup> Compare Gen. 20. 1-17; 21. 22-32 (E), with Gen. 26. 1-33 (J).

<sup>48</sup> J connects it with Reuben's mandrakes (Gen. 30. 14-16), E makes it an act of divine grace (verses 17, 18).

<sup>49</sup> According to J, it was Jacob's trick that gave him the advantage over Laban (Gen. 30. 28-43), according to E, an angel interfered in Jacob's behalf (Gen. 31. 9-12).

separation from polytheistic surroundings, the deliverance from Egypt and the conquest of Canaan—is represented as much more miraculous in E than in J. (2) The religious and theological conceptions of E are in advance of those expressed in J. For instance, the latter represents Yahweh as a big man, he eats, drinks, is jealous, repents, etc.; the God of E speaks from heaven, he does not appear in human form.<sup>50</sup> It may be due to this more elevated conception of Deity that the author of E gives to his God no proper name such as is borne by other gods. Hence, even after he has introduced the explanation of the name of Israel's God, Yahweh,<sup>51</sup> he uses it but rarely, preferring the more general "Elohim," which to him is much more significant.

This kind of evidence may not be conclusive. The difference in point of view, which is due, fundamentally, to differences in religious conceptions, might, perhaps, be explained as due, not to difference in time of composition, but to origin in different circles or parties, each having its own peculiar religious views, within one and the same community. Nevertheless, if one studies the two documents in their entirety, he cannot escape the impression that E is younger than J.

Numerous attempts have been made to fix the exact date of E. If it originated in the northern kingdom, as is generally thought, it must have been written before B. C. 722; but how long before cannot easily be determined. Most modern scholars favor a date between B. C. 850 and 750,<sup>52</sup> but there are a few who lean toward

<sup>50</sup> Gen. 21. 17; 22. 11; see further, above, p. 156.

<sup>51</sup> Exod. 3. 14.

<sup>52</sup> At least for the groundwork of E; practically all scholars hold that the original E was expanded at later times down to the seventh century.

a much earlier date; thus Sellin decides in favor of the later years of Solomon's reign, and Koenig in favor of the period of the Judges. Koenig's view as to the date of E is dependent on his other theory that E is earlier than J, which cannot be established by the arguments he adduces, and has been seen to have little in its favor.<sup>53</sup> If E is later than J, and if J cannot be dated earlier than the reign of David, which is regarded as certain by Koenig,<sup>54</sup> E cannot be assigned to a date earlier than that suggested by Sellin, namely, the latter part of Solomon's reign.

But the majority of scholars seem to be convinced that even this date is far too early: (1) They claim, for instance, that Gen. 37. 8 and Deut. 33. 13-17 imply the existence of the northern kingdom, in which the Joseph tribe, Ephraim, was supreme. But what is there to hinder the counter claim that these passages reflect conditions during the early period of the Judges, when Ephraim occupied a position of considerable prominence? It should be remembered that E represents the Ephraimite hero Joshua as the successor of Moses. (2) Gen. 31. 48ff. is said to be a reflection of the Syrian wars in the ninth century. This may or may not be true; it certainly cannot be proved, since the passage contains no reference to war. (3) Josh. 15. 2ff. implies that Edom is no longer a part of Judah. This is true; but Edom was lost to Judah during the reign of Solomon;<sup>55</sup> and if this happened during the early years of Solomon's reign, as is implied in the narrative,<sup>56</sup> might not a writer during the

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<sup>53</sup> See above, pp. 241, 242.

<sup>54</sup> *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 206.

<sup>55</sup> I Kings 11. 14ff.

<sup>56</sup> Especially verse 21.

latter part of Solomon's reign represent Edom as lost to the Israelites? (4) The assertion is made that the more general use of "Elohim" throughout the document presupposes the struggles of Elijah and Elisha, which created a more deep-seated monotheistic consciousness in Israel, which, naturally, would lead to the use of the more general "Elohim"—God—in the place of the more particular and specific "Yahweh." This would be a most satisfactory explanation of the use of "Elohim" if the same practice were seen, for example, in the prophetic messages of the eighth century. But Amos and Hosea, prophets of Israel, like Elijah, and certainly no less monotheistic than he, constantly use "Yahweh." It would be quite as easy to prove that the process was the reverse: Before the days of Elijah "Elohim" was widely used, but the designation of "Yahweh" as "Elohim" created a tendency of reducing him to the level of the Baals of the land; hence upon the rise of a deeper monotheistic sense the use of the ambiguous "Elohim" was discouraged. (5) Josh. 6. 26 is thought to presuppose the rebuilding of Jericho in the days of Ahab.<sup>57</sup> But, why not turn it the other way? May not the act of Hiel presuppose a knowledge of the curse uttered by Joshua? All this simply means that, while E may have been written later than the age of Solomon, in the ninth or in the eighth century, arguments like these can never demonstrate the truth of this theory, probable though it may be.

Equally inconclusive are the arguments urged in favor of the earlier date: (1) Attention is called to the fact that E contains not the slightest reference or allusion to the division of the kingdom subsequently to the death of Solomon. Throughout Israel is represented as a united

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<sup>57</sup> 1 Kings 16. 34.

whole. In response to those who interpret Deut. 33. 7, 16 as reflecting conditions under the Divided Kingdom, it is suggested that these verses may well reflect conditions during the age of the Judges. (2) Exod. 23. 31, in giving the extent of Israel's territory, is said to reflect conditions under David and Solomon. (3) While J does not know Jerusalem as a sanctuary of Israel—which is thought to prove that J was written before the building of the temple by Solomon—E recognizes it as a place of divine revelation, along with Bethel, Shechem, etc.<sup>58</sup> These arguments have little force: (1) Anyone capable of writing E, though living a century or two after Solomon, would know that the division was a comparatively recent event, that formerly the two kingdoms formed one national unit; hence, when writing of the earlier history, he would represent Israel as one united people.<sup>59</sup> (2) The conquests of David, more extensive than those of any other Israelite ruler, continued to live in the memories of his people. Naturally, ever afterwards, in the tenth century, as in the eighth or seventh, anyone desiring to state the widest extent of Israel's territory would refer to the boundaries established by David. (3) While the mention of Jerusalem as an Israelite sanctuary may preclude a date prior to David or Solomon, it certainly does not make impossible a date in the ninth or eighth century.

Again, as in the case of J, there is insufficient specific evidence to fix the exact date of E; again the student is compelled to rely upon such general considerations as are enumerated on p. 239. These make it quite certain that E was written later than J, but still during the "early cen-

<sup>58</sup> Gen. 22. 2; Moriah=the temple area in Jerusalem.

<sup>59</sup> See also above, p. 238.

turies of the monarchy"; and they make it very probable that at least the first edition of E antedates, though, perhaps, not by many decades, the appearance of the eighth-century prophets.

The origin of D having received sufficient attention in a previous chapter,<sup>60</sup> the discussion may pass immediately to a consideration of the date of P. The evidence already examined<sup>61</sup> has shown that the date of P must be sought somewhere between Ezekiel and the Chronicler, that is, between about B. C. 550 and 350. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah narrate that in B. C. 458 Ezra, a descendant of Aaron, and therefore a priest, and "a scribe of the words of the commandments of Jehovah," went up from Babylon "to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem according to the *Law of God,*" which was in his hand.<sup>62</sup> After a short period of activity Ezra disappeared from view, and was not heard of again until after the arrival of Nehemiah in B. C. 445. In the following year a great popular assembly was held, before which Ezra read out of "the book of the law of Moses."<sup>63</sup> That this law book contained P is beyond question, for the account contains several unmistakable references to passages in P.<sup>64</sup>

There are many scholars who hold that P by itself, not as a part of a larger work, was the Law Book of Ezra.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Chapter XII.

<sup>61</sup> In Chapters XIII and XIV.

<sup>62</sup> See Ezra 7. 1-26.

<sup>63</sup> Neh. 8-10.

<sup>64</sup> Neh. 8. 15 evidently refers back to Lev. 23. 40; Neh. 8. 18 to Lev. 23. 36 (compare Deut. 16. 13-15); Neh. 10. 36-40 to Num. 18. 12-32.

<sup>65</sup> In his splendid *Einleitung*, published in 1912, C. Steuernagel again argues strongly in favor of this view, pp. 264, 265, but his arguments appear, to the present writer, inconclusive.

This is by no means certain, for the law read on that occasion contained some provisions not found in P but only in other parts of the Pentateuch.<sup>66</sup> It would seem, therefore, that the law read before the assembly contained all the law codes of the Pentateuch; and there is no good reason for doubting that the reformers used the Pentateuch, substantially in its final form. The objection urged against this view that the entire Pentateuch could not have been read in so short a time is met by the text itself, which nowhere states that Ezra read the entire book, but that he read *in* the book, that is, selections from the book; nothing is said about the extent of the portions read.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, the Deuteronomic law, introduced by Josiah, must have been known at least to the leaders of the postexilic community; and it is difficult to believe that these would be ready to accept an entirely new code of laws and by so doing practically discard the old one; on the other hand, they might be quite willing to reaffirm their loyalty to the old code and accept with it an expansion which, they must have realized, met more adequately the spirit and the needs of their age. Conditions were different in the days of Josiah: prior to B. C. 621 no law had been publicly promulgated or accepted by the people, hence there could be no fear on the part of the people or their leaders that the public acceptance of a law would result in the discarding of an older legislation. There is still another consideration in favor of the view that the book from which the law was read was the entire

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<sup>66</sup> For example, intermarriage with natives (Neh. 10. 30; Heb., verse 31) is forbidden only in Exod. 34. 16 (JE) and Deut. 7. 3; the release of a debt in the sabbatic year (Neh. 10. 31; Heb. 32) is ordered in Deut. 15. 2.

<sup>67</sup> Neh. 8. 3, 8, 18.



Pentateuch, namely, the fact that P contained the history of Israel to the division of Palestine among the tribes. The account of the conquest and the division, that is, the closing section of P, is now not a part of the Pentateuch but of the book of Joshua. But if, in B. C. 444, the whole of P had been accepted as the law of Yahweh,<sup>68</sup> would it have been possible, within a few decades, at the most, to cut off a part and exclude it from the Torah? Thus, while there is no conclusive evidence that the entire Pentateuch was before the assembly in B. C. 444, what evidence there is points strongly in that direction.

If the entire Pentateuch—aside from minor additions and editorial changes—was in the hands of Ezra in 444, then his silence between 458 and 444, which has appeared so inexplicable to many scholars, may receive a satisfactory explanation. The law which he brought from Babylon in 458<sup>69</sup> and which he intended to promulgate in Jerusalem was P; but when he became familiar with conditions in the postexilic community the conviction grew upon him that he could never secure the acceptance of P at the expense of the older codes. But being equally sure that the older laws were inadequate under the new conditions, and that the people needed the modifications and adjustments introduced in P, he set about to unite the new code with the older material in a manner that would preserve the good in all and yet give to P the place of

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<sup>68</sup> The case would not be essentially different if it were assumed that the historical sections became a part of P subsequently to the assembly in 444. Whenever they would be added to a book regarded as unique, they would be accepted as an integral part of that book, and it would be exceedingly difficult to remove them again either in whole or in part.

<sup>69</sup> Ezra 7. 14.

prominence, which he accomplished by making the latter the groundwork of the new production.<sup>70</sup>

According to this view, then, P became public property for the first time in B. C. 444, not as an independent document but as a part of the larger work now known as the Pentateuch; after having been brought, as a separate document, from Babylon in B. C. 458. If this is correct, it must have been written, probably among the descendants of the exiles still living in Babylonia, some time prior to that date. It has been suggested that Ezra himself was the author, but that is not probable. True, he knew the document intimately, and its spirit had permeated his whole thinking, but the reverence with which he treated it makes it more than probable that it was the work of another. How long before 458 and by whom it was written cannot be determined; but, as has been stated,<sup>71</sup> internal evidence favors a date some distance removed from Ezekiel, perhaps about B. C. 500, which is, approximately, the date accepted by most modern scholars.

The discussion in the preceding paragraphs has proceeded on the assumption, which, the present writer believes, has still much in its favor, that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah give an essentially correct picture of the reform movements in which Ezra and Nehemiah are said to have been the leaders. If, however, it should be demonstrated, as is now widely held, that Ezra did not precede Nehemiah, and that he did not cooperate with him until the latter's second administration, in B. C. 432,

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<sup>70</sup> It may well be that the reference to interpretation in Neh. 8. 8 is an allusion to the efforts of Ezra to harmonize provisions in different parts of the Pentateuch and to point out the superiority of P.

<sup>71</sup> See above, p. 222.

the main positions advocated above would remain unaffected. The date of the public reading of the law would have to be brought down a few years, and a new explanation would have to be provided for the uniting of P with the other codes, but these changes would in no wise affect the view that the Law read and expounded in the public assembly—whenever held—was taken from the entire Pentateuch and that P was written in Babylonia about B. C. 500. The same would be true if Ezra were placed in the fourth century, and even if his existence were denied. True, in such case, Ezra could not have played the important role in the promulgation of the Law assigned to him in Ezra-Nehemiah or in the above discussion; more credit would have to be given to Nehemiah and the unnamed leaders of the age, but the date of P would not be affected thereby.<sup>72</sup>

Summing up, then, the entire discussion, the following conclusions may be regarded as resting upon secure foundations: (1) The chronological order in which the Pentateuchal documents originated is J, E, D, and P. (2) The approximate dates at which the several documents were written are: J, during the early centuries of the monarchy, perhaps in the ninth century B. C.; E, somewhat later, but still during the period of the early monarchy, perhaps a generation or two preceding the appearance of the eighth-century prophets; D, during the reactionary reign of Manasseh, about B. C. 675; P, among the descendants of exiles in Babylonia, about B. C. 500.

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<sup>72</sup> The question of the reliability of the Ezra-Nehemiah narratives is discussed more fully in the chapter on Ezra-Nehemiah in vol. III of this Introduction, which is to appear in the near future.



CHAPTER XVI

ANCIENT MATERIAL EMBODIED IN THE  
PENTATEUCHAL DOCUMENTS

I. POETIC MATERIAL



## CHAPTER XVI

### ANCIENT MATERIAL EMBODIED IN THE PENTATEUCHAL DOCUMENTS

#### I. POETIC MATERIAL

THE view that the Pentateuch in its present form is essentially a compilation of material taken from four originally distinct documents—J, E, D, P—may be regarded as firmly established. It is equally certain that, whenever these documents may have been written, all of them contain material handed down independently, in oral or written form, throughout generations and, in some instances, centuries, before it found a place in one of the four documents. In many cases the form in which the material reached the authors of the documents can no longer be determined, but in others so few alterations were made that even now the passages taken from earlier sources can easily be separated from their contexts. This is true more especially of poetic and legal material, for which the compilers simply furnished a suitable historical framework. In this chapter the poetic fragments preserved in the Pentateuch are brought together for the purpose of discovering, if possible, the time and occasion of their origin.

**1. The Song of Lamech or Of the Sword.**<sup>1</sup> The context in which this “song” is now found suggests that

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<sup>1</sup> Gen. 4. 23, 24.

the six lines of this poem express the fierce joy of primitive man at the discovery that the possession of metal weapons gives a decided advantage as compared with other means of defense, the possessor of such weapons can do more for himself than even the Deity can do for the one not thus protected. Nothing is known of the origin of the poem. It may be, as has been suggested, that it did not originate among the Israelites at all but among the Kenites,<sup>2</sup> a nomadic tribe that joined the Hebrews at the time of the Exodus.<sup>3</sup> At any rate, Marti is right when he calls the song "an echo from the old times of the Bedouins";<sup>4</sup> and there is nothing improbable in the suggestion of A. R. Gordon, that the cry, "Cain shall be avenged sevenfold," may have been an old Kenite war cry.<sup>5</sup> The date of the poem cannot be determined. It may be older than the time of Moses, and may have become an Israelite possession at the time of the amalgamation of the Kenites with the Israelites; then, at a later time, it was introduced in its present place by the author of the prose narrative as an illustration of the advantages of metal weapons.

2. **The Curse of Canaan.**<sup>6</sup> Though the passage pronounces blessings upon Japhet and Shem, on account of its dominant note it is generally known as the "Curse of Canaan." It reflects a situation in which Canaan is oppressed by peoples represented by the other two names, but the exact historical background is not easily determined. Some have seen in the poem a reference to the

<sup>2</sup> The names "Cain" and "Kenites" are closely related; in Hebrew they have the same root.

<sup>3</sup> Judg. 1. 16.

<sup>4</sup> *The Religion of Israel*, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> *The Early Traditions of Genesis*, pp. 188-191.

<sup>6</sup> Gen. 9. 25-27.



final subjugation of the Canaanites by Solomon,<sup>7</sup> but it might equally well refer to the struggles during the period of the Judges, when Israel was getting the upper hand.<sup>8</sup> With either interpretation the reference to Japhet remains obscure. The pre-Mosaic period would offer a more suitable occasion—the attacks upon the Canaanites by Semitic tribes, called *Habiri* in the Tel-el-Amarna tablets,<sup>9</sup> and by sea-faring tribes coming from the islands of the Mediterranean and the south coast of Asia Minor that made themselves masters of the territory later known as Philistia.<sup>10</sup> Whatever the date of the poem, it is introduced into the biblical story to show that the subjugation of the Canaanites by the Israelites and other nations was due to a curse pronounced in very early times upon their ancestor, Canaan.

3. **Oracles Concerning the Patriarchs.**<sup>11</sup> The origin of these brief sayings is obscure. It is very probable, however, that in the course of the oral tradition the divine promises and blessings, by which it was sought to explain the superiority of Israel and the powerful faith concerning the future, gradually assumed poetic form, which would make them more easily remembered by the people. When this took place cannot be determined. Generally speaking, the utterances reflect the conditions and expect-

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<sup>7</sup> 1 Kings 9. 20, 21.

<sup>8</sup> Judg. 4, 5.

<sup>9</sup> See F. C. Eiselen, *The Christian View of the Old Testament*, p. 126.

<sup>10</sup> These tribes might be designated Japhet, for, according to Gen. 10. 2-5, Japhet is regarded as the ancestor of the tribes in the north and northwest.

<sup>11</sup> Abraham, Gen. 12. 2, 3; 13. 14-17; Isaac, Gen. 26. 4; Jacob, Gen. 27. 27-29; 28. 13, 14; Joseph, Gen. 48. 20; compare also Esau, Gen. 25. 23; 27. 39, 40.

tations of the generations during which Israel acquired possession of Palestine.

4. **The Blessing of Jacob.**<sup>12</sup> Gen. 49 contains a series of blessings, or, in some instances, curses, upon the tribes of Israel. The patriarch Jacob is introduced as the dispenser of the blessings to his sons, the ancestors of the tribes; but the fact that at least some of the tribes are represented as already in Canaan, shows that the poem originated subsequently to the time of Moses. The mention of Simeon<sup>13</sup> favors an early date—in the age of the Judges, because that tribe lost its identity soon after the settlement in Palestine; on the other hand, the special blessing pronounced upon Judah seems to presuppose the reign of David. It is, indeed, possible that the several sayings originated independently and at different times, and were collected subsequently, suffering such modifications as the purpose of the collector would demand. The poem assumed its final form not later than the period of the United Monarchy.

5. **The Triumph Song Over the Destruction of the Egyptians.**<sup>14</sup> This ode of triumph commemorates the wonderful deliverance of the Israelite hosts at the Red Sea. That an experience of this sort should inspire a poetic outburst is not unnatural; at the same time, the song in Exod. 15, in its present form, seems to be of later date. Verse 17,<sup>15</sup> for example, seems to presuppose

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<sup>12</sup> Gen. 49. 2-27.

<sup>13</sup> Verse 5.

<sup>14</sup> Exod. 15. 1-18.

<sup>15</sup> Compare also verse 13; and verse 15 seems to imply acquaintance with subsequent events:

“Then were the chiefs of Edom dismayed,  
The mighty men of Moab, trembling taketh hold of them:  
All the inhabitants of Canaan are melted away.”

the building of the temple by Solomon, or, at least, the selection of Jerusalem as the religious center:

. . . . the mountain of thine inheritance,  
The place, O Yahweh, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in,  
The sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.<sup>16</sup>

True, the present poem may be the expansion of a shorter poem composed at the time the event commemorated took place; but if so, there is no way of determining the extent of this earlier poem.

**6. Poetic Fragments in Numbers 21.** Numbers 21 contains poetical passages, which are obviously older than the prose narrative in which they are embodied: (1) A Song concerning the boundary line between Moab and Israel.<sup>17</sup> Of this only a fragment has been preserved, the meaning of which is not altogether clear.<sup>18</sup> It is said to have been taken from a collection of songs called "The Book of the Wars of Yahweh," or, if Schmidt's emendation is correct, "The Book of Wars." The origin of the poem is obscure. (2) The so-called Song of the Well,<sup>19</sup> an ancient folk-song, the origin and occasion of

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<sup>16</sup> To escape the conclusion that the poem originated subsequently to the building of the temple, and thus to save an earlier date, even though it might be later than Moses, the words have been interpreted as referring to the land of Canaan in contrast with the desert (compare Deut. 1. 7, 19, 44; Isa. 11. 9; Ezek. 28. 16. etc.), or to some other sanctuary, such as Shechem or Shiloh; but these interpretations seem forced; a natural interpretation must admit that the poet is thinking of the sanctuary in Jerusalem; and if this is the case, then the poem in its present form cannot be earlier than David or Solomon.

<sup>17</sup> Verses 14, 15.

<sup>18</sup> G. B. Gray, *Numbers*, pp. 284, 285; N. Schmidt, in *Messages of the Poets*, p. 223, suggests a reconstruction of the text, with satisfactory results.

<sup>19</sup> Verses 17, 18.

which are uncertain. The words are addressed to a well, and may form a song by which "the Hebrew women, as they stand round the fountain waiting their turn to draw, coax forth the water, which wells up all too slowly for their impatience."<sup>20</sup> (3) The Song of Sihon's Conquests.<sup>21</sup> Like the other poetic fragments in the chapter, this poem presents difficulties. The text has suffered, the purpose is obscure and, as a result, the date is uncertain.<sup>22</sup> On the whole, Schmidt's interpretation<sup>23</sup> seems the most reasonable: He believes the poet to have been a citizen of Heshbon, living soon after the conquest of the city by the Israelites. The purpose of the poem he interprets in these words: "The poet exhorts his hearers to come to Heshbon to build up and establish Sihon's city taken from him by the Israelitish tribes. For from this city the fire had gone forth that had consumed all of Moab down to the Arnon and beyond. So completely had Sihon destroyed the Moabitish strongholds that Chemosh's people seemed to have perished from Heshbon in the north to Daibon in the south. Now that the land of Sihon had been taken from him, let the city where he reigned and which had suffered during the siege at the hands of the Israelites be built up and established."

**7. The Oracles of Balaam.**<sup>24</sup> Three chapters in Numbers are devoted to the interesting story of Balak, king of Moab, and Balaam, the son of Beor, a seer of great renown. Alarmed by the advance of the Israelites,

<sup>20</sup> G. B. Gray, *Numbers*, pp. 288ff.; Schmidt, *Messages of the Poets*, pp. 324f. interprets the poem as a song commemorating the capture of the city of Beor.

<sup>21</sup> Verses 27-30.

<sup>22</sup> G. B. Gray, *Numbers*, pp. 299ff.

<sup>23</sup> *Messages of the Poets*, pp. 326, 327.

<sup>24</sup> Num. 23, 24.

Balak sends for Balaam and asks him to pronounce a curse upon the invaders, so as to deliver them into the hands of Moab. But Balaam, driven by an irresistible divine impulse, blesses them instead, and announces the ultimate conquest of Moab by the newcomers.

The prose narrative<sup>25</sup> furnishes the historical setting for the utterances of Balaam, which are in poetic form. There are seven poems, four longer ones centering around Israel, and three shorter ones containing threats against other nations: (1) Israel's exaltation;<sup>26</sup> (2) Israel's conquering power;<sup>27</sup> (3) Israel's prosperity and strength;<sup>28</sup> (4) Israel's conquering king;<sup>29</sup> (5) Destruction of Amalek;<sup>30</sup> (6) Devastation of the Kenite territory;<sup>31</sup> (7) An oracle of uncertain meaning.<sup>32</sup> It has been suggested, with some degree of probability, that 24. 1-19 is not the continuation of chapter 23 but a duplicate account of the same incidents. If so, poems (3) and (4) may be simply different recensions of (1) and (2), the former representing the tradition current in the south, the latter that current in the north.

As to the date of the poems there exists much uncertainty. For the poems centering around Israel, Gray considers a date prior to Saul out of the question, and a date earlier than David improbable;<sup>33</sup> they may well have originated during the period of the early monarchy. Of the shorter poems the first, against Amalek, may reflect conditions in the age of David;<sup>34</sup> but the other

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<sup>25</sup> Chap. 22 is in prose, chaps. 23 and 24 are partly in prose and partly in poetry.

<sup>26</sup> 23. 7-10.

<sup>27</sup> 23. 18-24.

<sup>28</sup> 24. 3-9.

<sup>29</sup> 24. 15-19.

<sup>30</sup> 24. 20.

<sup>31</sup> 24. 21, 22.

<sup>32</sup> 24. 23, 24.

<sup>33</sup> *Numbers*, p. 314.

<sup>34</sup> Compare 1 Sam. 30.

two are generally considered of a later date; that against the Kenites seems to presuppose the rise of Assyria, and the last oracle the dawn of Greek power.

8. **The Song of Moses.**<sup>35</sup> Deut. 32 is a didactic poem seeking to exemplify "the rectitude and faithfulness of Yahweh as manifested in his dealings with a corrupt and ungrateful nation." In carrying out this purpose the poem gives a retrospective survey of Israel's early religious history: (1) Yahweh's goodness in establishing the people;<sup>36</sup> (2) Israel's base ingratitude and idolatry, with the consequent judgments which brought the nation to the verge of destruction;<sup>37</sup> and (3) Yahweh's determination to deliver his people from their distress.<sup>38</sup>

Internal evidence forbids the assignment of the poem to the age of Moses. Evidently, the Exodus and the occupation of Canaan are in the distant past,<sup>39</sup> Israel is settled in Palestine,<sup>40</sup> there has been time for apostasy from Yahweh,<sup>41</sup> and even for the calamities sent as punishments which have brought the nation to the verge of ruin.<sup>42</sup> All these things are in the poet's past; the only thing still in the future is the deliverance from utter annihilation.<sup>43</sup> That it is a relatively late poem is further shown by the theological conceptions reflected in the song, which seem to presuppose the teaching of at least some of the great prophets. The prophetic tone is so marked that Cornill calls the poem "largely a compendium of the prophetic theology, steeped from end to end in reminiscences of the older prophets"; and he concludes that it cannot be assigned "to an earlier period than the end of

<sup>35</sup> Deut. 32.

<sup>36</sup> Verses 1-14.

<sup>37</sup> Verses 15-26.

<sup>38</sup> Verses 27-43.

<sup>39</sup> Verses 7-12.

<sup>40</sup> Verses 13, 14.

<sup>41</sup> Verses 15-19.

<sup>42</sup> Verses 20-30.

<sup>43</sup> Verses 36-43.

the Babylonian exile, if we should not indeed come down to a still later date." <sup>44</sup> Other scholars favor an earlier date, but the song can hardly be much earlier than Jeremiah and Ezekiel, in other words, about B. C. 600. <sup>45</sup> In all probability the poem was added to the original D by the same editor who inserted the material from JE, but who took the song from another source. <sup>46</sup>

9. **The Blessing of Moses.** <sup>47</sup> The Song of Moses has been made an integral part of the Deuteronomic narrative; not so the Blessing of Moses. It appears as an independent poem, the introductory verse connecting it but loosely with the rest of the book. The introduction <sup>48</sup> describes the advent of Yahweh, the giving of the law and the establishment of the kingdom; the main part <sup>49</sup> consists of a series of eulogistic sayings <sup>50</sup> concerning eleven of the tribes, Simeon being omitted; the conclusion <sup>51</sup> emphasizes the uniqueness of Yahweh and the blessedness of his chosen people. The "blessings" characterize each tribe by some salient feature in its history, situation, or character.

In many respects the poem resembles the Blessing of Jacob, <sup>52</sup> but it seems to reflect a more advanced stage in

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<sup>44</sup> *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (English translation), pp. 123, 124; N. Schmidt, *Messages of the Poets*, p. 343.

<sup>45</sup> Driver, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 345ff.; H. T. Fowler, *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel*, p. 231; the date suggested by Sellin, *Einleitung*, p. 21, the age of Ahab, when, he thinks, a disciple of Elijah wrote the poem, is less probable.

<sup>46</sup> Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p. lxxvii.

<sup>47</sup> Deut. 33.

<sup>48</sup> Verses 2-5.

<sup>49</sup> Verses 6-25.

<sup>50</sup> There are no curses, as in Gen. 49.

<sup>51</sup> Verses 26-29.

<sup>52</sup> Gen. 49.

the historical and theological development of Israel. Simeon had disappeared as a tribe, Reuben was on the decline,<sup>53</sup> Judah was separated from his brethren,<sup>54</sup> Levi was recognized as the priestly tribe,<sup>55</sup> the house of Yahweh seems to have been in the land of Benjamin,<sup>56</sup> Joseph occupied the most prominent position,<sup>57</sup> Zebulun and Issachar were commercially prosperous,<sup>58</sup> Gad seems to have enjoyed some special blessing in the recent past;<sup>59</sup> the northernmost tribes, Dan, Naphtali, and Asher, are named in last place.<sup>60</sup>

Again, as in the case of the Song of Moses, internal evidence makes it impossible to consider Moses the author of the poem;<sup>61</sup> but it is not easy to determine its exact date. Koenig, Sellin, and others are quite confident that it originated in the age of the Judges; the majority of scholars, however, look for a suitable occasion in the centuries subsequent to the division of the kingdom; but there is no agreement as to the exact period. Kuenen, Moore, Steuernagel, Cornill, and others favor the prosperous reign of Jeroboam II;<sup>62</sup> others—Dillmann, Driver, Westphal, etc.—assign it to the age of Jeroboam I, that is, soon after the division. No doubt some of the utterances, such as the reference to Levi as the priestly tribe,

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<sup>53</sup> Verse 6.

<sup>54</sup> Verse 7.

<sup>55</sup> Verses 8-11.

<sup>56</sup> Verse 12; compare Josh. 12. 10; Judg. 1. 21.

<sup>57</sup> Verses 13-17.

<sup>58</sup> Verses 18, 19.

<sup>59</sup> Verses 20, 21.

<sup>60</sup> Verses 22-25.

<sup>61</sup> Note especially the reference to Moses in verse 4, and the reference in verses 27-29 to the conquest as a thing of the past and to the peaceful life of Israel in Palestine.

<sup>62</sup> Approximately, B. C. 780-740.



point to the later period;<sup>63</sup> others might have originated in an earlier age, though the description of Judah as apart from the rest of the people, seems to presuppose the division. Perhaps, as was suggested in connection with Gen. 49, the several utterances originated independently, in different places and at different times. Later they were collected, probably in the northern kingdom;<sup>64</sup> if so, the poem must be dated earlier than B. C. 722, the date of the dissolution of the northern kingdom. The favorable comments on the tribe of Levi have led some scholars to conclude that the author or collector was a member of that tribe.

**10. Miscellaneous Poems.** In addition to the poems discussed in the preceding paragraphs, there are found in the Pentateuch a few other poetic fragments which, undoubtedly, had been in existence for some time when the prose narratives embodying them were written. (1) The Song of Miriam<sup>65</sup> is a repetition, with a slight change, of the first two lines of the triumph song over the destruction of the Egyptians.<sup>66</sup> The verse may be regarded as the E recension of the original song, the longer poem being embodied in J. (2) The Oracle of the Altar Fire.<sup>67</sup> This is an ancient oracle, of uncertain date, quoted by the author to enforce the lesson which he sought to draw from the catastrophe that befell Nadab and Abihu. Schmidt thinks that it reflects the low opinion which the Jerusalem priests had of the priests at the sanctuaries in the north, and that it was written subse-

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<sup>63</sup> See above, p. 145.

<sup>64</sup> This may be inferred from the fact that the most prominent position is assigned to Joseph.

<sup>65</sup> Exod. 15. 21.

<sup>66</sup> Exod. 15. 1; see above, p. 258.

<sup>67</sup> Lev. 10. 3.

quently to the fall of Samaria, in B. C. 722.<sup>68</sup> (3) The Priestly Benediction.<sup>69</sup> Though embodied in the Priestly Code, this benediction undoubtedly originated much earlier than the date of its incorporation in P. Very probably it is of pre-exilic origin; and it may have been used as a part of the temple ritual in Jerusalem before the exile; but its date cannot be determined.<sup>70</sup> (4) The Song of the Ark.<sup>71</sup> The first two lines of this poem were probably addressed to the ark,<sup>72</sup> when it was carried into battle, the rest when it was brought back to the sanctuary. The principal objection to assigning it to the period of the desert wanderings arises from the fact that then the people advanced to overtake the ark; the ark did not return to the people.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, the custom of carrying the ark into battle seems to have been discontinued after it had been deposited in the temple in Jerusalem. It would seem, therefore, that the words reflect conditions in the pre-Solomonic era, when the home of the ark was at Shiloh, Nob, or some other sanctuary.

Two other passages may be noted which, though not in the Pentateuch, were at one time a part of JE. (5) The Curse of Jericho.<sup>74</sup> Joshua is said to have tried to prevent the rebuilding of Jericho by uttering this curse upon anyone attempting to do so. In 1 Kings 16. 34 it is

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<sup>68</sup> *Messages of the Poets*, p. 319.

<sup>69</sup> Num. 6. 24-26.

<sup>70</sup> G. B. Gray, *Numbers*, pp. 71, 21; Schmidt, *Messages of the Poets*, p. 320.

<sup>71</sup> Num. 10. 35, 36.

<sup>72</sup> The ark being considered the symbol of the presence of Yahweh, words addressed to it were in reality addressed to Yahweh.

<sup>73</sup> This is certainly implied in verses 33ff.

<sup>74</sup> Josh. 6. 26.

reported that when, after the lapse of centuries, the city was rebuilt the builder suffered the calamity threatened in the curse.<sup>75</sup> The relation of the two passages is variously interpreted. Some assume that the disaster which befell Hiel gave rise to the curse;<sup>76</sup> others believe the curse to be much more ancient and the account in Kings to have been colored by a knowledge of the curse, which came to be connected with Joshua because of his share in the destruction of the city.<sup>77</sup> (6) The Standing Still of Sun and Moon.<sup>78</sup> The celestial bodies, exhorted to aid in the destruction of Israel's enemies, heeded the request and continued to shine until the Israelite armies had completed the slaughter.<sup>79</sup> The poem was taken by the narrator from a collection of songs called "The Book of Yashar," or "The Book of the Upright," or "Brave." Its date cannot be definitely fixed; probably it was written while the battle was still fresh in the memory of the people, and yet sufficiently removed to allow the story of a miraculous prolongation of the day to arise.

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<sup>75</sup> It should be noted, however, that Judg. 3. 13 and 2 Sam. 5. 10 presuppose the existence of the city during the intervening centuries.

<sup>76</sup> Schmidt, *Messages of the Poets*, p. 351.

<sup>77</sup> Steuernagel, *Joshua*, *in loco*.

<sup>78</sup> Josh. 10. 12, 13.

<sup>79</sup> Compare Judg. 5. 20.



CHAPTER XVII

ANCIENT MATERIAL EMBODIED IN THE  
PENTATEUCHAL DOCUMENTS

2. LEGAL MATERIAL



## CHAPTER XVII

### ANCIENT MATERIAL EMBODIED IN THE PENTATEUCHAL DOCUMENTS

#### 2. LEGAL MATERIAL

**The Origin and Contents of the Legal System of the Hebrews.**<sup>1</sup> In the course of the critical study of the Pentateuch the origin of the legal portions has received considerable attention; and, as in the case of the narrative sections, questions have arisen regarding the reliability of traditional views on the subject. "The traditional view of the religion of Israel represented Moses as the giver of an ethical and ritual law of a highly developed and complex nature, centuries in advance of his time, a law so high in its ethical character that, for the most part, it is applicable to-day, in spite of the wonderful advance in morals since Moses's time; a ritual law so complicated that, even after the nation turned into a church, in the period following the exile, there were still portions of that ritual which were impracticable of execution."<sup>2</sup>

There appears to be no good reason for doubting that, whatever the inheritance from other ages and peoples may have been, the beginnings of the distinctively Hebrew

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<sup>1</sup> Practically the entire legal system of the Hebrews is embodied in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; outside of the Pentateuch the most important piece of legislation is Ezek. 40-48.

<sup>2</sup> J. P. Peters, *The Religion of Moses*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XXI, ii, p. 101. Compare also *The Religion of the Hebrews*, p. 81.

system of laws, in all its aspects—judicial, moral, and religious—may be traced to the activity and influence of Moses. It was he who proclaimed Yahweh to be the one and only God of Israel, and Israel to be the peculiar people of Yahweh; and in order to maintain and perpetuate the new relationship it became incumbent upon him somehow to regulate the relation of the people, as a religious unit, to their God, and of the individual members of the nation to one another and to the community as a whole. Out of this need grew a demand for the creation or adaptation of a ceremonial system, moral precepts, and judicial laws, by which the life and conduct of the people could be governed.<sup>3</sup> But while there is general agreement that Moses was the originator of the law-giving or law-making movement that culminated in the legal system—if it may be called such—in the Pentateuch, scholars are also agreed that this system in its present form cannot come from him. While engaged in the study of the Pentateuch as a whole, they discovered in the legal portions, as in the narrative sections, repetitions and discrepancies, and differences in religious conception, language, style, and scope, which led them to conclude that the complicated legal system embodied in the Pentateuch was in reality a compilation of material taken from several originally independent codes, formulated in successive periods of Hebrew history. This conclusion was confirmed by a more searching analysis of the history of Israel and of the other Old Testament books, which study also furnished the means of tracing through its successive stages the gradual development of Hebrew law.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>For the opinion of scholars that Moses is the originator of Hebrew *Torah*, see further, above, p. 90.

<sup>4</sup>See further, above, Chapters IX, X, XIII-XV.



Five distinct groups of laws or commandments may be discovered in the Pentateuch: (1) The Decalogue; (2) the Book of the Covenant; (3) the Deuteronomic Code; (4) the Holiness Code; (5) the Priestly Code. Allowing for the possibility of minor additions at later times, these codes are commonly thought to have been compiled during the following periods:

The Decalogue—in some form, in the age of Moses.

The Book of the Covenant—in the period of the Judges or of the early monarchy; certainly before the appearance of the eighth-century prophets.

The Deuteronomic Code—during the seventh century, preceding the reform movement under Josiah.

The Holiness Code—in the early years of the exile.

The Priestly Code—in the closing years of the exile and the early post-exilic period.

The origin of the Deuteronomic Code is discussed in Chapter XII, and that of the Priestly Code, which, joined with the Priestly History, represents one of the four Pentateuchal Documents, in Chapters XIII-XV, in connection with the chronological order and date of the other documents. The remaining three codes, however, came into the Pentateuch only as parts of larger documents; they were in existence as completed codes when these documents were written; they and their origin, therefore, must be considered in the discussion of the legal material embodied in the Pentateuchal Documents.

THE DECALOGUE. The Decalogue, in some form, probably represents the earliest attempt among the Hebrews to formulate a brief and easily remembered legal code, in which were included the precepts forming the basis of their religious and community life. Nor is there any reason for doubting that such a Decalogue was

given to the people by Moses. "Tradition," says C. F. Kent, resting probably on an ultimate basis of fact, assigns their<sup>5</sup> origin to Moses and the mount of revelation";<sup>6</sup> and again, "There is no reason for doubting that through Israel's first great prophet there was transmitted a primitive Decalogue—and possibly several—which defined in ten brief sentences the nation's obligations to its God."<sup>7</sup>

Differences of opinion arise as soon as the inquiry turns to the contents of the Mosaic Decalogue. The group of commandments commonly designated the Decalogue appears in two recensions, differing in details, the one in Exod. 20. 1-17, the other in Deut. 5. 6-21 (Heb. 6-18). In both cases some of the commandments have received certain hortatory additions. In its original form the Decalogue reproduced in the two passages may have read:

1. Thou shalt have no other gods beside me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of Yahweh, thy God, in vain.
4. Remember the sabbath day to hallow it.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt do no murder.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.
10. Thou shalt not covet.

Is this the Mosaic Decalogue? Kent is convinced that "the familiar prophetic Decalogue of Exod. 20. 1-17 was

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<sup>5</sup> He is referring to the origin of the "original ten words."

<sup>6</sup> *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, p. 29.

substituted by a late prophetic editor for the older Decalogue of Exod. 34.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, he believes the Decalogue in Exod. 34<sup>9</sup> to have been preceded by an earlier one, and this earlier one to have originated during the period of the United Monarchy, which would mean a relatively late date for the Decalogue in Exod. 20 and Deut. 5. And Kent assigns the latter Decalogue to a late date, for he holds that the teaching of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah underlies "this noble prophetic Decalogue";<sup>10</sup> and this opinion is shared by many modern scholars.<sup>11</sup> The evidence upon which this conclusion is based is chiefly internal, as may be seen from the statement of Addis: "The Elohist document (perhaps a later edition of it) is our earliest external witness, and that does not carry us back beyond the middle of the eighth century B. C. Nor does internal evidence point to a much earlier time. The character of the Decalogue, which is not ritual, but almost purely moral; the prohibition of images, apparently unknown to Elijah and Elisha; the refinement which forbids thoughts of covetousness (the Hebrew cannot fairly be taken otherwise) all lend support to the view that the Decalogue is grounded on the teaching of the great prophets of whose discourses we have written records. It has been compared with the loftier teaching in Mic. 6. 6-8, and may belong to the same age; that is, at earliest that of Manasseh."<sup>12</sup> W. R. Harper and other scholars maintain that, historically interpreted, the Ten Command-

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<sup>8</sup> *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> See, further, below, p. 278.

<sup>10</sup> *Beginnings of Hebrew History*, p. 182.

<sup>11</sup> See articles on *Decalogue* in Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, and in *Encyclopedia Biblica*, where numerous authorities are cited.

<sup>12</sup> *Encyclopedia Biblica*, art. "Decalogue."

ments do not necessarily presuppose so late a date; he believes that the "prophetic" Decalogue in its completed form may be assigned to "a period not much later than B. C. 750."<sup>13</sup> Another group of scholars insists that there is really nothing in the "ten words"—as preserved in expanded form in Exod. 20 and Deut. 5—that would militate against belief in Mosaic authorship.<sup>14</sup>

It is generally admitted that the chief, though perhaps not the only, difficulty arises in connection with the second commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image." Says E. Kautzsch: "There would be no valid reason for refusing to attribute to Moses himself a primitive, concise form of the Decalogue, were it not for the formidable difficulty presented by the *prohibition of the use of images*. Down to the eighth century no one seems to be acquainted with so categorical a command that images of Yahweh are not to be made."<sup>15</sup> But even this difficulty does not seem to be insurmountable. Koenig, for example, after a lengthy discussion of the whole subject reaches the conclusion that there is abundant evidence to prove that from the very beginning the legitimate Yahweh religion was opposed to the use of images as representations of Yahweh; and he can see no reason whatever for denying the Decalogue of

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<sup>13</sup> *Amos and Hosea*, p. lxii.

<sup>14</sup> J. P. Peters, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XXI, ii, pp. 101ff.; *The Religion of the Hebrews*, chap. IV; E. Sellin, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 23; E. Koenig, *Gesch. der alttest. Religion*, p. 148, where other authorities advocating the same view are named.

<sup>15</sup> Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, extra vol., p. 634. Eerdmans escapes the difficulty by assuming that only seven of the ten words came from Moses (*Theo. Tijdschrift*, xxxvii, pp. 18ff.); but there is insufficient ground for believing that the original collection contained only seven words.

Exod. 20 and Deut. 5 in its original form to Moses.<sup>16</sup> Internal evidence, therefore, does not seem to be decisive.

Another serious difficulty arises from the presence in Exod. 34. 10-28 of what appears to be another Decalogue; at any rate, the precepts in that chapter are called "the words of the covenant, the ten words," and are said to have been written upon two tables.<sup>17</sup> The Decalogue in chapter 34 is a part of J; and is thought by some to correspond to the Decalogue in Exod. 20, which is thought to have been preserved by E. Which means that those who assign the latter Decalogue to the seventh century cannot connect it with the original E, written a century earlier, but at most with a later recension or revision of E, leaving the original E without an organized Decalogue. Now, further investigation has led to the discovery within the Book of the Covenant of requirements corresponding to those in Exod. 34, from which the inference has been drawn that these laws,<sup>18</sup> though widely separated at present, originally constituted the Decalogue preserved by E. In other words, Exod. 34 is thought to contain the J recension and the verses indicated in Exod. 20, 22, 23, the E recension of an early Decalogue. The Decalogues in Exod. 20: 1-17 and Deut. 5 would, then, be still later developments inspired by the teaching of the great eighth-century prophets.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Geschichte der alttest. Religion*, pp. 200ff.; he is supported in this by other scholars, some of whom are named on p. 222. Compare also R. Kittel, *History of the Hebrews* (English translation), i, pp. 248, 249.

<sup>17</sup> Verse 28.

<sup>18</sup> Exod. 20. 23; 22. 29-31; 23. 12-19.

<sup>19</sup> See J. P. Peters, *The Religion of the Hebrews*, chap. iv, especially pp. 97, 98.

The exact wording of the Decalogue in Exod. 34 is not easily determined, for the code as there preserved contains at least twelve precepts. J. Wellhausen suggests the following arrangement:<sup>20</sup> which is accepted by many scholars,

1. Thou shalt worship no other God.
2. Thou shalt make thee no molten God.
3. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread.
4. All the first-born are mine.
5. Thou shalt keep the feast of weeks.
6. Thou shalt keep the feast of ingathering at the end of the year.
7. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven.
8. Thou shalt not retain until the morning the fat of my feast.
9. Thou shalt bring the best of the firstfruits of the field to the house of Yahweh thy God.

10. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk.  
This reconstruction is based exclusively on Exod. 34; Kent, on the basis of Exod. 34 and the relevant verses in the Book of the Covenant, seeks to restore the Decalogue underlying the J and E recensions; which differs slightly from the above:<sup>21</sup>

1. Thou shalt worship no other God.
2. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.
3. The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou observe.
4. Every first-born is mine.
5. Six days shalt thou toil, and on the seventh thou shalt rest.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Composition of the Hexateuch*, p. 333.

<sup>21</sup> *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, p. 21.

<sup>22</sup> Omitted by Wellhausen,

6. Thou shalt observe the feasts of weeks and ingathering at the end of the year.<sup>23</sup>

7. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven.

8. The fat of my feast shall not be left until morning.

9. The best of the firstfruits of thy land shalt thou bring to the house of Yahweh.

10. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk.

This Decalogue undoubtedly bears a more primitive aspect than the one in Exod. 20; moreover, its precepts are in perfect accord with what is known of the nature and character of primitive religion in general. G. F. Moore, therefore, calls the Decalogue in Exod. 34 "the earliest attempt with which we are acquainted to embody in a series of brief injunctions formulated as divine commands the essential observances of the religion of Yahweh. . . . Religion seems to be as yet untouched by the prophetic movement whose burden was that what God demands is not worship but righteousness."<sup>24</sup> The background of at least some of the precepts being clearly agricultural,<sup>25</sup> the origin of this Decalogue in written form is assigned by most scholars to the period after the settlement in Canaan; but there is no agreement regarding the exact date. Kent expresses the opinion that "it was promulgated at least as early as the days of the united monarchy,"<sup>26</sup> and more specifically, that "the primitive ten words were not put in written form until the reign of Solomon and in connection with the royal sanctuary reared by him";<sup>27</sup> others date it as late as the

<sup>23</sup> A combination of 5 and 6 in Wellhausen's arrangement.

<sup>24</sup> *Encyclopedia Biblica*, art. "Exodus."

<sup>25</sup> See especially 5, 6, 9 in Wellhausen's list, 6 and 9 in Kent's.

<sup>26</sup> *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

eighth century.<sup>28</sup> The commonly accepted theory is that this primitive Decalogue was inserted in both J and E; subsequently, under the influence of prophetic teaching the "prophetic" Decalogue was formed, taking as its starting point the earlier ten words; at a still later time, the "prophetic" Decalogue was substituted in E, perhaps by a Judahite redactor, for the older Decalogue, after Exod. 19. 20-25, while the provisions of the older Decalogue were transferred to their present positions within the limits of the Book of the Covenant.

While this explanation of the origin and mutual relation of the several Decalogues is reasonable and in accord with the general development of the theological and ethical thought of the Hebrews, the case of the defenders of the Mosaic authorship of the Decalogue in Exod. 20—aside from the hortatory additions—is by no means as hopeless as some appear to think. True, the suggestion that the requirements in Exod. 34 are nothing more than recollections of some of the precepts in the "prophetic Decalogue and in the Book of the Covenant,"<sup>29</sup> fails to do justice to the facts; nevertheless, it must be admitted that the available data are hardly sufficient to answer all questions and solve all problems connected with the origin and the mutual relation of the several Decalogues. Moreover, the existence of the "prophetic" Decalogue as the original charter of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel would furnish an adequate explanation of the physical and spiritual vigor and vitality that gave to

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<sup>28</sup> As has been stated, the requirements themselves and the decalogue form may go back to Moses, but in the beginning they were "simply inscribed on the popular memory."

<sup>29</sup> Sellin, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 25; compare also Peters, *Religion of the Hebrews*, p. 97, note 2.



the Hebrews final victory over the inhabitants of Canaan and of the distinctively ethical tone of Hebrew religion as proclaimed by its leaders from the time of Moses on. It may be wise, therefore, to heed the words of R. L. Ottley: "The facts as they stand are perplexing, and justify a suspension of judgment. It is reasonable to suppose that the Decalogue in its present form bears traces of expansion in prophetic times; at the same time it lays down principles of morality which are so elementary as to be strictly consistent with what we know of the condition of Israel in Mosaic times. It is difficult to see what other precepts could have been better adapted to lift the Hebrews above the degraded nature religion of their heathen neighbors, to teach them the true character of their divine Deliverer, and to educate them in the rudiments of social justice and humanity."<sup>30</sup>

**The Book of the Covenant.**<sup>31</sup> This group of laws owes its title to Exod. 24. 7, which, in referring to it, uses the expression "book of the covenant." That it is meant to serve as the charter of a covenant is suggested also by the promises made to those who obey its provisions.<sup>32</sup> The laws contained in the collection comprise two elements: "the words" and "the ordinances" or "judgments" of Yahweh.<sup>33</sup> They deal with a variety of subjects; as they stand at present the transitions are frequently abrupt,

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<sup>30</sup> *The Religion of Israel*, p. 36.

<sup>31</sup> The law code proper extends from Exod. 20. 22 to 23. 19; including the exhortations and promises it extends to 23. 33.

<sup>32</sup> 23. 20-33.

<sup>33</sup> Exod. 24. 3. The "ordinances," all stated hypothetically, are found in 21. 1 to 22. 17, 25a, 26; 23. 4, 5; the "words," in the nature of direct commands, occupy the rest of the book down to 23. 19; the succeeding verses, as already stated, containing promises to those who live in harmony with the preceding commandments.

and numerous adjustments are necessary to make a systematic arrangement possible. Many modern scholars hold that originally the Book of the Covenant was arranged on the principle of the Decalogue; that is, the code in its original form is thought to have consisted, not, like the Decalogue, of ten individual commandments, but of ten complete Decalogues, each divisible into two groups of five individual laws. Corresponding to the two tables of the Decalogue, the Book of the Covenant has further been divided into two groups, each consisting of five related Decalogues: (1) Judgments—dealing with civil and criminal cases; (2) Religious and Humane Laws.<sup>34</sup> By transferring a few verses from Deuteronomy it becomes possible to reconstruct the five Decalogues of the first group; of the second only four Decalogues can be found, and though traces of a fifth may be discovered, there is no way of restoring it.

Kent's outline of the code is as follows:

## I. JUDGMENTS

### *First Decalogue: The Rights of Slaves*

First Pentad—Males, Exod. 21. 2, 3a, 3b, 4, 5-6.

Second Pentad—Females, Exod. 21. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

### *Second Decalogue: Assaults*

First Pentad—Capital Offenses, Exod. 21. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

Second Pentad—Minor Offenses, Exod. 21. 18-19, 20, 21, 26, 27.

<sup>34</sup> A full discussion of this rearrangement is found in C. F. Kent, *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, pp. 26ff., where mention is made of some of the scholars who have contributed to the development of the theory.

*Third Decalogue: Laws Regarding Domestic Animals*

First Pentad—Injuries by Animals, Exod. 21. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32.

Second Pentad—Injuries to Animals, Exod. 21. 33-34, 35, 36; 22. 1, 4.

*Fourth Decalogue: Responsibility for Property*

First Pentad—In General, Exod. 22. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Second Pentad—In Cattle, Exod. 22. 10-11, 13, 14, 15a, 15b.

*Fifth Decalogue: Social Purity*

First Pentad—Adultery, Deut. 22. 13-19, 20-21, 22, 23-24, 25-27.

Second Pentad—Fornication and Apostasy, Exod. 22. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

## II. CEREMONIAL AND HUMANE LAWS

*First Decalogue: Kindness*

First Pentad—Toward Men, Exod. 22. 21a, 22-23, 25a, 25b, 26-27.

Second Pentad—Toward Animals, Exod. 23. 4 (Deut. 22. 1); 22. 2, 3; 23. 5 (Deut. 22. 4); 22. 6-7.

*Second Decalogue: Justice*

First Pentad—Among Equals, Exod. 23. 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3.

Second Pentad—On the Part of Those in Authority, Exod. 23. 6, 7a, 7b, 7c, 8.

*Third Decalogue: Duties to God*

First Pentad—Worship, Exod. 20. 23a, 23b, 24, 25, 26.

Second Pentad—Loyalty, Exod. 22. 28, 29a, 29b, 30, 31.

*Fourth Decalogue: Sacred Seasons*

First Pentad—Command to Observe them, Exod. 23. 10-11, 12, 15a, 16a, 16b.

Second Pentad—Method of Observing them, Exod. 23. 17, 18a, 18b, 19a, 19b.<sup>35</sup>

The date of the Book of the Covenant is a matter of dispute. The statements in Exod. 23. 1ff. imply Mosaic authorship,<sup>36</sup> and this is accepted by some recent writers.<sup>37</sup> But since it is generally admitted that chapter 24 reflects simply the view of the later editor who is responsible for the present position of the code, its testimony cannot be considered absolutely final. Even Sellin feels at liberty to reject the statement that the code was given on Mount Sinai; he interprets it as the law given by Moses shortly before the crossing of the Jordan; and he thinks that at one time it preceded Deut. 27, from which position it was displaced subsequently by the Deuteronomic Code.

In the absence of sufficient external evidence the question must be decided on the basis of internal evidence and other more general considerations. Now it seems incredible that Moses should have settled all disputes

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<sup>35</sup> If the whole of chap. 20 could be included in the Book of the Covenant, the "prophetic" Decalogue in verses 1-17 would supply the missing Decalogue; but this Decalogue is so different from the rest of the book and offers so many parallels to it, that it cannot be so regarded. It is not impossible, however, that its presence may be responsible for the omission of one Decalogue from the Book of the Covenant, and thus, for the practical substitution of this one for the other.

<sup>36</sup> Though, perhaps, only in the sense discussed above, p. 90.

<sup>37</sup> Sellin, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, pp. 23, 24; Koenig, *Geschichte der alttest. Religion*, p. 148.

brought before him simply by reference to the Decalogue, whatever its original form and contents may have been; he must have made his decisions more specific; and if so, it is very probable that at least some of these decisions were written down for the guidance of succeeding generations. Moreover, some of the provisions now in the Book of the Covenant are quite suitable for that early age. On the other hand, the code as a whole seems to reflect a somewhat more advanced stage of civilization. "The society contemplated in it is of very simple structure. The basis of life is agricultural. Cattle and agricultural produce are the main elements of wealth; and the laws of property deal almost exclusively with them. The principles of criminal and civil justice are those still current among the Arabs of the desert, namely, retaliation and pecuniary compensation. Murder is dealt with by the law of blood revenge; but the distinction is drawn between murder and manslaughter, and the innocent manslayer may seek an asylum at God's altar (21. 13, 14). With murder are ranked man-stealing, offenses against parents, and witchcraft. Other injuries are occasions of self-help, or of private suits to be adjusted at the sanctuary (22. 9). Personal injuries fall under the law of retaliation, just as murder does. A blow for a blow is still the law of the Arabs; and in Canaan, no doubt, as in the desert, the retaliation was usually sought in the way of self-help. Except in this form, there is no punishment, but only compensation, which in some cases is at the will of the injured party, but in general is defined by law. Degrading punishments are unknown, and loss of liberty is inflicted only upon the thief who cannot pay a fine (22.3). Definite rights are secured for the slave. He recovers his freedom after seven years,

unless he prefers to remain a bondman, and seals solemnly his determination at the door of the sanctuary. His right of blood revenge against his master is, however, limited (21. 20, 21); though instead of the *lex talionis* for minor injuries, he can claim his liberty (21. 26, 27). Women do not enjoy full social equality with men. Women slaves are slaves for life, but were often, it may be inferred, married to members or servants of the family (21. 4, 7-9). The daughter was her father's property (21. 7), who received a price for surrendering her to a husband; and so a daughter's dishonor was compensated by law as a pecuniary loss to her father (22. 16, 17)."<sup>38</sup>

Evidently, the state of society reflected in the code is exceedingly simple; and yet it seems in advance of conditions in the days of Moses. True, it is not impossible to think of Moses as giving laws suitable for an environment more advanced than the one in which he lived, especially since he must have looked forward to the settlement in Canaan, when the people's mode of living would necessarily undergo a change,<sup>39</sup> nevertheless, it is unquestionably more natural to explain the laws as arising out of present needs of the people for whom they were intended. This being the case, the Book of the Covenant may be described as a collection of Mosaic decisions, modified and expanded in accord with the needs of later generations.

But it is difficult to say at what period subsequently to Moses it assumed the form in which it was embodied in one of the Pentateuchal documents. That it was

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<sup>38</sup> W. R. Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2nd ed., pp. 336ff.

<sup>39</sup> Koenig, *Geschichte der alttest. Religion*, p. 149.

prior to the time of Amos is beyond question;<sup>40</sup> but it is no easy task to locate it more definitely between the age of Moses and the age of the eighth-century prophets. There is no convincing reason for bringing it down beyond the age of the Judges; nevertheless, Kent, followed by other scholars, believes that he has excellent reasons for saying: "These<sup>41</sup> represent, therefore, the growth of Israel's laws and institutions from the early period, about 1150, to about B. C. 750, when Amos and Hosea and Isaiah appeared as the heralds of a new era in the political and religious life of the Hebrew race."<sup>42</sup>

THE LAW OF HOLINESS.<sup>43</sup> Peculiarities of form, contents, and expression have convinced modern scholars that Lev. 17-26 existed at one time as an independent code.<sup>44</sup> The designation "Law of Holiness,"<sup>45</sup> first suggested by Klostermann, finds justification in the fact that the central theme of the whole code is holiness, moral and ceremonial. Its motto is: "Ye shall be holy: for I Jehovah am holy";<sup>46</sup> and one of its striking characteristics is the impressive refrain, "I am Jehovah," which occurs forty-six times.

<sup>40</sup> W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, p. lxviii.

<sup>41</sup> Exod. 20. 23 to 23. 19; 34.

<sup>42</sup> *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, p. 30.

<sup>43</sup> Lev. 17-26.

<sup>44</sup> It is not improbable that originally the code was more extensive than it is now. Some of its laws may have been omitted by the redactor who made H (=Law of Holiness) a part of the Priestly Code; others may have been transferred to other parts of the Pentateuch; for example, the food laws in Lev. 11, and the law concerning fringes, in Num. 15. 37-41.

<sup>45</sup> Heiligkeitsgesetz; see *Zeitschrift fuer Lutherische Theologie*, 1877, pp. 401ff.

<sup>46</sup> 19. 2; compare 22. 31-33.

As in the case of the Book of the Covenant, attempts have been made to subdivide the Law of Holiness into a series of Decalogues,<sup>47</sup> but such an arrangement necessitates in many instances a disregard of the present order. The code deals with a variety of topics; it is noteworthy, however, that it lays much less stress upon civil and criminal laws than upon moral and ceremonial requirements. The more important subjects covered in the laws are: The slaughter of animals and sacrifice,<sup>48</sup> unchastity and Moloch worship,<sup>49</sup> religious and moral behavior,<sup>50</sup> penalties for Moloch worship, unlawful marriage, and other offenses,<sup>51</sup> regulations touching priests and offerings,<sup>52</sup> the sacred seasons,<sup>53</sup> the lights of the sanctuary, the showbread, the blasphemer and his punishment,<sup>54</sup> the sabbatic year and the year of jubilee.<sup>55</sup> The code closes with a hortatory address, emphasizing the fundamental duty of loyalty to Yahweh and his commands.<sup>56</sup> It is within the bounds of the Law of Holiness that Old Testament legislation reaches its noblest expression, in the command: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."<sup>57</sup>

The individual laws did not originate with the compiler of the code. Internal evidence—for example, differences in the form of laws dealing with the same or kindred subjects—makes it probable that the author of the code had access to earlier collections, which may have been made at different times and places and in different priestly circles. No doubt he may have formu-

<sup>47</sup> L. B. Paton, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1897, pp. 31-37.

<sup>48</sup> Chap. 17.

<sup>53</sup> Chap. 23.

<sup>49</sup> Chap. 18.

<sup>54</sup> Chap. 24.

<sup>50</sup> Chap. 19.

<sup>55</sup> Chap. 25.

<sup>51</sup> Chap. 20.

<sup>56</sup> Chap. 26.

<sup>52</sup> Chaps. 21, 22.

<sup>57</sup> 19. 18.



lated and inserted new laws, but, on the whole, his work was that of adapting older laws to present conditions, of bringing them into harmony with his own point of view, and of reenforcing them by supplying suitable motives. Kent is undoubtedly right when, in speaking of these laws, he says, "Their roots are probably to be traced to the Mosaic and nomadic periods of Israelitish history."<sup>58</sup>

In language, thought, and general aim the Law of Holiness resembles Ezekiel.<sup>59</sup> The similarities are, indeed, so striking that some scholars have considered Ezekiel the author, or at least the redactor, of the code. That there are remarkable resemblances cannot be denied; it is equally true, as other scholars have pointed out, that there are such obvious differences between the two that it is almost impossible to believe that they came from one and the same author. Nevertheless, the similarities are so numerous and striking that they cannot be regarded as coincidence. There seems to be some relationship, but it is not easy to answer the inquiry, Was Ezekiel influenced by the Law of Holiness, or did the compiler of that code write under the influence of the thought and language of Ezekiel? The available evidence is so slight that there exists wide diversity of opinion on this point among scholars; some hold to the priority of Ezekiel, especially in view of the exhortations in Lev. 26; others, and they are in the majority, favor the priority of H. G. F. Moore assigns the code to the half century before Ezekiel,<sup>60</sup> and Driver thinks that the

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<sup>58</sup> *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, p. 41.

<sup>59</sup> Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 145ff.; A. T. Chapman, *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, Appendix V; Carpenter and Harford, *Composition of the Hexateuch*, pp. 269ff.; *Encyclopedia Biblica*, art. "Leviticus."

<sup>60</sup> *Encyclopedia Biblica*, vol. iii, col. 2791.

author or compiler may have been a priest-prophet living toward the closing years of the monarchy.<sup>61</sup>

That would bring the date of H very near to the date of D. Now Lev. 17. 4 might be interpreted as implying that the author recognized only one legitimate sanctuary, which would favor the priority of D; but, unfortunately, the word translated "the tabernacle (abode) of" is generally considered a later addition; if so, the original "before Yahweh" would be in perfect accord with the earlier recognition of a multiplicity of sanctuaries. On the whole, however, the evidence points to the priority of D; the priestly interest is more prominent in H than in D, and the former places much more emphasis on the ritual than the latter. Hence there is good support for the view that "in subject matter and aim H stands midway between the prophetic codes of Deuteronomy and the priestly codes of Ezekiel and the later writers who place the emphasis chiefly upon the ceremonial. . . . It is probable, therefore, that the original draft of this code was made between the first and final captivity (B. C. 597-586), a period in which the more enlightened leaders, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, saw clearly that the state was doomed, and that Israel's laws and institutions, if they were to be preserved, must be put into written form."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 151.

<sup>62</sup> C. F. Kent, *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, p. 41; see also below, p. 305.

CHAPTER XVIII  
THE GROWTH OF THE PENTATEUCH



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE GROWTH OF THE PENTATEUCH

THE earliest literary period in Israel, as among other peoples, was preceded by an age of song and story. Some of the songs considered in Chapter XVI may be assigned to that early age,<sup>1</sup> and others, not preserved in the Old Testament, may have been in existence.<sup>2</sup> These songs, dealing with significant incidents and events in the history of the clan, tribe, or nation, and with the heroic deeds of individuals, were highly prized and frequently repeated both by the common people and by professional singers. In the course of time collections of these songs were made, two of which are referred to in the Old Testament. "The Book of the Wars (of Yahweh),"<sup>3</sup> mentioned in Num. 21. 14, was a collection of songs commemorating the mighty deeds of Yahweh and of his people in connection with the struggles for the possession of Palestine; "The Book of Yashar" or "the Upright" is mentioned two or three times.<sup>4</sup> It is not quite clear whether Israel or Yahweh is to be regarded as the Up-

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<sup>1</sup> The Song of the Sword, Gen. 4. 23, 24; the Curse of Canaan, Gen. 9. 25-27; the Blessing of Jacob, Gen. 49. 2-27; the Triumph Song over the Downfall of the Egyptians, Exod. 15. 1-18; the poetic fragments in Num. 21; the Oracles of Balaam, Num. 23, 24; the Song of Moses, Deut. 32; the Blessing of Moses, Deut. 33.

<sup>2</sup> This is a safe inference from the frequent allusions to songs accompanying banquets and other festal occasions; for example, Gen. 31. 27; 2 Sam. 19. 35; Amos 6. 5; Isa. 5. 12; 16. 10, etc.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 259.

<sup>4</sup> Josh. 10. 13; 2 Sam. 1. 18; and, perhaps, 1 Kings 8. 53.

right; in either case, this collection, like "the Book of the Wars," seems to have contained songs inspired by incidents in the early history of the people.

Unfortunately, only a few of the early songs have been preserved, and some of these in fragmentary form. The abbreviations and other alterations—aside from textual corruptions—may, perhaps, be traced to two causes: (1) As long as the individual songs or the collections were known to the people it was not necessary to embody the songs in their entirety in the historical records; brief references or quotations would be sufficient to recall the whole of the poem as found in the song book. (2) The later literature was written from the standpoint of religion; hence everything that could not be accommodated under the later religious point of view was omitted.<sup>5</sup>

Alongside of these songs existed stories and legends centering around important persons and events. "We must ascribe," says E. Kautzsch, "to an actual tradition, handed down from the preliterate period, the largest part of the matter furnished by the ancient documentary sources in the Pentateuch and Joshua."<sup>6</sup> Some of this material goes back to early pre-Mosaic times. For instance, as soon as men learned to observe the phenomena of nature they sought answers to the questions: Whence came the world? Whence came man? How did evil and death come into the world? etc. The early Semites, long before there was a Hebrew people, furnished answers to these inquiries. When the ancestors of the Hebrews separated from the common stock they carried these

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<sup>5</sup> E. Kautzsch, *Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

traditions with them; then, in their new home, they developed them and impressed upon them the stamp of their own national and religious characteristics. In this manner may have originated and grown some of the stories in Gen. I-II.

As among other peoples, so among the families, clans, and tribes out of which developed the Hebrew nation, stories and even cycles of stories grew up, centering around prominent ancestors, especially such as distinguished themselves in battle or in connection with other epoch-making events. These stories would be handed down from father to son, or from family to family, and they might be told and retold by professional story-tellers on various occasions, even outside of the immediate circles in which they originated. Some of the patriarchal stories may be of this nature. The most significant event in early Hebrew history was the Exodus from Egypt, which furnished an immense mass of new material to the story-teller: the life and activity of Moses, the Exodus and the events connected with it, the desert wanderings, the entrance into Palestine and the subsequent conflicts under the leadership of the champions known as the Judges. After the occupation of Palestine the Hebrews assimilated a large part of the native population and rededicated to Yahweh many of the local shrines and sanctuaries. Is it not at least probable that with the sanctuaries many of the traditions that had grown up around the sacred places were taken over by the invaders until gradually they became a part of their own popular traditions?

But in time the new religion introduced by Moses permeated all the earlier stories, whatever their origin and original home may have been, and caused various

modifications that brought them into line with the newer and higher religious conceptions. In all probability much of this material continued to be preserved and handed down in oral form; on the other hand, it is not impossible that even at this early time some of the stories assumed written form.

Moses did two things for his people: (1) He succeeded in combining the heterogeneous elements into a national unity; and (2) he gave to this unity a practical monotheism; all of which finds expression in the watchword: "Yahweh the God of Israel, Israel the people of Yahweh." But to place this work upon a permanent basis it was necessary to establish a political organization, however simple, to formulate or adapt laws for the purpose of regulating the relation of the people to their God, and of the individual members of the new nation to one another, and, further, to introduce various institutions that were essential for the maintenance of the religious, social and political life. Some of the laws and regulations given by Moses may well have found a place in the later, and more complete, legal system of the Hebrews.

The entrance into Palestine transformed a considerable number of the Hebrew nomads and seminomads into agriculturists. The new mode of living produced far-reaching social changes and consequently necessitated the adaptation of older laws to the new conditions and the formulation of new laws. Moreover, with the general advance in culture and civilization reading and writing became more common;<sup>7</sup> and, perhaps, efforts were made, especially at the sanctuaries, to preserve in more permanent form the songs and stories of the past. There

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<sup>7</sup> Judg. 8. 14 implies the wide prevalence of the art of writing.



too attempts may have been made to codify the legal decisions handed down from earlier times. The Book of the Covenant may represent such a collection.

During the period of the United Monarchy further advances in civilization were made. There were new poetic outbursts; and now, for the first time, traces of connected prose writing appear. The earliest efforts dealt with events of the recent past, especially with those centering around Saul and David. But the literary interest, once awakened, continued to flourish even after the division of the kingdom subsequently to the death of Solomon. The royal annals, begun under the United Kingdom, were continued, and the broader literary interest manifested itself among the prophets in the collection of ancient songs and stories, and their compilation—after impressing upon them the conceptions and ideals of the collectors—into extensive narrative works, which endeavored to trace history back to the beginning of man's life on earth.<sup>8</sup> Several compilations of this kind may have been undertaken, both in the southern kingdom and in the north; but only two of them, the Yahwist, written in Judah, and the Elohist, written in Israel, exerted any marked influence on later literary developments affecting the growth of the Pentateuch.

The Jehovistic or Yahwistic document was written first.<sup>9</sup> It opened with an account of creation, the origin of sin, and the introduction of important occupations and institutions known to the writer. Through the story of the tower of Babel he sought to account for the dispersion of mankind, and the rise of nations and languages.

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<sup>8</sup> The compilers seem to have made no attempt to harmonize traditions derived from different sources.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 242.

Then followed the patriarchal narratives, accounts of Israel's experiences in Egypt, the Exodus, the desert wanderings, the settlement in Canaan, and perhaps, the early decades of the monarchy, down to the accession of Solomon. Here and there brief legal sections were embodied. The original document was expanded at different times by the addition of other narratives and of archaeological or explanatory notes. These additions can be distinguished from the original work by variations in vocabulary and point of view; but the work in its final form was dominated by the same essentially prophetic tone and spirit that characterized the earliest portions.

Within the century following the compilation of the Yahwistic history in Judah the prophets in the northern kingdom undertook a similar task, and they produced a history resembling in many respects that written in the south. There are, however, some very marked differences between the two. Though there is abundant evidence of a pronounced religious and ethical purpose in J, the historical interest is at least equally marked. Evidently, the author made a serious effort to trace the development of Israel as a race and as a nation. "The great crises and their significance are graphically portrayed. The interest in the heroes of the nation and their valiant achievements is that of a devoted patriot. The origin of Israel's social and religious institutions also commands attention. But a still broader and deeper purpose is everywhere evident, which reveals not only the patriotic historian but the prophet. Israel's history is recounted, not because it was glorious, but because it effectively illustrates God's gracious attitude toward men, and the inevitable consequences of right or wrong acts."<sup>10</sup> This emphasis is to

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<sup>10</sup> C. F. Kent, *The Historical Bible*, i, p. 24.

some extent reversed in the northern history. It reveals less interest in the history of the nation as such; its primary concern is the development of the theocracy, in which the prophet occupied the commanding position. Consequently, direct divine interferences in Israel's history are much more frequent than in J. The author's interest centering in the theocracy, he began his narrative with Abraham, who was the first to receive the theocratic promise. It too may have continued the story well into the period of the United Monarchy.

The next significant step in the development of the Pentateuch was the combination of these two documents, the Yahwistic and the Elohist, into one continuous history. When the northern kingdom was dissolved in B. C. 722 many pious Israelites who escaped deportation emigrated to Judah, where they hoped to enjoy a more congenial religious atmosphere than among the colonists brought from the east. Naturally, these emigrants carried with them the literary treasures of the north, or at least some of them, among them the Elohist history. The circulation of this history by the side of the Judæan narrative might prove confusing; at the same time it was so full of valuable didactic material that its suppression would mean a decided loss to the religious life of the south. A great, inspired, prophetic soul, recognizing the value of the northern document, decided to combine the two narratives. When this was done cannot be definitely decided; the era of reaction during the reign of Manasseh would seem to offer a most suitable occasion, for it was then that the very lessons taught in and by these histories needed to be impressed upon the people.

As might be expected, the native history was made the basis of the compilation; material from the other source

being introduced in suitable places. Sometimes two accounts of the same incident were fused into one; sometimes the parallel accounts were retained side by side; in other instances only one account, usually that of J, was retained; when there was but one version of a story it was reproduced, whether it came from the northern or the southern document. In this manner the most valuable elements in both histories were preserved; but, as is natural, minor inconsistencies and abrupt transitions abounded in the composite narrative. Legal elements found in J and E were embodied in their proper places; and it is not impossible that some laws not found in either were introduced at this time. There is no good reason for thinking that after the completion of the compilation efforts were made to destroy the two independent narratives; they may have continued to be read for generations, or even centuries; but in the end they were entirely superseded by the composite work.

During the same general period another Pentateuchal document, the Deuteronomic Code, assumed literary form. After the establishment of the monarchy, and especially beginning with the reign of Solomon, the life and society of Israel became increasingly complex. Intercourse with foreign nations opened the way for the introduction of foreign beliefs, customs and institutions, which, in turn, affected the religious and ethical ideals of the people, until the uniqueness of Yahweh religion was seriously threatened. The crisis became acute in the eighth century. On the one hand, external prosperity led to moral and religious corruption; on the other, the successes of Assyria threatened to destroy belief in the power and supremacy of Yahweh as the God of Israel. The severity of the crisis called forth four prophets of

unusual insight and spiritual power—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah.<sup>11</sup> Their teaching established new ethical and religious standards, and under king Hezekiah a serious attempt was made to put the prophetic teaching into practice throughout the whole of Judah.

The era of reform under Hezekiah was followed by the reactionary reign of Manasseh, during which the voice of prophecy was silent. For half a century or more the anti-Yahwistic party was supreme. The old Canaanite cults and the newly introduced Assyrian beliefs and practices commanded the devotion of the people, while the sublime teaching of the eighth-century prophets was forgotten. It was the very seriousness of the situation that opened the eyes of the spiritually-minded to the needs of the hour. The spirit of Isaiah still lived in his disciples, Yahweh was still watching over his people. Prevented from preaching, the prophets were compelled to devise other and better means to accomplish the desired results. They resorted to writing, and endeavored to put their teaching into a form more permanent and, at the same time, intelligible to all. They realized that in order to reach the masses they must put even the loftiest principles into concrete form; hence they adopted, so far as possible, previously existing forms, usages, and traditions, eliminated the lower, unspiritual elements, and poured into them a deeper and more spiritual significance. The noblest results of this activity found expression in the Deuteronomic Code.

The laws of Deuteronomy do not represent a break with Israel's past; they mark, rather, a development and expansion of earlier legislation in the spirit of the eighth-century prophets. The spirit of D is preeminently pro-

<sup>11</sup> F. C. Eiselen, *The Minor Prophets*, pp. 210ff.

phetic, not priestly; service is ever placed above sacrifice. To love and to serve Yahweh with all the heart and soul and might is the supreme demand.<sup>12</sup> The specific laws are presented simply as means whereby this love may express itself. Three fourths of the laws in the earlier codes are reproduced in some form in D. The omission of some of the others is to be accounted for by the purpose of the new code: it was intended for popular use, while the omitted laws were primarily for the guidance of those who administered the law. The omission or alteration of other earlier laws and the addition of new ones are to be traced to changes in the political, social, and religious conditions and to the teaching of the eighth-century prophets. In the words of Kent: "The lofty ideals of justice and social righteousness that permeate the book of Deuteronomy are clearly traceable to the sermons of Amos and Isaiah, and its distinctive spirit, that of love to God and man, is the clear reflection of the central doctrine of Hosea."<sup>13</sup>

The extent of D in its original form is a matter of dispute. Many hold that it contained only what corresponds in the present book to chapters 12-19 and 26, *plus* the blessings and curses in chapter 28, though the latter in a simpler form than they now have. But even if the original D was as short as is claimed, the whole legal section, chapters 5-28, must have been completed before the exile in B. C. 586. The original document probably opened with a brief historical introduction,<sup>14</sup> which was later expanded, on the basis of either the independent J and E, chiefly the latter, or the combined

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<sup>12</sup> Deut. 6. 4ff.

<sup>13</sup> C. F. Kent, *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, p. 32.

<sup>14</sup> Deut. 4. 45-49.

JE, into the lengthy introduction now filling chapters 1-4. Chapters 29-34 also contain later additions made at different times and from different sources.<sup>15</sup>

After the acceptance of D as the law of the land the desirability of combining the new law code with the earlier documents that had come to occupy a unique place in the thought of the people was soon felt. This feeling received a new impetus after the dissolution of the national life, when the few remains of national literature came to be highly prized. The exact process or processes of combination can no longer be traced. If it were certain that the narrative sections in D were based on the combined JE, it might be assumed that during the exile in Babylonia a religious patriot, or a school of such men, set about the task of combining D with JE. In doing this they introduced but few modifications in the narrative portions to the close of what is now the book of Numbers. At this point they introduced the Deuteronomic Code, which may have necessitated other modi-

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<sup>15</sup> In its present form the book of Deuteronomy consists, aside from the introductory historical section (chaps. 1-4), and the farewell speeches, exhortations, blessings, curses, etc. (chaps. 27-34) of seven loosely connected groups of laws:

(1) The prophetic Decalogue, followed by a series of exhortations based chiefly on the first command (chaps. 5-11).

(2) Ceremonial and religious laws (12. 1 to 17. 7).

(3) Appointment and duties of the officials in the theocracy—judges, kings, priests, and prophets (17. 8 to 18. 22).

(4) Criminal laws (19. 1-21; 21. 1-9).

(5) Military laws, to be observed in case of war (20. 1-20; 21. 10-14).

(6) A miscellaneous collection of civil, criminal, humane, and religious laws, many of which are closely related to laws in the other groups (21. 15 to 25. 19).

(7) Presentation of the first-born and the triennial tithe (26. 1-19). Compare Kent, *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, p. 34.

fications and additions.<sup>16</sup> As was first suggested by Kuenen,<sup>17</sup> the Book of the Covenant may originally have occupied this place, and was transferred to its present position in order to make room for D. Another suggestion is that for a time two editions of D were current, one consisting of chapters 12-26, with chapters 5-11 as introduction, the other consisting of chapters 12-26, with 1. 1 to 4. 40 as introduction.<sup>18</sup> According to this theory, the task of the compiler would have been twofold: (1) the combination of the two recensions of D, and (2) the combination of the result with JE. A still different theory is advanced by E. Sellin, namely, that a short time before the exile D was combined with E, and that during the Babylonian exile this combination ED was united with JE, the result being JED.<sup>19</sup> Whatever the exact method of procedure may have been, it seems clear that at some time during the sixth century D was united with JE, the compiler or compilers introducing into the older work such modifications as were necessary to maintain or establish a logical arrangement.

The efforts of the Deuteronomic editor or editors did not confine themselves to the sections of JE dealing with the periods preceding the death of Moses, though it is not improbable that they introduced a definite and well-marked division at the point where the close of Moses's activity was recorded. They edited or revised, from the standpoint of D, the sections of JE that contained the later history and also the historical documents independent of JE, which traced the national history beyond

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<sup>16</sup> C. Steuernagel, *Deuteronomium*, Sec. 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Hexateuch*, pp. 258ff.

<sup>18</sup> Bennett and Adeney, *Biblical Introduction*, p. 51.

<sup>19</sup> *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 49.



the United Monarchy. In doing this they made the ideals of D the criterion by which they judged the whole course of the history. The result was what may be called a Deuteronomic history from creation to the exile, parts of which are found, outside of the Pentateuch, in Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

The Deuteronomic Code, though recognizing the value and importance of priestly institutions, was written from the prophetic standpoint. Now, while there is no good reason for thinking that the priests placed any obstacles in the way of Josiah's reforms, or expressed dissatisfaction with the code upon which they were based, it may well be that the publication of the "prophetic" code, intended for the instruction and guidance of the people, caused the priests to feel that their own interests and the interests of the phase of religion they represented demanded the collection into one, easily accessible, code of at least the more fundamental laws or *tōrōth*, which had grown up at various priestly centers and which dealt more particularly with priestly interests and ideals. The result was the so-called Law of Holiness, which internal evidence, especially its close affinity with the literature of the latter part of the seventh and the early part of the sixth century, such as Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and especially Ezekiel, proves to have been compiled shortly before the exile of B. C. 586.<sup>20</sup> Even a superficial study shows that the laws of H reflect primarily priestly interests and practice. At any rate, the parts which have been preserved<sup>21</sup> "deal largely with subjects in which the priesthood had a peculiar interest—the physical qualifica-

<sup>20</sup> See above, p. 290.

<sup>21</sup> The original code may have been more extensive than the body of laws embodied in the Pentateuch.

tions of priests, restrictions on mourning and on marriage, conditions which prevent their eating sacrificial food, the examination of animals for sacrifice, and the celebration of the feasts.<sup>22</sup> After its completion the code may have been carried to Babylonia by a member of the priestly circles to which Ezekiel belonged. At any rate, it exerted a profound influence on the latter's thinking and preaching, as is attested, for instance, by the fact that the principle underlying the laws of Ezekiel is the same kind of holiness as is insisted upon in the Law of Holiness—the supreme holiness of Yahweh and the corresponding obligation of the people to reflect this holiness.

The work of Ezekiel and the Babylonian exile in general proved of the greatest significance in the development of Israel's literature and religion. With the promulgation of D began the reign of written law; the Law of Holiness and the laws of Ezekiel marked a further step in the same direction; but the highest development of the legalistic tendency during the Old Testament period may be seen in the Priestly Code. Self-examination and contrition for past sins led many of the exiles into a new and higher religious experience and life; they came to understand—in large part as a result of the activity and teaching of Jeremiah and Ezekiel—that true religion did not depend on the existence of the state, the sacred city, or the temple, but on the relation of the individual to his God.

While this spiritualizing process was going on, the question seems to have arisen in the minds of some of the religious thinkers: Having reached the higher stage of religion, how may the people avoid the lapses of the past? Apparently, the prophetic method had not proved a com-

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<sup>22</sup> G. F. Moore, *Encyclopedia Biblica*, art. "Leviticus."

plete success; generation after generation these courageous preachers of righteousness had done their best to create a pure and holy nation; but after the lapse of centuries the people seemed to be still far short of the ideal. Then the thought suggested itself that, perhaps, the method of the prophets was not the one best adapted to the needs of the time. Perhaps the people had not yet reached the stage of mental and spiritual development when they might be trusted to apply the lofty, spiritual principles of religion to the ordinary affairs of everyday life. It might be safer and more effective to lay down definite rules and urge the people to observe these, and thus avoid the failures of the past.

It was this kind of reasoning that gave birth to the legalism of the postexilic period, already foreshadowed in the Law of Holiness and in the work of Ezekiel.<sup>23</sup> The movement was hastened by the profound sense of guilt created within the people as a result of the experiences of the exile. In the attempt to propitiate Yahweh new festivals were introduced, new forms of sacrifice were instituted, and older institutions, sacrifices, and festivals assumed a new and deeper significance. With the feeling of unworthiness came an almost overpowering sense of the awful holiness of Yahweh, who, it came to be thought, could be approached only by means of an elaborate and beautiful ritual and ceremonial. Moreover, the Jewish exiles could not remain uninfluenced by the magnificent temples and splendid forms of worship of the pious Babylonians. In the light of all these facts is it any wonder that among the religious leaders of the

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<sup>23</sup> In the beginning the movement was permeated by a spirit of intense moral earnestness; the exaggeration of the letter is a later development.

Jews the conviction grew that the supreme need of the hour was an elaborate and beautiful ritual and a legal system comprehensive enough to regulate every detail of life?

The new ideals found concrete expression in the elaborate system of laws and regulations which constitutes the so-called Priestly Code.<sup>24</sup> Underlying the entire body of laws is the conviction reflected also in the earlier collections, that Israel is ordained to be a holy community, sanctified by the presence of Yahweh himself. Consequently, the nation is treated as a religious community, whose chief mission is to live for the service of God; and the whole legislation is meant to maintain the right kind of relation between Yahweh and his people, or, if in any way it should be interrupted, to restore it.

The legislation of the Priestly Code was not a new creation; on the contrary, it reproduced many laws and legal precedents that had been handed down from the

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<sup>24</sup> Provisions taken from this code are found principally in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. That it deals almost exclusively with the external, ceremonial aspect of religion may be seen from the following brief survey of the more important laws in the Code:

Law of circumcision (Gen. 17).

Law of the Passover (Exod. 12).

Regulations regarding the tabernacle and its furniture, the dress and consecration of the priests, the law of the daily burnt-offering, etc. (Exod. 25-31; 35-40).

Ritual of various kinds of sacrifice (Lev. 1. 1 to 6. 7).

Regulations relating to the priests, their dress, perquisites, etc. (Lev. 6. 8 to 10. 20).

Laws of purification and atonement (Lev. 11-16; Num. 5, 19).

Commendation of tithes and vows (Lev. 27; Num. 30).

Law of the Nazirite (Num. 6).

Duties and revenues of priests and Levites (Num. 18), the Levitical cities (Num. 35. 1-8). A more detailed analysis may be found in Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iii, p. 70.

earliest days of Hebrew history. However, many of these early laws had undergone various modifications, and the priestly compiler or editor embodied them in his collection in a form which, he believed, would meet the religious needs of the age for the guidance of which he was compiling the new code. It is not improbable that the Law of Holiness served as the nucleus around which the material taken from different sources was arranged; at any rate, it seems to have been a part of the new code from the beginning.

As long as the religious leaders of the Jews retained the spirit and moral earnestness of the prophets the detailed legal system might prove a valuable means of religious education, to "develop and deepen the sense of sin, and to awaken in devout souls religious affections—trust, devotion, self-surrender, thankful love, the longing for divine grace." Nevertheless, through its excessive emphasis of external forms and ceremonies it would prove an ever-present danger to true religion, for it would be very easy to define religion in terms of ritual and form, to drift into a spirit of formalism, and to confuse technical holiness with moral purity. Unfortunately, later generations yielded to the temptation, until the religion of the great mass of people became an empty form, lacking all vitality and power. Thus, estimating the significance of the Priestly Code in the light of later happenings, one is compelled to regard it as a step backward in the religious thought and life of Israel.

The new law, having behind it the authority of the name of Moses, soon came to be accepted and revered as final authority in all matters of faith and conduct. In other words, the seat of authority was transferred from the present experience of communion with God to

laws thought to have been given when God was much nearer to his people. The greater emphasis on the presence of Yahweh in the past, and the resulting underestimate of the spiritual privileges of the present, created an entirely new interest in the events of the past. With it came a tendency to idealize the early stages of Israel's history, and to trace back to the better days in the long ago many of the ideas and institutions that bulked so largely in the post-exilic Judaism. This new interest in the past impelled some priest or priests, who were under the influence of the new point of view, to rewrite the early history of Israel—tracing it back to creation—perhaps for the specific purpose of providing a fitting historical setting for the laws in the Priestly Code. The writers may have known the earlier histories J and E, or the combined JED, and they may have had access to other material, oral or written; but wherever they secured the material, they brought it all under their own peculiar point of view, giving abundant evidence that their primary interest was not in the history as such, but in the origin of legal and ceremonial practices and institutions.

The Priestly Code was not the work of a few months or years; in all probability the compilers and editors worked on it for several generations, beginning in the days of Ezekiel and ending about the middle of the succeeding century. The place of their activity was Babylonia, where they formed an important element in the Yahweh community among the exiles. If Ezra returned from there in B. C. 458,<sup>25</sup> the Code may have been brought by him to Jerusalem; indeed, he may have put

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<sup>25</sup> See above, pp. 250, 251, and vol. iii of this Series, chapter on "Ezra-Nehemiah," soon to be published.

the finishing touches to the work. But whether Ezra had any connection with the Priestly Code or not, before the middle of the fifth century practically all the material that ultimately found its way into the Pentateuch had assumed literary form.

The necessity of amalgamating the two parallel histories of the Mosaic and pre-Mosaic ages—JED and P—must have been felt soon after the completion of the Priestly Code. As long as the two existed side by side, as separate works, they would appear to compete for recognition as the authoritative law of Moses or of Yahweh. Such controversy could be averted only by uniting the two into one continuous work. The task of fusing JED with P may have been undertaken by Ezra, the scribe. But if he must be excluded from consideration,<sup>26</sup> it is perfectly safe to assume that it was done by some one who, though not blind to the religious value of the earlier work, yet was in hearty sympathy with the ideals of P. Consequently, he made the document that had originated in the priestly circles of the immediate past the groundwork of the compilation, introducing in their proper places extracts from the older work, with such modifications as the changed conditions and ideals seemed to make imperative. Some material found in neither document may have been added from other early sources or may have been supplied by the compiler.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See references given in note 25.

<sup>27</sup> Since the priestly writers were interested primarily in the age of Moses, because to it was assigned the origin of the entire legal system, the composite work, like the earlier compilation, was made to close with an account of the death of the great lawgiver. This left in the hands of the priestly conservers of the national literature the closing section of the Priestly Code, dealing with the conquest

Thus, aside from minor alterations, made at a still later period, the Pentateuch reached its completed form before B. C. 400.<sup>28</sup> The finished product received the designation *Tōrāh*, or *Law*. Subsequently it was divided, at natural dividing points, into five parts or books, so that the whole came to be known as the "Five-fifths of the Law." From this title is derived the name Pentateuch, meaning "Fivefold Treatise," which was coined by Greek writers, from whom it passed into Latin and other western languages.

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and division of the land of Canaan. This was fused at a later time with the remaining portions of the Deuteronomic history of Israel, to which reference has been made on pp. 304, 305.

<sup>28</sup> See above, pp. 250, 251.



CHAPTER XIX

THE HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUE  
OF THE PENTATEUCH



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUE OF THE PENTATEUCH

PROFESSOR W. H. GREEN, in discussing the historical and religious value of the Pentateuch from the traditional point of view, uses these words: "If the Pentateuch is what it claims to be, it is of the greatest interest and value. It professes to record the origin of the world and of the human race, a primitive state of innocence from which man fell by yielding to temptation, the history of the earliest ages, the relationship subsisting between the different nations of mankind, and particularly the selection of Abraham and his descendants to be the chosen people of God, the depositaries of divine revelation, in whose line the Son of God should in due time become incarnate as the Saviour of the world. It further contains an account of the providential events accompanying the development of the seed of Abraham from a family to the nation, their exodus from Egypt, and the civil and religious institutions under which they were organized in the prospect of their entry into, and occupation of, the land of Canaan. The contents of the Pentateuch stand thus in intimate relation to the problems of physical and ethnological science, to history and archæology and religious faith. All the subsequent revelations of the Bible, and the gospel of Jesus Christ itself, rest upon the foundation of what is contained in the Pentateuch, as they either presuppose or directly affirm its truth.

“It is a question of primary importance, therefore, both in itself and in its consequences, whether the Pentateuch is a veritable, trustworthy record, or is a heterogeneous mass of legend and fable from which only a modicum of truth can be doubtfully and with difficulty elicited. Can we lay it at the basis of our investigations, and implicitly trust its representations, or must we admit that its unsupported word can only be received with caution, and that of itself it carries but little weight? In the settlement of this matter a consideration of no small consequence is that of the authorship of the Pentateuch. Its credibility is, of course, not absolutely dependent upon its Mosaic authorship. It might be all true, though it were written by another than Moses and after his time. But if it was written by Moses, then the history of the Mosaic age was recorded by a contemporary and eyewitness, one who was himself a participant and a leader in the scenes which he relates, and the legislator from whom the enactments proceeded; and it must be confessed that there is in this fact the highest possible guaranty of the accuracy and truthfulness of the whole.”<sup>1</sup>

Though Professor Green admits that the denial of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch does not necessarily destroy the historical value of the book, in another connection he insists that such denial not only robs the Pentateuch of all value but actually tends to destroy the historical basis of biblical religion. He says: “Here is no question merely of the strict inerrancy of Scripture, of absolute accuracy in unimportant minutiae, of precision in matters of science. This is not the issue raised by the theorizing of that class of biblical critics with which we

<sup>1</sup> *Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, pp. 31, 32.

<sup>2</sup> “The most conservative of the divisive critics” (p. 162).

contend.<sup>2</sup> And it is no mere question of the mode of inspiration. But it is the question whether any dependence can be placed upon the historical truth of the Bible; whether our confidence in the facts recorded in the Pentateuch rests upon any really trustworthy basis; facts, be it observed, not of mere scientific or antiquarian interest, but which mark the course of God's revelations to the patriarchs and to Moses. It is the certainty of facts which are vital to the religion of the Old Testament, and the denial of whose truth weakens the foundations on which the New Testament itself is built. The critical theory which we have been examining is destructive of all rational certainty of the reality of these truths; and thus tends to overturn the historical basis of the religion of the Bible. . . . It is no merely literary question, then, which this style of criticism raises. It is not simply whether the Pentateuch was written by one author or another, while its historic truth and its divine authority remain unaffected. The truth and evidence of the entire Mosaic history are at stake. And with this stands or falls the reality of God's revelation to Moses and the divine origin of the Old Testament."<sup>3</sup>

If the fears of Professor Green were well founded, the situation would seem to be a serious one. But is it true that the modern view of the origin of the Pentateuch has destroyed its value and threatens to undermine "the historical basis of the religion of the Bible"? There are thousands of serious-minded and devout students of the Bible who can subscribe to the testimony of Professor A. S. Peake: "I may truthfully say that my sense of the value of Scripture, my interest in it, my attachment to it, have been almost indefinitely enhanced by the new

<sup>3</sup> *Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, pp. 163, 164.

attitude and new mode of study which criticism has brought to us." <sup>4</sup> Equally clear and definite are the words of Professor Driver: "It is not the case that critical conclusions are in conflict either with the Christian creeds or with the articles of the Christian faith. Those conclusions affect not the *fact* of revelation but only its *form*. They help to determine the stages through which it passed, the different phases which it assumed, and the process by which the record of it was built up. They do not touch either the authority or the inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. They imply no change in respect to the divine attributes revealed in the Old Testament, no change in the lessons of human duty to be derived from it, no change as to the general position (apart from the interpretation of particular passages) that the Old Testament points forward prophetically to Christ. That both the religion itself and the record of its history embodied in the Old Testament are the work of men whose hearts have been touched and whose minds illuminated, in different degrees, by the Spirit of God, is manifest." <sup>5</sup>

It is generally admitted that the element which gives to the Pentateuch, or to the entire Bible, its unique value is what is commonly called its inspiration, that is, the presence in its message of a peculiar divine element. Now, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that the conclusions of the modern Pentateuchal criticism have not the slightest tendency of denying the inspiration of

<sup>4</sup>*Proceedings of the Fourth Methodist Ecumenical Conference*, p. 243.

<sup>5</sup>*Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. viii, ix. Both quotations refer to the criticism of the Old Testament as a whole; but everything that is said is equally true of Pentateuchal criticism in particular.

Moses or of any one else who may have had even the smallest share in the building up of the Pentateuch. The reality of inspiration does not depend upon the fact that a certain definite individual is responsible for a writing. A book is believed to be the result of inspiration because God is seen to be back of it and in it, and not because a certain man wrote it. Nor does belief in inspiration depend upon a knowledge of the human author, else how could men believe in the inspiration of the men who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, the book of Job, the books of Samuel, and other biblical books whose authors are not named? Moreover, an inspired book does not lose its inspiration because it is discovered that the human author inspired is one different from the man to whom tradition has been accustomed to assign the book. Green and other believers in the traditional views regarding the origin of the Pentateuch are needlessly alarmed; for it is not true that modern criticism "tends invariably . . . to absolute rationalism and the discrediting of inspiration."

Turning from these general considerations to the contents of the Pentateuch, what is the value and significance of this group of books in the light of modern knowledge? For the sake of convenience and clearness, the question may be considered under three heads: 1. The narratives dealing with the beginning of things, Gen. I. 1 to II. 9. 2. The patriarchal narratives, Gen. II. 10 to 50. 26; 3. The narratives relating the events from the Exodus to the settlement east of the Jordan.

1. **Gen. I. 1 to II. 9.** In former days these chapters were thought to give an absolutely accurate account of creation and of the earliest history of mankind. But as the result of various lines of investigation this view of the purpose of the narratives in Gen. I-II is now con-

sidered untenable.<sup>6</sup> "We are forced, therefore," says a recent writer, "to the conclusion that, though the writers to whom we owe the first eleven chapters of Genesis report faithfully what was currently believed among the Hebrews respecting the early history of mankind, yet there was much they did not know, and could not take cognizance of. These chapters consequently contain no account of the real beginnings, either of the earth itself, or of man and human civilization upon it."<sup>7</sup> This is easily accounted for by the fact that the primary purpose of the biblical writers was religious, not historical and scientific;<sup>8</sup> hence, in these opening chapters of Genesis "the only care of the prophetic tradition is to bring out clearly the religious origin of humanity."<sup>9</sup>

If anyone is in search of accurate information regarding the age of this earth, or its relation to the sun, moon, or stars, or regarding the exact order in which plants and animals have appeared upon it, he should go to recent textbooks in astronomy, geology, and paleontology. It is not the purpose of the writers of Scripture to impart physical instruction, or to enlarge the bounds of scientific knowledge.<sup>10</sup> So far as the scientific or historical information imparted in these chapters is concerned, it is of little more value than the similar stories of other

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<sup>6</sup> For a detailed discussion of the significance of these chapters, see, for example, S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (Westminster Commentary Series); John Skinner, *Genesis* (International Critical Commentary Series); H. E. Ryle, *The Early Narratives of Genesis*; A. R. Gordon, *The Early Traditions of Genesis*.

<sup>7</sup> S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis*, p. xlii.

<sup>8</sup> F. C. Eiselen, *The Christian View of the Old Testament*, pp. 12; 54ff.; 235ff.

<sup>9</sup> A. Westphal, *The Law and the Prophets*, p. 43.

<sup>10</sup> F. C. Eiselen, *The Christian View of the Old Testament*, chap. ii.



nations;<sup>11</sup> and yet the student of these chapters can see a striking contrast between them and extrabiblical stories describing the same unknown ages, which were also handed down from prescientific centuries. The extrabiblical traditions are of interest only as relics of a by-gone past; not so the biblical narratives; they are and ever will be of inestimable value, not because of their scientific teaching, but because they embody sublime religious truth in the crude forms of primitive science. Consequently, if any one, instead of searching for accurate scientific information, wishes to know what connection the world has with God; if he seeks to trace back all that now is to the very fountain head of life; if he desires to discover some unifying principle, some illuminating purpose in the history of the earth, he may turn to these chapters as a safe guide to the information he seeks.

The purpose of the narratives being primarily religious, it is only natural that the lessons reflected in them should be religious lessons. The one supreme truth taught throughout the entire section is "In the beginning God." But each separate narrative teaches its own characteristic lessons. The more important of these are summarized by Driver in the following sentences: "The narrative of creation sets forth, in a series of dignified and impressive pictures, the sovereignty of God; his priority to and separation from all finite material nature; his purpose to constitute an ordered cosmos, and gradually to adapt the earth to become the habitation of living beings; and his endowment of man with the peculiar, unique possession of self-conscious reason, in virtue of which he became capable of intellectual and moral life, and is

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 201ff.

even able to know and hold communion with his Maker. In chapters two and three we read, though, again, not in a historical but in a pictorial and symbolic form, how man was once innocent, how he became conscious of a moral law, and how temptation fell upon him and he broke that law. The fall of man, the great and terrible truth which history not less than individual experience only too vividly teaches each one of us, is thus impressively set before us. Man, however, though punished by God, is not forsaken by him, nor left in his long conflict with evil without hope of victory. In chapter four the increasing power of sin, and the fatal consequence to which, if unchecked, it may lead, is vividly portrayed in the tragic figure of Cain. The spirit of vindictiveness and the brutal triumph in the power of the sword is personified in Lamech. In the narrative of the Flood God's wrath against sin and the divine prerogative of mercy are alike exemplified: Noah is a standing illustration of the truth that 'righteousness delivereth from death,' and God's dealings with him after the Flood form a striking declaration of the purposes of grace and good will with which God regards mankind. The narrative of the Tower of Babel emphasizes Jehovah's supremacy in the world, and teaches how the self-exaltation of man is checked by God."<sup>12</sup>

2. **The Patriarchal Narratives, Gen. 11. 10 to 50. 26.** In any consideration of the historical value of the patriarchal narratives, it must be borne in mind that they do not claim to have been written by participants in the events recorded or by eyewitnesses. If Moses was the author, there was, according to the biblical record itself,

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<sup>12</sup> *The Book of Genesis*, p. lxx.

an interval of about 400 years between the latest events narrated, the descent into Egypt and the death of Jacob, and the time of writing; several centuries have to be added in the case of the earliest event, the migration of Abraham. If the narratives did not assume literary form until centuries after the time of Moses, the interval becomes even greater. In either case, the stories probably were handed down for several centuries by word of mouth, exposed to all the dangers that threaten narratives thus transmitted from generation to generation. It may readily be granted that among peoples without written records the memory is exercised more and thus becomes more tenacious than among highly cultured peoples at the present time, and that popular stories once enshrined in the memory of a clan or tribe may be transmitted practically unaltered for many generations; nevertheless, the possibility of their becoming materially modified, must be reckoned with. These modifications may be accidental, due to failure of the memory, or intentional, for the purpose of bringing the stories into more complete accord with the ideas, conditions and practices of a later age. Hence it is exceedingly difficult to prove that the patriarchal narratives are historical authorities in the strict sense of the word.

At the same time, there is insufficient ground for doubting the substantial accuracy of the narratives. On the contrary, the modern critical view has furnished a strong argument in support of their general trustworthiness. Leaving aside the late P, the older documents J and E furnish two distinct descriptions of the patriarchal age, one written in Judah, the other in Israel, which, though differing in details, are in fundamental agreement in their representation of the early events. In other words,

the traditions of both north and south appear to go back to what R. Kittel has called "a firm nucleus of consistent tradition." "The value of this nucleus," says the same author, "is by no means small, for it supplies the fundamental condition of real history. If the traditions were confusedly intermixed, this would stamp them as arbitrary creations, or the products of popular fancy. Their not being so, though far from proving them positively to be historical, justifies the presumption that we may perhaps succeed in finding a historic core in the patriarchal narratives."<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, the later history of Israel presupposes a nomadic stage in the development of the people, such as is described in the book of Genesis; and there is good reason for believing that, in the main, the narratives furnish a truthful picture of general conditions in the patriarchal age. There is nothing in the older strata of the narratives that appears historically improbable, and archæology has shown them to be accurate in portraying the general character of the times. This much is true, though it may be admitted that the significance of the archæological testimony has at times been exaggerated. There is, for instance, no justification for the claim of Professor A. T. Clay, that "the increase of knowledge gained through the inscriptions of this period has in every instance dissolved conclusions arrived at by those critics who maintain that the patriarchs are not to be regarded as historical."<sup>14</sup> Archæology has not one whit of direct proof to offer in support of the personal existence or character of the patriarchs. All that can confidently be asserted is that archæology has estab-

<sup>13</sup> R. Kittel, *History of the Hebrews*, i, p. 168.

<sup>14</sup> *Light on the Old Testament from Babel*, p. 143.

lished the possibility of the main outlines of the patriarchal narratives in Genesis being correct.

On the other hand, it is at least possible that in the course of time the growing traditions idealized the forefathers of the Hebrew race, and impressed upon them, to some extent, later religious and ethical conceptions. "The view which, on the whole, may be said best to satisfy the circumstances in the case is the view that the patriarchs are historical persons, and that the accounts which we have of them are in outline historically true, but that their characters are idealized, and their biographies not infrequently colored by the feelings and associations of a later age."<sup>15</sup>

The recognition of facts and possibilities like these has no terror for the student who holds the scriptural view of the Old Testament,<sup>16</sup> that the primary purpose of the ancient writers, even when relating historical incidents, was not to write history in the modern sense of the term, but to show the hand of God in the lives of individuals and of nations. And there can be no doubt that the hand of God may be seen in the early history of Israel as clearly on the acceptance of the modern critical view of the Pentateuch as in the days when the narratives were accepted as absolutely accurate in every detail. The records have lost not one iota of their value for purposes of religious instruction because they have been found to contain historical inaccuracies and discrepancies, or even legendary elements. In the words of Driver: "Abraham is still the hero of righteousness and faith; Lot and Laban, Sarah and Rebekah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, in their characters and experiences are still in different

<sup>15</sup> S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis*, pp. lvii, lviii.

<sup>16</sup> F. C. Eiselen, *The Christian View of the Old Testament*, chap. i.

ways types of our own selves, and still in one way or another exemplify the ways in which God deals with the individual soul, and the manner in which the individual soul ought, or ought not, to respond to his leadings." Then he continues: "What if some of these figures pass before us as on a stage, rather than in real life? Do they on that account lose their vividness, their truthfulness, their force? On the contrary, not only do they retain all these characteristics unimpaired, but, if it be true that the figures in Genesis, as we have them, are partly, or even in some cases wholly, the creations of popular imagination, transfigured in the pure, 'dry' light which the inspired genius of prophet or priest has shed around them, the book of Genesis is really more surprising than if it were even throughout a literally true record of events actually occurring. For to create such characters would be more wonderful than to describe them."<sup>17</sup> The same conviction regarding the permanent religious value of the patriarchal stories finds expression in the words of J. E. McFadyen: "If it should be made highly probable that the stories were not strictly historical, what should we then have to say? We should then have to say that their religious value was still extremely high. The religious truth to which they give vivid and immortal expression would remain the same. The story of Abraham would still illustrate the trials and the rewards of faith. The story of Jacob would still illustrate the power of sin to haunt and determine a man's career, and the power of God to humble, discipline, and purify a self-confident nature. The story of Joseph would

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<sup>17</sup> *The Book of Genesis*, pp. lxxviii, lxxix. The succeeding paragraphs give a summary of the religious teaching of the patriarchal stories.

still illustrate how fidelity amid temptation, wrong, and sorrow is crowned at last with glory and honor. The spiritual value of these and similar tales is not lost, even when their historical value is reduced to a minimum, for the truths which they illustrate are truths of universal experience."<sup>18</sup> Both historically and religiously, therefore, the patriarchal narratives are of the highest value.

**3. From Egypt to the Jordan, Exodus to Deuteronomy.** The closing chapters of Genesis record how the Hebrew nomads, after living in Canaan for some generations, were driven by famine into Egypt, where the Pharaoh settled them in the land of Goshen, a district in the eastern Nile Delta. There they remained in practical seclusion for many generations, retaining to a considerable extent their tribal customs and beliefs.<sup>19</sup> In the course of time a new dynasty arose in Egypt; under it began a period of oppression, from which the Hebrews were delivered under the leadership of Moses. The book of Exodus relates the closing events of the stay in Egypt, the incidents connected with the Exodus, and the march of the Israelites until they reached Mount Sinai. The book of Numbers continues the account of the wanderings, to the settlement east of the Jordan. The book of Deuteronomy consists mainly of addresses; the first of these contains a rehearsal of the history from Mount Horeb (Mount Sinai) to the Jordan. The book closes with a description of the death of Moses.

As to the substantial accuracy of these accounts there can hardly be any doubt. At any rate, what we know of conditions in Palestine and Egypt makes it quite easy to

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<sup>18</sup> *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*, p. 335.

<sup>19</sup> This period is passed over very briefly in the Old Testament, compare Exod. 1. 7.

believe that at least some of the Hebrew clans were driven by famine to the Nile Delta, and that a member of one of these clans rose to prominence at the court of Egypt. True, archæology has discovered no evidence of Israel or of Joseph in Egypt, no definite reference to the oppression of Israel or to the Exodus; but it has furnished numerous interesting illustrations of statements and allusions in the Genesis and Exodus narratives, which make it evident that the principal events recorded are quite within the possibilities of the age.<sup>20</sup> Archæology has shown, for instance, that intercourse between Palestine and Egypt was not unknown in the days of Abraham; and that on several occasions parties of foreigners received permission to settle in Egypt, as is told of the family of Jacob. The story of the exaltation of Joseph assumes a new significance in the light of archæology. About B. C. 1675 there poured from Asia into the Nile Delta a horde of Semites, which in a short time secured control of Egypt, and whose kings, known as the Hyksos kings, that is, kings of the countries, continued supreme for about a hundred years. If, now, the Exodus is dated about B. C. 1220, the most probable date in the light of Egyptian history and of the Old Testament story, and the biblical statement is accepted that the stay in Egypt lasted approximately four hundred years, the descent would have taken place during the period of Hyksos supremacy in Egypt. The Hebrews belonging to the same race as the Hyksos, is it impossible to believe that a shrewd and farseeing Hebrew should make himself indispensable to the rulers, and should be rewarded with the honors said in Genesis to have been heaped upon Joseph, or that a clan related to him should be permitted to settle in Egypt?

<sup>20</sup> D. G. Hogarth, *Authority and Archæology*, pp. 47ff.



Famines of long duration, due to the Nile failing to overflow, were not unknown in Egypt in the days when the Hebrews are said to have been in southern Palestine. For instance, a famine lasting several years is attested for approximately the age of Joseph. An inscription in the tomb of a certain Baba, at El-Kab in Upper Egypt, represents the deceased as saying: "I collected corn as a friend of the harvest god; I was watchful at the time of sowing; and when a famine arose lasting many years, I distributed corn to the city each year." Of an earlier official a similar statement is made: "In my time there were no poor, and none were hungry in my day. When the years of famine came, I plowed all the fields in the district; I kept the inhabitants alive and gave them food so that not one was hungry."

As has been stated, there is no reference in the inscriptions to the oppression of Israel in Egypt; but again archæology has shown the possibility, if not the probability, of such oppression. According to the biblical account, the oppression was instigated by a king who "knew not Joseph." Now, as has been suggested, the king under whom Joseph rose to distinction may have been one of the Hyksos kings. The rule of the latter came to an end with the seventeenth dynasty, which was followed, about B. C. 1575, by the strong eighteenth dynasty. If Joseph rendered the efficient service to Egypt with which he is credited in Genesis, it could not be overlooked by the new dynasty coming upon the throne so soon after his time, and the privileges accorded to his countrymen by the earlier dynasty might be continued. When, however, about B. C. 1350, the nineteenth dynasty came to the throne, enough time had elapsed to obscure the remembrance of Joseph; hence the new kings, afraid

of the growing numbers, may well have adopted a policy of oppression and extermination. The oppression is said to have assumed the form of forced labor, which was a familiar institution in ancient Egypt.

If the aforementioned events took place, the fact of an Exodus cannot be doubted; and a unique personality like Moses at the very beginning of the nation's life is needed to explain the subsequent national and religious development of Israel. And Moses loses none of his glory because he is no longer considered the author of the Pentateuch. On the contrary, the vital significance of Moses and his work can be appreciated only in the light of modern critical study. In the words of one who is in full sympathy with modern views regarding the origin of the Pentateuch: "Moses was the man who under divine direction 'hewed Israel from the rock.' Subsequent prophets and circumstances chiseled the rough boulder into symmetrical form, but the glory of the creative act is rightly attributed to the first great Hebrew prophet. As a leader he not only created a nation but guided them through infinite vicissitudes to a land where they might have a settled abode and develop into a staple power; in so doing he left upon his race the imprint of his own mighty personality. As a judge he set in motion forces which ultimately led to the incorporation of the principles of right in objective laws. As a priest he first gave definite form to the worship of Yahweh. As a prophet he gathered together all that was best in the faith of his age and race, and fusing them, gave to his people a living religion. Under his enlightened guidance Israel became truly and forever the people of Yahweh. Through him the Divine revealed himself to Israel as their Deliverer, Leader and Counselor—not afar off, but

present; a God powerful and willing to succor his people, and, therefore, one to be trusted and loved as well as feared. As the acorn contains the sturdy oak in embryo, so the revelation through Moses was the germ which developed into the message of Israel to humanity.”<sup>21</sup>

From this investigation it appears that all the important incidents in the early history of Israel as recorded in the Pentateuch remain unaffected by the conclusions of modern criticism regarding the origin of this group of books. Nor is the religious value of the narratives affected; they still reveal the hand of God in the events culminating in the organization of a Hebrew national life, and they still furnish striking illustrations of the reality of a Divine Providence.

On turning from the historical records to the legal sections, a moment's thought will convince the student that the inherent value of the laws embodied in the narrative portions remains the same whether they come from Moses, or were, as modern scholars believe, the product of the nation's experience from Moses to Ezra. The latter view does not alter the fact that the Hebrews were the first to learn and to teach that the supreme goal of life is righteousness and to give expression to pure and lofty ethics in objective law. The principles of Hebrew legislation, whether they were established by Moses or by some other man or men of God, remain to this day the bone and marrow of the world's greatest legal systems. Whenever the Decalogue assumed literary form, “the marvelous perfection of this summary of moral law, its intrinsic excellency, the universal applicability of its several precepts, and their abiding and unchanging nature, place these commandments in advance

<sup>21</sup> C. F. Kent, *A History of the Hebrew People*, vol. i, pp. 44, 45.

of anything to be found elsewhere in the annals of human legislation.”<sup>22</sup> Thus it is with the entire legal system. Modern criticism does not tend to deny or doubt that the laws of Israel are permeated by a divine spirit, for the important question is not, when, where, and by whom were these laws written, but, Do the character and spirit of the laws bear witness to the presence of God?

The conclusion of the whole matter may be stated in the words of the Oxford Hexateuch: “The structure of the Pentateuch may be compared to the fabric of a great cathedral whose external history is imperfectly recorded. The origins of the church which first stood upon its site may be irrevocably lost, though fragments of its stones may still be lodged in the foundation walls. The plan of the building may have been again and again enlarged; the transepts may now stand where once the west front was erected; the nave may have been converted from Norman to Perpendicular, or may be a wholly fresh construction. Under successive bishops portions may have been pulled down and rebuilt, the style changed with the century; yet here a Norman arch remains contiguous with a piece of early English, or the ancient vaulting has been preserved unharmed. Chapels may have been added, windows enlarged, chantries inserted, and by perpetual small adaptations the new has been combined (though not always harmonized) with the old. It may happen that the cathedral archives or the chronicles of the adjacent abbey have preserved some mention of the completion of a tower, or the dedication of an altar, yet the real history is inscribed upon the venerable walls. By the comparison of the parts among themselves,

<sup>22</sup> M. S. Terry, *Moses and the Prophets*, p. 28.

and with other edifices of known date, it becomes possible first to relate them to each other, and then to establish their probable order in time within tolerably exact limits. The mind that planned and the hands that executed the chief features of the design may have passed away, to remain forever obscure; but we may still know who were their contemporaries, and under what influences they wrought the soaring arch, or lifted pinnacle and spire toward heaven. Not dissimilar in method is the process which seeks to trace in the growth of the Pentateuch through succeeding centuries the rise of the sanctuary of Israel's faith and life. And just as the devotion of many generations remains unaffected by the discovery that the history of the church fabric may have been misread in a less discerning age, so if the venerable work here considered be now seen to embrace the main courses of the development of the religion of Israel, it still stands with unimpaired grandeur as the stately introduction to the great series of sacred writings which find their climax in the New Testament."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Vol. i, pp. 16, 17.



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